

"Give that kiss to my son," she said. "Tell him that I loved him dearly to the last, and beseech him not to curse my name! Now go, Petris de Cossé!" she added, with a calm smile. "I will give you the signal of departure."

She raised her armed right hand, and held it on high for a few moments, her eyes uplifted, and her lips moving without sound. Her arm fell; the long, keen blade was buried in her bosom, and the erring woman fell at the feet of the buccaneer, breathing with her last sigh the name of "Joachim!"

"Poor, unhappy mother!" murmured Petris de Cossé; "thy last wishes shall be faithfully fulfilled!"

He hastily buried the corpse under a mass of earth and leaves, and then departed on his rash and desperate enterprise.

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I.
SAN FERNANDO.
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THE LEOPARD had taken a bold and decisive resolution. He saw that there was no time to make an appeal to the Brethren of the Coast then at Tortuga, to put himself at their head, and rescue his nephew by force of arms; for the vengeance of the Spaniards was generally as expeditious as it was cruel. He returned to Porto de la Paça, and announced the fate of their companions to the eight or ten buccaneers whom he found there, having been absent at the chase when the expedition against the *caravel* set out. He gave the chief brother among them some secret instructions for M. du Rossey and L'Olonnais, and then departed for San Fernando, resolving to gain admittance to the town, were it even as a prisoner, and determined to restore Joachim to liberty at the cost of his life, or to perish with him.

After a toilsome journey, he reached San Fernando, but was surprised to meet no patrol of *lanceros* near the town, according to their customary caution, nor to see any sentries stationed along the ramparts. The silence around the town was as profound as in the midst of a desert savannah. At length as he passed through one of the gates of the town, called the Giralda, he saw a ragged looking soldier, half asleep under a wooden pent-house near the gate. He advanced almost close to this figure unnoticed; but the soldier suddenly turning round, and catching sight of him, seized the musket that lay beside him, and levelled it at the adventurer, shouting at the same time, with signs of the utmost terror: "A sorcerer! a poisoner!"

The buccaneer marched right onwards, and the sentinel fired, but missed his aim, as might have been anticipated from the manner in which his

whole frame shook. The Leopard seized him by the arm.

"Has fear so troubled your vision," he said, "that you do not recognize the dress and accoutrements of a buccaneer?"

But the soldier, regarding him with a wild, unsteady gaze, still continued to cry: "A sorcerer! a poisoner!"

Almost immediately, the street of the Giralda, whose houses had hitherto seemed so many silent tombs, became animated as if by enchantment. Windows were opened; the balconies were occupied by armed men; the sun's rays were reflected on every side from glistening musket-barrels; and the cry of "A poisoner! a poisoner!" echoed along the street, repeated from window to window like a death-knell. Women and young girls, their hair scattered in dishevelled locks over their shoulders, their drapery hastily thrown around their forms, as if they had been suddenly aroused from their siesta, pointed out the Leopard, with trembling fingers, to the fury of the men; whilst a cry of detestation arose with that accent of implacable fierceness which is given by deep, mysterious and desperate terror.

The buccaneer saw the imminence of his danger without understanding its cause, and, determined not to throw away his life for nothing, he clasped in his arms the paralyzed sentinel, and held him before his breast, a living cuirass. Meantime, the exasperation of the inhabitants seemed rising to its height, and although none of them ventured to cross the threshold of his house, the most furious would undoubtedly have fired at once on the soldier and the buccaneer, when suddenly the echoing sound of a gong was heard from a small cross street that opened upon the Giralda. This sound seemed to strike new terror into the minds of the listeners, and the windows and balconies were deserted almost as quickly as they had been peopled.

Along the narrow street, a waggon slowly advanced, the wheels creaking and groaning under its load, which, as it drew near, was seen to be a hideous mass of livid corpses, partly concealed under a few torn winding-sheets. In front of the vehicle sat three men, entirely clad in yellow, who were emptying, amid shouts of merriment, a large leathern bottle, marked with stains of blood. From time to time they struck the gong which hung on a cross pole behind them, or lashed the two meagre mules that drew the disgusting load along.

A few females still remained at the windows, darting eager glances at the death-waggon, as if to ascertain if it contained amid its lifeless tenants, any dear to their hearts. As the vehicle rolled along the street of the Giralda, some even