

accompanied with that low groan, which was rendered more awful and ghost-like by the painful stillness of the midnight hour. For some time they remained motionless, without the power to speak; but as it did not approach nor again frighten them by a repetition, the man said in a cracked voice, which betrayed by its loud rattle the fright and stupor he evidently laboured under,

"That was *human*, mother, if ever I heard a voice." A pale blue light, at this juncture, described a circle upon the floor, disclosing a white figure, seemingly in the very air, hovering through the distant part of the room. All doubts were silenced by this spectacle. He had seen a ghost, he had heard a ghostly groan, he had seen a ghostly light; and with a bound he was in the centre of the room, hastening toward the open door, with his wife close upon his heels.

"I am the ghost of thy departed father; I rested sadly in my grave, and now come to disclose to you, my child, the place of my hidden gold! Advance to me, and let me but touch your keys, and my gold, by such magic, may be brought here to you, on this night—here to this very house!"

With a trembling step, the hostess, accompanied by her husband, approached the spectre. She mustered sufficient courage to hold her keys at arm's length towards the apparition, which were rudely snatched from her, instead of being merely touched. A fierce flame, blue and dreadful now lighted the room for several seconds. There was a figure clothed in white—its ashen face, and long hoary locks matted in gore, and its piercing eyes, set back and sunken in their ghastly sockets,—proved too much for them. Madam Diachilo seized her rosary and repeated prayers until morning, whilst her husband, half dead with fright, fell headlong near her.

Could she have possessed sufficient courage to have followed the apparition to the street door, she might have heard a low laugh as the door opened, and have seen that her midnight visitor was not supernatural, but real flesh and blood—as several linen articles were removed from the chest, and as his ghostship hurried swiftly away, she might have discerned the dark form of Vallandano, the gypsy. But she was too much frightened for anything of this kind, and she consequently found when awakened by Don Nunez on the next morning, from her long devotion, that she had not only lost her keys, but that the German gentleman was gone, that her boarders were robbed during the preceding night, but what was worst of all, she was accused as being an accomplice of the outlaws.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ATTACK.

"Caramba, the villains are trying to find us out! No, put away your carbine; it is useless here, and would only reveal our hiding place. Follow me, and I will tell you all that can be done."

The door or entrance through which Gomez de Manchez had entered the cave was the simplest mode of ingress or egress of any opening about the whole cave. It was consequently the weakest, and required protection either by stratagem or