

He was unable, from the stupor into which Vallandano had placed him on the preceding night, to accompany the party himself, and probably had he been quite well, indolence alone would have caused him to give the charge of the men into another's hands. As it was, he saw a company of men, who from their features and forms he felt sure were national—although they were brigands from La Mancha—and from their strange attempt at uniform order, as they filed round the corner of the building, closely scrutinized by a band of royalists, he flattered himself that they were just the men to send on this expedition, and he even was disposed to look upon the whole affair as settled. He caused the keepers of the Pasoda to be imprisoned, and offered a reward of several pounds for the apprehension of Don Gomez, which was the cause of fastening many loyal eyes of Cordova upon his movements so closely, that he felt very uncomfortable, and ultimately caused him to retire to the villa of a friend, where he very impatiently awaited the return from the mountains.

This party of men discovered the dead animal, lying with his head hanging over the precipice; and the wound caused by the cavalier's bullet, informed the hirelings that the lady had received assistance from some one who had probably pursued her. They rolled the animal over the cliff, and to assure them themselves that the *Señorita* had not already shared the same fate, they lowered one of the party by the aid of some ropes, as it was impossible to ascend to the jutting rock from below.

We have seen how this attempt failed,—how it revealed to the descending person the mouth of a cave, and the sight of the gypsy woman,—how he effected a footing, and how it resulted in his own death, and in the loss of the *Caloré*.

The headlong descent of their companion, down the rocky abyss, dragging after him an old woman, whose long locks were white as the Autumnal frosts of our northern clime, was noticed by the band above, and a howl arose from them, as they saw him sink from their view among the rocks beneath.

In a few moments, however, another man was lowered. Don Gomez saw him descend, he might have clubbed him with his carbine, perhaps, as he came down, fearing lest a number be lowered in the same manner, had he been on the spot in time. But as he was not there soon enough to put this in execution, he knew the mastery must be decided either by cunning or by brute strength alone. There were great rocks, which he might easily have rolled down the passage, by simply removing wedges from beneath them—they having been placed there seemingly in view of an emergency of this nature—but he preferred deciding the affair by what he considered to be a more honourable method.

The man, thus lowered, shaded his eyes with his hand for a moment and peered cautiously into the opening, but as all appeared to be darkness within, he took a whistle from his pocket, and applying it to his lips blew a shrill blast, which was answered by loud yells from his companions, far above him. He without doubt saw Don Gomez, and supposing that personage to be alone, he loosed the rope from his body and sent it from the cave, and it was immediately raised again to the land above.