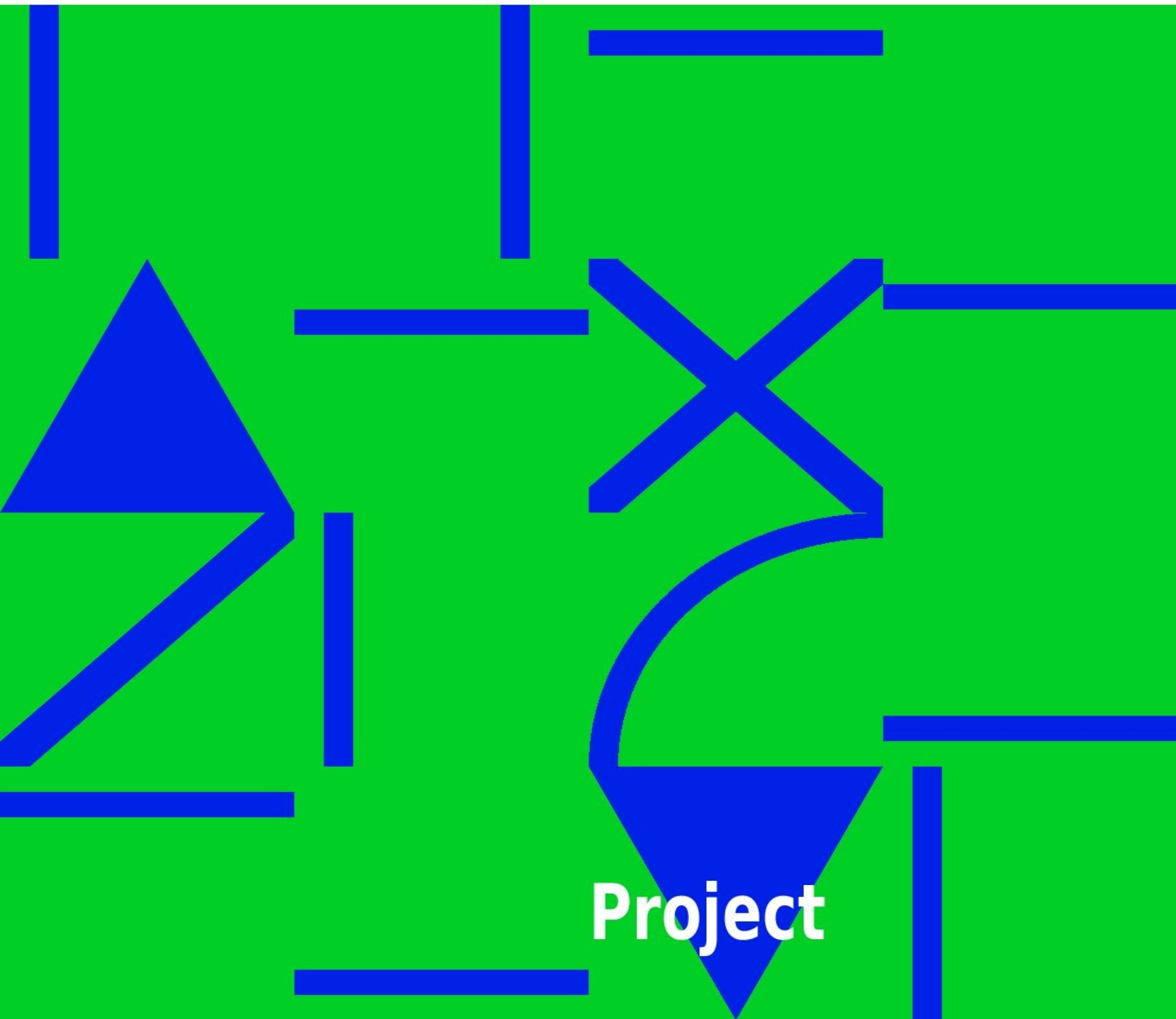


The Adventurers

Gustave Aimard



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THE ADVENTURERS

A Story of a Love-Chase

BY

GUSTAVE AIMARD

AUTHOR OF

"LAST OF THE INCAS," "QUEEN OF THE SAVANNAH,"

ETC.

LONDON

WARD AND LOCK, 158, FLEET STREET.

1863.

PREFACE.

With the publication of the present and the ensuing volume, "The Pearl of the Andes," I am enabled to perfect the most important series of Aimard's Tales of Indian Life and Adventure. To preserve uniformity, the volumes of this series should be arranged in the following order on the book-shelf;—

1. THE ADVENTURERS.
2. THE PEARL OF THE ANDES.
3. THE TRAIL-HUNTER.
4. PIRATES OF THE PRAIRIES.
5. THE TRAPPER'S BRIDE.
6. THE TIGER SLAYER.
7. THE GOLD SEEKERS.
8. THE INDIAN CHIEF.
9. THE RED TRACK.

Gustave Aimard has a precedent in Fenimore Cooper for introducing the same hero in a long range of volumes, and, like his great predecessor, he has so arranged, that each work should be complete in itself, and not necessitate the

purchase of another. But Aimard has one marked advantage over Cooper; for while "Leather-Stocking" is but a creation of the fancy, or, at the most, the type of the Backwoodsman, the Count Louis who figures as the hero of Aimard's series, is a real man. Count de Raousset Boulbon, had he succeeded in his daring attempt of founding an independent kingdom in Mexico, would in all probability have become the Napoleon of the West. A gallant adventurer and thorough gentleman, he staked his life upon the issue, and ended his career the victim of unparalleled treachery, as Aimard has faithfully recorded. Hence Aimard's romances have the great merit of being founded on an historic basis, and but little fiction was required to heighten the startling interest of the narrative.

Valentine Guillois, there is very little doubt, is intended for the Author himself, with all his qualities and defects. When he first reached the New World, he was the true, reckless Parisian; but constant intercourse with nature rendered him a generous and thoughtful friend of humanity. So soon as he returned to civilization, he began recording the history of his past life; not so much as a livelihood, as for the pleasure he felt in living once again the life of excitement and adventure which he had known among the Indians. Hence his books are written without an effort; they flow spontaneously from his pen; and the absence of artistic effect is the best guarantee of their truthfulness.

It is not surprising, consequently, that M. Aimard's books have met with such extensive popularity. They have been translated into nearly every modern language, and the Author is now generally recognised as the French Cooper. The reception given to his stories in this country has been most flattering, and each day heightens their popularity. Hence it is not too much to assume that they will become standard works, especially with young readers, for whom they are especially adapted; because M. Aimard has never yet written a line which could prove offensive to the most delicate mind.

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CONTENTS.

- I. THE CHAPARRAL
- II. THE FOSTER BROTHERS
- III. THE RESOLUTION

IV. THE EXECUTION
V. THE PASSAGE
VI. THE LINDA
VII. HUSBAND AND WIFE
VIII. THE DARK-HEARTS
IX. IN THE STREET
X. SWORD-THRUSTS
XI. GENERAL BUSTAMENTE
XII. THE SPY
XIII. LOVE
XIV. THE QUINTA VERDE
XV. THE DEPARTURE
XVI. THE MEETING
XVII. THE PUELCHES
XVIII. THE BLACK JACKAL
XIX. TWO OLD FRIENDS
XX. THE SORCERER
XXI. THE OBSEQUIES OF AN APO-ULMEN
XXII. EXPLANATIONS
XXIII. THE CHINGANA
XXIV. THE TWO ULMENS
XXV. THE SUN-TIGER
XXVI. THE MATRICIDE
XXVII. THE JUSTICE OF THE DARK-HEARTS
XXVIII. THE TREATY OF PEACE
XXIX. THE ABDUCTION
XXX. THE PROTEST
XXXI. SPANIARD AND INDIAN
XXXII. IN THE MOUNTAIN
XXXIII. ON THE WATCH
XXXIV. FACE TO FACE
XXXV. THE REVOLT
XXXVI. THE LION AT BAY

- XXXVII. THE TRUCE
XXXVIII. TWO ROGUISH PROFILES
XXXIX. THE WOUNDED MAN
XL. ARAUCANIAN DIPLOMACY
XLI. THE COUNCIL
XLII. THE NIGHT JOURNEY
XLIII. TWO HATREDS
XLIV. THE RETURN TO VALDIVIA
XLV. THE FATHER REVEALS HIMSELF
XLVI. CURUMILLA
-

CHAPTER I.

THE CHAPARRAL.

During my last sojourn in America, chance, or rather my good star, led me to form an acquaintance with one of those hunters, or wood rangers, the type of whom has been immortalized by Cooper, in his poetical personage, *Leather-Stockings*.

The strange circumstance by which we were brought together was as follows. Towards the end of July, 1855, I had left Galveston, terrified at the fevers prevalent there, which are so fatal to Europeans, with the intention of visiting the north-west portion of Texas, a country I was then unacquainted with.

A Spanish proverb somewhere says, "It is better to go alone than in bad company;" and, like all other proverbs, this possesses a certain foundation of truth, particularly in America, where the traveller is exposed at each instant to the chance of meeting rogues of every hue, who, thanks to their seducing exterior, charm him, win his confidence, and take advantage of the first occasion to remorselessly plunder and assassinate him.

I had profited by the proverb, and, like a shrewd old traveller of the prairies, as I knew no one who inspired me with sufficient sympathy to lead me to make him my travelling companion, I had bravely set out alone, clothed in the picturesque dress of the inhabitants of the country, armed to the teeth, and mounted upon an

excellent half wild horse, which had cost me twenty-five piastres—an enormous sum in those countries, where horses are considered as worth little or nothing.

I carelessly wandered here and there, living that nomadic life which is so full of attractions; at times stopping at a *toldería*, at others encamping in the desert, hunting wild animals, and plunging deeper and deeper into unknown regions. I had, in this fashion, passed through, without any untoward accident, Fredericksburgh, the Llana Braunfels, and had just left Castroville, on my way to Quichi. Like all Spanish-American villages, Castroville is nothing but a miserable agglomeration of ruined cabins, cut at right angles by streets choked with weeds, growing undisturbed, and concealing multitudes of ants, reptiles, and even rabbits of a very small breed, which spring up beneath the feet of the few passengers. The *pueblo* is bounded on the west by the Medina, a slender thread of water, almost dry in the great heat seasons; and on the east by thickly-wooded hills, the dark green of which forms a pleasing contrast with the pale blue of the sky.

At Galveston I had undertaken to deliver a letter to an inhabitant of Castroville. The worthy man lived in this village like La Fontaine's rat in the depths of its Dutch cheese. Charmed by the arrival of a stranger, who, no doubt, brought him news for which he had been long anxious, he received me in the most cordial manner, and thought of every expedient to detain me. Unfortunately, the little I had seen of Castroville had sufficed to completely disgust me with it, and my only wish was to get out of it as quickly as possible. My host, in despair at seeing all his advances repulsed, at length consented to allow me to continue my journey.

"Adieu, then," he said, warmly pressing my hand, with a sigh of regret; "since you are determined to go, may God protect you! You are wrong in setting out so late; the road you have to travel is dangerous; the *Indios bravos* are up; they assassinate without mercy all the whites who fall into their hands—beware!"

I smiled at this warning, which I took for a last effort of the worthy man to detain me.

"Bah!" I replied gaily; "the Indians and I are too old acquaintances for me to fear anything on their account."

My host shook his head sorrowfully, and retreated into his hut, making me a last farewell greeting. I again set forward. I soon began to reflect that it was full late, and pressed my horse, in order to pass, before nightfall, a *chaparral*, or large thicket of underwood, of at least two miles in length, against which my host had

particularly warned me. This ill-famed spot had a very sinister aspect. The mezquite, the acacia, and the cactus constituted its sole vegetation, while here and there, whitened bones and planted crosses plainly designated places where murders had been committed. Beyond that extended a vast plain, called the Leona, peopled by animals of every description. This plain, covered by grass at least two feet in height, was dotted at intervals with thickets of trees, upon which warbled thousands of golden-throated starlings, cardinals, and bluebirds. I was anxious to reach the Leona, which I saw in the distance; but ere I did so, I had to cross the chaparral. After examining my weapons, and looking carefully in all directions, as I could perceive nothing positively suspicious, I resolutely spurred my horse forward, determined, if attacked, to sell my life as dearly as possible.

The sun, in the meantime, was sinking rapidly towards the horizon, the ruddy hues of closing day tinged with their changing reflections the summits of the wooded hills, and a fresh breeze agitated the branches of the trees with mysterious murmurs. In this country, where there is no twilight, night was not long in enveloping me in thick darkness, and that before I had passed through two-thirds of the chaparral.

