

have been taken for a kind angel sent down to arrest their progress.

Armed in the prevailing style of Mexican equipment, each with a pair of heavy horse pistols, a short sword and dagger, the latter unhappily the most frequently and fatally used, the principal and his two aids found themselves, just as the great clock in the church of St. Mary Magdalene was tolling twelve, beside a little wicket in the inner gardens of the Tobasco palace. The reader will undoubtedly demand how they gained so facile an admittance gate. I know not, nor was the lover prepared for so easy an introduction into those high-walled and triply-barricaded gardens; but the contrabandista produced keys to the various gates as promptly as if he were the authentic porter. A dim taper, burning in a low window in the eastern side of the palace, acquainted them with the apartment occupied by the fair Leonora. No scaling of walls, or wrenching off of rusty bolts, was necessary, however; the lovely girl, enveloped in that wicked disguise, a Spanish cloak, soon made her appearance, and in less than twenty minutes the nuptial party stood at the door of the little church of St Pedro, in the extreme northern verge of the city. "If this is stealing a Spanish lady," thought our hero, "it is by no means so hazardous a business as I had supposed it."

A slight blow at a small side-door, which led to the sacristy, aroused the keeper, who conducted them into the chapel. At the altar stood a venerable man, whose garb bespoke his functions, though it was the immediate observation of the shrewd Scotchman, that his eye was lighted up by a fire, holy or otherwise, as might best suit the beholder to regard it. Viewing the lovers for a moment, with an impatience evidently kept under with difficulty, he said:—

"You are come hither to be joined in the holy bands of matrimony?"

"We have," answered the Caledonian.

"As a priest of the Holy Catholic Church, and as a good member of the Mexican state, I require to be informed of the name, station, family and fortune of the bridegroom. I should be wanting in my duty both to God and my country, if I omitted to ascertain the true character of all, who, under such suspicious circumstances, wish to partake of the holy sacrament of marriage."

"Well," said the youth, "to avoid a long talk, may be to small purpose—I will answer all your questions. I am Robert Boswell, a Scotchman from Lanarkshire, low born, and as poor as a kirk mouse."

"I need not inquire the name of the bride; I know her well," said the priest, dropping his hood. "Wretched girl! The only daughter of the house of Tobasco, going to be married to a beggarly foreigner, in the obscure church of St. Pedro, accompanied by a lying waiting maid and a ragged smuggler."

"Holy mother!" exclaimed the terrified girl, falling upon her knees; "it is my father. Robert, it is my father.—Join me, dear Robert, in my prayers, that he will grant our lives."

"We never do that in Scotland till we have tried the temper of our swords," said the lover resolutely. "And so it seems you are the Count Tobasco.—And who are you? (to the bandellero.) Make me acquainted, at once, with the various disguises assumed to deceive.—I shame the boasted sagacity of my nation—a Scotchman."

"I am my master's valet," answered the bandallero, throwing off his sable appendages of whiskers, eye-brows and moustaches.

"And who are you, traitor?" to Pedro.

"O, I am still Pedro the smuggler," replied he, laughing as unconcernedly as if nothing had happened. "There is not much disguise about me, and I repel with disdain the epithet traitor."

"And now, sir, give me that sword," said the Count, fiercely.