

The Firebrand.

By S. R. CROCKETT.

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Ramon Garcia, known as El Sarria, having been induced to believe that his wife, Dolores, is unfaithful, stabs a viliage fop, Rafael Flores, whom he finds presumably kissing Dolores through the window. His estates are confiscated and he becomes a hunted man. At the same time a young Scotch adventurer, Rollo Blair, comes to Spain, and during an inn quarrel is aided by John Mortimer, an Englishman. The two start to visit Don Baltasar, about of the monastery of Montblanch. Blair and Mortimer are entertained lavishly by the abbot, and meet Etienne St. Pierre, a French gallant who is studying for holy orders. These three, with El Sarria, who has found protection at the monastery, are commissioned by the abbot to capture the queen regent and her little daughter in the interests of the church. Enroute for the camp of Cabrera, the Carlist general, they pass the home of El Sarria, who learns that Dolores was not false to him and that his downfall was plotted by Luis Fernandez. Dolores is imprisoned in Luis home and the son to whom she has just given birth is about to be buried alive by Luis brother. Tomas, when El Sarria falls upon him. El Sarria rescues his child and takes it to the Conchas is also staying. Then, aided by Rollo Blair and his companions, he captures Fernandez' home and rescues his wife. Hiair and his comrades, captured by General Cabrera, cannot prove their sympathy with the Carlist cause because Blair was forced to leave his credentials at the convent as security for Dolores. They are sentenced to be shot at daybreak. Conchas arrives from the convent with credentials, saves their lives and later joins Blair's party in search of the queen regent.

CHAPTER XXV .- Continued.

Sergeant Cardono called Rollo aside and told him how he had made his way into a village, as was his custom, and found all quiet-the shops open, but none to attend to them, the customs superintendent in his den by the gate, seated on his easy chair, but dead—the presbytery empty of the ray of scrubbing boards, but not a washerwoman to be seen. Only a lame lad, furtively plundering, had leaped backward upon his crutch with a swift drawing of his knife and a wolfish gleam of teeth. He had first of all warned the sergeant to keep off at his peril, but had afterward changed his tone and confessed to him that the plague was abroad in the valley of the Duoro and that he was the only being left alive in the village, save the vulture and the prowling dog.

"The plague!" Sergeant Cardono had gasped, like every Spaniard, stricken at the very sound of the word.

Yes, and I own everything in the village," asserted the imp. "I you want any-thing here you must pay me for it." The sergeant found it even as the cripple

had said. There was not a single living inhabitant in the village.

As the others made their preparations for the night, watering their beasts and groom-

ing them with the utmost care, the little crook-backed imp from the village appeared on the brink of the baranco, his sallow. wizened face peeping curiously and sus-piciously out of the underbrush and his crutch performing the most curious evolu-Concha shrank instinctively at his ap-

proach and the boy, perceiving his power over her, came scuttling like a weasel through the brushwood until little more than a couple of paces interposed between him and the girl. Prosen stiff with loathing and terror, it was not for some time that Concha could cry out and look around hastily for Rollo-who (doubtless in his capacity of leader of the expedition) was not slow in hastening to her assistance. "That boy-there!" she gasped, "he frightens me-oh, make him go away!" And

she clutched the young man's arm with such a quick, nervous grasp that a crimson flush

All unconsciously, Rollo reached a protecting hand across the little white fingers which gripped his arm so tightly. "Go away, boy," he commanded, "do you

not see that you terrify the senorita?" "I see-that is why I stay!" cried the amiable youth, gleefully, flourishing his prutch about his head as if on the point of sunching it at the party. Rollo laid his hand on the hilt of Killie-

krankie with a threatening gesture. "If you come an inch nearer I will give You will grow black-yes and swell! Then

But Rollo was not the man to be jested with, either by devil or devil's imp. He drew a pistol from his belt, looked carefully at the priming and with the greatest

coolness in the world pointed it at the mis-"Now, listen," he said. "You are old enough to know the meaning of words. 1 give you one minute to betake yourself to your own place and leave us alone! There is no contagion in a pistol builet, my fine lad, but it is quite as deadly as any plague. So be off before a charge of powder catches

The sound of the angry voices had attracted La Giralda, who, looking up hastily from her task of building the fire beneath the gypsy tripod at which she and the sergeant were cooking, advanced hastily with a long wand in her hand.

imp turned hastily and positively appeared to shrink into his clothing at the sight of her. As she approached he emitted a cry of purely animal terror and hastily whipping his crutch under his arm, betook himself in a series of long hops to a spot twenty yards higher up the bank. But La Giralda stopped him by a word or two, spoken in an unknown tongue, harshsounding as Catalan, but curt and brief as a military order.

