

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 village fop. Itafaci Flores, whom he finds presumably kissing Dolores through the window. His extates are confucated and he becomes a hunted man. At the same time a young Scotch adventurer, Roilo Blair, comes to Spain, and during an inn quarrel is aided by John Mortimer, an Englishman. The two start to visit Don Baitasar, asnot of the monastery of Montblanch. Blair and Mortimer are entertained lavishly by the abbot, and meet Etienne St. Pierre. A French galiant who is studying for holyorders. 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. Enrouse 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 downtail 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 burtled alive by Luis brother. Tomas, when El Sarria falls upon him El Sarria rescues his child and takes it to the Convent of the Holy Innocents, where Concha is also staying. Then, aided 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. Concha arrives from the convent with credentials, saves ther lives and later joins Blair sparty in search of the queen regent. The settle of the cause of the black plague and Cardono and La Giraldo are sent ferward to reconnoiter. They learn that a band of gypsics are planning to raid the castle, and Roilo hastend to see what followed. But was fixed on the girl, was fixed on the girl, who see what followed. But was fixed on the girl, was fixed on the girl, and the castle on the girl have been discovered from the tessue of the royal party. Hollo and They learn that a band of gypsies are planning to raid the eastle, and Rollo hastens to the rescue of the royal party. Rollo and party barricade the palace, resst the gypsies, who succeed however, in kidnapping the Princess Isabel. Rollo rescues Isabel and starts with her for the hermitage.

(Copyright, 1961, by S. S. McClure Co.) CHAPTER XXXIII.

Concha Says Amen.

Looking down from their station on the reof. Rollo and the friar could see what appeared to be the main force of the gypsies drawing near through the alleys or military formation, which, indeed, it was never their nature to adopt. But aisles of the forest.

"They are telling each other to spread out on the wings and encircle the house on the upon her young and girlish skin appeared north!" whispered Rollo (who understood the dread irregular blotches which betrayed their dialect) in a low voice to the Basque | the worst and most deadly form of the disfriar by his side

The monk laughed a low, chuckling laugh. "They will find the holy hermitage shricked the throng of besiegers, surging equally well guarded on that side." he said this way and that like a flock of sheep And as they stood silent the rose of dawn which strange dogs drive, as with wild and began slowly to unfold itself over the tree shrill cries they turned and fled headlong tops with that awful stillness and decorum | toward the mountains. which characterize the daybreaks of the hovering over their earthly tenements.

land pirates on their own ground, none able to make them afraid.

Some of them still carried botas of wine (the true "leather bottle") in their hands solemnity. or swung across their shoulders, azd ever and anon took a swig to keep the courage up as they came near. Some sang and touched her! Let us go down. The sun the lazy monks, always rich in money and place out of their lurking places?

"To the knives' point with them, then!" they shouted. "They who prate so much of paradise-let them go thither and that with speed!" This would be a rare jest to tell for forty years by many a swinging kettle and while footing it over many a lonely and dispeople heath.

Thus with laughter and shouting they came on and to Rollo, peering eagerly over the battlements, the white-wrapped ere the sun rise. There is no infection to corpses along the walls seemed to turn be feared till an hour after sunrise." slowly blood-red before his eyes, the flaunt-

ing crimson of the sky above. First of all strode the man who had from the dead?" called himself the executioner of Salamanca. Ezquerra, he who had saved the beheld the smitten of the plague, like that. so hotly, and scattered the white roses over slayer," said Rollo, calmly. life of Jose Maria upon the scaffold. He It works so upon very many. For a time all. came forward boldly, intending to thunder they are, as it were, possessed with seven with his knife handle upon the great door. devils and the strength of man is vain But at the foot of the steps he stopped.

Looking to either hand he saw, almost even as Samson did the Philistine withes. erect within their niches a strange pair of Then-puff! Comes a breath of morning figures, apparently wrapped in bloody raiment from head to foot. He staggered gone. They were—and they are not! The back nerveless and shaken.

"What are these faceless things?" cried. "Surely the evil spirits are here!" And in deadly fear he put his hands before what I am to do!" his eyes lest his vision should be blasted by a portent.