I was beginning to hope I should reach the Leona safe and sound, when, all at once, my horse made a violent bound on one side, pricking up its ears, and snorting loudly. The sudden shock almost threw me out of the saddle, and it was not without trouble that I recovered the mastery over my horse, which displayed signs of the greatest terror. As always happens in such cases, I instinctively looked round me for the cause of this panic; and soon the truth was revealed to me. A cold perspiration bedewed my brow, and a shudder of terror ran through my whole frame, at the horrible spectacle which met my eyes. Five dead human bodies lay stretched beneath the trees, within ten paces of me. Among them was one of a woman, and one of a girl about fourteen years of age. They all belonged to the white race. They appeared to have fought long and obstinately before they fell; they were literally covered with wounds; and long arrows, with jagged barbs, and painted red, stood out from the bodies, which they had pierced through and through. The victims had all been scalped. It was evidently the work of Indians, marked with their sanguinary rage, and their inveterate hatred for the white race. The form and colour of the arrows told me that the perpetrators of this atrocity were the Apaches, the most cruel plunderers of the desert. Around the bodies I observed fragments of both wagons and furniture. The unfortunate beings, assassinated with refined cruelty, had, no doubt, been poor emigrants on their way to Castroville.

At the aspect of this heartbreaking spectacle, I cannot express the pity and grief which weighed upon my spirits; high in the air, urubus and vultures hovered with lazy wings over the bodies, uttering lugubrious cries of joy, whilst in the depths of the chaparral the wolves and jaguars began to growl portentously.

I cast a melancholy glance around: all immediately near to me was quiet. The Apaches had, according to all appearances, surprised the emigrants during a halt. Gutted bales were still ranged in a symmetrical circle, and a fire, near which was a heap of dry wood, was not yet extinguished.

"No!" said I to myself, "whatever may happen, I will not leave Christians without burial, to become, in this desert, the prey of wild beasts."

My resolution, once formed, was soon carried into execution. Springing to the ground, I hobbled my horse, gave it some provender, and cast some branches of wood upon the fire, which soon sparkled and sent into the air a column of bright flame. Among the necessities of the emigrants were spades, pickaxes, and other agricultural instruments, which, being of no use to the Indians, they had disdainfully left behind them. I seized a spade, and, after having carefully explored the environs of my encampment, to assure myself that no immediate danger need be apprehended, I set to work to dig a grave.

The night had now set in; one of those American nights, clear, silent, full of intoxicating odours, and mysterious melodies chanted by the desert in praise of God. Extraordinary to say, all my fears had vanished, as if by enchantment! Though alone in this sinister place, close to these frightfully-mutilated carcasses, watched in the darkness, no doubt, by the unseen eyes of wild beasts, and, perhaps, of the murderous Indians, some incomprehensible influence sustained me, and gave me strength to accomplish the rude but sacred task I had undertaken. Instead of thinking of the dangers which surrounded me, I found myself yielding to a pensive melancholy. I thought of these poor people, who had come from distant lands, full of hope for the future, to seek in the New World a little of the comfort and well-being which were denied to them at home, and who, scarcely landed, had fallen, in an obscure corner of the desert, by the hands of ferocious savages. They had left in their own country friends, perhaps relations, to whom their fate would for ever remain a mystery, and who would for years reckon the hours with anxiety, looking for their much-wished return, or for intelligence of their success in their bold undertaking.

Except two or three alarms caused by the rustling of the leaves in the bushes, nothing occurred to interrupt my melancholy duty. In less than three-quarters of

an hour I had dug a grave large enough to contain the five bodies. After extracting the arrows by which they were transfixed, I raised them one after the other in my arms, and laid them gently side by side at the bottom of the grave. I then hastened to throw in the mould again, till it was level with the sod; and that being done, I dragged upon the surface all the large stones I could find, to keep wild beasts from profaning the dead. This religious duty accomplished, I breathed a deep sigh of satisfaction, and bowing my head towards the ground, I mentally addressed a short prayer to the Almighty, for the unfortunate beings I had buried.

Upon raising my head, I uttered a cry of surprise and terror, while at the same time mechanically feeling for my revolver; for, without the least noise having given me warning of his approach, a man was standing within four paces of me, watching me earnestly, and leaning on his long rifle. Two magnificent Newfoundland dogs were lying carelessly but quietly at his feet. On observing my gesture, the unknown smiled with a kindly expression, and holding out his hand to me over the grave, said—

"Fear nothing! I am a friend. You have buried these poor people; *I* have avenged them—their assassins are dead!"

I silently pressed the hand that was so frankly extended to me. Acquaintance was formed—we were friends—we are so still! A few minutes later we were seated near the fire, supping together with a good appetite, while the dogs kept watch against intruders.

The companion I had fallen in with in so curious a manner was a man of about forty-five years of age, although he did not appear to be more than thirty-two. He was tall and well made; his broad shoulders and muscular limbs denoting extraordinary strength and agility. He wore the picturesque hunter's costume in all its purity, that is to say, the *capote*, or surtout (which is nothing but a kind of blanket worn as a robe, fastened to the shoulders, and falling in long folds behind), a shirt of striped cotton, large *mitasses* (drawers of doeskin, stitched with hair, fastened at distances, and ornamented with little bells), leather gaiters, moccasins of elk skin, braided with beads and porcupine quills, and a checked woollen belt, from which hung his knife, tobacco pouch, powder horn, pistols, and medicine bag. His headdress consisted of a cap made of the skin of a beaver, the tail of which fell between his shoulders. This man was a type of a hardy race of adventurers who traverse America in all directions. A primitive race, longing for open air, space, and liberty, opposed to our ideas of civilization, and consequently destined to disappear before the immigration of the laborious

races, whose powerful agents of conquest are steam and the application of mechanical inventions of all kinds.

This hunter was a Frenchman, and his frank, manly countenance, his picturesque language, his open and engaging manners, notwithstanding his long abode in America, had preserved a reflex of the mother country which awakened sympathy and created interest.

All the countries of the New World were familiar to him; he had lived more than twenty years in the depths of the woods, and had been engaged in dangerous and distant excursions among the Indian tribes. Hence, although myself well initiated in the customs of the redskins, and though a great part of my existence had been passed in the desert, I have felt myself often shudder involuntarily at the recital of his adventures. When seated beside him on the banks of the Rio Gila, during an excursion we had undertaken into the prairies, he would at times allow himself to be carried away by his remembrances, and relate to me, as he smoked his Indian pipe, the strange history of the early days of his abode in the New World. It is one of these recitals I am about to lay before my readers—the first in order of date, since it is the history of the events which led him to become a wood ranger. I do not venture to hope that my readers will take the interest in it which it excited in me; but I beg them to have the kindness to recollect that this narrative was told me in the desert, amidst that grand, vast, and powerful nature, unknown to the inhabitants of old Europe, and that I had it from the lips of the man who had been the hero.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOSTER BROTHERS.

On the 31st of December, 1834, at eleven o'clock in the evening, a man of about twenty-five years of age, of handsome person and countenance, and aristocratic appearance, was sitting, or rather reclining, in a luxurious easy chair, near the mantelpiece, within which sparkled a fire that the advanced season rendered indispensable. This personage was the Count Maxime Edouard Louis de Prébois-Crancé. His countenance, of a cadaverous paleness, formed a striking contrast with his black curly hair, which fell in disorder upon his shoulders, covered by a large-patterned damask dressing gown. His brows were contracted,

and his eyes were fixed with feverish impatience upon the dial of a charming Louis Quinze clock, whilst his left hand, hanging carelessly by his side, played with the silky ears of a magnificent Newfoundland dog which lay by his side. The room in which the Count was sitting was furnished with all the refinement of comfort invented by modern luxury. A four-branched chandelier, with rose-coloured wax candles, placed upon a table, was scarcely sufficient to enliven the room, and only spread around a dim, uncertain light. Without, the rain was dashing against the windows violently; and the wind sighed in mysterious murmurs, which disposed the mind to melancholy. When the clock struck the hour the Count started up, as if aroused from a dream. He passed his thin white hand across his moist brow, and said, in a dissatisfied tone—

"He will not come!"

But at that moment the dog, which had been so motionless, sprang up and bounded towards the door, wagging its tail with joy. The door opened, the *portière* was lifted by a firm hand, and a man appeared.

"Here you are at last!" the Count exclaimed, advancing towards the newcomer, who had great trouble to get rid of the caresses of the dog. "I had begun to be afraid that you, like the rest, had forgotten me."

"I do not understand you, brother, but trust you will explain yourself," the other replied. "Come, that will do, Cæsar; lie down! you are a very good dog, but lie down!"

And drawing an easy chair towards the fire, he sat down at the other side of the fire, in front of the Count, who had resumed his place. The dog lay down between them.

The personage so anxiously expected by the Count formed a strange contrast with him; for, just as M. de Prébois-Crancé united in himself all the qualities which physically distinguish nobility of race, the other displayed all the lively, energetic strength of a true child of the people. He was a man of twenty-six years of age; tall, thin, and perfectly well proportioned; while his face, bronzed by the sun, and his marked features, lit up by blue eyes sparkling with intelligence, wore an expression of bravery, mildness, and loyalty of character that created sympathy at first sight. He was dressed in the elegant uniform of a quartermaster sergeant of the Spahis, and the cross of the legion of honour glittered on his breast. With his head leaning on his right hand, a pensive brow and a thoughtful eye, he examined his friend attentively, whilst twisting his long, silky light-coloured moustache with the other hand.

The Count, shrinking before his earnest look, which appeared trying to read his most secret thoughts, broke the silence abruptly.

"You have been a long time in responding to my message," he said.

"This is the second time you have addressed that reproach to me, Louis," the soldier replied, taking a paper from his breast; "you forget the terms of the note which your groom brought yesterday to my quarters."

And he was preparing to read.

"It is useless to read it," said the Count, with a melancholy smile. "I acknowledge I am in the wrong."

"Well, then, let us see," said the Spahi gaily, "what this serious affair is which makes you stand in need of me. Explain: is there a woman to be carried off?—Have you a duel on hand?—Tell me."

"Nothing that you can possibly imagine," the Count interrupted him bitterly; "therefore do not waste time in useless surmises."

"What the devil is it, then?"

"I am going to blow out my brains."

The young man uttered these words with so firm and resolute an accent, that the soldier started in spite of himself, and bent an anxious glance upon the speaker.

"You believe me mad, do you not?" the Count continued, who guessed his friend's thoughts. "No, I am not mad, Valentine; I am only at the bottom of an abyss from which I can only escape by death or infamy, and I prefer death."

The soldier made no reply. With an energetic gesture he pushed back his chair, and began to walk about the room with hurried steps. The Count had allowed his head to sink upon his breast in a state of perfect prostration of mind. After a long silence, during which the fury of the storm without increased, Valentine resumed his seat.

"A very strong reason must have obliged you to take such a determination," he said coolly; "I will not endeavour to combat it; but I command you, by our friendship, to tell me fully what has led you to form it. I am your foster brother, Louis; we have grown up together; our ideas have been too long in common, our friendship is too strong and too fervent for you to refuse to satisfy me."

"To what purpose?" cried the Count, impatiently; "my sorrows are of a nature which none but he who experiences them can comprehend."

"A bad pretext, brother," replied the soldier, in a rough tone; "the sorrows we dare not avow are of a kind that make us blush."

"Valentine," said the Count, with a flashing eye, "it is ill judged to speak so."

"On the contrary, it is quite right," replied the young man, warmly. "I love you, I owe you the truth; why should I deceive you? No, you know my frankness; therefore do not hope that I shall listen to you with my eyes shut. If you want to be flattered in your last moments, why send for me? Is it to applaud your death? If so, brother, farewell! I will retire, for I have nothing to do here. You great gentlemen, who have only known the trouble of coming into the world, know nothing of life but its joys; at the first roseleaf which chance happens to ruffle in your bed of happiness, you think yourselves lost, and appeal to that greatest of all cowardices, suicide."

"Valentine!" the Count cried angrily.

"Yes," continued the young man, with increased energy, "I repeat, that supreme cowardice! Man is no more at liberty to quit life when he fancies he is tired of it, than the soldier is to quit his post when he comes face to face with his country's enemy. Your sorrows, indeed! I know well what they are."

"You know?" demanded the Count with astonishment.