The dialogue lasted for some time, till at last by a gesture La Giralda released him, pointing to the upper edge of the barrance as the place by which he was to

During this interview Rollo had stood absent-mindedly with his hand pressed on Concha's as he listened to the speech of La Giralda. The girl's color had slowly re-turned, but the fear of the plague still ran like ice in her veine. She, who feared nothing else on earth, was shaken as with a palsy by the terror of the black death.
"Well?" said Rollo, turning to La
Giralda, who stood considering with her
eyes upon the ground after her interview
with the crooked-backed dwarf.

You must give me time to think," she said. "This boy is one of our people—a Gitano of Bara. He is not of this place and he tells me strange things. He swears that the queen and the court are plaguestayed at La Granja by the fear of the cholera. They dare not return to Madrid. They cannot supply themselves with victuals where they are. The very guards formake them. And the Gitanos—but I have no right to tell that to the foreigner—the Gordio. For am I not, also, a Gitano?"

The village where Rollo's command first stumbled upon this dreadful fact was called Frias, in the district of La Peria.

௸௸௸௸௸௸௸௸௸௸௸௸௸ enough then that the boy spoke truth and serial nalace of La Grania.

But even when interrogated by El Sarria the old woman was obstinately silent as to the news concerning her kinsfolk which she had heard from the ragged dwarf.

"It has nothing to do with you," she repeated, "It is a matter of the Gitano!" But there came up from the bottom of the ravine the lantern-jawed sergeant, long, silent, lean, parched as a Manchegan cow whose pasture has been burnt up by a summer sun. With beckoning finger he sum-moned La Giralda apart and she obeyed him communed a long time together, the old gypsy speaking, the coffee-colored segeant istening with his head a little to the side. At the end of the colloquy Sergeant Car-dono went directly to Rollo and saluted.

"Is it permitted for me to speak a word to your excellency concerning the objects of the expedition?" he said, with his usual

"Certainly," answered Rollo, "for me, my mission is a secret one, but I have no instructions against listening."

The sergeant bowed his head. "Whatever be our mission you will find me do my duty," he said, "and since this cursed plague may interfere with all your lans, it is well that you should know what has befallen and what is designed. You will pardon me for saying that it takes no great prophet to discover that our purposes have to do with the movements of the

Rollo glanced at him keenly. "Did General Cabrera reveal anything to you before your departure?" he asked.

"Nay," said Sergeant Cardono, "but when am required to guide a party secretly to San Ildefenso, where the court of the queen regent is sojourning, it does not require great penetration to see the general nature of the service upon which I am engaged!" Rollo recovered himself.

"You have not yet told me what you have discovered," he said expectantly. "No," replied the sergeant with great omposture, "that can wait."

For little Concha was approaching and, though he had the most limitless expecta-tions of the good influence of that young lady upon the military career of his Meer, he did not judge it prudent to communicate intelligence of moment in her presence. Wherein for once he was wrong, since that pretty head of the Andalusian ceauty, for all its clustering curls, was full of the wisest and most far-seeing counsel-indeed more to be trusted in pinch than the junctus of half a dozen

But the sergeant considered that when girl was pretty and aware of it she had fulfilled her destiny—save as it might be in the making of military geniuses. So he remained silent as the grave so long as Concha stayed. Observing this, the girl asked a simple question and then moved off a little accomfully, only remarking to tell me whenever I get him to myself!"
She referred (it is needless to state) not to Sergeant Cardono, but to his com-manding officer, Senor Don Rollo Blair of Blair castle in the shire of Fife.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The news which Sergeant Cardono had to communicate was indeed fitted to shake the strongest nerves. If true, it took away from Rollo at once any hope of the success of his mission. He saw himself returning disgraced and impotent to the camp of Cabrers, either to be shot out of hand, or, worse still, to be sent ever of Spain, and specially during these last of hand, or, worse still, to be sent over he frontier as something too useless and feeble to be further employed.

