

startle even a man so used to shedding human blood as had been the Lord of Cartillon.

Pedro was slowly sinking to the ground, easing himself down somewhat upon his knees and elbows. His brother stood near watching, and calmly wiping the red drippings from his sword upon the grass. Not a semblance of regret did he show for the deed of blood.

The father gazed transfixed with horror from one son to the other, until the slow comprehension came to him.

"How now, Raoul, what hast thou done?" the older man demanded of Raoul.

"Canst thou not see? He stood between me and the lordship of this fair domain," the younger replied full as sturdily, hot and scornful, with lowering brow and unrepenting glare.

"Thou foul and unnatural murderer, and thinkest thou to profit by thy brother's death? No; I swear—"

"Hold, old man; swear not and taint not thy soul with perjury. Have a care for thine own safety. It is now but the feeble barrier of thy tottering age which prevents all these acres, these fighting men, these towers from being my own. Have a care, I say, that thou dost not lie as low as he, and by my hand."

The old man fell back a pace affrighted, feeling for the first time in his life a fear, fear of his own son. Yet the scornful and defiant face before him was that of his true child. Therein he saw reflected his own turbulent and reckless youth. The wretched old man covered his face from the sight of Pedro, his first born, who had settled down upon his back in the repose of death, and moaned aloud in his agony.

"Nay, sorrow not, my father," Raoul commanded harshly, "it was but a weakling who stood next thy seat of power. Behold! I, too, am thy son; I am stronger, of a stouter heart, abler and more courageous than he, and will make thee a fitter heir. Didst thou not slay thy brother to sit in his hall? Didst not thou hang him to drink his wine, to command his servants?" Have I done aught but follow thy example?"

Heedless of his father's sobs Raoul pursued his unrelenting purpose.

"What the sword did for thee it has done for me, all glory to the