"All—listen to me; and when I have told you my thoughts, why, kill yourself if you like. Pardieu! do you think when I came here I did not know why you summoned me? A gladiator, far too weak to fight the good fight, you have cast yourself defencelessly among the wild beasts of this terrible arena called Paris—and you have fallen, as was sure to be the case. But remember, the death you contemplate will complete your dishonour in the eyes of all, instead of reinstating you or surrounding you with the halo of false glory you are ambitious of."

"Valentine! Valentine!" cried the Count, striking the table forcibly with his clenched hand, "what gives you a right to speak to me thus?"

"My friendship," the soldier replied, energetically, "and the position you have yourself placed me in by sending for me. Two causes reduce you to despair. These two causes are, in the first place, your love for a coquettish woman, a Creole, who has played with your heart as the panther of her own savannahs plays with the inoffensive animals she is preparing to devour.—Is that true?"

The young man made no reply. With his elbows on the table, his face buried in his hands, he remained motionless, apparently insensible to the reproaches of his

foster brother. Valentine continued—

"Secondly, when, in order to win favour in her eyes, you have compromised your fortune, and squandered all that your father had left you, this woman flits away as she came, rejoicing over the mischief she has done, over the victims she has left on the path she has trod, leaving to you and to so many others the despair and the shame of having been the sport of a coquette. What urges you to seek refuge in death is not the loss of fortune, but the impossibility of following this woman, the sole cause of all your misfortunes. I defy you to contradict me."

"Well, I admit all that is true. It is that alone which kills me. What care I for the loss of fortune? She alone is the object of my ambition! I love her—I love her—I tell you, so that I could struggle against the whole world to obtain her!" the young man exclaimed with great excitement. "Oh, if I could but hope! Hope—a word void of meaning, invented by the ambitious, always implying something unattainable! Do you not plainly see the truth of what I say? There is nothing left me but to die!"

Valentine contemplated him for some minutes with a sad countenance. Suddenly his brow cleared, his eye sparkled; he laid his hand upon the Count's shoulder.

"Is this, then, more than a caprice? Do you really love this woman?" he said.

"Have I not told you that I am ready to die for her?"

"Ay; and you told me at the same time that you would struggle with the whole world to obtain her."

"I did—and would."

"Well, then," continued Valentine, fixing his eyes earnestly upon him, "I can help you to find this woman again—I can."

"You can?"

"Yes, I can."

"Oh! you are mad! She has left Paris, and no one knows into what region of America she has retreated."

"Of what consequence is that?"

"And then, besides, I am ruined!"

"So much the better."

"Valentine, be careful of what you say," the young man remarked with a sigh; "in

spite of my reason, I allow myself to believe you."

"Hope, man! hope, I tell you."

"Oh, no; no, that is impossible!"

"Nothing is impossible; that is a word invented by the impotent and the cowardly. I repeat that I not only will find this woman for you again, but that she—she herself, mind—shall be afraid lest you should despise her love."

"Oh!"

"Who knows? You yourself may then, perhaps, reject it."

"Valentine! Valentine!"

"Well, to obtain this glorious result, I only ask two years."

"So long?"

"Oh, such is man!" cried the soldier, with a faint, pitying laugh. "But an instant ago, and you were anxious to die, because the word had never stood in its true light before you; and now you have not the courage to look forward, or wait two years, which constitute only a few minutes of human life!"

"Yes, but——"

"Be satisfied, brother—be satisfied! If in two years I have not fulfilled my promise, I myself will load your pistols—and then——"

"Well, and then?"

"And then you shall not die alone," he said coolly.

The Count looked at him. Valentine seemed transfigured: his countenance wore an expression of indomitable energy, which his foster brother had never observed in it before; his eyes sparkled with unwonted brilliancy. The young man avowed himself conquered; he took his friend's hand, and pressing it warmly, said—

"I agree!"

"You now, then, belong to me?"

"I give myself entirely up to you."

"That's well!"

"But what will you do?"

"Listen to me attentively," the soldier said, sinking back into his chair, and motioning to his friend to resume his seat. At this moment the clock struck the hour of midnight, and, from a feeling for which they could not account, the young men listened silently and reflectively to the twelve strokes which resounded at equal intervals upon the bell.

When the echo of the last stroke had ceased to vibrate, Valentine lit a cigar, and turning towards Louis, whose eyes were intensely fixed upon him, "Now, then," he said slowly, emitting a puff of thin blue smoke, which went curling gracefully up towards the ceiling.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESOLUTION.

"I am listening," said Louis, leaning forward as if to hear the better.

Valentine resumed with a melancholy smile.

"We have now reached the 1st of January, 1835," said he; "with the last vibration of midnight your existence as a gentleman has come to an end. From this time you are about to commence a life of trials and struggles; in a word, you are about to become a man!"

The Count gave him an inquiring glance.

"I will explain myself," Valentine continued; "but in order to do that, you must, in the first place, allow me, in a few words, to recall your history to you."

"Surely, I am well enough acquainted with that," interrupted the Count, in a tone that displayed impatience.

"Well, perhaps you are; but, at all events, listen to my version of it; if I err, put me right."

"Follow your own humour," the Count replied, sinking back into his chair with the air of a man whom politeness obliges to listen to a tiresome discourse.

Though he saw it, Valentine appeared to take no notice of this movement on the part of his foster brother. He relit his cigar, which he had allowed to go out, patted the dog, whose great head was lying upon his knees, and began, as if

convinced that Louis gave him the most profound attention.

"Your history is that of almost every man of your rank," said he. "Your ancestors, whose name can be traced to the Crusades, left you at your birth a noble title, and a hundred thousand francs a year. Rich, without having had occasion to employ your faculties to gain your fortune, and consequently ignorant of the real value of money, you spent it heedlessly, believing it to be inexhaustible. This is just what has happened; only, one day, when you least expected it, the hideous spectre of ruin rose up suddenly before you, and you had a glimpse of want, that is, of the necessity for labour; and then you drew back terrified, declaring there was no refuge but in death."

"All that is perfectly true," the Count interrupted; "but you forget to mention, that before forming this last resolution, I took care to put my affairs in order, and to pay all my creditors. I then became my own master, and had a right to dispose of my life as I thought fit."

"Not at all. And it is this which your education as a gentleman has prevented you from understanding. Your life is not your own; it is a loan which God has made you. It is, consequently, nothing but an expectation, a *waiting*, a passage: for this reason it is short, but the profit of it is due to humanity. Every man who wastes the faculties which he holds from God in orgies and debaucheries, commits a robbery upon the great human family. Remember that we are all mutually responsible for one another, and that we ought to employ our faculties for the advantage of the whole."

"For Heaven's sake, brother, a truce to your sermons! Such theories, more or less paradoxical, may succeed with certain people, but——"

"Brother," Valentine interrupted, "do not speak so. In spite of yourself, your pride of race dictates words which you will ere long regret. Certain people! there you have let slip the great word. Oh, Louis, Louis! how many things you have yet to learn! But that we may know what we are about, reckoning all your resources, how much have you left?"

"Oh, I scarcely know! A pitiful sum."

"Well, but how much?"

"Good Heavens! some forty thousand francs, I suppose, at most, which may amount to sixty thousand by the sale of these luxurious trifles," the Count said carelessly.

Valentine started up in his chair.

"Sixty thousand francs!" he cried; "and you are in despair! and have made up your mind to die! Senseless fellow! why, these sixty thousand francs, well employed, are a fortune! they will enable you to find the woman you love! How many poor devils would fancy themselves rich with such a sum!"

"What do you mean to do, then?"

"You shall see. What is the name of the lady you are in love with?"

"Doña Rosario del Valle."

"Very well. She has, you say, gone to America?"

"Ten days ago; but I, in justice, must observe to you, that Doña Rosario, whom you do not know, is a noble and amiable girl, who has never lent an ear to one of my flatteries, or given favourable heed to the ruinous extravagances which I committed to please her."

"Ah, that is very possible! why, then, should I seek to rob you of this sweet illusion? Only it makes me the more puzzled to perceive how, under these circumstances, you could manage to melt your fortune, which was considerable, like a lump of butter in the sun."

"Here! read this note from my broker."

"Oh!" said Valentine, pushing back the paper; "you have been dabbling on the Stock Exchange, have you! Everything is now easily explained, my poor pigeon; the kites have plucked you nicely! Well, brother, you must take your revenge."

"Oh, I ask nothing better!" said the young man, knitting his brows.

"We are of the same age; my mother's milk nourished us both; in the eyes of God we are brothers! I will make a man of you! I will help you to put on that armour of brass which will render you invincible. Whilst you, protected by your name and your fortune, allowed life to glide luxuriously away, only plucking its flowers as it passed, I, a poor wretch wandering over the rough pavement of Paris, carried on a gigantic struggle to obtain a mere existence; a struggle of every hour and every minute, where the victory for me was a morsel of bread, and experience most dearly bought; for often, when I held horses, sold theatre checks, or acted clown to a mountebank—in fact, when I went through the thousand impossible shifts of the Bohemian, depression and discouragement nearly choked me; often and often have I felt my burning brow and throbbing temples clasped in the pinching vice of want; but I resisted, I girded myself up against adversity; never did I allow myself to be conquered, although I left upon

the thorns of my rugged path many of the rags of my most fondly-cherished illusions; while my heart, writhing with despair, has bled from twenty wounds at once! Courage, Louis! henceforth there will be two of us to fight the battle! You shall be the head to conceive, I the arm to execute; you the intelligence, I the strength! Now the struggle will be equal, for we will sustain one another. Trust in me, my brother; a day will come when success will crown our efforts!"

"I can fully appreciate your devotion, and I accept it. Am I not, at present, your property? Entertain no fear of my resisting you. But I cannot help telling you that I fear all my attempts will be in vain, and that we shall be forced, sooner or later, to fall back upon that last means which you now prevent me having recourse to."

"Oh, thou man of little faith!" Valentine said, cheerfully; "on the road which we are about to take, fortune will be our slave!"

Louis could not repress a smile.

"We must, at all events, depend upon the aid of chance in what we are about to undertake," he said.

"Chance! chance is the hope of fools; the strong man commands it."

"Well, but what do you mean to do?"

"The lady you love is in America, is she not?"

"I have already told you so several times."

"Very well, then, we must go thither."

"But I do not know even in what part of America she resides."

"Of what consequence is that? The New World is the country of gold—the true region of adventurers! We shall retrieve our fortunes whilst searching for her; and is that so disagreeable a thing? Tell me—this lady was born somewhere?"

"She is a Chilian."

"Good! she has gone back to Chili, then; and it is there we shall find her."

Louis looked at his foster brother for a moment, with a species of respectful admiration.

"What! do you seriously mean that you will do this, brother?" he said, in an agitated voice.

"Without hesitation."

"Abandon the military career which offers you so many chances of success? I know that in three months you will be an officer."

"I have ceased to be a soldier since the morning; I have found a substitute."

"Oh, that is not possible!"

"Ay, but it is done."

"But your old mother, my nurse, whose only support you are!"

"Out of what you have left we will give her a few thousand francs, which, joined to my pension, will suffice for her to live on till we come back."

"Oh," said the young man, "I cannot accept of such a sacrifice—my honour forbids it!"

"Unfortunately, brother," Valentine said, in a tone which silenced the Count, "you have it not in your power to prevent it. In acting as I propose to do I am only discharging a sacred duty."

"I do not understand you."

"What is the use of explaining it to you?"

"I insist."

"Very good; and, perhaps, it will be better. Listen:—When, after having nursed you, my mother restored you to your family, my father fell sick, and died at the end of an illness of eight months, leaving my mother and myself in the greatest want; the little we possessed had been spent in medicines, and in paying the doctor for his visits. We ought to have had recourse to your family, who would, no doubt, have relieved us; but my mother would never consent to it. 'The Count de Prébois-Crancé has done as much as he ought,' she remarked, 'he shall not be troubled any more.'"

"She was wrong," said Louis.

"I know she was," Valentine replied. "In the meantime, hunger soon began to be felt. It was then I undertook all those impossible trades of which I just now spoke to you. One day, as I was carrying my cap round in the Place du Trône, after swallowing sabres and eating fire, to the great delight of the crowd, I found myself face to face with an officer of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, who looked at me with an air of pity and kindness that melted my heart within me. He led me away with him, made me relate my history, and insisted upon being conducted to the shed where I and my mother lived. At the sight of our misery the old soldier was

much affected; a tear, which he could not restrain, flowed silently down his sunburnt cheek. Louis, that officer was your father."

"My noble and good father!" the Count exclaimed, pressing his foster brother's hand.

