

ATHOLIC HRONICLE.

VOL. XVIII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1868.

No. 28.

CONSTANCIA DE GONSALVO; OR, THE TRUE HEIRESS. A TALE OF SPAIN.

(From the N. Y. Metropolitan Record.)

The weather was as sullen and scowling as I. suffering from a thin pair of trousers and the hardest trotting brute a man ever bestrode, speedily became; and to this I attributed the sense of dismal apprehension which, for no definite or tangible reason, darkened over me as we approached, towards three in the afternoon. the dwelling of Juan Alvarez. Not a soul was to be seen in or about the bruse and grounds till the ratiling cortege halted and drew up before the outer gate, when Pedro's wonder-widened mouth and eyes greeted us from a lower window. No ceremony was used. Senora de Calderon and the general quickly alighted from the carriage, and, preceded by an officer and a couple of privates, entered the house. I remained, with the bulk of the soldiers, just outside the door; and a very few moments passed before a loud. exultant, yet agitated scream proclaimed to me that the Lady Inez had found and recognized a a niece in the breathing, glowing incarnation of the picture I had seen at Madrid. It was not long before I was sent for, and found the be wildered, blushing, weeping, half terrified girl entwined in her aunt's arms, who was perusing Luisa's handsome features with an intensity of love and griet that spoke eloqueatly for the tenacity of affection she had cherished for the memory of her long since deceased sister .-Pedro had been caught, and was brought in at the same time; and he explained the cause of the absence of Katerina, and conjecturally that of Juan Alvarez, Katerina, habited as Luisa Alvarez had set out about two hours previously for the convent, and Juan Alvarez had followed by the same road about one hour afterwards, accompanied by the Senor de Gousalvo. The two servants Pedro had not seen all day. So perfectly satisfied was the lady that she held her true niece in her arms, that she merely smiled good humoredly when Pedro, whom the sudden apparition of so many fierce looking s Idiers had so terribly scared, blurted out that Katerina-he meant Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo-was cone to be married to Senor Alfonso Manuel!' As it was, however, of the first importance that Juan Alrarez and his confederate should be captured without delay, Lieutenant Davila was ordered off with a party of the lancers for that purpose, accompanied and guided by myself and Pedro; Senora de Calderon, Luisa, the general. and remainder of the troop, setting off forthwith, as evening was fast approaching, on the road to Sevilla. Half an bour's smart trot brought us to a turn in the rout, from which the east hank of the Guadalquiver and the road along it could be seen for a considerable distance. This was the way Katerina was to come ; and we moved on more slowly and cautiously, keeping as much as possi ble within the shadow of the wood on our left. Presently, one of the men who rode with Pedro in advance, remed up, and pointed with his lance to the figures of two men on horseback, partially disclosed through the openings in the trees be hind which they stood, intently watching, it was manifest, the path slong the river from the convent. They were Juan Alvarez and Senor de Gonsalvo ; there could be no doubt about that ; but as they appeared well mounted, the lieutenant, instead of dashing forward into the open space which intervened between us and them. resolved upon the safer plan of making a con siderable circuit, and coming upon them unawares from the rear. This movement occupied perhaps ten miautes; but almost immediately on our coming again in sight of the two horsemen, they started off at a gallop towards the river bank, just about there high, rocky, and steep. We also spurred quickly but quietly on, the soft turf deadening the sound of the horses' hoofs, and permitting us, unfortunately, as it proved, to near them unobserved. We were quickly aware of the motive of this sudden movement. Katerins, habited in the dress-a peculiar one as to make and color-usually worn by Luns, had reached a part of the high rocky bank, within, I judged, about fifty yards of the ordinary landing place, and was waving a handkerchief and making eager gestures river ward, Alvarez and Gonsalvo vehemently shouting to her the while. They had approached within a short distance, when an answering cry was heard from the river, and Katerina, wilb her back to the pursuers, began to descend slowly the bank on the other side .--Another minute or two and she must have been safe in the boat which had arrived so opportunely; and the certainty that she would be so, no doubt, determined Senor Gonsalvo to prevent change of dress and persons on that unher escape by any crime and at all bazards .--Sharply reining up, and snatching a long cavalry Duarphy reining up, and snatching a long cavairy and sneuceu, and yet the mind to brook it pas pustol from his holster, he, with at least the tacit slight necessity for such extreme caution. There Antonio de Gonsalvo was the first interrogated. reading, it would have seemed, from the long- I tiently. So terrible a catastrophe should, one

