

## THE VAQUERO.\*

(From Desprez in Temple Bar.)

Oh, who is so free as a gallant vaquero?  
With his beauty of bronze 'neath his shady sombrero;  
He smiles at his love, and he laughs at his fate,  
For he knows he is lord of a noble estate;  
The prairie's his own, and he mocks at the great,  
"Ho-ho! Hal! Ho-ho!  
Head 'em off! Turn 'em back!  
Keep 'em up to the track!  
Ho-hillo! Ho-hillo!  
Cric-crao!"

Oh, Donna Luisa is proud as she's fair;  
But she parted last night with a lock of her hair,  
And under the stars she roams, seeking for rest,  
While she thinks of the stranger that came from the West;  
And Juan bears something wrapped up in his breast—  
And Donna Luisa—gets over it all!

"Ho-ho! Hal! Ho-ho!  
Head 'em off! Turn 'em back!  
Keep 'em up to the track!  
Ho-hillo! Ho-hillo!  
Cric-crao!"

His proudest possessions are prettily placed,  
His love at his heart and his life at his waist.  
And if in a quarrel he happens to fall,  
Why, the prairie's his grave and his poncho's his pall.  
And Donna Luisa—gets over it all!

"Ho-ho! Hal! Ho-ho!  
Head 'em off! Turn 'em back!  
Keep 'em up to the track!  
Ho-hillo! Ho-hillo!  
Cric-crao!"

The Padre may preach, and the Notary frown,  
But the *poblanos* smile as he rides through the town;  
And the Padre, he knows, likes a kiss on the sly,  
And the Notary oft has a "drop in his eye."  
But all that he does is to love and to die—  
"Ho-ho! Hal! Ho-ho!"

Head 'em off! Turn 'em back!  
Keep 'em up to the track!  
Ho-hillo! Ho-hillo!  
Cric-crao!"

\* A California cattle-driver. Furnished with revolver, lasso and long-lashed whip, these adventurous gentry conduct the half-wild cattle of the plains over miles of their surface, and, with their gay sashes, high boots, gilded and belted spurs and dark, broad hats (*sombreros*), present a very picturesque appearance. (Cloak. Peasant girls.

## BENEATH THE WAVE.

A NOVEL

BY

MISS DORA RUSSELL,

Author of "Footprints in the Snow," "The Miner's Oath," "Annabel's Rival," &c., &c.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

Mr. Hannaway had always been a great man at Massam. During Sir George Hamilton's prolonged absence from England he had had the entire control of the estates, and had managed them with much prudence and discretion. He was a popular man also; a man who was at once just and generous in his business transactions, and who was ever ready to help a neighbour in his hour of need.

The late Lady Hamilton had, however, not liked him. He was too free a liver for her taste, and had moreover too loose ideas of morality to suit the strict, God-fearing woman who spent her quiet days of widowhood almost alone at Massam Park.

But still she did him justice. He was a first-rate man of business, and had no temptations to dishonesty. His father had left him a good fortune, and his professional income was large. He lived, in fact, more like a country gentleman than a lawyer, always riding a good horse, and hunting and shooting regularly. He was a handsome man, too, handsome, jovial, and prosperous, and was a welcome guest at almost every house in the neighbourhood.

He admired the new Lady Hamilton immensely, and used to go about saying so right and left, "She's a lovely creature," he would tell the jovial red-faced farmers, who came to pay their rents at his office, when speaking of their landlord's new wife. "She is a splendid woman," he would say to the sporting squires he met on the hunting field. "Wait until you see Lady Hamilton, she's the greatest beauty I ever saw."

Public curiosity was thus excited about Isabel's appearance before she returned to Massam as a bride. There had always been a sort of mystery about Sir George Hamilton, and people had said things concerning his prolonged absence and its cause, that they would not care to hear repeated now. Mr. Hannaway was supposed to know more of the owner of Massam's private life than he chose to tell. Men sometimes chaffed Hannaway about this, but he was always reticent.

"He's been a lucky fellow," he would say now, on any of these allusions being made. "He's married the handsomest woman by far that I know."

Then the news came that Lu Featherstone was going to marry Mr. Trevor, Lady Hamilton's father's. This created a good deal of gossip and excitement in the neighbourhood also. The Featherstones were known to be in such difficulties, and Sir George Hamilton was known to be so rich, that people began to speculate and wonder if Antony Featherstone would now get out of his troubles.

