

mists of dreamland. He was not, therefore, at all surprised to hear from him that so soon as his strength would permit, he had a journey in contemplation.

Two gypsy women were summoned to attend the señora, and the young lady, whom we have followed thus far, found the place more comfortable than she had ever supposed a cave life could be made; but this conclusion probably arose from the painful knowledge that her guardian was faithless, and that he, to whom her dead father had given her hand in infancy, was a villain; and for the present, though she was separated from the friends she had loved during her childhood and youth, she seemed to be quite contented. During the long days which succeeded the adventure on the mountain, she had reflected on her own sad condition, and wondered at the bravery of the noble cavalier, who had saved her life. She knew he had been very ill, and moreover that it was all on her account he now suffered, and so soon as she was allowed to visit his room, she took advantage of it, and accompanied by Vallandano and a gypsy woman, sought that part of the cave which she had not as yet explored.

There might, naturally, have been some timidity in a young lady, separated from those of her own rank by circumstances she could not control, and surrounded only by gypsy attendants whom she had all her life abhorred, seeking the sick couch of a young knight, whom she had never seen, save by the few terrified glances she had cast upon him on that night so nearly fatal to herself. Still he had saved her life, and although she regretted that he had not allowed her to be dashed in pieces with her horse on the rocks below, she felt that she owed him a great debt of gratitude for his bravery, and she longed to express her sincere thanks in words. She was now an entirely defenceless female; her estate had been seized by her oppressors; the country was harrassed by the French; civil dissensions were common in every Province; marauding bands of Carlists were devastating all Spain from Galicia and Asturia to Granada,—from Estremadura to Catalonia; and Antonia saw in herself not only a person lowered from wealth to poverty in a day, but one who was hunted even after she had fallen, and one who, worst of all, was dependent wholly on another who might be, for ought she knew, as unfortunate as herself.

"My brother," said Vallandano, "the Sese damsel would see her unknown friend and protector."

The lady turned her full eyes upon the knight, and bowing gracefully, advanced to the side of the couch and extended her hand. Don Gomez could only press her palm, he could not speak, though he made several ineffectual efforts to do so.

The señora noticed this, and placing her finger to her lip she motioned him not to speak. She then seated herself by his bedside, and although he could see nothing distinctly, he was conscious that a lady with black sparkling eyes and glittering ringlets was near him, gazing at her benefactor, at him! He attempted to speak or even to look at the lady several times, but these efforts were always attended with the painful sound of something rushing to his head; then a weakness stole over him, so great that he could not remember where he

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