And from the other side of the hermitage came an answering cry of fear. "Be brave, Ezquerra," called one behind

"It's nothing-only some monk's glance at the speaker.

"Brother!" he cried, "you who are so yourself!

Nevertheless, through very pride of place as their temperary leader. Ezquerra set his feet once more on the steps and page's dress, but there was at all times mounted. The shrouded figures grew less red as he approached.

"After all, it 's some trick!" he shouted sitively, but her eyes were steady. She angrily, "we will make the fools pay for continued to hold out her hands. this! Did they think to practice the black art upon those whose fathers have used

all magic, black and white, for 10,000 So saying, he set his hand to the face-

affrightened and revolted gaze the features. swollen and bloated, of one who had died of the black plague. At the same moment and before his followers could set their hands to their mouths or retreat a step, round both corners of the building there came a double

swarm of gypsies, running at random through the tangle of the woods and streaming along the paths.

The executioner of Salmanca also turned and ran down the steps.

"Touch the thing, who will!" he crief. "I have done with it!" And the entire httacking party, with their knives and sledge hammers would in like manner have fled but for a strange and Concha, putting it on as happily as an-

saw a elight form rush suddenly across the lock cart once more and spreading a clean front of the fleeing gypsics, shouting at and cloth over it Rollo, moved in his heart of striking the fugitives. And even at that hearts, came near. Never did two such distance he was sure that it must be the lovers as they meet more strangely ardaughter of Munez, whom he had left cap- rayed. Yet he laid his black gauntlet across tive in La Granja. She had been safely her own and whispered a word which

she excaped? But all theorizing was stepped at sight straps and harnessings. of the vehement anger of the girl and of the evident power she had over these wild -yet," he said. and savage men. She did not even heatto strike a fugitive with her elenched in a whisper, lifting her eyes to his. fist if he attempted to evade her. In her It was a strange betrothing and little

*************************** belt and struck at the throat of the exe-

> So vehement was her anger and so potent her influence that the girl actually succeeded in arresting more than half the

more than the fortitude of the railied forces lasts till the judgment day, and before the

Whereupon the girl, shrilly screaming the

"I will teach you," she screamed. "I. a girl and alone, will show you what sacks of straw ye are frightened of. Do ye not know that the great prize is here! Within this very house, behind these defenceless windows and cardboard doors, th queen of Spain, whose ransom is worth twice 10,000 duros, if your coward hearts dared not shed her black, Bourbon blood!

It was only by craning far out over the parapet (so far, indeed, that he might easily have been discovered from below had there been any to look) that Rollo was

it out of its niche and cast it down the steps upon which it lay all abroad, half revealed and hideous in the morning light. This done, rushing back as swiftly and with the same volcanfe energy to the occupant of the other niche, she hurled him by main force after his companion. Then, panting and wan, her single tattered garment half rent from her flat ill-nourished body, she lifted one arm aloft in triumph the wood. They approached in no order and cried: "There, you dogs, that is what you were afraid of!"

But even as she stood thus revealed in they came with a sufficiency of confused the morning light a low murmur of terror noise, signalling and crying through the and astonishment ran around all who saw her. For in the struggle the girl had uncovered her shoulder and breast, and there

"The black plague! The black plague!

The girl, speechless with wrath and persouth. The glades of the woods were filled haps also with the death sickness far adwith a glimmering filmy light, in which it vanced within her, took a step forward as was easy to imagine the spirits of the dead if to follow them. But forgetful of where she stood, she missed her footing, fell head-The gypsies came on as usual, freely and long and lay across the dead sentinel whom she had first dragged from his post.

The Basque looked over Rollo's shoulder and pointed downward with a certain dread

"What did I tell you?" he said, "the finger of God! The finger of God hath will be above the horizon minutes.

"Had we not better wait?" urged Rollo they may return. Think of our responsibility, of our feeble defenses, of-" "Of Concha," he was about to say, but checked himself and added quietly, "of the little queen."

