

26 SARITA, THE CARLIST

"Well, otherwise? I tell you again you are a liar and a perjured traitor to the cause."

I raised my fist to strike him in the face, when the two others interposed, thrust me back and away from him with considerable violence, and then covered me with their revolvers.

"No, no; none of that," growled one of them, threateningly. "You've done enough harm already. If what we believe is true, you're not fit for that kind of punishment. We'll deal with you, for the cursed pig you are."

I was not such a fool as to argue against two loaded revolvers levelled dead at my head and held within a yard. But it struck me that Colonel Livenza was not altogether satisfied with the interruption, and that he had some kind of personal interest in the affair which was apart from the motives of his companions.

"Do as you will," I said, after a second's thought. "And do it quickly. The people at the hotel to which I was going know where I have come. I told them; and a messenger will be here shortly from there." I intended this to frighten them; and for the moment it did so. But in the end it acted merely as a warning, and gave them time to concoct a lie with which to get rid of the hotel porter when he arrived.

One of them kept me covered with his pistol while the others talked together and referred to some papers which lay on a table. Then the man who had met me at the station, and whom I judged to be in some way the Colonel's inferior, turned to me with the papers in his hand, and began to question me.

"You admit you are Ferdinand Carbonnell?"

"My name is Ferdinand Carbonnell; I am an