"Yes! yes, noble and good! he secured my mother a little annuity which enables her to live, and took me into his own regiment. Two years ago, during the last expedition against the Rey of Constantine, your father was struck by a bullet in his chest, and died at the end of two hours, calling upon his son."

"Yes," the young man said, with tears in his eyes, "I know he did."

"But what you do not know, Louis, is, that at the point of death your father turned towards me—for, from the moment he had received his wound I had never left him."

Louis again silently pressed the hand of Valentine, whilst the latter continued—

"'Valentine,' he said to me, in a faint voice, broken by the rattle of death, for the mortal agony had commenced, 'my son is left alone, and without experience; he has nobody but you, his foster brother. Watch over him—never abandon him! May I depend upon your promise? it will mitigate the pain of dying.' I knelt down beside him, and respectfully seizing the hand he held out to me, exclaimed—'Die in peace! in the hour of adversity I will be always by the side of your Louis. Two tears of joy at that awful hour dropped from your father's eyes; he said, in a faltering voice—'God has heard your oath and murmuring your name, and clasping my hand, he expired. Louis, I owe to your father the comfort my mother enjoys; I owe to your father the feelings that make me a man, and this cross which glitters on my breast. Can you not now comprehend, then, why I have spoken to you as I have done? While you held your course in your strength, I kept aloof; but now that the hour has arrived for accomplishing my vow, no human power can prevent me from doing so.'"

The two young men were silent for a moment, and then Louis, laying his face on the soldier's honest chest, said, with a burst of tears—

"When shall we set out, brother?"

The latter looked at him earnestly—

"You are fully resolved to commence a new life?"

"Entirely!" Louis replied, in a firm tone.

"Do you leave no regrets behind you?"

"None."

"You are ready to pass bravely through all the trials to which I may expose you?"

"I am."

"That is well, brother! it is thus I wish you to be. We will set out as soon as we have settled the balance of your past life. You must enter on the new existence I am about to open to you quite free from clogs or remembrances."



On the 2nd of February, 1835, a packet boat belonging to the Trans-Atlantic Company left Havre, directing its course towards Valparaiso. On board this vessel, as passengers, were the Count de Prébois-Crancé, Valentine Guillois his foster brother, and Cæsar their Newfoundland dog—Cæsar, the only friend who had remained faithful to them, and whom they could not think of leaving behind. Upon the quay a woman of about sixty years of age, her face bathed in tears, stood with her eyes intently fixed upon the vessel as long as it remained in sight. When it had disappeared below the horizon, she cast a desponding glance around her, and with a heavy heart bent her steps towards a house situated at a small distance from the beach, where she remained three days.

"Do what is right, happen what may!" she said, in a voice stifled by grief.

This woman was the mother of Valentine Guillois. She was the most to be pitied, for she was left alone!



CHAPTER IV.

THE EXECUTION.

Towards the end of the year 1450, Chili was invaded by Prince Sinchiroca, afterwards Inca, who gained possession of the valley of Mapocho, then called Promocaces, that is to say, the place of dancing and rejoicing. The Peruvian government, however, was never able to establish itself in the country, on

account of the armed opposition of the Promocians, then encamped between the rivers Rapel and Maulé. Hence, though the historian Garcilasso de la Vega may place the limits of the territory conquered by the Incas upon the river Maulé, everything proves they were upon the Rapel, for, near the confluence of the Cachapeul with the Tingerica, which from this point takes the name of Rapel, start the ruins of an ancient Peruvian fortress, constructed exactly like those of Callao and Asseray, in the province of Quito. These fortresses served to mark the frontier.

The Spanish conqueror, Don Pedro de Valdivia, founded, on the 24th of February, 1541, the city of Santiago in a delightful position upon the left bank of the Rio Mapocho, at the entrance of a plain a hundred miles in extent, bounded by the Rio Parahuel, and the mountain of El Pardo, which has an elevation of not less than four thousand feet. This plain, which is also bathed by the Rio Maypo, forms a natural reservoir, in which the light soil brought down from the neighbouring heights has found a level, and created one of the richest territories of the New World.

Santiago, which at a later period became the capital of Chili, is one of the finest cities in Spanish America. Its streets are broad, built in straight lines, and refreshed by *acequias*; or rivulets of clear and limpid water; while the houses, built of *adobes*, only one story high, on account of the earthquakes so frequent in this country, are vast, airy, and well situated. It possesses a great number of monuments, the most remarkable of which are the stone bridge of five arches, thrown over the Mapocho, and the Tajamar, or breakwater, formed of two brick walls, the interior one of which is filled with earth, and serves to protect the inhabitants from inundations. The Cordilleras, with their eternally snow-crowned summits, although eighty miles distant from the city, appear suspended over it, and present an aspect of the most majestic and imposing kind.

On the 5th of May, 1835, towards ten o'clock in the evening, stifling heat oppressed the city; there was not a breath in the air, or a cloud in the heavens. Santiago, generally so joyous at this hour of the night, when beams from black eyes and smiles from rosy lips are seen at every balcony, and each window seems to challenge the passer-by with the twanging of *sambecuejas*, and snatches of Creole songs, appeared plunged in the deepest sadness. The balconies and the windows were filled, it is true, with the heads of men and women, packed together as closely as possible, but the expression of every face was serious, every look was thoughtful and uneasy: no smile, no joy could be witnessed; but on all sides were sorrowful brows, pale cheeks, and eyes filled

with tears.

Here and there in the streets numerous groups were stationed in the middle of the causeway, or upon the steps of the doors, conversing in a low voice, but with great vivacity. At every instant, orderly officers left the government palace, and galloped off in various directions. Detachments of troops quitted their barracks, and marched, with drums beating, to the Plaza Mayor, where they formed in line, passing silently amidst the terrified inhabitants. The Plaza Mayor on this evening afforded an exceptional appearance. Torches, waved about by individuals mixed with the crowd, threw their red dull reflections upon the assembled people, who seemed to be in expectation of some great event.

But among all these people assembled on one spot, and whose number increased every second, not a cry, not a word could be heard. Only, at intervals, there arose a nameless murmur—a noise of the sea before a tempest—the whisper of a whole anxious people—the hoarse fury of a storm lashing all these oppressed breasts. The clock of the cathedral heavily and slowly struck ten.

Scarce had the *serenos*, according to custom, chanted the hour, ere military commands were heard, and the crowd violently driven back in all directions, with cries and oaths, accompanied by blows from gunstocks, divided in two nearly equal parts, leaving between them a wide, free space. At this moment arose the sounds of religious chants, murmured in a low, monotonous tone, and a long procession of monks debouched upon the square. These monks all belonged to the order of the Brothers of Mercy. They walked slowly in two lines, with their hoods pulled down over their faces, their arms crossed upon their breasts, their heads hanging down, and chanting the *De Profundis*. In the middle of them ten penitents each bore an open coffin. Then came a squadron of cavalry, preceding a battalion of militiamen, in the centre of which body, ten men, bare headed, with their arms bound behind them, were conducted, each riding with his face toward the tail of a donkey, whose bridle was held by a monk of the order of Mercy; a detachment of lancers came immediately after, and closed this lugubrious procession.

At the cry of halt, given by the commander of the troops drawn up upon the Plaza, the monks separated to the right and left, without interrupting their funeral chant, and the condemned remained alone in the middle of the space left free for them. These men were patriots, who had attempted to overthrow the established government, in order to substitute another, the more broad and democratic basis of which would be, as they thought, in better accordance with ideas of progress and the welfare of the nation. These patriots belonged to the first families of the

country.

The population of Santiago viewed with sullen despair the death of the men whom they considered as martyrs. It is even probable that a rising in their favour would have taken place, if General Don Poncho Bustamante, the minister at war, had not drawn out a military force capable of imposing upon the most determined, and obliging them to be silent spectators of the execution of men whom they could not save, but whom they entertained a fierce hope of avenging at a future day.

The condemned alighted; they piously knelt, and confessed themselves to the monks of Mercy nearest to them, whilst a platoon of fifty soldiers took up a position within twenty paces of them. When their confession was completed, they rose up bravely, and taking each other by the hand, ranged themselves in a single line in front of the soldiers appointed to put them to death. In spite, however, of the great numbers of troops assembled on the Plaza, an ominous fermentation prevailed among the people. The crowd rocked about in all directions. Murmurs of sinister augury and curses, pronounced aloud against the agents of power, seemed to remind the latter that they had better finish the affair at once, if they did not wish to have their victims torn from their hands.

General Bustamante, who calmly and stoically presided over this dismal ceremony, smiled with disdain at this expression of popular disapprobation. He waved his sword over his head and commanded "right about face," which was executed with the rapidity of lightning. The troops faced the insurgents on all sides; the front rank pointing their muskets at the citizens crowded together before them, whilst the others appeared to take aim at the balconies encumbered with people. This was followed by so dead a silence, that not a word was lost of the sentence read by the proper officer to the patriots—a sentence which condemned them to be shot as traitors, or accomplices in a conspiracy designed to overthrow the constituted government, and plunge their country into anarchy.

The conspirators listened to their sentence with silent firmness; but when the officer, who trembled in every limb, had finished reading it, they all cried, as with one voice,

"Viva la Patria! Viva la Libertad!"

The General gave a signal, and a loud rolling of the drums drowned the voices of the condemned. A discharge of musketry resounded like a clap of thunder, and the ten martyrs fell, once again shouting their cry of liberty, a cry doomed to find an echo in the hearts of their terrified compatriots.

The troops filed off, with shouldered arms, ensigns flying, and band at their head, past the dead bodies, and regained their barracks. When the General had disappeared with his escort, and the troops had left the Plaza, the people rushed in a mass towards the spot where the martyrs of their cause lay in a confused heap. Every one wished to offer them a last farewell, and to swear over their bodies to avenge them, or to fall in their turn.

At length, by degrees, the crowd became less compact, the groups dispersed, the last torches were extinguished, and the spot where, scarce an hour before, an awful drama had been accomplished, was left completely deserted. A considerable time elapsed before any noise disturbed the solemn silence which brooded over the Plaza Mayor.

Suddenly, a heavy sigh escaped from the heap of bodies, and a pale head, disfigured by the blood and dirt which stained it, arose slowly from this human slaughterhouse, pushing aside with difficulty the carcasses which had covered it. The victim, who, by a miracle, survived this bloody hecatomb, cast an anxious look around him, and passing his hand over his brow, which was bathed in a dark perspiration, said vehemently—

"My God! my God! grant me strength to live, that I may avenge myself and my country!"

Then, with incredible courage, this man, too weak from the blood he had lost, and was still losing, to stand, or to escape by walking away, began to crawl along upon his hands and knees, leaving behind him a long wet track, and directing his course towards the cathedral. At every yard he stopped to take breath, and to place his hands upon his wounds, which motion rendered more painful. Scarce had he left the centre of the Plaza and its horrid sacrifice fifty paces behind him, and that with immense difficulty, when, from a street which opened just before him, issued two men, who advanced with hasty steps towards him.

"Oh!" the unhappy man cried, in utter despair, "I am lost! I am lost! Heaven is not just!"—And he fainted.

The two men, on coming up to him, stopped with great surprise; they leant over him, and examined him with care and in an anxious manner.

"Well?" said one of them, at the end of a minute or two.

"He is alive!" the other replied, in a tone of conviction.

Without uttering another word, they rolled up the wounded man in a *poncho*, lifted him on their shoulders, and disappeared in the gloomy depths of the street

by which they had come, and which led to the Canadilla suburb.

CHAPTER V.

THE PASSAGE.

It is a long voyage from Havre to Chili. The man accustomed to the thousand agitations and the intoxicating whirlwind of the atmosphere of Paris, necessarily finds the life on shipboard, the calm and regular life, insipid and monotonous. It is certainly tedious to remain months together in a vessel, confined to a cabin a few feet square, without air and without sun, almost without light, and to have no walk but the narrow deck of the ship, no horizon but the rolling or the tranquil sea—at all times and everywhere nothing but sea.

The transition is very trying. The Parisian, accustomed to the noise and perpetual motion of a great city, cannot at once enter into or comprehend the poetry of the sailor's life, of which he knows nothing, or the sublime pleasures and keen enjoyments which those granite-hearted men, exposed incessantly to a struggle with the elements, constantly experience; men who laugh at the tempest and brave the hurricane; who, twenty times a minute, stand face to face with death, and at last feel such a contempt for it that they end by not believing in it. The hours are of interminable length to the passenger who pines for the land; every day appears an age to him. With his eyes constantly turned toward a point which he begins to imagine he shall never gain, he sinks, in spite of himself, into a species of gloomy nostalgia, which the sight of the wished for port is alone powerful enough to dissipate.

