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rising. He got hold of the children in some way ; and I'm bound to say, although he was my own brother, it was a most unfortunate thing for them. He died soon afterwards, but not before he had ruined the boy's character. The lad was to have been a priest—the Quesadas were seeing to that—but he broke through all control some years ago, and—well, they tell me there is scarcely a crime forbidden in the Decalogue he hasn't committed. The least of his offences is that he is a Carlist of the Carlists ; he has more than once attempted violence against the Quesada family, and—in fact I don't know what he hasn't done. What I do know is that he has involved his sister, Sarita, in some of his confounded Carlist plottings, and it seems to be a desperate entanglement altogether.”

“ Do the Quesadas know of the relationship, sir ? ”

“ No, no, thank goodness, no. At least I think and hope not. There's only one person in Madrid knows of that ; a Madame Chansette. She is a Quesada, it's true ; but she married against the family's wish. She married a wealthy Frenchman, but is now a widow, and she went back to Madrid some time ago, really to try and take care of Sarita. The family have behaved abominably, I must say ; and from what she tells me there seems to be no doubt that they've appropriated all the children's fortune. Well, Madame Chansette has written several times, and lately has pressed me to go over and consult with her about the children's future. She is afraid there will be some big trouble ; and what you've got to do, Ferdinand, is just to take my place in the affair. I can't go, of course ; and you've got a head on your shoulders if you like to use it : and you can just take a careful look into things and see what had best be done.”