The monk crossed himself with infinite "They will not return." he said. "It is

our duty to lay these in the quiet earth "But the girl, the daughter of Munoz?" said Rollo, "did not she take the disease

"Nay," said the Basque, "I have often against them. They snap strong cords

finger of God hath touched them. So it was with this girl." "I will follow you!" said Rollo, awestricken, in spite of himself. "Tell me

air, chill from the Sierra, and they are

In silence Rollo permitted himself to be covered with an armor of freshly tarred to pray. cloth, which was considered in Spain at that time to be a complete protection against plague infection. The monk Teo- a secluded part of the garden and wash in "What of them?" For the young man had talking confidently to La Giralda. She was dero was proceeding to array himself in the clean, cool water of a fountain while he even yet no high opinion of that nobleman dressed in her own girlish costume of belied like manner, when Concha appeared beside Ezquerra, over his shoulder, cast a flerce them and held out her hands for the gauntlets.

"The little princess is asleep," she said, full of courage that you can supply others, eagerly. "I am strong. I have as good a go up these steps and find out the trick | right to serve God as either of you-and

as great a need!" The Basque gazed at her curiously. To the eye she appeared a mere boy in her something irresistibly attractive about Concha's face. Now her lips quivered sen-

"I demand that you permit me to serve God!" she cried to Brother Teodoro. The monk shrugged his shoulders with a pitying gesture and looked from one to the

so saying, he set his name to plucked the Basque. "You are young i pray to cloth of the nearest figure and plucked the Basque. "There is great danger! Look at that maid there and what she bath brought on herself."

> "Ah!" said Concha, softly-so softly, indeed, as to be alomst inaudible-"but the difference is that she did this thing for hate-while-I-I--She did not finish her sentence, but, rais-

> ing her eyes, wet with the seldom-coming tears, to those of the stern-faced brother. she said instead: "Give me the dress and let us be gone. The sun is rising!" "If you are, indeed, determined you shall have that of Brother Domingo," said Teo-

> doro. 'He was of little more than your height and died, not of the plague, but simply from doing his duty." "Then let me die in no other way," said

unlocked for event which happened at that other maiden might dress for a ball. These three went out to their terrible As Relio peered over the low parapet he task and as they were harnessing the bulenough locked in the castle-how then had Brother Teodoro did not hear, being, as he took good care to be, busted about the

interrupted by a certain old woman of a "I do not think that love will let us die

"That is a prayer. Amen!" said Concha fury she drew a kuife from Ezquerra's said. But when at last he put the ox goad

in her hands, Concha knew that the night still wrapped in the cleak which covered had indeed passed away and that the morn-

CHAPTER XXXIX. A.

A Handful of Roses.

Patiently and softly went the exen about the little pottage garden of the friars, till, where the soil was sandlest and the ground most open under a south-looking wall on which the roses were still clustering (for they grow roses late at La Granja, lo! a trench was dug. It was not so deep as a rich man's grave in other countries, but in Spain, or elsewhere, a little earth covers I have to tell you." a multitude of sorrows.

Brother Teodoro did his best, but in spite of his endeavors the bulk of the work fell to Rollo and Concha. Yet under the page's dress and the rude outer slough of tarred canvas the girl's heart sang. There fleeing gypsies. Some, however, evaded was nothing terrible in death when he and her and she would stay her headlong course she together lifted the stuff of mortality moment to send a flerce curse after them. and laid it in its last resting place. With-"She is crazed," thought Rollo, "her out a shudder she replaced a fallen facecloth. With Rollo opposite to her she But the eight of that glimmering array took the feet of the dead that had guarded of plague-stricken sentinels waiting for them so well in the red morning light, and them, still and silent in the red dawn, was when all were laid a-row in the rest which could stand. Upon approaching the her- first spadeful of earth had failen, Concha mitage the gypsics showed again symp- with a sudden impulse took a kerchief from her neck and plucked a double handful of the roses that clustered along the whereupon the girl, shrilly screaming the vilest rames at them, mounted the steps herself with the utmost boldness and confidence. and while the monk was still busy with his prayers for the dead, she sprang down he said.

carried the little princess, but Isabel had taken so overwhelming a fancy to Concha that she could not be induced to quit her side for a moment. Indeed, she declared her intention of leaving her mother and Dona Susana and returning to Aranjuez with Concha as soon as her message should

be delivered. The sergeant received them at the garden or, which he had so carefully watched all night. There was a kindlier look than usual upon his leathern and saturnine features. I judge, senor," he said, as he saluted Rollo, "that you have more to tell me than

"In any case, let me hear your story first," said Rollo, "mine can keep!"