ling with the fierce execuations of myself and the |-of that Katerina whom it was so easy to see greater part of the soldiers with whom I rode, he loved with such entire and passionate affecturned, panic stricken at the sound, and although which he would be convulsed and torn must rend taken at such disadvantage, made a desperate asunder all disguises, sweep away all deceits, effort to escape. A sergeant and three men were briefly bidden to ascertain the young woman's fate, whom I should have accompanied but for a forbidding gesture of the lieutenant's ; and we started in headlong chase.

At the distance of about four miles from the scene of the frightful tragedy we had so unexpectedly witnessed-for no one who saw the shot had the slightest doubt that the girl was killedwe came up with and captured the two ruffines, who were immediately bound and placed apart. Peremptory orders were given neither to speak to nor answer any questions that might be put by them; and Lieutenact Davilla was about to officials, high and low, of the Sevilla Chancelgive the word advance, when I rather angrily laria. The chief aim manifestly was to obtain intimated, that as there could be no further pretence for detaining me, I must be set at liberty forthwith. This was at once and decisively refused; the general, either from forgetfulness or design, had given no order for my liberation, and I must therefore proceed on to Sevilla, or, at all events, till we overlook the general. " The devil take Sevilla and the general into the bargain !" I burst out in great wrath. But I might have spared my breath : the words, ' Alert !- forward !' were quickly given ; the bugle sounded, and away I was painfully borne with the rest, bitterly lamenting that I had ever permitted myself to be mixed up in so unfortunate, so disastrous an affair.

We reached Sevilla on the third day of that detestable journey, from the eff cts of which I did not thoroughly recover for a fortnight. The Captain General whom we found there was pleased to express a polite regret for the unpleasant duress I had been subject to. excusing it, however, on the plea of necessity; pleasantly adding, that in the interest of justice it was necessary that I should remain for some time longer under the surveillance of Litutenant Davila, who would treat me with every civility and con sideration consistent with not permitting me, on any presence, to communicate, even by letter, with a living soul. This coul insolence was really unbearable, and I flamed away at a great rate till I was out of breath-to all which the sole reply vouchafed was, that the instant the trial of Alvarez and his confederate for the murder of the young woman by the Guadalquiver, for which my evidence was required, had concluded, I should be set at liberty ! The sergeant of lancers and his men-Lieutenant Davila had mformed me, previous to this interview-were arrived, and had reported that the as-assio's bullet had pierced the brain of the unfortunate girl, and that death had consequently been instantaneous. It was not me alone that the high and mighty Captain-General treated in this infamous manner. Senor Manuel - the lieutenant, two or three days subsequently, informed me-having arrived in Sevilla in obedience to the General's summons, bringing with him some letters that were wanted, was arrested the moment he entered the city, and, to his infinite, surprise and indignation, placed in solitary confinement, which he was rendering incessantly vocal by enculations to all the saints in the calendar-San Jago, in particulartouching the astounding treatment to which he, a loyal and wealthy Spaniard, was so incomprebensibly exposed. His expostulations, like my own, were only aughed at, and we both perforce waited for such explanation as time might bring of the extraordinary treatment to which we were condemned. It was not long before I pretty well guessed the motives of all this precautionary rigor. Neither of the prisoners, I heard from the lieutenant, who was tolerably communicative in some respects, had made any revelation beyond a declaration by Alvarez that the fatal shot was fired without his consent, and appealing with wellsimulated pathos to all men who were fathers on the imporsibility of the crime with which he was charged. The examining judge had then been careful to conceal from hum as yet that it was Katerina, not Luisa, he had been accessory to the destruction of, reserving, that, 1 concluded, for a sudden blow at a later and more suitable part of the process; and it was in order, no doubt, that the effect of the announcement, which l very well understood. might elicit an involuntary confession of great importance for the determination of the legal claims of the Senor de Calderon's niece, should not be marred in consequence of its prematurely coming to his knowledge, that I had others likely to speak of the happy afternoon, bad been temporarily secured pointing upwards, that we had spoken the truth eyes dazzle." and silenced; and yet there was, I felt, but as in the presence of God and his saints.

