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## THE GUERRILLA.

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On came the crowd, shouting, "The Guerrilla! The Guerrilla!" furious exultation in the sound of their voices and in their looks. On they came right to the place of execution, gathering new accessions at every yard. Arrived at the fatal spot, they stopped; and, drawing back on every side, formed a little ring, densely bunched; in the centre of which stood a Guerrilla, with a boy about fifteen or sixteen years old, apparently his son; and along with them a Spanish of superior rank, one or two public functionaries of a subordinate class, and the executioner.

Several murders had been recently committed in the mountains; among the rest, one upon the son of a Spaniard who was extremely popular in Burgos; and against the Guerrilla the retaliation of summary justice was proclaimed by the chief of the people; of which act of popular despotism the man and the boy, who had been taken at a few leagues' distance from the city, were now about to become the victims.

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the two. The man, of swarthy complexion and stalwart form, with lank black hair, and just sufficient of intelligence in his countenance to give direction to a bold and reckless nature; defiance, not deprecation, in his eye—the boy, with a skin of bright and transparent olive; a frame, slender, though not spare; dark—jet dark hair hanging almost to the waist in clusters of curls; and a countenance shining with sensibility and intellect; his eye, with an expression of intense horror, cast here and there upon the crowd; with one hand clasped in that of his robust companion, and with the other grasping his arm, to which he shrinkingly clung.—There was something so irresistibly subduing in the group—now that their tormentors had halted, and had time to look on—that clamour subsided into perfect silence, which lasted for several minutes. At length the Guerrilla, with a smile, stretched forth his hand—

"Fellow-Christians!" he exclaimed—but his voice was instantly drowned with cries of execration.

"Pinion him! Strangle him!" was vociferated from a thousand mouths.

Finding it impossible to obtain a hearing, he now had recourse to gesture, and his extended hands were gradually lowered in the direction of the boy; then moving his eyes from right to left, backwards and forwards, as far as he could turn his head—occasionally glancing at the boy—while the smile never once quitted his face, he plainly told what he would say. The promiscuous mass was touched again, and clamour once more was superseded by silence.

"Pinion me!" exclaimed the Guerrilla, and execute me if you please. I am a fair object for your vengeance, and you shall see that I will prove myself worthy of it; but why wreak it upon a child?—a boy who has done nothing to you? He is not a Guerrilla, nor the son of a Guerrilla. He is one of yourselves. Burgos was the place of his birth."

Hesitation, doubt, pity, dissatisfaction, revenge, were variously pointed in the faces of the crowd. At length one—who seemed to be a sort of leader—by a single word recalled the passion which had originally predominated. "Antonio!" was all he said, but in a voice in which there was doom, without rufeness or mitigation. He was echoed by a thousand throats. The air resounded with "Antonio."—It was the name of the Senor's son,—the young man that had been murdered. Cries of "Pinion them!" "Strangle them!" succeeded. The executioner looked towards the Senor. The Senor nodded; and the former instantly proceeded to pinion the boy. The boy, submitting without a struggle, looked up in the Guerrilla's face. The Guerrilla looked down at the boy—and still with a smile!

The process was nearly completed, when the Guerrilla, in a voice of thunder and command, cried, "Stop!" The executioner me-

chanically desisting, gaped at the Guerrilla, as did also the Senor and the crowd—all seemed electrified by the tone in which the Guerrilla uttered that single word.

"Is there a man in Burgos?" in the same tone proceeded the Guerrilla. "Is there a man Burgos who lost, about sixteen years ago, a daughter two years old?"

The Senor started, and now bent upon the Guerrilla a look of the most intense interest and eager enquiry.

"What mean you?" said the Senor. "What I say?" replied the Guerrilla, and repeated the question.

"Yes, I am that man!" said the Senor; "I lost a daughter sixteen years ago at the age of two old! Knowest thou aught of that girl?"

"You see I do!"

"And what?"

"Unbind the boy!" said the Guerrilla, calmly folding his arms.

"Does she live?" impetuously inquired the Senor.

"Unbind the boy!"

"Wretch!" furiously vociferated the Senor. "You shall be put to the torture!"

