

she will find a protector, not in the attendant of Michel le Basque, but in Joachim Montbars!"

"Be it so!" replied the buccaneer, trembling with rage, "but take good heed to yourself, for I will show no mercy to the traitor who breaks his engagements."

"I respect my master," returned Joachim, with a sarcastic smile. "And will not aspire to the honor of a duel; I only wish to render you harmless."

As he spoke, he took from his shoulder one of those coils of cord, similar to a South American lasso, used by the *monteros* to arrest the course of the wild bull. The buccaneer rushed upon him with drawn cutlass, but stepping back a few paces, the youth threw the cord with such address that in a moment Le Basque was enveloped in its strict embrace. It was in vain that he writhed and struggled furiously; ere he well knew what was the matter, he was lying on the ground, completely unable to move.

"You see I do not wish to harm you, Michel!" said Joachim, calmly looking down upon him.

"You might have killed me," cried the buccaneer, grinding his teeth, "rather than have tied me thus like a wild beast. It is a shameful and treacherous action; a Spaniard could not have treated me worse!"

"My master!" replied the young man, "you made a jest of my sufferings—you endeavoured pitilessly to crush my spirit. My vengeance is light, and you have no reason to complain. Adieu!"

"Help! help!" shouted the prisoner with all his strength.

"Let us fly!" said Joachim to Carmen and the monk, who had not yet recovered from their surprise at the singular issue of this encounter; "the cries of the poor fellow will attract the attention of the other hunters, and we shall be pursued. We must haste away."

He picked up the fusil and powder-calahash of the buccaneer, gave one of his hunting knives to Fray Eusebio, and taking the hand of the trembling girl, he led her on in a direction different from that by which they had arrived. For half-an-hour they went steadily on, and were soon out of hearing of the despairing shouts of Michel le Basque. All at once Joachim paused, and striking his forehead, exclaimed,

"What a fatal neglect! I have omitted to untie Curacao and bring him with us."

"But how does this omission augment our danger?" demanded the monk.

"Do you not understand," replied Joachim impatiently, "that they will loose him on our track? and the scent of Curacao has never yet failed him. But come—let us on!"

Donna Carmen, however, sank to the ground, overcome with fatigue, and the three fugitives looked to each other in consternation.

"I can go no further," she said; "leave me—abandon me!"

"Can you not make another effort?" enquired the monk anxiously; but the poor girl mournfully shook her head.

"Let us await the hunters, then!" said Joachim tranquilly, leaning with folded arms against a tree; "they will soon be here."

"You have misunderstood me," said Donna Carmen eagerly. "I will remain here, but do you, Joachim! fly with Fray Eusebio. You alone are guilty. Le Basque will be satisfied in recovering his slave. They will pause here—they will forget you—they will not pursue you—Joachim! you shall yet escape."

"Leave you in their hands!" replied the young man; "What to me is liberty or life, if you are a prisoner, and exposed to the insults of that man? No! I will die ere you again fall in to the hands of the Brethren of the Coast."

They could now distinguish the distant baying of Curacao.

"Poor dog!" exclaimed Montbars, his forehead covered with a cold sweat; "See; Senorita! how he rejoices to rejoin his master."

"If it be so," said the young creole, endeavouring to rise, "I will follow you whilst I can drag one limb after the other."

"Donna Carmen!" said Joachim with hesitation, "I am strong and unwearied. Only permit me to bear you in my arms, and I will answer for it that we shall soon reach the Grand River, where we shall be safe from all pursuit. It is our only chance of safety."

"Carry me, then!" replied Carmen with a blush.

The young man raised her in his arms and bore her along like a sleeping infant, animated, rather than weighed down by his precious burden. The course of our fugitives was now rapid and breathless, for they knew the value of every minute, and the bark of the dogs rang in their ears clearer and more distinct. At times they cast a startled glance behind, believing themselves overtaken by the hunters, for whom they themselves were but opening a path. Once Fray Eusebio, who could only by the greatest efforts traverse the stumps and roots over which Joachim seemed to glide with ease, called to him:

"We have arms—let us face these brigands and die bravely!"

"If we die, we leave Donna Carmen the slave of Michel le Basque," replied the young man, without pausing, and the monk had to resume his toilsome route.