consent of Alvarez, who rode by his side, and was on my mind not the faintest doubt that He answered in substance, that the pistol had drawn agonising groan which accommanied it. might easily have struck his arm up had he so whenever or however the terrible announcement she toppled over the crag into the river, ming- and consenting. In the murder of his own daughter who were by this time close upon them. They iton-the tempest of remorse and agony by however, cunningly contrived ; and that especially the man by whose hand Katerino had actually fallen, would be instantly denounced, and the fraud with regard to Luisa, by which the assassin's family. if not himself, might thereafter profit, would be exposed with vengeful promptpess.

> This, however, was clearly not the opinion of Lady Inez and her counsellors ; and it was soon, moreover, quite plain to me, that the object of the investigation going forward was, but in a very inferior degree, the conviction and punishment of Katerina's murderers, even as regards the judicial proof that Luisa was the legitimate Gonsalvo heiress, and this purpose was, I must say, worked out with equal skill, audacity, and perseverance. They examined me very slightly with respect to the shooting by the Guade louiver but with elaborate minuteness as to the conversations I had with Alvarez relative to the Senor de Gonsalvo, with a view, it seemed, to show the animus of the Confederates. Jose Perez was brought from Madrid for the same purposand denosed to the conversation on the Puerta del Sol, already given.

At last I was informed that most of the pre liminary forms baving been gone through, the trial of the prisoners was about really to com mence, and that myself and and other witnesses would be present to hear our evidence read over, that it might be confirmed in the presence of the accused. I do not know whether this is the ordinary mode of judicial procedure in Spain, and I am the mere inclined to doubt that it is from what subsequently occurred, leading to a suspicion that the chiefs of the Chancellaria had been indured, in order to gratily a lady possessed of great influence at head quarters, to vary some. what the mode of trial. The Hall of Justice at Sevilla is, or was, a large heavily fitted place, impressing one with a solemoity and awe that hardly required to he increased by the grave and imposing costume of the principal officials, and the black velvet hang. ings and other mourning paranhernalia, set up in memory of the late King Ferd nand. There was no public, properly so called, only about twenty or thirty persons beside the witnesses. and all, I observed, admitted by especial favor ; amongst whom Lady Inez de Calderon and the Cantain General were conspicuously placed .-Myself, Jose Perez and Pedro-who whispered hat he also had been imprisoned from the mument of his errival in this mcomprehensible city. who or what for he could not even guess-sat together, and were presently cautioned by a black browed alguazil, who had just before been beckoned to by the presiding judge, not to speak one word except in answer to such questions as he, the president might himself put to us; the said alguazil taking his seat in our midst for the purpose, I presumed, of enforcing, if necessary, the command of which he was the bearer. By and by, my coat collar was seized from behind and shaken violently, a proceeding but confusedly interpreted by the hardly recognisable tones of Senor Manuel's voice-so fear suppressed, yet fierce, angry and indignant were they : " Ha, ha! I say, Senor Inglese, John Brown, Englishman' -these three words comprised my friend's entire stock of English, and were not brought into reanisition except when he was extremely angry and inclined to be impertiment -- you are in the hole yourself, are you ! I am glad of it with all my heart; and, I say, my friend, you may take that account for the journey to Madrid to those who showed you the picture, for, by San Jago _____, 'Silence, silence ! That way, sir !' called out our alguazil friend, at the same time pushing Senor Manuel with some violence in the direction indicated by his staff aimed fist. The poor senor, whose fice was purple with rage and perplexity, did as he was ordered; and I observed him a few minutes after seated, nearly opposite, and every now and then indulging in a pantomimic demonstration, which, except. in its expression of fury and bewilderment, was altogether unintelligible to me. The prisoners were at length brought in separately, and placed at a baize covered 1 ailing, and the questioning process by the president glanced at the lines, shuddered, the naper commenced after the reading of the depositions, dropped from his nerveless grasp to the floor, during which the witnesses stood erect, and once and he said. faintly: 'I know the character. bear; and by more declared, with the right arm raised and It is Ka ----- hers. Read it for me; my all my heart.'