Antony himself, on the strength of his daughter's engagement, boldly asked Mr. Han-

naway to lend him a thousand pounds. But Mr. Hannaway was wary. He wished to keep on good terms with Antony, on account of his future connection with Lady Hamilton, but he was afraid of losing his money. He, therefore, advanced five hundred pounds to reckless Antony, although he knew that the property was mortgaged to the hall doors. He called, too, and complimented Lucinda so cordially on her engagement after her return home, that Patty declared that she had nearly lost her heart to the good-looking lawyer. Altogether he was on pleasant terms with the Featherstone family, and when Sir George wrote from Paris to announce the day of their proposed return to Massam, Mr. Hannaway rode over to tell the Featherstones.

"Your future lovely step-daughter," he said, smilingly addressing Lucinda, "returns on Thursday. We really ought to get up some sort of demonstration to show our joy."

But another letter that he received from Sir George expressly forbade this. "Don't make any fuss about our return, please, Hannaway," wrote the baronet, "for you know I hate that kind of thing." And thus Mr. Hannaway's ideas of ornamental arches, of addresses from the tenantry, and speeches from Sir George and the beautiful Lady Hamilton, were all nipped in the bud.

He went to the Park, however, to receive the bride and bridegroom, and was waiting on the terrace when they arrived.

"Welcome home, Lady Hamilton," he said, opening the carriage door; "a thousand welcomes."

Isabel answered him with a gracious smile. It was dark, but by the carriage lamps, and the lights from the house, she could see the lawyer's handsome face, and his looks of eager admiration.

"Well, Hannaway?" said Sir George, and he shook his lawyer's hand.

"You snubbed my ideas of welcome so cruelly, Sir George," said Mr. Hannaway, smiling, "that I dared not allow one of the tenants to know the exact time of your return. Would you believe, Lady Hamilton," he continued, addressing Isabel, "that Sir George forbade us to express our feelings of delight and enthusiasm at the idea of your return? He characterized my proposal as 'stuff that he hated!'" And Mr. Hannaway laughed, and showed his white and even teeth.

"Nay, Hannaway, that is an exaggeration," said Sir George.

"At all events I was to do nothing," answered Mr. Hannaway. "In fact I confess I felt afraid even to come to the Park myself—but the temptation was too strong."

Mr. Hannaway dropped his voice as he uttered the last few words, but though Sir George did not hear them, Isabel did. This was what he intended. He wished the new Lady Hamilton to know that he admired her immensely, that he was ready, in fact, to become her devoted slave.

"You will dine with us, of course, Hannaway?" said Sir George, looking back as he was ascending the steps of the terrace, and the lawyer answered that he would be only too glad.

During this meal Isabel exerted herself to please, or rather to fascinate, Mr. Hannaway. She looked wonderfully beautiful, wearing a plain black velvet dress high to the throat, round which she wore a white ruff, her only ornaments being the diamond buttons of her bodice, and a diamond ornament to fasten her ruff.

"And what do you think," she said, smilingly addressing Mr. Hannaway, "of my father's approaching marriage?"

"I think," answered the lawyer discreetly, "that Miss Lucinda Featherstone is a very lucky young lady."

"And a very clever one, I think," said Isabel with a scornful curve of her lip. But Sir George looked at her disapprovingly at these words, and, so for the time she dropped the conversation.

But during the evening (Sir George not being just then present in the room), she resumed it.

"I did not like to say much before Sir George and the servants," she said to Mr. Hannaway, who was obsequious in his attentions to her, "but I am really horribly annoyed. Fancy being connected with Mr. Featherstone!"

"You see no probability of its being broken off, then?" asked the lawyer.

"Not the least," answered Isabel. "They are, I believe, to be married in a fortnight."

"Of course, as a lawyer—I speak, confidentially, Lady Hamilton—but of course, in my position I know of many things that might reasonably influence Mr. Trevor against Mr. Featherstone," said Mr. Hannaway, lowering his voice. "But then an old man in love, you know?" And he laughed.

"A dotard's folly!" said Isabel, angrily. "What do you know against him, Mr. Hannaway? Whatever you tell me, I will not repeat."

"For one thing he asked me the other day to lend him a thousand pounds on the strength of his new connexion," answered Mr. Hannaway, with a smile.

"And did you?" said Isabel eagerly.

"I gave him half the sum he asked for," replied Hannaway. "But this will show you what sort of a man he is."

"I know what he is!" said Isabel, rising indignantly. "Can we do anything to prevent it, Mr. Hannaway? I would give much—oh! how much, if I could!"