A loud hoarse laugh was the reply of the Guerrilla, and "Unbind the boy!" was again calmly repeated. The indignation—the impotence of the Senor all at once subsided.—The expression of his eye changed to something like respect and deference as he kept it still fixed upon the Guerrilla, upon whom the crowd now gazed with a feeling rather of admiration than hostility. The boy moved his eyes from his companion, whose smile seemed as permanent as the hue of his cheek while he stood like a figure hewn out of rock. There was a dead silence of several minutes.

"Unbind the boy!" at length said the Senor. He was obeyed. "Now!" said he, addressed the Guerrilla.

"Remove us hence!" calmly rejoined the latter.

"Do you sport with me?" with renewed impatience, inquired the Senor.

"No!"—calmly replied the Guerrilla. "You know I do not. You know that a child—a girl of two years old—was stolen from Burgos sixteen years ago, and that you are the father of that girl. Now may well believe, Senor, that what I know a part of, and so well, I can reveal wholly—thoroughly! I will do so; but not here. Take me to your own house. There, but there alone, will I disclose to you what it will be a happiness to you to know, and a satisfaction also to my friends the good people of Burgos, by whom I perceive you are held in no small estimation.

The Senor cast around him an inquiring look as if to learn the pleasure of the crowd—they understood him.

"Give him his life. Take him away!" was vociferated on all sides.

The Senor, accompanied by the Guerrilla and the boy, and followed by a portion of the populace, walked hurriedly home. The three were presently seated in the library of the Senor.

"Now?" said the Senor.

"Not yet!" was the Guerrilla's reply.

"Do you mean to deceive me?" sternly demanded the Senor.

"No!" said the Guerrilla; "but I must think—I must reflect—and that takes time.—I must stipulate too; and that requires deliberation—caution. Thus far, however, thus shall be informed. Thy daughter lives. The place of her residence is known to me. She is in safety there. I can restore her to you, and I will! but you must abide my pleasure as to the when and the where—with this assurance, I shall disclose all in the course of the next seven days. But mark you, Senor, and pay due heed to what I say. The girl is a hostage for my life and that of the boy; so look carefully to our safety. And give us handsome entertainment too. Lodge us as your guests, and board us as such. You must not turn us over to your household. We will not at all table, but that whereat you preside. 'Tis the least courtesy you can show towards those who have ventured their lives in coming

to Burgos, to restore to you your only living child!"

The Senor sat silent with astonishment.—He eyed the Guerrilla and the boy alternately from head to foot. The Guerrilla, following his eyes, said nothing for a time; but at length bursting into a hearty laugh:

"Your guests, I perceive," he exclaimed,

"have their habitations to thank for the questionable welcome you gave them. 'Tis all very right. 'Tis the way of the world, and 'tis natural to go with the strong! Men's nature's ought to lie in the streets that cover their bodies, and not in their bodies themselves; though I have seen many a velvet arm make sorry work with a rapier opposed to one wielded by an arm in buff! No matter! heed not on habits, Senor! The Guerrilla and the boy will be fit for your table to-morrow. To-day they are content to dine alone. Give orders, however, that they be treated as becomes your guests. They bring good news to Burgos, and at the risk of their necks."

The Senor neither spoke nor moved; but sat staring at the Guerrilla, whose peculiar smile kept its place upon his cheek. The latter suddenly started up. The Senor did the same—as if instinctively.

"Senor!" ejaculated the Guerrilla, firmly, and with an air of command that indicated the most thorough confidence in himself; Senor, are you, or are you not, the father of the girl that was stolen from Burgos sixteen years ago? If you are, and if you wish the child to be restored to you, I have told you the way. Take it or not, as it pleases you. Give me the time I demand, and the treatment I look for during that time; if not—forth to the place of execution!—but remember, your daughter's life depends upon the safety of mine and of that boy's."

"One question!" interposed the Senor.

"I will answer none till my time?"

"Only this—has the girl any mark upon her person?"

The Guerrilla whispered the Senor.

The Senor threw himself into his chair and leaned back for a time, pressing both his hands upon his forehead. The Guerrilla remained standing—his eyes scrutinizingly fixed upon him as if he would penetrate the determination that was forming.

"Alphonso!" exclaimed the Guerrilla. The boy started up.

"Every thing shall be as you require!" hastily exclaimed the Senor. "Your name?"

"Nunez?"

"And the boy's?"

"You heard it just now—Alphonso?"