cone off unintentionally; that he had merely that a sword was passing slowly through the willed, levelled a pistol, fired - the explosion, and made to the miserable man, that he had in very meant to frighten the girl; and no one could body of the writhing wretched man, whose head a piteous scream from the unfortunate girl as truth been an accomplice, more or 'ess active more lament the fatal result than he did. " Had had sunk down upon the railing in his front .-it, indeed, been the young person known as Ka- There was another long oppressive nause terlerina, who was reported to be the herress of the minated by the president saying : ' I will remove Gonsalvo property' -----

He was stopped by an exclamation of rage from Senor Manuel, which brought upon that persisted in, you would have met Luisa, as you witness an instant sentence of removal to a distant part of the sala, with the intimation, that if he presumed again to offer the slightest comment to an attendant, ' and confronted with the priupon what was said, he would be immediately sent to prison.

'Had it been.' resumed the prisoner, ' the young person known as Katerina, who, it was asserted, had claims, whether ill or well-founded was another matter, to the Grassivo estates and honors, there might have been some color for the hemous but utterly unfounded crime; but under the actual circumstances, none whatever existed." & meaning smile glanced, as the accused spoke, towards the Lady Inez and the Captain General from the president judge, but no commentary in words followed the coolly audacious statement.

It was soon Juan Alvarez's turn, and after much inconsequent interrogatory, to which be mainly replied - exhibiting all the while an af fectation of intense grief-that whether the pistol was discharged by accident, as he believed, or by design, he, Juan Alvarez, was entirely innocent thereof; his sole purpose in galloping towards his daughter (whose strange position and action, in making signals to somebody on the river, he had, from accidentally passing that way, b-held with astonishment) being to inquire the meaning of such conduct-the real business of the audencia commenced.

'The time is at length arrived, Juan Alvarez and Antonio de Gonsalvo,' said the presiding magistrate with grave solemnity, ' when it was necessary that I should inform you both, that we are aware of a circumstance which entirely destroys the very slight plausibility of your statements. You, Alvarez, attempted to substitute your own child for the one placed in your charge'

+ Ha?

'Ay, now, that is a natural movement and expression. This cheat Antonio de Gonsalvo dis-

any doubt that may yet linger in your mind. If the project mentioned in the letter had not been believed you did, instead of Katerina. Let the former lady be brought in,' he added with a sign soner. Now, Juan Alvarez, look up, and disbelieve if you can the evidence of your own senses.'

As the president's voice ceased, and amidst a breathless stillness, the prisoner's head was gradually raised and directed towards that part of the hall where the swinging of a duor and the shuffing of feet announced the entrance or the new comer. A recewal, but much weaker, of the terrible cry which the first intumation of the truth had wrung from Alvarez, proclaimed his recognition of the supposedly slam Luisa. It was followed by a convulsive but vain effort at articulate speech, and the next moment he had fellen across the railing without sense or motion.