The Count de Prébois-Crancé and Valentine Guillois had, then, undergone the dispersion of all the illusions and all the ennuis attendant upon a first sea voyage. During the first days they were employed in recalling the vivid remembrance of that other life from which they had parted for ever. They talked over the surprise which the sudden disappearance of the Count would cause in the fashionable society from which he had fled without warning, and without leaving any means of tracing him. Forgetting for awhile the distance which separated them from the America to which they were bound, they dwelt at great length upon the unknown pleasures which awaited them upon that golden soil, that land of promise for all sorts of adventurers, but which, alas! often offers those who go thither in the

hope of gaining an easy fortune, nothing but disappointment and sorrow.

As every subject, however interesting it may be, must in the end grow exhausted, the two young men, to escape the fatiguing monotony of the voyage, had the good sense so to arrange their existence as to prevent tedium from gaining the influence over them which it had upon the other passengers. Twice a day, morning and evening, the Count, who was perfectly well acquainted with Spanish, gave his foster brother lessons in that language, lessons by which he profited so well, that after two months' study, he was able to carry on a conversation in Spanish. When he had made such progress, the young men employed no other language, either between themselves or with the persons on board who understood it. This habit produced the desired result; that is to say, Valentine, in a very short time, spoke Spanish, which is not difficult to acquire, as fluently as French; and then, in return, Valentine occasionally became the professor. He made Louis go through gymnastic exercises, in order to develop his natural strength, accustom his body to fatigue, and render him capable of supporting the rude exigencies of his new position.

We will here, for a moment, return to the character of Valentine Guillois, a character of which the reader, from the young man's manner of acting and speaking, might form a completely erroneous opinion, and this we think it our duty to rectify. Morally, Valentine Guillois was a young fellow quite unacquainted with himself; hot-headed, giddy in the extreme, the surface had been slightly vitiated by reading chosen without discernment; but the foundation was essentially good. He united in himself all the characteristics of a class whose knowledge of the world is obtained from romances and the dramas of the Faubourg du Temple. He had sprung up like a mushroom upon *the pavé* of Paris, performing for bread, as he himself said, the most eccentric and impossible things. As a soldier, he had lived from hand to mouth, happy in the present, and careless of a future whose existence was so uncertain for him. But in the heart of this thoughtless *gamin* a new sentiment had germinated, and, in a very short time, taken deep root,—a hearty devotion to the man who had held out his hand to him, had had pity on his mother, and who, by dragging him from the slough in which he was plunged, without hope of ever rising, had given him a consciousness of his own personal value. The death of this benefactor had struck him like a clap of thunder. He felt all the importance of the mission with which his dying colonel had charged him, the responsible burden he imposed upon him, and he swore, with the firm resolution of keeping his oath, cost what it might, to watch, like an attentive and devoted brother, over the son of him who had made a man of him equal to other men. The two most prominent points of Valentine's

character were, an energy which obstacles only augmented instead of depressing, and an iron will.

With these two qualities, employed to the extent to which Valentine carried them, a man is sure to accomplish great things, and, if death does not surprise him on the road, to attain, at a given moment, the object, whatever it may be, which he has marked out for himself. In the present circumstances, these qualities were invaluable to the Count de Prébois-Crancé, a man of a dreamy, poetical nature, weak character, and timid mind, who, accustomed from his birth to the easy life of people of fortune, was entirely ignorant of the incessant difficulties of the new life into which he found himself suddenly cast. As always happens, when two men gifted with such opposite qualities meet, Valentine was not long in gaining over his foster brother a great moral influence, an influence which he employed with infinite tact, without ever rendering his companion aware of it; he appeared to do everything according to his will, whilst imposing his own upon him. In short, these two men, who loved each other thoroughly, and had but one head and one heart, perfected each other.

The mode of speaking employed by Valentine in the early chapters of this history, was not at all habitual to him, and had truly astonished himself. Rising to the level of the situation in which the resolution of the young man he wished to save placed him, he had comprehended, with that sound common sense which he unwittingly possessed, that instead of desponding over the misfortune which struck his foster brother so unexpectedly, it was his duty, on the contrary, to endeavour to impart to him the courage he was deficient in. Thus, as we have seen, he found in his heart arguments so peremptorily decisive, that the Count consented to live, and gave himself up to his counsels. Valentine did not hesitate. The departure of Doña Rosario furnished him with the excuse he needed for dragging his foster brother from the Parisian gulf which, after having swallowed up his fortune, threatened to swallow up himself. Perceiving, before all else, the necessity for expatriating him, he persuaded Louis to follow the object of his love to America; and both set out gaily for the New World, abandoning the country which, like other emigrants, they fancied had been so ungrateful to them.

Often during the passage the young Count had felt his courage flag, and his faith in the future abandon him, when thinking of the life of struggles and trials that awaited him in America. But Valentine, by his inexhaustible gaiety, his incredible store of anecdotes, and his incessant sallies, always succeeded in smoothing the wrinkles from the brow of his companion, who, with his habitual carelessness and want of energy, allowed himself to sink under that occult influence of Valentine which remoulded him, without his cognizance, and gradually made a new man of him.

Such was the state of mind in which our two personages found themselves when the packet boat cast anchor in the roads of Valparaiso. Valentine, with his imperturbable assurance, doubted of nothing: he was persuaded that the people he was about to have to do with were very much beneath him in intelligence, and that he could manage very well to attain the double object which he aimed at. The Count entirely depended upon his foster brother for finding for him the woman he loved, and whom he had come so far to seek. As to retrieving his fortune, he did not even dream of that.

Valparaiso—Valley of Paradise—so named probably by antiphrasis, for it is the filthiest and ugliest city of Spanish America—is nothing but a depot for foreigners, whom commercial interests do not call into Chili. Our young men only remained there long enough to equip themselves in the costume of the country; that is to say, to assume the Panama hat, the *poncho*, and *polenas*; then,

each armed with two double-barrelled pistols, a rifle, and a long knife in his belt, they left the port, and, mounted on excellent horses, took their course towards Santiago, on the evening preceding the day on which the execution we have described in the preceding chapter was to take place. The weather was magnificent;— the rays of a burning sun rendered the very dust golden, and made the stones of the road shine like jewels.

"Ah!" said Valentine, as soon as they found themselves upon the superb road which leads to the capital of Chili; "it does one good to breathe the air of the land—*caramba*, as they say here. Well, now, here we are in this boasted America, and now we must set about collecting our harvest of gold."

"And Doña Rosario?" said his foster brother, in a melancholy tone.

"Oh! we shall have found her within a fortnight," replied Valentine, with astounding confidence.

With these consolatory words, he animated his horse with the spur, and the distance before them rapidly diminished.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LINDA. [1]

The night was gloomy; no star glittered in the heavens; the moon, concealed by clouds, only spread a wan, pale light, which, when it disappeared, rendered the darkness the denser. The streets were deserted; but at regular intervals the furtive steps of the serenos, who alone watched at this hour, were audible.

The two men whom we have seen upon the Plaza Mayor, bearing away the wounded man, walked for a long time, loaded with their strange burthen, stopping at the least noise, and concealing themselves in the depths of a doorway, or in the angle of a street, to allow the serenos to pass, as they would be sure to require a reason for their being in the streets at that unusual hour. Since the discovery of the conspiracy, orders had been given that at eleven o'clock every citizen should be within doors. After many turnings and windings, the strangers stopped in the street El Mercado, one of the most secluded and narrow in Santiago. They appeared to be expected, for a door was opened at the

sound of their steps, and a woman, dressed in white, and holding a candle, the light of which she shaded with her left hand, appeared on the threshold. The two men stopped, and one of them, taking a steel from his pocket, struck the flint so as to produce as few sparks as possible. At this signal—for it evidently was one—the woman extinguished the light, saying with a loud voice, but as if speaking to herself—

"Dios proteja a Chile (May God protect Chili)!"

"Dios lo ha protegido (God has protected it)," the man with the flint and steel replied, as he replaced his utensils in his pocket.

The woman uttered a cry of joy, which her prudence suddenly repressed.

"Come in, come in," she said in a low voice; and in an instant the two men were beside her.

"Is he alive?" she asked, with intense anxiety.

"He is alive," one of the strangers laconically replied.

"In Heaven's name, come in!" she exclaimed.

The bearers, guided by the woman, who had relighted her candle, disappeared in the house, the door of which was immediately and softly closed after them. All the houses of Santiago are alike, with respect to their internal arrangements. To describe one is to describe all. A wide doorway, ornamented with pilasters, leads to *the patio*, or great entrance court, at the end of which is the principal apartment, generally the dining room. On each side are bed chambers, reception rooms, and cabinets for labour or study. Behind these apartments is the *huerta*, or garden, laid out with taste, ornamented with fountains, and planted with orange trees, citron trees, pomegranates, limes, cedars, and palm trees, which grow with incredible luxuriance. Behind the garden is the *corral*—a vast enclosure appropriated to horses and carriages.

The house into which we have introduced the reader, only differed from the others in the princely luxury of its furniture, which seemed to indicate that its inhabitant was a person of importance. The two men, still preceded by the woman, who served them as guide, entered a little room, whose window opened on the garden. They laid their burthen down upon a bed, and retired without speaking a word, but bowing respectfully.

The woman remained for a moment motionless, listening to the sound of their retreating footsteps; and when all was silent, she sprang with a bound towards

the door, the bolts of which she fastened with an impetuous gesture; then, returning and placing herself beside the wounded man, she fixed upon him a long and melancholy look.

This woman, though really thirty-five years of age, appeared to be scarcely more than five-and-twenty. She was of an extraordinary, but a strange style of beauty; it attracted attention, commanded admiration, but created an instinctive repulsion. In spite of the majestic splendour of her graceful form, the elegance of her carriage, the freedom of her motions, full of voluptuous ease,—in spite of the purity of the lines of her fair face, slightly tinged by the warm rays of an American sun, which the magnificent tresses of her black hair beautifully enframed, her large black eyes, ornamented with long velvety lashes, and crowned by perfectly-arched brows, her straight nose, with its mobile and rosy nostrils, her little mouth, whose blood-red lips contrasted admirably with her pearl-white teeth—in spite of all these rich endowments, there was in this splendid creature something fatal, which chilled the heart as you contemplated her. Her searching glance, the satirical smile, which almost always contracted the corners of her lips, the slight wrinkle, which formed a harsh, deep line along her white brow—everything about her, even to the melodious sound of her voice, with its strongly-accentuated pitch, destroyed sympathy, and produced a feeling of hatred, rather than respect.

Alone in that chamber, dimly lighted by one flickering taper, in that calm and silent night, face to face with that pale, bleeding man, whom she contemplated with stern, contracted brows, she resembled, with her long, black hair falling in disorder from her shoulders on to her white robe, a Thessalian witch, preparing herself to accomplish some terrible and mysterious work.

The stranger was a man of, at most, forty-five years of age, of lofty stature, strongly built, and well proportioned. His features were handsome, his brow noble, and the expression of his countenance proud, but frank and resolute.

The woman remained for a considerable time in mute contemplation. Her bosom heaved, her brows became more and more contracted, and she appeared to watch the too slow progress of the return to sensibility of the man her emissaries had saved from death. At length words forced their way through her compressed lips, and she murmured in a low, broken voice,—

"Here he is, then; this time, at least, he is in my power! Will he consent to answer me? Oh! perhaps I had better have left him to die."

She paused to breathe a deep, broken sigh, but almost immediately continued:—

"My daughter! my daughter! of whom this man has bereaved me! and whom, in spite of all my researches, he has hitherto concealed in some inviolable asylum! My daughter! he must restore her to me; it is my will!" she added with inexpressible energy. "He shall, even if I had to deliver him up again to the executioners from whom I have ravished their prey! These wounds are nothing; loss of blood and terror are the sole causes of this insensibility. But time passes—my absence may be noticed. Why should I hesitate longer? Let me at once know what I have to hope from him. Perhaps he will allow himself to be softened by my tears and prayers. What, he! he to whom all human feeling is unknown! Better for me to implore the most implacable Indian! He will laugh at my grief, he will reply by sarcasms to my cries of despair;—oh! woe, woe be to him if he do so!"

