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embraced his arms and body to prevent him drawing his sword.

"Strike him!" he groaned to his friend, recognizing his guest at Aranda, "strike him down! he is French!"

With a desperate effort, the captain dashed down the enfeebled arms, but he was free too late. Between him and the opening where he had expected Tournesol to appear, Blas de Montalvan had bounded, and with a strong pull of his long arms he quickly drew down an iron door running in grooves up and down like a portcullis. It closed at the bottom with the snap of a spring, in the face of the orderly on the other side.

It is true that the caged Fontenay might have sprung through the yawning panel; but in that other room the French soldiers were groping with their bayonets in the smoke, and he would probably be slain before he could make himself known.

A hoarse laugh recalled him to the full comprehension of the position.

With his back against the iron door, Don Blas stood at bay; he had discharged his pistols as well as the blunderbuss, for he only held the pampeluna knife and a long, thin but strong Spanish rapier which he must have detached from some unseen niche in the wall. Who but the owner of the house of the Montalvans would know its resources so intimately?

This attitude made the whole scene very much resemble a duel, and at once the West Indian swordsman felt clear, cool and at ease. Yet the burning eyes of the Spaniard, identifying him with the spoiler of his sport of king-slaving, would have appalled a veteran like Carénac.

The combat was without seconds, but in a brief space the soldiers in the other room would burst in, sooner than Tournesol had any hope of doing through the metal barrier.

At the first meeting of the blades, Fontenay recognized that he had never more occasion to tax all his resources of nerve, agility, quick invention and strength of wrist which had won him the name of the master of fence. His antagonist was what fencing-room slang denominates a "demon."

Not content with warding off the sabre cuts with the serpent-like blade, he used the poniard according to the obsolete school of the mediaeval times—when the Italians, at least, believed all tricks worthy of praise that won the fray.

Twice the captain parried thrusts that so closely ran along his stouter blade that a curtain ring would have encircled them both, and each time his right shoulder was pricked. Twice he had replied with strokes that would have stretched the count beside the senseless Don Inigo but for the double defence of knife and rapier. A third time the sinuous weapon travelled around his ribs; but, entangled with his coat, failed to be withdrawn, and he snapped it in the *forte* close up to the exquisitely chiseled hilt with a sudden spinning round on his heel.

Don Blas retreated to the wall, in the darkest portion, between the iron door on which Tournesol madly kicked and the open panel where several soldiers' heads and muskets appeared. Beyond a doubt, having no idea of a friend here, they would fire on the combatants, and the Spaniard grinned at the prospect of being so oddly revenged.

"Not by any hand but mine!" shouted the West Indian, his eyes now ablaze and his warm brown complexion glowing like bronze.

Seizing his sabre with both hands like a lance, he rushed at the smiling enemy.

At the very moment when the knife just touched the impaling steel, Don Blas' left hand disappeared behind him to execute a juggler's sleight, and the wall opened and shut like a monster's jaws. Carried on by the impetus, Fontenay's charge brought him violently against the closed shutter of a window he had not suspected. A laugh resounded without, but was immediately followed by a shriek of dismay and baffled rage in the same voice. A volley of musketry pealed forth below him; the street, above which on a balcony he so imprudently presented himself, was crowded with French soldiers, and they could not have had a plainer mark.

Fontenay, who had torn the shutter open with his hand and sword, was in time to see the shattered corpse of the head of Montalvans topple over the railing and descend as the spirals of smoke came up. He recoiled, for he would have received a platoon's fire in the next instant.

In the other direction he was equally as much endangered, for bayonets were bristling against him. Fortunately they were the Poles commanded by Zolnycki, who hastened to cry out:

"Hold! it's the captain, our brother!" He had the muskets held up, and he said:

"I see we arrived in time. Who is that pounding at the door, though? is it more Spaniards eager to meet us?"

Fontenay explained that it was probably his orderly, who was presently welcomed when the means of raising the fallen door was discovered.

"One here, one below," said a lieutenant, "but they have killed five men. The fellow who leaped out of the window began the battle, for the order was to take him alive. The colonel wanted to question him. It appears he was 'the great gun' of the guerrillas."

"Who denounced him to the colonel?" quickly inquired Fontenay.

"A villainous old native woman, who must have been in the brigand's service, for she knew the house as well as her pocket. She made it clear to us how we ought to act so that he could not escape."

"She even advised me to kill everybody found in the house," continued Zolnycki; "and I do not know how you and your orderly were not both shot down in the scuffle."

"I will explain what I was doing here," whispered Fontenay in his friend's ear.

"Oh, you cannot be accused of being an accomplice of this man whom you laid at your feet, and the other whom you drove out of the window."

"Never mind. Is that duenna below?" went on the creole to the officer of the 14th line regiment.

"Yes, captain, unless she has made off with what she saw of it. She told the colonel that the Spaniards would flay her alive if she staid at Teruel, and he signed a pass for her to go out. My order was to detain her until we captured the rogues whom she pointed out. I handed the pass to my sergeant who is watching her in the street."

"I hope he has not been such a fool as to give it to her!" exclaimed the West Indian.

"So do I, captain," muttered the officer, a little crestfallen, for he began to fear that he had committed a folly in trusting too much to his subordinate.

"Where is your sergeant?" inquired Fontenay.

"Before the great door which we had to batter down, captain, commanding the men guarding it."

Zolnycki intervened. He divined that Fontenay had private reasons for attending to the duenna, not for the lieutenant's ear, and he came to his aid by saying to the latter:

"My dear comrade, it is important that the colonel should be informed as soon as possible of what has happened. I leave the command to you, and will make my report to him for him to proceed further. I will take Captain Fontenay also to inform him. Awaiting further orders, surround the house by sentinels to prevent any one going in or coming out."

"Very good, captain."

Zolnycki and Fontenay went down into the court-yard, where Don Blas lay upon his back, riddled by bullets; in his clinched hand he still clutched the haft of the knife which had threatened the life of the Emperor Napoleon, and after once nearly killing Fontenay, failed to protect his own. Some holes in the wall, whence stones had been detached, in a line up and down from the balcony, indicated that, but for the soldiers on the alert, the formidable guerrilla chief might have descended to the yard without breaking his neck.

Tournesol followed the two officers without being hindered; all seemed to admit that he and his captain should be inseparable.

"Did you recognize that miscreant?" inquired Fontenay of his brother-officer, "The dead man still grasping the haft of knife? I own that I did not look hard at him."

"That is the false valet of Palafox."

"Really! Are you sure?"

"Yes, my friend, that is the villain we escorted into France, where he attempted to assassinate the Emperor. It was he who slew your brother at Somo Sierra—I regret that the soldiers shot him!"

"Because you did not slay him by your own hand?"

"No, he ought to have been hanged as a rascal—a thief! If you only knew all he has done!"

"I know enough not to lament for him. But here's the sergeant, and the duenna is not with him. Let me question him."

Interrogated militarily, the sergeant stated that he had handed her the pass and she hastened to depart. He had heard the fusillade and a wounded man had told him that the Spaniards were all killed. The duenna implored him, saying the people of Teruel would tear her to pieces, and he let her go.

Zolnycki reprimanded him for form's sake, for it was the lieutenant's fault, and besides the Pole did not attach any great importance to the horrible hag's flight.

Fontenay was furious and was compelled to explain to his best friend. On the way beside him toward the colonel's quarters he related all from his last visit to Angel's confectionery on the evening of the insurrection to the meeting with Carmen under the cloister arcades of San Pedro.

Tournesol at the regulation distance could not hear it.

Zolnycki listened to his junior as usual with benevolent attention and as usual also was wisdom itself speaking.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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