"In brief, then, having your authority," began the sergeant, "I permitted his excellency, the duke of Rianzares to have an interview with his daughter, at which for safety's sake, I was present, and gained a great deal of information that may be exceedingly useful to us in the future. But in one thing I confess that I was not sufficiently careful. The girl, being left to herself a moment, escaped-by what means I know not. Nor this with a quaint glance at Concha) was she the only lady who left the palace that night without asking my leave!"

But without answering the cloaked page passed him rapidly, and with the princess still clinging to her hand she passed upstairs. The sergeant looked after her and her young charge "You are sure of that lady's discretion?

to where at the corner opposite to Brother | "I have proved it to the death," answered

Concha spread her kerchief tenderly over "It is none of my business." But instead he in the upper hall.

Rollo nodded.

"And speaking of the princess, if she asks

questions," continued Cardono, "had she not

better be told that Dona Susana has gone to

"But the queen regent and the duke-

"We might take the little princess alone,"

"The queen regent, and she alone, is the

After he had spoke thus freely, Rollo

continued to muse and the sergeant to

"Weil," said Rollo at last, "let us go up

and again during the night and he feared. Sarria. I think I see a way of inducing her that they may represent to her the danger

as much from the ensuing silence as from royal higness to accompany us. But it will of remaining longer in a house exposed

the escape of the daughter of Munoz, that require some firmness and even a certain alike to the attacks of bloodthirsty villains

The sergeant nodded with grim appre-

"It is a pity with women," he said, philo-

The sergeant gave Rollo a quick glance,

ness of joy. The sergeant also did not love

So these two went abreast up the great

staircase and found the Princess Isabel al-

ready playing joyously with Etienne, John

Mortimer joining clumsily in, as best ha

Accordingly Rollo set out, with Concha the sergeant in a low tone, as Rollo and he And Sergeant Cardono tapped his brow

his grandeeship, the duke of Rianzares.

ophically, "but sometimes, I know, it is answer brought back.

"The severity I speak of," continued thumbnail, as he had a fashion of doing

Rollo, not regarding his words, "will mostly when thinking deeply. Then he asked

could. Concha had vanished and La Giralda Frenchman (9n) well-our excellent Don

mother after her night adventure!" said for more than one idea at a time

"The rogue is in no haste to visit her But it is a pity that he has not room here

radiant with the water of the Guadarrama sequester her within the Carlist lines, you as Rollo supposed to obtain an audience

The sergeant shook his head.

concern the matter is of yours."

Domingo the daughter of Munoz had been the young man briefly and a little haughtily.

the face of the girl, dropping tears the took up his report to his superior and said:

while. Then she crossed the little hands "We buried the body of the poor woman

breast, in which the angry heart had beaten "And an hour ago I buried the body of her

at the foot of the trench, a little crucifix only said, "You will let me hear what hap-

in her hand. Her lips moved as he held pened in your own time, and also how you

the rude image of the crucified over that, discovered and regained the little prin-

terian by his father, he knew that this lit- visit her relations, which, as she was the

tle foolish Concha might yet teach him how last of her family, is, I believe, strictly

scene had somewhat overwrought, go off to Senor Munoz, I mean?" queried Rollo

remained to shovel in the soil and pack it or his vocation in life.

himself to the skin and washed in one of the possibility of secrecy."

some disaster must have occurred. He amount of severity."

true.

them solemnly munching their fodder, Badajoz. She is so set on returning to Spain.

blinking their meek eyes and ruminating Madrid that she will not move a step toward

upon the eternal sameness of things in their Aragon, and we have not enough force to

serene bovine world. He came out, stripped carry her thither against her will with any

mingo, some time almoner and cook to the mused Rollo, "she would go with Concha

he went out to find Concha, who, her face fountain of authority. If you kidnap and

It was now Rollo's chief desire to get watch him. The latter had a great opinion

had heard the rattle of musketry fire again and talk a little to my friends and El

Basque returned, carrying the news that may chance to work on the lady's feelings

full possession of La Granja. He had even in which was discernible a certain alert-

the only way."

off and it was no long time before the fall to the lot of the Senor Munoz. But we sudden question.

was nowhere to be seen.

back to the palace and find out what had of this young man's practicability.