The sitting of the tribunal was immediately uspended and the prisoner removed, and a buzz of excitement pervaded the auditory for perhaps half an hour, when the president resumed his seat, and the murmuring hum of voices subsided once more in o protound silence, to hear a com. munication read by one of the officers who had gone out with the accused. Juan Aivarez, it was formally stated, had volunteered, the instant he was restored to consciousness, to make a full confession upon all matters connected with the present inquiry. Antonio de Gonsalvo had discovered the fraud with respect to Dona Constancia, and a scheme bad finally been matured for the disposal of that young lady, who was to have been taken and kent out of the country by her reputed father. For doing so, Alvarez was to have received a very large reward, with which, he said, he believed the Senor Manuel could have been induced to consent to his son's mar riage with Katerina-a union which he, the deponent, believed to be necessary to her hanniness. The firing of the pistol had been wilful, covered, taxed you with, and finding further de. malevolent, the words used by the Gonsalvo. as ception vain so far as he was concerned, you he drew the trigger, having been : 'She shall not escane h let the consequence be what it may.' 'As to the description of the child's nerson on the parchment, which it could be seen had been written in a separate paragraph, anart from the body of the writing as it were, an alteration had been effected in the following manner by one Pasco, a singularly skillul caligraph. ist, residing at Lagos, in Algarve, Portugal .----He had carefully pumiced out the original words, and written those descriptive of Katerina over them. But he, Pasco, had told deponent that, if the super-writing were carefully removed, and a moderate heat applied to the parchment the orig ginal words would distinctly reappear.? Thus was the substance of the confession ; and it may be as well to state at once, that the experiment suggested was afterwards successfully performed. and Luisa's right to the name of Constanci Isabella de Gonsalvo, and the solid appurten. ances thereto belonging, established beyond auestion. The agitation which followed the reading of Alvarez's confession was of an altogether exultant kind with nearly all the persons present, and it certainly could not be denied that the affair had been cleverly managed; but with one, and more especially poor Pedro, whose grief for the fate of Katerina was bitter and vehement, the feeling was a very different one; so much so, that when the Lady Inez-sweeping triumphantly past, accompanied by her niece, who looked, I was perfectly shocked to see, radiantly, proudly happy-requested me to call on ber the next day, that she might, in some degree, compensate me for the inconvenience to wrich I had been put, the choking emotion of anger I felt would, I am pretty sure, have been expressed in very unwise words, but that the great lady was gone before I could fashion the indignant rebuke which trembled at my heart into articulate utterance. Senor Manuel's morose peevisbness jumped better with my irritated, humor; and hearing that, like myself and others, he was at last released from surveillance, I waited, with weeping, heart broken Pedro, for bim in an antercom, through which he would necessarily pass. Nor had we long to wait ; he came up very quickly, his features still swollen and spotted with angry dismay.

agreed with him to confine Luisa in some remote place, by virtue of your usurped authority of father; or-and this, from what subsequently passed, has a more horrible likelihood - you finally, perhaps reluctantly, consented to a darker ournose⁷----

'Never, never ! I swear by the holy saints !' exclaimed Alvarez, whose features, like those of De Gonsalvo, were changing to the bue of ashes-Never, I swear !'

"Listen, unhappy man. I have another and much more terrible revelation to make; she whom you met, at whose life your confederate in crime levelled his murderous pistol-with your consent, I can hardly doubt - was in very truth your own child, Katerina, who? ---

A wild frenzied cry from Alvarez interrupted the magistrate. But for the flashing eyes, from which lightning had seemed to leap as the president's words tell in thunder upon his brain, one might have thought the wretched man had been suddenly changed to stone, so white, rigid, mo tionless, were his aspect and posture. I glanced towards De Gonsalvo. He also was strongly agitated, but in a much less degree of course, and was wiping his claminy forehead with a bandkerchief. At last he said, after three or four efforts which had died upon his parched and twitching lips: ' It is a trick, Juan-a trick, be assured.' Alvarez heard him, turned slowly round, and fixed his burning eyes for a few moments upon De Gansalvo's face, then closed them. and pressed the palms of his hands forcibly over the lids, as if to calm bimself, and rally his bewildered faculties by the extrusion of exterior objects. 'You know your daughter's writing ?' said the president, after a lengthened and unbroken silence. De Gonsalvo, I should state, had been removed in obedience to a sign from the judge.

The question was repeated three times without eliciting an answer. At last an attendant alguazl shook the prisoner roughly by the arm, and repeated it in a barsh, menacing tone. 'Yesyes.' Alvarez slowly said ; ' I do.'

'Then read this letter, and' convince yourself of the truth of what you have just heard ?

A letter-one from Katerina to Alfonso Manuel, detailing the scheme arranged with Luisa for a change of dresses-was handed across the court, and placed in the accused's hands, He-

"Ha, ba !' he burst out again the instant he caught sight of me-- ' you, Inglese, John Brown, Englishman / you have been shut up, too, I hear ; and by San Jago ! 1 am glad of it, with

You are disposed to be insolent. Senor Ma-His request was complied with. During the nuel, I am not at all in the mind to brook it pas