"I think, perhaps," began Mr. Hannaway, but just at this moment the door of the small

drawing-room, where they were sitting, opened, and Sir George appeared, and with a slight gesture Isabel motioned the lawyer to be silent.

But she did not let the subject rest. Early on the following morning a special messenger brought to Combe Lodge (where Mr. Hannaway lived) a little note from Isabel. It only contained a few words, but the lawyer's cheeks flushed, and his eyes sparkled as he perused them. In Isabel's clear hand-writing he read as follows:—

"Dear Mr. Hannaway,—Sir George has ridden out this morning. Can you come over at once? I wish to renew the conversation that was interrupted last night about L. F."

"Yours truly,

"I. HAMILTON."

Ten minutes later Mr. Hannaway was on the road. A handsome gentleman he looked on his handsome bay horse as he rode along. He felt full of triumph and pride. What, this lovely woman trusted him, then? She was about to be confidential to him; to talk to him as she would not talk to her husband, and about her father, too!

"But Sir George is so gloomy," reflected the lawyer, with a self-satisfied smile passing over his good-looking face. "No wonder a woman prefers a little more life and vivacity." And again Mr. Hannaway smiled.

Isabel received him very winningly. She told him in her light, coquettish manner that she thought she could trust him; that Sir George (here she shrugged her fine shoulders) was so gloomy and stern, it was impossible to be confidential with him; and then she plainly asked him to tell her the full extent of Mr. Featherstone's shortcomings; adding that it was right that her father should be told of them.

"But how?" asked the lawyer.

"I will write him an anonymous letter," answered Isabel boldly; and so at her bidding Mr. Hannaway told her all that he knew.

Mr. Featherstone was deeply in debt; he had disreputable connections of all sorts; he drank, he swore. There was nothing bad, in fact, that he could do, that he did not apparently do, as still to be out of the clutches of the law; and, half jokingly, half in earnest, Mr. Hannaway certainly described him as not a very desirable gentleman to be connected with.

"I will write to papa, to-day," said Isabel, determinedly.

"But do not post it here," said the lawyer. "Entrust your letter with me, and I will run up to town with it to-morrow."

It was a mad thing for a wife to do, was it not? But Isabel had at times a strange recklessness in her nature that made her defy alike conventionality and consequences. As for Mr. Hannaway he was but too pleased. Before they parted, they had arranged it all. Isabel was to write her letter in a disguised hand to Mr. Trevor, declaring all Mr. Featherstone's enormities, and during the following morning she agreed to meet Mr. Hannaway in the grounds of Massam at an appointed place. She never thought of how she was committing herself in the man's eyes. She only thought "this stupid man is in love with me, and will always be ready to do my will."

She carried out her foolish scheme in full. She wrote a letter to her father (purporting to be from an unknown friend, who was sorry to see a respectable gentleman about to make a fool of himself), and in this letter she abused Mr. Featherstone and his daughters to her heart's content. Mr. Hannaway, to do him justice, even to please Isabel, had said nothing against the girls.

"Poor things, they are to be pitied!" he told her, but Isabel showed them scant pity. She exaggerated in her letter Mr. Hannaway's information, and she cast out imputations that he certainly had not made. Had the lawyer seen her letter, he probably would not have been so eager to post it. As it was, he was delighted with the commission and felt that as a man of gallantry he could not refuse so fair a lady's command.

They met at the appointed place on the following day, and Isabel gave him her letter.

"I am giving you a great deal of trouble," she said, with her sweetest smile.

"You could give me no trouble," answered the lawyer with emphasis, and Isabel smiled again.

He left Massam during the afternoon with a fair vision ever before his eyes. Isabel was so beautiful that she bewitched men, stealing their senses away from them, and making them forget right and honour. Mr. Hannaway never remembered that he was acting dishonestly to Sir George. He only thought that Lady Hamilton had trusted him; that the loveliest woman he knew had condescended to treat him as a friend.

So he went up to town with her letter and posted it, and then returned to his home. He told her what he had done in a few low-spoken words, when Sir George was standing in another part of the room, on the day following his return. Thus a completely confidential understanding took place between them, and Mr. Hannaway felt a proud and happy man to know that it was so.

But the day was not over—the day of his return to Yorkshire, after he had posted Isabel's letter in town—when he was once more called in to her assistance.

