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expression—a powerful face, indeed, except for a weak, sensual, and rather brutish mouth, but a very awkward antagonist, no doubt, in any kind of scrimmage. One of the others was he who had met me at the station, and the third was of a very different class; and I thought that if his character paired with his looks, I would rather have him in my pay than among my enemies.

“So you are Ferdinand Carbonnell?” cried the Colonel, after staring at me truculently, and with a gaze that seemed to me to be inspired by deep passion. The note in his voice, too, was distinctly contemptuous. What could have moved him to this passion I could not, of course, for the life of me even guess.

“Yes, I am Ferdinand Carbonnell, and shall be glad to understand the reason of this most extraordinary reception, and of the far more extraordinary blunder which must be at the bottom of it.”

“You carry things with a high hand—but that won’t serve you. We have brought you here to-night—trapped you here if you prefer it—to make you explain, if you can, your treachery to the Carlist cause, and if you cannot explain it, to take the consequences.”

The gross absurdity of the whole thing struck me so forcibly at that moment, and his exaggerated and melodramatic rant was so ridiculously out of proportion that I laughed as I answered—

“Really this is farce, not tragedy, senor. I have never seen you before; I know nothing of you or your affairs; I am not a Carlist, and never have been; I am not a Spaniard, but an Englishman; I have just come from London; and I assure you, on my honour as an Englishman, that you are labouring under a complete