Briefly, the boy's news, as repeated by La Giralda to the sergeant, informed Rollo that though the court was presently at La Granja and many courtiers in the village of San Ildefenso, the royal guards, through fear and hunger, had mutinied and marched back to Madrid and that the gypsies were gathered among the moun-tains in order to make a night attack upon the stranded and forsaken court of Spain.

In Rollo's opinion, not a moment was to you the plague!" cried the boy, showing be lost. The object of the Gitanos was pure his teeth wickedly, "and your wench also. plunder, but they would think nothing of be lost. The object of the Gitanes was pure bloodshed, and would doubtless give the whole palace and town over to rapine and coughing came upon him so that he actu-ally crowed in a kind of fiendish exulta-tion. But Relle was not seen that he actu-Spain to the other. It was their intention, so the imp said,

to kill the queen regent and her daughter, to slaughter the ministers and courtlers in attendance, to plunder the palace from top o bottom and to give all within the neighboring town of San Ildefense to the sword. The program as thus baidly announced was indeed one to strike all men with the ancient Bourbon principle of learning his gallantries to the most common and horror, even those who had been hardened

by years of fratricidal warfare in which

quarter was neither given nor expected. Besides the plunder of the palace and its ecupants, the leaders of the gypsies expected that they would obtain great re-wards from Don Carlos for thus removing the only obstacles to his undisputed

possession of the throne of Spain. The heart of Rollo beat violently. His Scottish birth and training gave him a natural reverence for the sancity of sickness and death, and the idea of these men plotting ghoulishly to utilize "the onlaying of the hand of Providence" (as his father would have phrased it) for the purposes o plunder and rapine, unspeakably revolted

He immediately called a council of war, at which, despite the frowns of Sergeant Cardono, little Concha Cabesos had her

death civil war divided the state. The the sergeant driving before him a donkey stricter legitimists who stood for Don Car- which he had picked up the night before La Giralda was summoned also, but excused herself, saying: "It is better that I should not know what you intend to do. I Basque countries, whose privileges had the giant's usual placid good nature ap-been threatened, together with large disam. after all, a Gitana, and might tempted to reveal your secrets if I knew them. It is better, therefore, that I should not. Let me therefore keep my own place Aragon and Catalonia. as a servitor in your company, to cut the brushwood of your fire and to bring the water from the spring. In those things you will find me faithful. Trust the gypsy no daughter collected all the liberal opinion of the peninsula. Most of the foreign sym-

Rollo, remembering her loyalty in the ment officials, the regular army and police matter of Dolores at the village of El with their officers—indeed all the or-Sarria, was about to make an objection, but a significant gesture from the sergeant restrained him in time.

Whereupon Rollo addressed himself to the others, setting clearly before them the gravity of the situation. John Mortimer shook his head gravely.

He could not approve. "How often has my father told me that the first loss is the least. This all comes of trying to make up my loss of the abbot's priorate!" Etienne shrugged his shoulders and philosophically quoted a Gascon proverb to the effect that who buys the flock must

El Sarria simply recollected that his gun and pistol were in good order and waited for orders.

prospects of the party. Their great general, Thomas Zumulacarregui, had been killed by a cannon ball at the siege of Bilbon and Cabrers though take the black sheep also.