Isabel had been out driving during the afternoon, and was sitting in her luxuriantly-furnished dressing-room amusing herself until it

was time to dress for dinner, by turning out the contents of her jewel-box. This was a favourite occupation of hers. She loved the sparkling stones; loved their glitter, and had pleasure also in thinking of their value. One after the other she was now placing her diamond rings on her slender white fingers. This one Sir George had given her, this her father, and so, on. Then she came to the one she had coveted and secured, which had been taken from the poor unknown woman's body that had come ashore at Sanda. She examined this one now with some interest. For one thing they were splendid stones, which composed the hoop that had encircled the dead finger, and clung to it amid the wild waves. Then, for another, the inscription on the inner rim was remarkable—"To my Beloved." A tale of romance and woe seemed to lie in these simple words. Where was the lover now who had caused them to be inscribed, perhaps kissed them in his fond hour of love? His "Beloved" now lay in the little churchyard of Sanda-by-the-Sea; but where was he who had placed the glittering stones on the hand of her who had met so drear a fate?

Isabel was vaguely thinking some such thoughts as these, when her maid, after rapping at the dressing-room door, appeared.

"My lady," she said, "your father, Mr. Trevor, has arrived, and wishes to see you immediately."

For a moment Isabel felt disconcerted, but the next she quickly recovered herself.

"Indeed!" she said. "Show him up here at once. What can he have come for?"

The maid departed to do her bidding, and Isabel at once pulled off the ring which had belonged to the dead woman, and threw it back into the jewel-case, the lid of which she put down. She did not wish her father to see this ring. He had been annoyed by her keeping it to begin with, and before her marriage he had told her that he thought it right that she should return it to his custody, so that if at any time the woman's relations should appear to claim her property, that it might be ready for them.

But Isabel had declined to comply with this very reasonable request.

"It will be time enough to give it up when somebody asks for it," she had said, and nothing that Mr. Trevor could say to her on the subject had any influence over her. So it remained among her rings, though Isabel had never worn it since her marriage, nor previous to it in the presence of Sir George. She was afraid, in fact, that if he noticed it he would wish her to return it to her father, and she had determined that she would not give it up.

So she shut her jewel-box, and a moment after her father entered the room. Her first glance at his face showed her that Mr. Trevor was in a terrible rage. The old man's face was pale, almost grey, and his eyes had a fierce, fixed look, and the hand that he just touched Isabel's with was cold and trembling.

"Papa," she said, "I am so surprised to see you! Have you just come?"

"I have come on most disagreeable business," jerked out the Squire. "Shameful business, I call it!" he added, raising his voice.

"What is the matter?" asked Isabel, coolly.

"Some scoundrel, some male or female wretch!" said the Squire, almost shouting in his rage, "has written me a letter—a letter I received this morning—and I have come to investigate it. I shall not leave a stone unturned to discover the perpetrators of so gross an outrage."

"What is it about?" said Isabel, looking at her irate parent with some inward sense of amusement.

"About? It's about my marriage," roared the Squire. "Here it is." And he tore an open letter from his waistcoat pocket. "It begins," he continued, placing his double gold eye-glasses on his high nose, which, however, was trembling and snorting so with rage that the glasses dropped off. "It begins," he continued, replacing them and going nearer the toilet lights on Isabel's dressing-table, and commencing reading—"Sir,—This is written by one who regrets to see a respectable gentleman like you, who has arrived at such a respectable age.—There!"

shouted the Squire, almost beside himself, "what do you think of that? Respectable age, indeed! Confounded impertinence—age, indeed!"

"Well, papa, aren't you of a respectable age?" said Isabel, unable to resist a smile.

"No impertinence, if you please, Isabel," said the Squire, recovering his dignity. "You may think this is a joke, but I do not. I not only do not think it a joke," he added, "but I intend to punish, and punish severely also, the perpetrators of the outrage. He, or she, or they, have committed themselves," he continued. "A name is mentioned," and the Squire referred to the letter he held in his trembling hand, "the name of Mr. Hannaway, Sir George's law man and agent, and through him I shall trace the offender."

"What does the letter say?" said Isabel, holding out her hand for it.

It was, no doubt, a shameful letter. It went on to say (Isabel coolly read her own words with an unmoved countenance), "it went on, then, after referring to Mr. Trevor's 'respectable' age, to give an exaggerated account of Mr. Featherstone's life and ill-doings. But this was not all. It insinuated that if Mr. Trevor knew all that was to be known about the lives of Patty and Lucinda Featherstone, that he would not be so ready to marry one of them. 'To prove,' it ended in, 'that this letter is written in good faith, the writer received sure information that