

was thrown aside, and disclosed a heavily armed person, instead of the inoffensive German, with whom they supposed they were dealing.

The Spaniards exchanged quick glances; Don Nunez turned pale, and señor Olibanzo permitted his weapon to return to its sheath. What the termination of this meeting might have been is difficult to conjecture, had not the German turned quietly upon his heel, and followed the hostess across the apartment or corridor toward the adjoining room, with an air of *nonchalance* that would have astonished an amateur, leaving the surprised followers of Don Carlos, wondering at the strange character who had so mysteriously intruded upon their privacy.

II.

"Did you ever see such a splendid apartment, señor, in all your days? The great Don Carlos slept in this very room not three weeks since—a fine gentleman is Don Carlos, señor!"

"I sincerely hope you have thoroughly cleansed the whole apartment!" came to the lip of the strange man, but recollecting the power of the hostess he only said:

"The great Don Carlos! I am, indeed, fortunate!"

As she retired from the room, he heard her mutter to herself: "Ave Maria, but the cavalier is overjoyed; so, I will charge him double for the delight of sleeping on the couch once occupied by Don Carlos."

III.

"Yes, señor Olibanzo, thanks to gold and good management, the affair is all settled. I have sent a host of men to the mountain to search for the señorita, and they, of course, will find her, be she dead or not."

"I must say, señor, that this is altogether an ugly business! I don't like it from some cause!"

"By the great Abdel, I never suspected you of possessing a chicken's heart, I look upon you as a sort of mental Hercules, and I am sure this is only a mad freak, come fill your glass, señor; I am sure it will pass away." Olibanzo stroked his beard for a few moments thoughtfully. He was the possessor of small black eyes, which sparkled incessantly with a malicious light, when excited; and his appearance would, I think, at that time, have suggested to the physiognomist, that he was not the person to be entrusted with anything in which such a question as honor or honesty was involved.

They conversed for some time in a low tone, but as the deep breathing of the German told them they were free from observation or from listening ears on his part, they threw off their reserve, and were soon retailing for mutual edification, important news relative to state movements and resolutions, whose success depended chiefly upon secrecy for the present, as their spirits were stimulated by the immoderate use of French and Spanish wines. Olibanzo was comparatively sober,

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