The conference therefore resolved itreif as a guerrilla leader, had not the swift and lay upon the eastern spurs of the into a trio of consultants—Rollo, because Napoleonic judgment and breadth of view Guadarrama. It was, therefore, likely he was the leader, Sergeant Cardono because of his predecessor. Add to this that a new

They were within an hour or two's rapid. Madrid. The former, already march of La Granja over a pass in the had begun to carry out his great scheme of "I mean by my late profession," he exGuadarrama. The sergeant volunteered to filling the pockets of the civil and military plained, smiling on Cencha, "it will not do

Guadarrama. The sergeant volunteered to filling the pockets of the civil and military plained, smiling on Cencha, "it will not do

authorities by conveying to the government for a man on the high road to a commislead them down into the gardens in that authorities by conveying to the government time. He knew a path often traveled by all the property belonging to the religious smugglers on their way to Segovia.

must forestall the gypsies," eaid Rollo. Concha clasped her hand pitifully. Praise to the saints that I was not born Balthazar Varela and caused him to look a princess! It goes to my heart to make about for some instrument of vengeance to any such excuse." Finally it was judged that they should of "that burro of the English Stock Ex-Her pretty mouth was pursed up like a make a night march over the mountains, change," as his enemies freely named ripe strawberry and her brows were knitted find some suitable place to lie up in during Mendizabhai.

of Spain was enduring privations in its the day, and in the morning send in La truth. San Ildefenso and La Granja are two of her mind.

A high and generally snow-clad sierra certainty in his mind, the abbot of Mont-Don Ramon understand."

divides them from Madrid and the south blanch rescived to proceed. "But I thought," s The palace is one of the most high-lying

Upon the site a palace has been erected, a

miniature Versailles, infinitely more charm-

waterfalls, all fed by the cold snow water of the Guadarrama, and fanned by the pure

years of the Regent Cristina, who, when

tired of the precision and etiquette of the

court of Madrid, retired hither that she

might do as she pleased for two or three

Generally the great park gates stood hos-

pitably open and the little town of San

Ildefenso, with its lodgings and hotels, was

at this season crowded with courtiers and

hangers-on of the court. Guards circu-

lated here and there or clattered after the

upward over the Guadarrama toward Madrid

or whirled down toward Segovia and the

plains of Old Castile. Bugles were never

long silent in plaza or barrack yard. Drums

best, fifes shrilled and there was a con-

tinuous tramping of horses as this am-

baseador or that was escorted to the

presence of the Queen Cristina, widow of

Perdinand IV, mother of Isabella II and

A word of historical introduction is here

necessary and it shal be but a word. For

nearly a quarter of a century Ferdinand,

nothing and forgetting nothing. His tyran-

nies became ever more tyrannical, his ex-

actions more shameless, his indolent arro-

indeed, a French army marched from one

was changed. Under her influence Ferdi-

nand promptly became meek and uxorious.

he recalled his revocation and again pro-

mulgated it according as his hope of off-

brother, and the former heir-apparent, left

les included the church generally and the

religious orders. To these were joined

the northern parts of Navarre and the

tricts of the ever-turbulent provinces of

Round the queen regent and her little

and seaports, of the capital and the govern-ment officials, the regular army and police

ganized and stated machinery of the gov-

advantages had been to some extent neu-tralized by the ill-succes of the government

generalship and by the brilliant successes

of two great Carlist leaders-Tomas Zumu-

These men perfectly understood the con-ditions of warfare among their native mountains and had inflicted defeat upon

Bilbon, and Cabrers, though unsurpassed

lacarregul and Ramon Cabrers.

But up to the time of our history these

end of Spain to the other.

spring waxed or waned.

ficent king's highway, which stretched

months of the year.

regent of Spain.

air of the mountains. This grange has been in a uniform of blue and white, because

since he had been restored to the forfeited at Rollo, warned the experienced youth

gance more oppressive. Twice he had in- partisanship and military rank. Moreover,

voked the aid of foreign troops and once, he had acquired in some unexplained way

But with the coming of his third wife, plush and leathern small clothes of the young Maria Cristina of Naples, all this same sort as those worn by La Giralda.

He revoked the ordinance which ordained There was the swagger of a famous matador

that no woman should reign in Spain. Then about the way he carried himself. He gave

Finally, a daughter was born to the ill- dangerous than the grave, dignified inhabimated pair and Don Carlos, the king's tants of Old Castile, through whose country

Conception."

tains of Guadarrama.

tenderly about her.

ing than the original, with walks, fountains,

he knew the country and Concha—because premier, Mendizabhai, and a new general, and causing it to issue from his nostrils

of Don Carlos. Concha clasped her hand pitifully. It was an early rumor of this intention mail bags. But our sergeant—well I am "Ah, the poor young queen!" she cried. which had so stirred the resentment of Don man sworn and without honor if he hath prevent the accomplishment of the designs | Concha seemed to be considering deeply.