She looked earnestly at the wounded man, who was still motionless, for another instant, and then, adding resolutely, "I will try," she drew from her bosom a small crystal phial, curiously cut, and raising the head of the unknown, made him inhale the contents. This was followed by a moment of intense expectation; the woman watching with an anxious eye the convulsive movements which are the precursors of the return to life, as they agitated the body of the wounded man. At length, with a deep sigh, he opened his eyes.

"Where am I?" he murmured in a faint voice, then sank back, and closed his eyes again.

"In safety," the woman replied.

The sound of the voice produced upon the wounded man the effect of an electric shock. He raised himself quickly, and looking around him with a mixture of disgust, terror, and anger, asked in a hollow voice,—

"Who spoke?"

"I!" the woman replied haughtily, placing herself before him.

"Ah!" he said with a gesture of disgust, and sinking back upon the bed; "you again! ever you!"

"Yes, I! still I, Don Tadeo! I, whose will, in spite of your disdain and your hatred, has never faltered! I, in short, whose assistance you have always obstinately refused, and who have saved you, in spite of yourself."

"Oh! that is an easy matter for you, madam; are you not on the best possible terms with my executioners?"

At this reply the woman could not repress a movement of anger; a sudden redness flitted across her face.

"No insults, Don Tadeo de Leon!" she said, stamping her foot; "I have saved you! I am a woman, and you are under my roof!"

"That is true," he replied, rising and bowing to her with ironical respect; "I had forgotten that, madam; I am in your house. Have the goodness, then, to direct me the way out, that I may be gone as quickly as possible."

"Do not be in such haste, Don Tadeo—you have not yet sufficiently recovered your strength. Within a few steps, you perhaps would fall again, to be raised up by the agents of the power which, this time, I swear to you, would not let you escape."

"And who told you, madam, that I should not prefer being retaken and executed a second time, to the chance of remaining longer in your presence?"

There was a moment of silence, during which the two interlocutors observed each other attentively. The woman was the first to speak.

"Listen to me, Don Tadeo," she said. "In spite of all your efforts, destiny, or, speaking more correctly, woman's genius, which nothing can resist, has brought us together once again. If you live, if you have received only slight wounds, it is because I lavished my gold upon the soldiers charged with your execution; I wished to force you to that explanation which I have so long demanded of you, which you so often have refused me, but which you can now no longer avoid. Submit, then, with a good grace. We will afterwards separate, if not good friends, at least indifferent, never to meet again. Though I do not wish to establish any claim upon your gratitude, you certainly owe your life to me; were it for that service alone, you are bound to hear me."

"What! madam," Don Tadeo replied, proudly, "do you think that I consider what you have done was rendering me a service? By what right have you saved my life? You know me but ill if you fancied I should allow myself to be softened by your tears. No, no, I have been too long your dupe and your slave to do so. Heaven be praised! I know you well now; and the Linda, the mistress of General Bustamente, the tyrant of my country, the executioner of my brothers and myself, has nothing to expect from me! All that you can say, all that you can do, will be to no purpose. Spare yourself, then, I advise you, the trouble of pretending a gentleness which neither accords with your character nor your mode of life. I madly loved you, a young, pure, and prudent girl, in the cabin of the worthy *guaso*, your father, whose death was caused by your scandalous life;

you were then called Maria. At that period, would I not have sacrificed my life and my happiness for you?—you know I would. Many times have I given you proofs of that boundless love; but the Linda, the shameless courtesan, the Linda, the woman branded on the brow like Cain with the seal of infamy, the miserable creature—I know her not. Away, madam!—away! There can be nothing in common between you and me."

And with a gesture of proud authority he waved her from him.

The woman had listened to him with flashing eyes and heaving bosom, trembling with rage and shame. Drops of perspiration stood upon her face, which glowed with a feverish redness. When he had finished, she seized his arm, pressed it with her utmost strength, and placed her face close to his.

"Have you said all?" she muttered from between her teeth. "Have you heaped insults enough upon me? Have you cast sufficient mire in my face? Have you nothing more to add?"

"Nothing, madam," he replied, in a tone of cool contempt. "You can, when you please, summon your assassins—I am ready to receive them."

And throwing himself upon the bed, he waited with an air of the most insolent indifference.

[1] This word, which has no equivalent in English or French, is in the Spanish language the highest expression of physical beauty in woman.

CHAPTER VII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Doña Maria, notwithstanding the fresh and bitter insult she had just received from Don Tadeo, did not yet renounce the hope of softening him. When she recalled to her mind the early years, already so distant, of her love for Don Tadeo, his devotion to her smallest caprices, when she could bring him trembling and prostrate to her feet by a glance or a smile, and the entire abnegation he had made of his will, in order to live for her and by her; notwithstanding all that had since taken place between them, she could not persuade herself that the violent and deeply-seated passion he had entertained for her, the species of worship he had vowed to her, could have entirely disappeared without leaving some slight

traces behind. Her pride revolted at the idea of having lost all her empire over the lofty nature which she so long had moulded at her pleasure like soft wax, under the burning impression of wild caprices. She fancied that, like most other men, Don Tadeo, deeply wounded in his pride, loved her still without being willing to admit it, and that the virulent reproaches he had addressed to her, were flashes of that ill-extinguished fire which still smouldered in his heart, and whose flame she should succeed in reviving.

Unfortunately Doña Maria had never given herself the trouble to study the man she had married, and whom her beauty had so long held in subjection. Don Tadeo had been nothing in her eyes but an attentive, submissive slave, and, under the apparent weakness of the loving man, she had not discovered the powerful energy which formed the foundation of his character. And yet the history itself of their love had been a proof of that energy, and of a will which nothing could control. Doña Maria, then fifteen years of age, dwelt with her father in a *hacienda*, in the neighbourhood of Santiago. Deprived of her mother, who had died in giving her birth, she was brought up under the care of an old aunt, an incorruptible Argus, who allowed no lover to come near her niece. The young girl, ignorant as all girls brought up in the country are, but whose warm aspirations led her to desire to know the world, and to launch into that whirlwind of pleasures the sound of which died without an echo in her ears, waited impatiently the arrival of the man who should introduce her to these delights, of which, although unknown, she had formed seducing ideas. Don Tadeo had only been the guide charged with initiating her into the pleasures for which she thirsted. She had never loved him; she had only said to herself, on seeing him and learning he was of a noble family, "That is the man I have been looking for."

This hideous and selfish calculation is made by more girls than we may fancy. Don Tadeo was handsome. Doña Maria's self-love was flattered by the conquest; but if he had been ugly and disagreeable, it would not have altered her course. In her extraordinary character, a strange conjunction of the most abject passions, among which shone here and there, like diamonds gleaming in the mire, a few feelings which attached her to humanity, there was the spirit of two women of ancient Rome; Locusta and Messalina were united in her: ardent, passionate and ambitious, covetous and prodigal, this demon, concealed under the outward form of an angel, acknowledged no other laws but her own caprices; and all means, by which she could satisfy them, to her appeared good.

For a long time, Don Tadeo, blinded by passion, had submitted without complaining to the iron yoke of this infernal genius; but when the day arrived

that the scales fell from his eyes, he measured with terror the depth of the abyss into which this woman had cast him. The frightful disorders to which, under the sanction of his name, she had abandoned herself, imprinted on his blushing brow a stigma of infamy: the world believed him to be her accomplice.

Don Tadeo had by Maria an only daughter, a fair girl of angelic beauty, at the period of our history fifteen years of age, whom he loved in proportion to the sufferings her mother had inflicted upon him. He trembled to think of the frightful future which lay before this innocent creature. For four years he had been separated from his wife; and during that time she had set no bounds on her irregularities. One day, Don Tadeo presented himself unexpectedly at the house of his wife, and without saying a word as to his ulterior intentions, took away his daughter. From that time—nearly ten years—Doña Maria had never seen her child.

A strange revolution was effected by this step in the mother's feelings; a new sentiment, so to say, germinated in her soul. A thing, till that time unknown to her, happened; she felt the pulses of her heart beat for another—she grieved at the remembrance of the little angel who had been ravished from her. What was the sentiment? She, herself, knew not; she only ardently wished to see her child again. During six years she contended, publicly and privately, with Don Tadeo, to have her daughter restored to her. The father was deaf and dumb; she could never learn what had become of her. Don Tadeo, who, since he ceased to love her, had studied the character of the woman of whom he had made an implacable enemy, had taken his precautions so prudently that all Doña Maria's researches proved fruitless, and all her attempts to obtain an interview remained without a result. She imagined that he was afraid of yielding, if face to face with her; and she resolved, cost what it might, to force him to grant her the interview to which nothing had been able to make him consent.

Such was, at the moment we bring them on the scene, the position of the two personages who now doubtless met for the last time. It was an extraordinary position for both; an unequal contest between a wounded and proscribed man, and an ardent, insulted woman, who, like a lioness deprived of her whelps, was resolved to succeed, whatever might happen, and compel the man whom she had forced to hear her, to restore her daughter to her.

Don Tadeo turned towards her.

"I am waiting," he said.

"You are waiting?" she replied, with a friendly smile. "What do you expect,

then?"

"The assassins whom you doubtless have at hand, in case I should be unwilling to reply to your questions concerning your daughter."

"Oh!" she said, with an air of repulsion, "how can you, Don Tadeo, have so bad an opinion of me? How can you pretend to believe that, after having saved you, I should deliver you up to those who have proscribed you?"

"Who knows?" he replied, in a strongly ironical tone. "The heart of women of your class, Linda, is an abyss which no man can pretend to sound. You, who are incessantly seeking eccentric pleasures, perhaps would find an unknown enjoyment and a charm in this second execution, which, besides, would not at all compromise you, as I am already legally dead to the world."

"Don Tadeo, I know how unworthy my conduct towards you has been, and how little I deserve your pity; but you are a gentleman, and, as such, do you think it does you honour to load with insults, however merited, a woman who is your wife, and who, after saving your life, with no intention of reinstating herself in your favour, merely makes a claim, at least upon your pity, if not on your esteem?"

"Very well, madam; nothing can be more just than your observations, and I subscribe to them with all my heart. I beg you to pardon me for having allowed myself to utter certain words; but, at the first movement, I was not master of myself, and I could not keep down in the depths of my heart the feelings which were stifling me. Now, accept my sincere thanks for the immense service you have rendered me, and permit me to retire. A longer sojourn, on my part, in this house, is a robbery of which I render myself guilty towards your numerous adorers."

And, bowing with ironical courtesy to his infuriated wife, he made a movement towards one of the doors of the room.

"One word more," she said.

"Speak, madam."

"Are you resolved to leave me ignorant of the fate of my daughter?"

"She is dead."

"Dead!" she cried, in a voice of terror.

"For you—yes," he replied, with a cold smile.

"Oh, you are implacable!" she shrieked, stamping her foot with rage.

He bowed, without making any reply.

"Well, then," she resumed, "it is now no longer a favour I implore—it is a bargain I propose to you."

"A bargain?"

"Yes, a bargain."

"The idea strikes me as original."

"Perhaps it is; you shall judge for yourself."

"I listen, but time presses, and I—"

"Oh, I will be brief," she interrupted.

"I am at your service," and he reseated himself, smiling, exactly like a friend on a visit. The Linda followed his motions with her eye, without appearing to attach any importance to them.

"Don Tadeo," she said, "during the many years we have been separated a great number of events has taken place."

"Quite correct," said he, with a gesture of polite assent.

"I will say nothing to you of myself—my life is known to you."

"Very little of it, madam."

She cast a savage look at him.

"Let that pass," she said, "it is of you I would speak."

"Of me?"

"Yes, of you, whose moments are not so completely absorbed by patriotism and the effervescence of political ideas as not to leave you a few for more intimate joys and emotions."

"What do you mean?"

"Why do you feign ignorance?" she said, with a perfidious smile; "I am sure you understand me."

"Madam!"

"Do not deny it, Tadeo! Tired of the ephemeral love of women of my class, as

you have just now so well said, you seek in the pure heart of a young girl emotions more in accordance with your tastes; in a word, I know you are in love with a charming young creature, worthy in all respects of being the wife of your choice, if I, unfortunately, did not exist."

Don Tadeo fixed upon his wife a scrutinizing look while she was pronouncing these words. As she finished, a sigh escaped him.

"What, are you aware?" he exclaimed, with well-feigned surprise. "You know—"

"I know that her name is Doña Rosario del Valle," she replied, satisfied of the effect she thought she had produced upon her husband; "why, it is the freshest news in Santiago! all the world is talking of it. How was it likely it should escape me, when I take such an interest in you?"

The Linda interrupted herself, and laid her hand on his arm.