"'Tis well! You shall be looked to in all that you desire!"

The Guerrilla and the boy were treated in every respect like the choice friends of the Senor. The day following, their mountain dresses were exchanged for that of the Spanish gentleman, and the youth of gentle blood. Their couches were the best under the Senor's roof; they dined at the same board, and had all the honour paid to them which the Senor himself was accustomed to receive.

"Senor," said the Guerrilla, the second day, as they sat at table after the domestics had retired—"Senor, I have told you but half the errand that brought me to Burgos. What I have farther to inform you of refers to a subject of pain, not pleasure. Will you hear it?"

The Senor bowed. The Guerrilla went on—

"I had always set my face against acts of ferocity; I have repeatedly punished those who have committed them. I was in sight when your son was attacked; I called to the ruffians to desist—I flew with all the speed I could in hopes to rescue him; but I arrived too late. He was mortally wounded. His own reckless courage accelerated his fate. I had recklessly conveyed, still alive, to my own habitation, where he survived six hours; a portion of which time he occupied in penning, with great difficulty, the contents of this paper."

The Guerrilla here drew a small packet from his breast and handed it to the Senor, who, glancing at the superscription, hurriedly

quitted the room. He returned in about a quarter of an hour, went directly up to the Guerrilla, and, without trusting himself to speak, wrung him warmly by the hand.

"A youth—a son of mine," said the Guerrilla—

"You have another son?" interrupted the Senor.

The Guerrilla went on without noticing the question.

"A youth, a son of mine, was wounded in endeavouring to save the young cavalier. He momentarily expects my summons to repair to Burgos; will you ensure him security of life and person if he comes?"

"Certainly!" said the Senor.

"I shall send for him at once!" said the Guerrilla.

"Do so; and tell him to come hither. This is his home."

The Guerrilla and the boy were now indeed the friends of the Senor. It seemed as if he could never make enough of them. On the fourth day of their sojourn at his house he made a feast for them, to which he invited the most esteemed and worthy among his relations and friends.

Besides the Guerrilla and the boy, there was but one stranger present—a young Italian about five and twenty, who was on a visit with one of the guests. He was a youth whose general appearance was rather unpossessing, with the exception of his eye, which was peculiarly dark, small and sparkling. During dinner he sat directly opposite to the boy, whose countenance, remarkable for nothing but its sweetness and blandness, he kept constantly scrutinizing, to the no small annoyance of the other, who attempted to repel the freedom by glances of coldness, and, occasionally, even of displeasure—in such a manner, however, as to avoid remark on the part of the rest of the company.

After dinner the guests amused themselves as their several tastes directed. Some repaired to the billiard-room; some played at cards. Music was the recreation of others, and, among the rest, of the boy and the young Italian, who with persevering obtusiveness had followed him to a window where he was standing, and contrived to keep him in course in spite of half-replies and pointed inattention. The Guerrilla and the Senor were deeply engaged in conversation in a corner of the room.

A charming passage of Mozart's was executed by a finger of truth and soul. All were enchanted. Even the young Italian discontinued his persecution of the boy, when the latter, uttering a shriek, suddenly darted out of the room. Every one ran to the windows to see what had excited such emotion. Some town officers were conducting a Guerrilla youth towards the house, which fronted the street up which they were coming. Before they came half a dozen steps nearer, the Guerrilla youth was in the arms of the boy.

"The poor brothers!" exclaimed the Senor, the tears starting into his eyes. Every one ran down into the hall. There they were met by the youth and the boy, still clinging to each other—the latter, overpowered by his feelings, almost carried by the former! Both looking into one another's eyes, straining, as if their souls were issuing from them, and blending, like their bodies, in embraces. Never was happiness at reunion more touchingly depicted; especially upon the part of the younger, who kissed alternately the forehead, the eyes, the cheeks, the neck, the hair of the young Guerrilla; and wept and laughed, and murmured unintelligible words of welcome—and at last was with difficulty taken by gentle force away.

Various were the spectators affected by this interview. The Senor wept like a child. The young Italian looked, as if he had never been acquainted with a tear. His countenance lowered with that cloud which throws the deepest shade; and which gathers in the mind. The tenderness which the boy displayed seemed to act upon him with the effect of an object of some natural, strong and uncon-