But Cristina of Naples was a typical Giralds and the sergeant to San ildefen o woman of the Latin races, and, however in the guise of fagot sellers to find out if strongly she might be determined to estabthe gypsy boy of Baza had spoken the lish her daughter on the throne of Spain. she was a good Catholic, and any oppres-sion of the holy church was abhorrent to

THE COUNCILS OF THE ROM AR E AS AN OPEN BOOK TO ME.

Neapolitan manner, the Spaniards generally

scandalized when the queen created her new

partner duke of Rianzares, or when, in her

role as colonel of dragoons she appeared

these were the colors of the "Immaculate

But enough has been said to indicate the

nature of the adventure which our hero

had before him, when after a tollsome

march the party halted in the gray of the

dawn in a tiny dell among the wild moun-

The air was bleak and cold, though

luckily there was no wind. Concha, the

child of the south, shivered a little as

Rollo aided her to dismount, and this must

be the young man's excuse for taking his

blue military cloak from its coll across his

saddle bow and wrapping it carefully and

Concha raised her eyes once to his as he

and Rollo, though the starlight dimmed the

brilliance of the glance, felt more than

repaid. In the background Etienne smiled

bitterly. The damsel of the green lattice

being now left far behind at Sarria, he

would have no scruples about returning

to his allegiance to Concha. But the chill

indifference with which his advances were

received, joined to something softer and

more appealing in her eyes when she looked

Sergeant Cardono had long ago aban-

doned all distinctive marks of his Carlist

a leathern Montera cap, a short, many-

buttoned jacket, a flapped waistcoat of red

Also, there was something indescribably

daring about the man, his air and carriage.

a cock to his plain countryman's cap which

betokened one of a race at once quicker

and more gay-more passionate and more

As these two departed out of the camp

wandering by the wayside, El Sarria looked

after him with a sardonic smile which

slowly melted from his face, leaving only

parent on the surface. The mere knowledge

that Dolores was alive and true to him

desperate outlaw almost beyond recogni-

seemed to have changed the hunted and

"Why do you smile, El Sarria?" raid

Concha, who stood near by, as the outlaw

slowly rolled and lighted a cigarillo. "You

do not love this sergeant. You do not think he is a man to be trusted?"

others. But if that man is not of your

haling the blue eigarette smoke luxuriously

Concha nodded a little uncertainly.

smoke through his nostrils.

lived in vain. That is all."

they were presently journeying.

ordinar offices of courtesy.

fastened its chain catch beneath her chin

had the greatest respect, not even being

the was Concha.

Espartero, were directing operations from white and moisture-laden with his breath. not at all after the pattern of Rolfo the was dead.

They were within an hour or two's rapid. Madrid. The former, already half English. Then he spoke.

ston to commit himself to the statement smugglers on their way to Segovia.

orders throughout Spain, who, like our that he has practiced as a bandit, or "It is clear that if we are to carry away friend, the abbot of Montblanch, had reso-stopped a coach on the highway in the the queen regent and her daughter we lutely and universally espoused the cause name of King Carlos Quinto that he might that he has practiced as a bandit, examine more at his case the governmental not many a time taken blackmail without

> so fiercely that a deep line divided the delicately arched eyebrows.
> "And to this I can add somewhat," she

began presently, "they say (I know not with what truth) that I have some lefthanded gypsy blood in me—and if man be not a Gitana—why then I never seen one. Besides, he speaks with the most strangely situated places in Sp in. Upon this probability, which amounted to La Giralda in a tongue which neither I nor

blanch rescived to proceed.