"It is of very little consequence," she added; "restore me my daughter, Don Tadeo, and this new love of yours shall be sacred to me—if not—"

"You are mistaken, madam, I tell you."

"Beware, Don Tadeo!" she remarked, with a glance at the clock; "by this time the woman we were speaking of is in the hands of my agents."

"What do you mean?" he cried, in great agitation.

"Yes," she replied, in a husky tone, "I have had her carried off. In a few minutes she will be here. Beware! I repeat, Don Tadeo! if you do not tell me where my daughter is, and if you continue to refuse to restore her to me—"

"Well," he said, haughtily, looking her full in the face, and crossing his arms, "what then will you do?"

"I will kill this woman!" she replied, in a gloomy but firm tone.

Don Tadeo looked at her for a moment with an undefinable expression, and then burst into a dry, nervous laugh, which chilled the woman with fear.

"You will kill her!" he cried, "unhappy woman! Well!—kill that innocent creature!—Call in your executioners—I will be mute."

The Linda sprang up like a lioness, and rushed towards the door, which she opened violently.

"This is too much!—Come in!" she called out, loudly.

The two men who had brought in Don Tadeo appeared, poniard in hand.

"Ah!" the gentleman said, with a contemptuous smile, "I know you again at last."

At a motion from the Linda the assassins advanced towards him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DARK-HEARTS.

As we have seen, the people had dispersed almost immediately after the execution of the patriots. Everyone carried away in the depths of his heart the hope of avenging, at an early day, the victims who had so nobly died, with the cry for a time left without an echo, of Viva la patria! A cry checked by the bayonets of the soldiers of Bustamente, but which must soon give birth to fresh martyrs.

And yet the square, though it seemed a desert, was not so. Several men, folded in dark cloaks, and with broad-brimmed hats, pulled down over their eyes, were grouped in the recess of the coach entrance of a house, and were conversing earnestly together in a low voice, keeping an anxious lookout the meanwhile. These men were patriots.

In spite of the terror which hovered over the city, they had, by dint of prayers, obtained from the archbishop of Santiago, who was a true priest according to the gospel, and at heart devoted to the liberal cause, permission to pay the last rites to their unfortunate brethren.

No part of the dismal drama which followed the execution had escaped them. They had seen Don Tadeo rise like a phantom from the heap of carcasses which covered him; they had heard the words he had pronounced, and were preparing to go to his succour, when the two strangers, appearing suddenly, raised his body and bore it away. This carrying off of a half dead man had surprised them exceedingly. After exchanging a few words, two of them went in pursuit of the mysterious strangers, probably in order to learn to what house the wounded man was taken, whilst the others, twelve in number, advanced to the middle of the square.

They anxiously bent down and examined the bodies stretched at their feet,

hoping, perhaps, that another victim might have escaped the slaughter. Unfortunately, Don Tadeo was the only one saved by some inexplicable mystery. The nine other victims were all dead. After a long examination, the patriots stood up again with a painful sigh of regret, and one of them went and knocked at a lower door of the cathedral.

"Who is there?" was immediately asked from the interior.

"*One for whom the night hath no darkness,*" the man who had knocked replied.

"What do you want?" the voice asked again.

"*Is it not written: Knock and it shall be opened to thee?*" the stranger added.

"*Our country!*" said the voice.

"*Or vengeance!*" the man promptly replied.

The door opened, and a monk appeared. His cowl pulled down over his face, prevented his features being seen.

"Well," he said, "what do the *Dark-Hearts* require?"

"A prayer for their murdered brothers."

"Return to those who sent you; they shall be satisfied."

"Thanks for all!" the unknown replied; and, after bowing respectfully to the monk, he rejoined his companions. During his absence they had not been idle, but had placed the bodies upon hand barrows concealed under the arcades of the place.

At the expiration of a few minutes a brilliant light inundated the place; the cathedral doors were opened. The interior was seen to be splendidly illuminated, and from the principal door issued a long procession of monks, each bearing a wax light in his hand; they chanted, as they walked, the service of the dead. At the same moment the gates of the government palace were thrown open as if by enchantment, and a squadron of the Ceras, with General Bustamente at their head, advanced, at a trot, towards the procession.

When the monks and soldiers met, they stopped as of one accord. The twelve unknown men, folded in their cloaks, and grouped round the fountain which forms the centre of the square, anxiously awaited the denouement of the scene about to take place.

"What is the meaning of this procession, at such an unusual hour?" the general

haughtily demanded.

"It means that we have come," the monk who walked first replied, with a firm voice, but in a melancholy tone, "to take up the victims you have struck down, and give them honourable burial."

"And who, pray, are you?" the general asked, sharply.

"I?" the monk replied, in the same firm tone, and throwing back his cowl upon his shoulders—"I am the archbishop of Santiago, primate of Chili, invested by his holiness the Pope with the power of binding and unbinding on earth."

In Spanish America, all persons yield without hesitation to the religion of Christ. The only power that is real is that of the priests. No one, however high he may be placed, ventures to struggle against it: he knows beforehand that, if he did, he would be sure to be crushed. The general knitted his brows, struck his forehead forcibly with his hand, but was constrained to admit himself conquered.

"My lord!" he said, with a bow; "pardon me! In these times of civil discord, we often, in spite of ourselves, confound our friends with our enemies. I was ignorant that your lordship had given orders for prayers to be offered up for these criminals, and still more so that you would deign to perform this task in person—I beg leave to retire."

During this scene, the patriots had concealed themselves behind the pillars of the place, where, thanks to the darkness, they remained unseen by the general. As soon as the military had disappeared, at a sign from the archbishop the bodies were borne into the cathedral.

"Beware of that man, my lord," whispered one of the unknown in the archbishop's ear; "he darted at you the glance of a tiger as he retired."

"Brother!" the priest replied calmly; "I am prepared for martyrdom."

The service commenced. As soon as it was terminated, the patriots retired, after warmly thanking the archbishop for his kindness towards their dead brethren. Scarce had they proceeded a few steps along a narrow street, edged by mean dwellings, when two men rose from behind an overturned cart which concealed them, and coming towards them, said in a low voice—

"Our country!"

"Vengeance!" one of the unknown replied. "Come on!"

The two men approached.

"Well!" said he who appeared to be the chief. "What have you learnt?"

"All that it is possible to know," one of the newcomers replied.

"Whither have they transported Don Tadeo?"

"To the mansion of the Linda."

"To the residence of his wife! Of the woman who is now the mistress of the General Bustamente!" the chief replied anxiously. "By the holy Virgin! my comrades, he is lost, for she hates him mortally. Shall we allow him to be assassinated without an effort to save him?"

"That would be base cowardice," they replied unanimously.

"But how can we introduce ourselves into the house?"

"Nothing more easy; the garden walls are very low."

"Come on, then! there is not a minute to be lost!"

Without another word, they all hastened off in the direction of the Linda's house, which, as we have said, was situated in the faubourg of the Canadilla, the handsomest quarter in Santiago. The windows, hermetically closed, did not allow one ray of light to pass; not a sound could be heard, and the house seemed deserted. The patriots stole silently round the walls, and when they reached the back, they easily climbed the fence by sticking their poniards between the bricks, and sprang into the garden. Here they looked carefully about them, and, after a short pause, proceeded with stealthy steps towards a pale, trembling light, which sent a feeble beam through the chink of a shutter. They were within a few paces of this window, when they suddenly heard the noise of what appeared a scuffle, and a terrible cry was uttered, mingled with the crash of furniture and imprecations of rage and pain. Bounding forward like panthers, the strangers, who had covered their faces with masks of black velvet, dashed at the window, which flew in a thousand fragments around them, and entered the salon.

And it was time for them to arrive. Don Tadeo, with a stool, had split the head of one of the bandits, who lay lifeless upon the floor; but the other had got him down, and, with his knee upon his breast, was on the point of stabbing him. With a pistol shot, one of the unknown blew out his brains, and the wretch rolled in his agony close to his dead companion. Don Tadeo sprang up quickly, exclaiming—

"By the Virgin! I thought my hour was come!" Then, turning towards the masked men, he said—"Thanks, caballeros! thanks for your very timely succour! One

minute more, and it would have been all over with me! The Linda is expeditious!"

The courtesan, with features contracted by rage, and clenched teeth, looked on without appearing to see, overwhelmed, confounded by the scene which had so rapidly taken place, and which had, in a few minutes, ravished from her the vengeance which she thought had this time been so certain.

"Without bearing malice, madam," said Don Tadeo in a jeering tone, "this is a match deferred. Your fertile imagination will no doubt soon furnish you with the means of taking your revenge!"

"I hope so," she said with a sardonic smile.

"Seize this woman," the leader of the unknown commanded; "gag her, and bind her securely to the bed."

"Bind me!" she cried in a paroxysm of anger; "me! do you know who I am?"

"Perfectly well, madam," the stranger replied drily. "You are a woman for whom honourable people have no name. Libertines have given you that of the Linda, and your present lover is General Bustamente. You see, madam, that we are not unacquainted with you."

"Beware, sir," she hissed; "I am not to be insulted with impunity."

"We do not insult you, madam; we only wish, for a time, to put it out of your power to do mischief. In a few days," he continued, in a quiet, firm tone, "we will determine what shall be done with you."

"Done with me!—me!—who then are you, with faces you dare not reveal, and who presume to speak to me thus?"

"Who we are,—learn!—We are the *Dark-Hearts!*" At this terrible announcement, a convulsive trembling shook the limbs of the woman, who, retreating to the wall, a prey to intense terror, exclaimed in a faint voice; "My God! my God! I am lost," and sank down fainting.

At a sign from the leader, one of his companions bound her securely, and after gagging her, fastened her to the foot of the bed. Then, taking Don Tadeo with them, they departed by the same way they had entered, without taking any heed of the two assassins lying upon the floor. Before he left the room, the chief pinned a piece of parchment to a table with a dagger. Upon this parchment were written a few words of terrible import:—

"The traitor Pancho Bustamente is cited at the expiration of ninety-three days!"

THE DARK-HEARTS.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE STREET.

As soon as they were outside of the house, the masked men, at a sign from the leader, dispersed in various directions. When they had disappeared round the corners of the neighbouring streets, the chief turned towards Don Tadeo, who, scarce recovered from the trying emotions he had successively gone through, and weakened by the blood he had lost, as well as by the prodigious efforts his last struggle had cost him, was leaning, half fainting against the wall of the house he had been so fortunately enabled to quit. A flood of bitter reflections rushed upon his brain; the incidents of that terrible night almost unsettled his reason: in vain he tried to recover the train of his ideas which had been so often and so violently broken. The stranger looked at him for a few minutes with profound attention; then approaching him, he laid his hand quietly upon his shoulder. At this sudden touch, the gentleman started as if he had received an electric shock.

"What!" the unknown said in a tone of reproach, "scarcely entered on the good fight, and you despair already, Don Tadeo?"

The wounded man shook his head.

"You, Don Tadeo, whose lofty brow has never bent before revolutionary storms; you, who in the most trying circumstances have always remained firm, are now pale and cast down, without faith in the present, or hope in the future, and have lost strength and courage through the vain threats of a woman!"

"That woman," he replied mournfully, "has always been my evil genius. She is a demon!"

"And suppose," the unknown exclaimed energetically, "that this woman should succeed in getting up another of the infamous schemes in which her brain is so fertile, a man of heart takes courage in a struggle? Forget these impotent hatreds that can never reach you; remember what you are; look boldly at the glorious

mission which is imposed upon you."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you not understand me? Can you believe that God, who has this night allowed you so miraculously to escape death, has not great designs in store for you? Brother," he added, in a tone of authority, "the existence that has been restored to you is not your own, it belongs to your country!"

A moment of silence followed this appeal, during which Don Tadeo appeared a prey to profound despair. At length, looking at the unknown, he said with bitter despondency—

"What is to be done? Heaven is my witness that my only desire, my sole happiness, would be to see my country free. But during the twenty years we have been struggling we have done nothing, alas! but pass from one tyranny to another, each time riveting afresh the chains which bind us. No! Heaven itself seems to forbid our contending longer against an implacable destiny. You know well from experience that citizens cannot be improvised from slaves. Servitude destroys moral virtue, abases the soul, and degrades the heart. Many generations must pass away before the inhabitants of this unfortunate country will be fit to form a people!"

"By what right do you presume to fathom the designs of Providence?" the unknown replied, in an imposing tone of voice. "Do you know what is reserved for you? Who tells you that the passing triumph of our oppressors is not granted by God, in His boundless wisdom, in order to render their future fall more terrible?"