Ermita of San Ildefonso, had forever de- anywhere. Of that I am certain."

which pain and madness had driven to Dona Susana within the precincts of the lenne.

tenance relaxed into a far-away smile.

deeds of darkness and blood upon the Colegiata-"

flerce little head and sorely tortured body. | cess?"

He who had cast out so many devils would

surely pardon and understand. So at least

she thought. Rollo watched her, and

though brought up to be a good Presby-

Then Rollo made the girl, whom the

deserted kitchens from which brother Do-

This being completed to his satisfaction,

all about them, but of a truth these two

happened there during his absence.

would have started at once to reconnoitre.

but Brother Teodoro, hearing of his inten-

tions, volunteered to find out whether the

gypsies had wholly evacuated the neighbor-

There was a private path from the

ground of the hermitage which led into

those of the palace. By this he hastened

ers, but that Rollo's people were still in

been able to speak with one of the royal

servants for an instant, a man with whom

he had some acquaintance. But this con-

ference, the Basque added, had been hastily

flerce aspect, who had ordered the young

man off. Nevertheless he had gained

enough information to assure him that

there would now be no danger in the whole

party returning openly to the palace of La

not only was the town free from maraud- | through him."

parted.

lived.

Granfa.

her through the wood



STRICTURE Cured with a new Home detention from business.

the passage of the thirty seconds of which

play upstairs and we want only men of Lust of his wife's grandfather upon the your nation or mine-men neither easily young man's toes, excited nor yet overscrupulous!" He added the last words under his breath. No great talker was El Sarria at any

through and through and up and down, Rollo did not directly reveal his inten-

"I wish you to follow me, gentlemen," not see us, perhaps we may fare better with the queen consort! I, for one, intend that we shall."

SHE LIFTED ONE ARM ALOFT IN TRIUMPH AND CRIED; "THERE, YOU DOGS, THAT IS WHAT YOU WERE AFRAID OF!" Yet in spite of the unpleasant interview laid, the pinched flerceness of her coun- The sergeant shrugged his shoulders as if which lay before him, Rello could not help to them that they could not at that moment he would have said with the Basque friar, smiling at the game that was going forward "Tout le monde y passe," chanted Et- the bed chamber had resumed the entire "Tout le monde y passe!" chorused the John Mortimer made a confused noise For an instant the sergeant looked in his throat and presently was compelled consort, prevailed at La Granja. Then while the Basque Teodoro did his astonished, as indeed well he might, but he to join the circle and dance slowly round,

But Rollo would have nothing of all this. office over his head brother, Concha kneeled restrained whatever curiosity he felt and his countenance meantime suggestive of Enough time had been wasted. He merely the mental reserve that such undignified moved his head a hair's breadth to the proceedings could only be excused as being side and the young man in gold lace, a most remotely connected with the safe shipment deserving valet-de-chambre, found himself looking down at the curved edge of El The little queen's merry laugh rang out Sarria's sword bayonet, which almost as his awkwardness, and then, seeing Rollo, touched his Adam's apple in a suggestive manner. He promptly dropped the silver "Come, you, and play," she cried, "the pipkin on the floor, whence the shaving red foreigner plays like a wooden puppet. water of the duke slowly decanted itself And where is that darling little page boy over the parqueterie floor. A portion scalded the valet's finely shaped leg, yet "That I cannot tell," quoth Rollo, "but he dared not complain, being in fear of the

Rollo knocked on the duke's door with loud, confident knuckles-not at all as the blouse, black basquina, pleated small after gentleman with the shaving water would