"But I thought," said El Sarria,
Moreover, it was an open secret that a astonished for the first time, "that both places upon earth, having originally been few months after the death of her husband, you and Don Rollo understood the crabbed one of the mountain ranges of the monks Ferdinand, Cristina had married Munoz, gypsy tongue! Have I not heard you speak of Sagovia, to which a king of Spain took one of the bandsomest officers of her body - it together?"

> ment. The pair slowly and, as it were, unconsciously gravitated thither, and in a moment Rollo found himself telling "the story of his life" to a sympathetic listener, whose bright eyes stimulated all his capacities as narrator, and whose bright smile welcomed every hairbreadth escape with a joy which Rollo could not but feel must somehow be heartfelt and personal. Besides, adventures sound so well when told in Spanish and to a Spanish girl. Yet, strange as it may seem, the young man missed several opportunities of arousing the compassion of his companion.

as for Concha, nothing could have been and settled down to listen to rolltale in Guadaljarra.

Meantime the sergeant and h's gypsy companion pursued their way with little regard to the occupations or sentiments f those they had left behind them. Cardono's keen black eyes, twinkling hither and thither, a myriad crowsfoot reticulating out from their corners like spiders' webs, took in the landscape and every ob-

a fancy, and, what is more remarkable, for guard. For this and other Bourbon de- "As it is commonly spoken—yes," she house lay before them, white on the hill- mission was productive of no more than a tions, and the small slit-like windows counterfeiting loopholes for musketry. But instead of the hum of work and friendly gossip, the crying of ox drivers yoking their teams or adjusting the long blue wool over the patient eyes of their beasts, there reigned about the place, both dwelling and Mce houses, a complete and solemn silence. Only in the front of the door several shegoats with overflowing udders waited to be milked with plaintive whimperings and

okens of unrest. thought was in the thought of each.

Sarria, looking her full in the face. "Carlist or no, he works for his own hand," she said simply. "Shall ye mention the matter to Don Rollo?" asked El Sar-"Nay-what good?" said Concha, quickly Don Rollo is brave as a bull of Jaen, but

open and say nothing. Perhaps—perhaps we may have doubted the man somewhat clang of La Giralda's oaken cudgel on the stout door panels. Accordingly, she overhastily. But as for me, I will answer stepped within and without ceremony ascended the stairs. In the house-place "For me," said El Sarria, sententiously. extended on a bed lay a woman of her own "I will answer for no woman-save only age, dead, her face wearing an expression

In a low trundle bed by the side of the "I also am a woman," she said, smiling "And quite able to answer for yourself, senorita!" returned El Sarris, grimly,

For the answers of Ramon Garcia were eyes, though open, were sightless. She also

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Sergeant and La Giralda The dust heat of the desolate plains of

Old Castile was red on the horizon when the sergeant and his companion started together on their strange and perilous mission. Would they ever return, and when? What might they not find? A court deserted and forlorn, courtiers fleeing, or eager to fice, if only they knew whither, from the dread and terrible plague? A queen and a princess without guards, a palace open to the plunder of any chance band of robbers? For something like this

the imp of the deserted village had prepared them. At all events, the sergeant and La Giralda vent off in the direction of the town of San Ildefenso, driving their donkey before them. For a minute, as they gained the crest, their figures stood black and clear against the coppery sunrise. The next they had disappeared down the slope, the flapping peak

of Cardono's Monters cap bring the last thing to be lost sight of. The long idle day was before the party in the dry ravine. Etienne went to his saddlebags and drawing his breviary from the the sergeant to make a mistake as for a leathern flap began to peruse the lessons town dweller to err as to the street in for the day with an attentive plety which which he has lived for years. was not lessened by the fact that he had soon absorbed in calculations in which wine woman. for importing into Spain Manchester goods use in discovering the disposition of the

country housewives. his never-failing resort of cleaning and tonight upon the place."

ordering his rifle and pistols. He had a La Giralda, who had been drawing a litvial of oil, a feather and a fine linen rag which he carried about with him for the to ease them for their travel, suddenly purpose. Afterward he undertook the same sprang erect. office for the weapons of Rollo. Those of take care of themselves. Ramon Garcia hal enough to desire death!" small belief in their ability to make much small belief in their ability to make much But, more grim and lack-luster than use of them at any rate, the sergeant being ever, the face of Sergeant Cardono was alone excepted.

