

had brought a surgeon with him, and the party now issued from the tent and took their way through the forest, accompanied by Joachim and Balthasar, who was in waiting outside. Having arrived at a small opening in the wood, about a quarter of a mile off, they halted, and the two combatants were placed opposite to each other, at the distance of forty paces. The Leopard being the challenger, Michel le Basque was entitled to the first fire; if he missed, his adversary might fire when he pleased. Michel took a long and steady aim at the old buccaneer, who stood as calm and motionless as if he were an unconcerned spectator.

"Fire, and have done with it!" he at length cried, somewhat impatiently.

"My reputation as a marksman is at stake. Leopard!" returned his antagonist.

A moment afterwards he fired and Michel uttered a cry of triumph—the Leopard was hit in the right arm. Michel's object was to disable him, and he had succeeded.

"My poor nephew!" was the only exclamation of the wounded chief.

"Follow me, Joachim!" cried Michel, and he strode away, leaving the Leopard to the care of Balthasar and the surgeon.

XXXIV.

THE CHASE.

IRRITATED by this encounter, Michel le Basque forgot the promise of leniency he had made to the Seigneuresse. When he reached his tent, he set Joachim a task of cleaving wood, that would occupy him till the evening, and called to his other attendants to follow him to the chase.

"Senorita! you will accompany us. Joachim! take good heed to the tent."

The young man determined to disobey, and at all hazards to follow the hunters, but he set himself industriously to work, in order to quiet all suspicion. Carmen, accustomed to read his features, saw therein such an expression of satisfaction, that she followed the buccaneer without hesitation. Michel therefore set out, accompanied by Carmen and two attendants, and followed by a number of dogs, amongst which were Curaçoa and Gerondif, the two brachs which had been given by the Leopard to his nephew, and won from him, with his other property, by Michel le Basque.

The buccaneer watched the footsteps of his slave with awkward but eager solicitude, smoothing her pathway, breaking off the branches that hung in front of her, but all this time speaking not a word, absorbed, as it seemed, in his own reflections. At one time, Carmen having fallen

rather behind, he snail in a tone of unaccustomed gentleness:

"You are fatigued, Senorita?"

"I have no right to be fatigued," she replied, with a bitter smile; "lead on! the slave must follow the master."

She endeavoured to proceed, but her little feet tottered under her.

"I am, indeed, cruel," murmured Le Basque. "Only speak one kind word to me, Senorita! Do you wish to rest here? You have only to say it."

"Master, I am ready to proceed!" coldly answered Donna Carmen.

"Still that inflexible Spanish pride!" exclaimed Michel; "she would rather die than ask me a favour. It matters not—I will remember my promise to the Seigneuresse, and be more generous than she deserves. Go on?" he said to the attendants. "I will keep Curaçoa and two other dogs to lead me on your track."

Carmen endeavoured to proceed, but was ordered by Michel to rest herself at the foot of an orange tree, and the attendants, with their train of dogs, soon disappeared amid the depths of the forest. Poor Carmen was quite exhausted by her unusual toil, as well as by the heat of the day. No whistle was heard from the mocking birds; no monkey swung from the pendant branches; all, at that hour, were asleep in their hammocks of interlaced vines. A few burning arrows of golden light alone pierced through the verdant screen above, around; but, despite this shade, the atmosphere was hot and oppressive. The heart of Carmen was depressed and sad, as if she had been enclosed within the walls of some gigantic prison, and she hid her face in her hands as she encountered the fiery eyes of Michel le Basque bent upon her.

"I cause nothing but fear in your breast, Senorita!" he said, sorrowfully. "How can you thus hate him who would willingly give his life for you?"

At this moment Curaçoa darted off through the thicket, but in a few moments his baying was again heard close at hand, and he returned to the feet of his master, while a crackling of branches among the underwood announced the approach of some large animal, which held its course straight for where they were now stationed.

"It is a wild boar at its speed!" cried Michel, rushing hastily forward to meet it.

Scarcely had he done so when an enormous boar broke into the open space. It was immediately attacked by the dogs, but two of them were almost at once stretched lifeless, while Curaçoa was driven back, howling, before his formidable and foam-covered jaws. The boar glared