Whereupon, inclining his ear, he heard hasty footsteps crossing the floor, and, suspecting that if he stood on any sort of ceremony, he might find the door boited and her by the hand, perused her from head barred in his face, Rollo turned the handle to foot, and then remarked with deep and quietly intruded a good half of a beaufeeling: "You are very well, senorita, but- tifully designed military riding boot within

So correctly had he judged the occupant's intentions that an iron bolt was actually pushed before Don Fernando discovered that his door would not close, owing to an

It was not, however, so simple a matter "Your excellency," cried Rollo, in a stern had made provision. voice. "we desire to speak with you on a (and other things which the young morning will certainly paralyze the government at with the queen regent of Spain. Her question which concerns the lives of all Sarria, and the giant moved swiftly to his had brought her), met him as he came to Madrid. Especially you may prevent the daughter, willing but by no means eager to within this castle. Being unable to obtain post, motioning away the gentlemen in sweeping away of the monasteries-which, see her mother, had at last been taken to an interview with her majesty the queen waiting as one might displace a dog from She held up her face to be kissed as sim- I take it, is at the bottom of all this pother, her room by one of the serving men, whose regent, we make hold to request you to con- a cushion. Then Rollo stepped briskly ply and naturally as a child. Death was though for the life of me I cannot see what faithfulness during the night had been so greatly stimulated by La Giraida's declared vey our wishes and-our intentions to her! "I am dressing-I cannot see you, not at and called a single word aloud. intention of shooting either of them who

> "But, senor, see you we must and shall, said Rollo, firmly, "in half a minute we "Tell her majesty that those gentlemen shall enter your apartment, so that you have who last night defended the palace wish due notice of our intention.

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tims of Nervous Desility or Exhaustion, Wasting Weakness, with early decay in young and middleaged, lack of vim, vigor and strength, with organs impaired and weak.

"Nor I," admitted Rollo with a smile

"Yet see the lady we must."

"And shall," said the sergeant

little princess, holding out her hands.

of a hundred hogsheads of Priorato.

A mement after Concha entered the room

The little Isabel went up to Conchs, took

CHAPTER XL.

All Dandies Are Not Cownrds.

his return Rollo made his request.

and to the ravages of the plague."

"Where is El Sarria?"

to be admitted into her presence in order

"Her majesty, being otherwise en-

Rollo stood a moment fuming, biting his

"Without, on the terrace-doing a little

sentry duty on his own account," said the

sergeant. "I told him that the gypsies.

for at least twelve hours, and that there

was no use in any juriher vigilance till

nightfall, should it be our ill-fortune to

spend another night in this place. But-

very slightly, as only an Andalusian or

Ramon is the best and braveat of mer

there the sergeant shrugged his shoulders

being walkers in darkness, had gone off

gaged, is not able to receive the gentle-

men!" was the civil but unsatisfactory

she ran impetuously to him.

from Aranjuez?

here comes his sister.

I liked your brother better!"

"Sur le pont d'Avignon,

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stood watching the scene from the door- with his forefinger. "I do not know," raid Rollo, smiling, he had given notice, and had not the ser-"if the one idea is a good one, it may carry geant suddenly dashed the chamber door a man far! But that matters nothing now, open, the young Scot's foot would certainly Let these two friends of mine, Don Juan have been crushed to a jelly, for the exceland M. de Saint Pierre, take his place on jent duke of Rianzares was disclosed in the the terrace, . We have a difficult part to very net of dropping a ponderous marble

> time, and now he had nothing to say till Rollo informed him why he wanted his help. Then he was ready to do everything but talk-go to the world's end, fight to the death, give up all except Dolores (and risk even her) that he might do the will of his chief. El Sarria was not good at fine othical distinctions, but he understood obedience, prompt and unquestioning,

tions to his followers, nor did he take Concha into his confidence. He had not even spoken another word to her, but a on-that there were dangers and difficulties before them, but that whatever happened neither would look back nor take their hands from the plough. Yes, oh, wise sceptic, it was indeed a comprehensive glance, yet it passed as swiftly as when in a placid lake a swallow dips his wings in full flight and is off again with the drops pearling from his feathers.