These three accounted for, there remained from which the chief of the expedition could keep an eye on the whole encamp-

He said not a word about Peggy Ramsay. nor did he mention the broken heart which he had come so far afield to cure. And more nun-like and conventual than the expression with which she listened. It was as if one of the lady superior's holiest innocents had flown over the nunnery wall that wild gorge among the mountains of

The morning was well advanced when

La Giralda looked at her companion. The sergeant looked at La Giralda. The same La Giralda went up quickly to the door and knocked loudly. At farmhouses in Old Castile it is necessary to knock loudly, for the family live on the second floor, and the first is given up to bundles of fuel, trusses of hay, household provender of the more

indestructible sort, and one large dog. which invariably answers the door first and expresses in an unmistakable manner his intention of making his breakfast off the beautiful bouquet. stranger's calves. But not even the dog responded to the

of the utmost agony.

other was a little girl of 4. Her hands clasped a doll of wood tightly. But her and the child got the penny.

La Giralda turned and came down the stairs, shaking her head mournfully. "These at least are ours," she said, when she came out into the bot summer air, pointing to the little flock of goats. "There is none to hinder us."

"Have the owners fled?" asked the sergeant quickly. "There are some of them upstairs now," she replied, "but alas, none who will ever reclaim them from us! The excuse is the

best than can be devised to introduce us

into San Ildefenso, and perhaps, if we have luck, into La Granja, also." So without further parley the sergeant proceeded in the most matter-of-fact way possible to load the ass with huge fagots of kindling wood till the animal showed only four feet paddling along under its burden and a pair of patient orbs black and bendy, like those of the sergeant himself, peering out of a hay-colored matting of

This done, the sergeant turned his sharp eyes every way about the dim, smoky horizon. He could note as easily as on a map the precise notch in the many purpletinted gorges where they had left their party. It was like all the others which silt and dimpled the slopes of the Guadaljarra, but in this matter it was as impossible for

But no one was watching them. forgotton most of the Latin he had learned clump of juniper held a spy, and the serat school. John Mortimer, on the other geant was at liberty to develop his plans. hand, took out his pocketbook and was He turned quickly upon the old gypsy and onions shared the page with schemes "La Giralda," he said, "there is small

woven and dyed to suit the taste of the courtiers in San Ildefenso-aye, or even the defenses of the palace, if we know El Sarria sat down with a long sigh to nothing of the Remany who are to march

"I do not interfere in the councils of the the other members of the expedition might Gitano," she cried, "I am old, but not old

turned upon her, and more starrily twinkled the sloe-like eyes (diamonds set only Rollo and Concha. Now, there was a in Cordovan leather) as he replied: "The double shelf a little way from the horses councils of the Rom are as an open book councils of the Rom are as an open book to me. If they are life, they are life because I will it-if death, then I will the death!

The old gypsy stared incredulously. "Long have I lived," she said, staring hard at the sergeant, "much have I seen both of gypsy and gorgio, but never have I seen or heard of the man who could make that boast and make it good."

She appeared to consider a moment. "Save one-" she added, "and he is "How did he die?" asked the sergeant, his

tanned visage like a mask, but never removing his eyes from her face. "By the garrote," she answered, in hushed whisper. "I saw him die!" "Where?" "In the great plaza of Salmanaca," she

said, her eyes fixed in a stare of regretful remembrance. It was filled from side to side and the balconies were peopled as for a bull fight. Ah, he was a man' "His name?" "Jose Maria, the Gitano, the prince of brigands!" murmured La Giralda.

"Ah!" said the sergeant coolly, "I have heard of him!" Not a word more was uttered between the two gypsies. La Giralda, for no reason that she would acknowledge even to herself, had conceived an infinite respect for Sergeant Cardono, and was ready to obey him implicitly—a fact which shows that our sweet Concha was over-hasty in supposing that one woman in any circum-

stances can ever answer for another when there is a man in the case. But on this occasion La Giralda's subidefense, the white houses of which could learly be seen a mile or two below, while the sergeant should betake himself to certain haunts of the gypsy and the brigand, known to him, in the fastnesses of the

Like a dog La Giralda complied. She sharpened a stick with a knife which she took from a little concealed sheath in her leather leggings, and with it proceeded to quicken the donkey's extremely deliberate

(To be Continued.)

Cook's Imperial Extra Dry Champagne is the pure juice of the grape naturally fermented. For boquet it has no superior.

Forgot Her Lines.

A well-known countess was announced to speak at a costers' gathering in the East End, so the little daughter of one of the costers-a flower seller-was deputed to present the countess on her arrival with a

The evening arrived, with an enthusiastic audience in the hall, and presently the countess was announced. The little girl, who had been coached

as to what to say, walked along the plat-form to where her ladyship stood and in laughter by shouting out: 'Ere yer are, mum. Only a penny a

bunch-market bunch for a penny! The countess smiled, accepted the flowers



for sport. But this which is spoken by the sergeant and La Giralda is deep Ro-

many, the like of which not half a dozen

in Spain understand. It is the old world

speech of the Rom before it became con-

taminated by the jargon of fairs and the

"Then," said El Sarria slowly, "it comes

to this-'tis you and not I who mistrust

"No, that I do not," cried Concha em-

phatically. "I have tried La Giralda for

many years, and at all times found her

faithful so that her bread be well buttered

and a draught of good wine placed along-

"Well worth the watching them," said E

side. But the sergeant is a strong man and

a secret man-

Concha nodded.

Dolores Garcia!"

Concha looked up quickly.

slang of the traveling horseclipper.'

DR. A. D. SEARLES, i te Most Reliable Specialist in Diseases of Men.

STRICTURE Cured with a new Home

treatment. No pain, no detention from business. URINARYCidney and Bicdder Troubles, hink he is a man to be trusted?"

Weak Back, Burning Urine, El Sarria shrugged his shoulders and Frequency of Urinating, Urine High Colslowly exhaled the first long breathing of bred or with milky sediment on standing.

"Nay," he said, deliberately, "I have been syphiles cured for life and the judged and misjudged myself, and its life. both judged and misjudged myself, and it cleansed from the system. Soon every would ill become me in like manner to judge sign and symptom disappears completely and forever. No "BREAKING OUT" of the country and my trade, Ramen Garcia has disease on the skin or face. Treatment contains no dangerous drugs or injurious

"Yes," she said slowly, "yes-of my country. I believe you. He has the An-WEAK MEN from Excesser or vio tims of Nervous Desifity or Exhaustion, Wasting Weakness, dalusian manner of wearing his clothes If he were a girl he would know how to tle with early decay in young and middle-aged, lack of vim. vigor and strength, ribbon irregularly and how to place a bowknot a little to the side of the right place with organs impaired and weak." —things which only Andalusians know. But what in the world do you mean by

Dr. SEARLES & SEARLES OMAHA, NEB.

SPECIALISTS FOR DISEASES OF MEN The Secret of Our Unparalleled Success is

Told in Two Words:

..WE CURE..

Varicocele, Acquired Blood Poison, Nervous Debility and all Reflex Complications and Associate Diseases and Weaknesses of Men.

VARICOCELE

Are you afflicted with Varicocele or its results-Nervous Debility-and are you nervous, irritable and despondent? Do you lack your old-time energy and ambition? Are you suffering from Vital Weakness, etc.? There is a derangement of the sensitive organs of your Pelvic System, and even though it gives you no trouble at present, it will ultimately unman you, depress your mind, rack your nervous system, unfit you for married life and shorten your existence. Why not be cured before it is too late? WE CAN CURE YOU TO STAY CURED. We have yet to see the case of Varicocele we cannot cure. Medicines, Electric Belts, etc., will never cure. You need expert treatment. We treat thousands of cases where the ordinary physician treats one. Method new, without cutting, pain or loss of time.

of your profession?"

El Sarria smoked a while in silence, including the blue eigarette smoke luxuriously

Call or address 110 6. 16th 86.

Call or address 119 S. 14th St. DRS. SEARLES & SEARLES, ONAWA.