Without offering any further explanation, Rollo turned and marched steadily, but not hastily, to the chamber door of Senor Munoz duke of Rianzares. The liveried servant who was approaching with a jug of hot water (the younger of La Gualda's charges of the previous night), called out see his excellency. He was, it appeared, in the act of dressing. With the coming of the morning light these two gentlemen of etiquette of the Spanish court, or at least such modified forms of it as, a little disarranged by altitude and the portent of an informal and (as yet) unauthorized prince

sword bayonet.

well down upon the bodies of the dead, who "Oh, as to the duke," answered the ser- the Andalusian manner, and the quaint and have performed that feat. had served his purpose so faithfully. Last geant, "I do not think that we shall have pretty reboze thrown coquettishly back from of all he unyoked and fed the oxen, leaving much trouble with him. The queen is our the finest and most bewitching hair in

the apartment of the duke.

nwented obstruction upon the floor.

present?" cried a voice from within. should fall from his post for an instant.

To the same gold-laced functionary upon

Watch in hand Rollo stood, absorbed in

After that, of course, there was no more ceremony with Sener Munoz. He was immediately relieved of his weapon, ordered to the further side of the room away from all possible avenues of escape, and further guarded by the sergeant, who bent upon him a stern and threatening brow. Then Rollo began to develop his inten-

tions in a foud clear voice. For if, as he uspected, Maria Cristina chanced to be within earshot, it might save an explanation in duplicate if she should hear at first hand what he was now about to communicate to her consort. On either side of the young man were his

two aids, the sergeant and Ramen Garcia, glance had passed between them and Con- the first gaunt, tough and athletic, of an cha was satisfied. It had told her much age between 30 and 60, courage and in--that he loved her, that his heart held vincible determination written plainly on her the best beloved thing the sun shone his brow, and in his eyes when he was angered, the Angel of Death himself standing like a threat. On the other side stood Don Ramon Garcia, gigantic in stature, deep-chested and solemn, driven by fate to actions of blood, but all the same with the innocent heart of a little child within his breast.

"Senor Munoz," said Rollo, speaking tharp and sudden, "let me introduce these he said slowly. "Bring your arms. It gentlemen to your notice. They are two her majesty the queen regent of Spain will of the most famous men in all Spain and worthy of your acquaintance. This of left is Senor Don Jose Maria, late of the town of Ronda, and this on my right is Don Ramon Garcia, better known as El Sarria of Aragon!"

For the first time the color slowly forsook the handsome but somewhat florid countenance of the duke of Rianzares. He was as his valet had truly said, engaged in his toilet and it is certainly difficult to look impressive in a flowered dressing Being Spaniards and, therefore, gentlemen, El Sarria and the sergeant bowed slightly at Rollo's introduction and stood waiting. Rollo, no ways loth, continued his speech:

"Your excellency is now aware of the names of two of those whom you may thank for your safety. I myself, to whom the queen regent owes the recovery of her daughter, am a Scottish gentleman of good family. My companions below are severally the count of Saint Pierre, a French nobleman of ancient family, and Don Juan Mortimer, an English merchant of unchallenged probity."

'Here, therefore, are five men who have defended the queen regent with their lives and who now judge it to be necessary for her and the princess that they put themselves immediately under our protection and leave this place of instant and terrible danger!

"The queen will not be dictated to by any combination of men whatsoever," the duke answered: "she has resolved to remain at La Granja and therefore nothing can move Rollo bowed gracefully, but there was

a dangerous glitter in his eye which might have warned his opponent.

"Your excellency," he went on with great calmness, "we look confidently for your voice and interest in this matter. You will have the goodness to introduce us into the presence of the queen regent. You are at liberty to announce our intentions and prepare her majesty for a visit.' A quick light flashed over the indifferent

and dogged countenance of Senor Munoz. The hope of escape was written there as plainly as if printed in Roman characters across his brow. But for this also Rollo "Guard that inner door," he cried to El

into the corridor, set his hand to his mouth "Concha!"

(To be continued.) is the United States look to Methodism their religious instruction and Christian



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