Don Tadeo, restored to himself by the manly words of his disguised friend, drew himself up proudly, and looked attentively at the speaker.

"And who are you," he said, "whose sympathetic voice has stirred the most secret fibres of my heart? Who authorizes you to speak thus? Answer! Who are you?"

"Of what importance is it who I am," the unknown remarked, calmly, "if I succeed in persuading you that all is far from being lost—that the liberty which you believe for ever destroyed has never been so near triumphing, and that it only perhaps requires one sublime effort to recover it!"

"But still?" the wounded man said, persistently.

"I am he who, a few minutes ago, saved your life. That ought to suffice."

"Not so," Don Tadeo said, warmly, "for you conceal your features under a mask, and the very circumstance you named gives me a right to see them."

"Perhaps it does," the unknown said, slowly removing his mask, and revealing to Don Tadeo, in the pale beams of the moon, a countenance with manly, marked features, and wearing a frank and loyal expression.

"Oh! my heart did not deceive me!" Tadeo cried—"Don Gregorio Peralta!"

"Yes, it is I, Don Tadeo!" the young man, he was scarcely thirty, replied—"and cannot comprehend the depression of the man whom the avengers have chosen as their chief."

"How do you know? Notwithstanding our friendship, I have always concealed from you—"

"Were you not condemned to death?" Don Gregorio interrupted. "Your companions elected me *King of Darkness* in your place, that is, they placed in my hands an immense power, as they had done in yours, of which I was left the uncontrolled disposal. Death unbound the oath of silence imposed upon the brethren. Your name was unknown to all; I was as ignorant that you were the energetic chief who had made our society a power, as you were, my dear friend, that I was one of your soldiers. But, thanks be to God, you are saved, Don Tadeo! Resume your place. You alone, under present circumstances, are able to fill worthily the post which our confidence has assigned you. Become again the King of Darkness! But," he added, in a deep, concentrated tone, "remember that we are the avengers; that we ought to be without pity for ourselves as for others; that one feeling, and one alone, ought to live in our souls—the love of our country!"

Then followed a short silence; the two men appeared to be reflecting deeply. At length Don Tadeo raised his head proudly.

"Thanks, Don Gregorio!" he said, in a firm voice, and pressing his hand—"thanks for your rough words; they have restored me to myself. I will prove myself worthy of you. Don Tadeo de Leon no longer exists; the hired assassins of a tyrant have shot him tonight upon the Plaza Mayor. No one is left but the King of Darkness! the implacable leader of the Dark-Hearts! Woe be to them whom God shall bring across my path! for I will crush them without pity. We shall triumph, Don Gregorio; for from this day I am no longer a man, I am the avenging sword, the exterminating angel, fighting for our country!"

While uttering these words, Don Tadeo had drawn his imposing stature up to its

full height; his handsome, noble features became animated, and his eyes sparkled in accordance with his speech.

"Oh," Don Gregorio exclaimed, cheerfully, "I have found my friend again! Thank God! thank God!"

"Yes, my brother," the leader continued, "from this moment the real struggle between us and the tyrant begins—a struggle without pity, without truce, and without mercy, which can only terminate in the complete extinction of our enemies. Woe be to them! Woe!"

"No time is to be lost; let us begone!" Don Gregorio said.

"But whither am I to go?" Don Tadeo asked, with a sardonic smile. "Am I not legally dead in the eyes of all? My house is no longer mine."

"That is true," the lieutenant of the Dark-Hearts murmured. "Well, never mind that! Tomorrow the news of your miraculous resurrection will be a thunderclap to our enemies! Their awaking will be terrible! They will learn with stupor that the invincible athlete, whom they thought they had for ever crushed beneath their feet, is up again, and ready to renew the contest."

"And this time, I solemnly swear," Don Tadeo cried, with energy, "the fall of the tyrant alone shall terminate it. But you are right; we cannot remain longer here. Come home with me; for a time you will be there in safety; unless," he added, with a smile, "you prefer asking an asylum of Doña Rosario?"

Don Tadeo, who had taken Don Gregorio's arm, stopped suddenly at this question, of which his friend did not suspect the terrible extent. A convulsive shudder darted through his frame, a cold perspiration inundated his face.

"Oh," he exclaimed, in a tone of agony, "my God! I had forgotten!"

Don Gregorio was terrified at the state he beheld him in.

"In heaven's name, what is the matter?" he asked.

"What is the matter!" the chief replied, in a voice choked with emotion, "that woman—that serpent whom we have weakly failed to crush—"

"Well, what of her?"

"Oh, I have but this moment recollected a horrible threat she made. Good heavens! good heavens! What is to be done?"

"Explain yourself, my friend; you quite terrify me."

"By her orders, Doña Rosario this very night, was to be carried off; and who knows if, furious at my escape from her assassins, that woman has not by this time put her to death?"

"Oh, that is frightful!" Don Gregorio cried. "What is to be done?"

"Oh, that woman!" the wounded man replied; "and not to be able to act, or to know how to thwart her horrible schemes."

"Let us fly to Doña Rosario's residence!" Don Gregorio said.

"Alas! you see I am wounded; I can scarcely support myself."

"Well, when you can no longer walk, I will carry you," his friend said, resolutely.

"Thanks, brother! May God help us!"

And the two men, the one leaning upon the other, set off, as fast as the state of Don Tadeo would permit, towards the residence of the lady whom they were so anxious to save. But, in spite of the earnest will that animated him, Don Tadeo felt his strength fail him; and, notwithstanding all his efforts, it was with extreme difficulty he sustained himself. Whilst labouring on thus, the noise of horses' footsteps reached them from a distance. Torches gleamed up the street, and a troop of horsemen appeared in sight.

"Oh, oh!" Don Gregorio said, stopping, and endeavouring to make out who those persons could be, who, in defiance of the police regulations, dared to be passing along the streets at this hour of the night.

"Let us stop," Don Tadeo replied; "I see the glitter of uniforms. They are the spies of the minister of war."

"By Saint Jago!" cried Don Gregorio, "it is General Bustamente himself! The two accomplices are going to have a little chat together."

"Yes," the wounded man said, in a faltering voice; "he is going towards the residence of the Linda."

As the horsemen were but at a short distance, the two men, fearing to be surprised, turned quickly into a side street, and the General and his suite passed by without seeing them.

"Let us begone as fast as possible," Don Gregorio said; and his companion, aware of the urgency for prompt flight, made a desperate effort. They resumed their course, and had walked for about ten minutes, when they heard the steps of more horses coming towards them.

"What can this mean?" the wounded man said, endeavouring to smile; "Are all the people of Santiago running about the streets tonight?"

"Hum!" said Don Gregorio, "I will find out this time."

All at once a female voice was heard in a lamentable tone imploring help.

"Make her hold her tongue, *carajas!*" a man said, coarsely.

But the sound of that voice had reached the ears of Don Tadeo and his friend. At that voice, which both had recognized, they were roused to feelings of deep interest and anger. They pressed each other's hand firmly; their resolution was formed—to die or to save her who called upon them for help.

"Holloa! what is this about?" another individual said, pulling up his horse.

Two men, standing firmly in the middle of the street, seemed determined to bar the passage of the horsemen, of whom there were five. One of them held a woman before him on his horse.

"Holloa!" cried the one who had just spoken, "get out of the way, if you don't wish to be ridden over."

"You shall not pass," a deep voice replied, "unless you release the woman you are bearing off."

"Shan't we?" the horseman remarked with a laugh.

"Try," said Don Gregorio, cocking his pistol; a movement silently imitated by Don Tadeo, whom he had supplied with firearms.

"For the last time, stand out of the way!" the horseman shouted.

"We will not!"

"We will ride over you, then!" and turning towards his companions, "Forward!" he cried angrily.

The five horsemen advanced with uplifted sabres upon the two men, who, firmly fixed in the middle of the street, made no effort to avoid them.

CHAPTER X.

SWORD-THRUSTS.

In order to make the facts that follow intelligible, we must leave Don Tadeo and his friend in their critical position, and return to the two principal personages of this history, whom we have so long neglected. We saw in a preceding chapter the two foster brothers gaily leaving Valparaiso, to repair to the capital of Chili, like Bias, carrying all their fortune with them, but possessing over the philosophical Greek the immense advantage of being amply furnished with hopes and illusions, two words which, in this life, have but too frequently the same meaning.

After a rather long ride, the young men had stopped for the night in a miserable *rancho* constructed of mud and dry branches, the dismal skeleton of which stood out on one side of the road. The inhabitant of this miserable dwelling, a poor devil of a peon, whose life was passed in guarding a few head of lean cattle, gave our travellers a frank and hospitable reception. Quite delighted at having something to offer them, he had cheerfully shared with them his *charqui*—strips of meat, dried in the sun—and his *harina tostada*—roasted corn—the whole washed down with cups of detestable *chicha*.

The Frenchmen, who had been literally dying of hunger, were glad of even these humble viands, however little savoury they might be, and after ascertaining that their horses were comfortably provided for, they lay down, wrapped in their ponchos, upon a heap of dry leaves, a delicious bed for fatigued men, and upon which they slept soundly till morning.

At daybreak, our two adventurers, still accompanied by their dog Cæsar, who, whatever he might think, expressed no astonishment at this new kind of life, but trotted seriously beside them, saddled their horses, bade farewell to their host, to whom they gave a few reals in return for his hospitality, and set forward again, looking with earnest curiosity at every object that presented itself to their view, and surprised to find so little difference between the New World and the Old. The life they were beginning, so different from that they had hitherto led, was, for them, full of unexpected charms, and they felt like schoolboys in holiday time. Their lungs seemed to expand to inhale the fresh, sharp breeze of the mountains. Everything, in their eyes, wore a smiling aspect; in a word, they felt they lived.

It is about thirty-five leagues from Valparaiso to Chili, as the people of the country are accustomed to call the capital of the Republic. The handsome, broad, and well-kept up road, which was formerly cut through the mountain by the

Spaniards, is rather monotonous, and completely devoid of interest for tourists. Vegetation is rare and poor; a fine and almost impalpable dust arises with the least puff of wind. The few trees, which stand at long distances from each other, are slender, stunted, dried up by both wind and sun, and seem, by their wretched appearance, to protest against the efforts at cultivation which have been made on this plateau, which is rendered sterile by the strong sea breezes and the cold winds of the Cordilleras which sweep over it.

At times may be seen, at an immense height, like a black dot in space, the great condor of Chili, the eagle of the Andes, or the savage vulture in search of prey. At long intervals pass *recuas* of mules, headed by the *yegua madrina*, whose sonorous bells are heard to a great distance, accompanying, well or ill, the dismal chant of the muleteer, who thus endeavours to keep his beasts going. Or else it is a *guaso* of the interior, hastening to his *chacra* or his *hacienda*, and who, proudly mounted upon a half wild horse, passes like a whirlwind, favouring you as he goes by, with the eternal "Santas tardes, caballero!"

With the exception of what we have described, the road is dull, dusty, and solitary. There is not, as with us, a single hostelry affording accommodation for horse and foot; these would be useless establishments in a country where the stranger enters every house as if it were his own home. Nothing! Solitude everywhere and always; hunger, thirst, and fatigue must be expected and endured.

But our young men perceived nothing of this. Enthusiasm supplied the place of all they wanted; the road appeared charming to them; the journey they were making, delightful! They were in America; beneath their feet was the soil of the New World, that privileged land, of which so many surprising accounts are given; of which so many people talk, and about which so few know anything. Having landed only a few days before, while still under the impressions of an endless passage, the weariness of which had weighed down their spirits like a mantle of lead, they beheld Chili through the enchanting prism of their hopes; reality did not yet exist for them. What we have here said may appear a paradox to many people; and yet, we are satisfied that all travellers of good faith will acknowledge the exact truth.

At times travelling at a steady foot pace, at others enjoying a laugh and a gallop, our young men, to whom the political events of the Chilean Republic were very uninteresting, and who, consequently, knew nothing of what was going on, arrived quietly within a league of Santiago, at about eleven o'clock in the evening, just at the moment when the ten Chilean patriots were falling on the

Plaza Mayor, beneath the balls of General Bustamente's soldiers.

"Let us pull up here," Valentine said cheerfully; "it will give our horses time to breathe."

"Pull up! what for?" Louis asked. "It is late; we shall not find a single hotel open."

"My dear friend," Valentine replied, with a laugh, "you are still a Parisian to the backbone! You forget that we are in America. In that city, of which the numerous steeples dimly stand out on the horizon before us, everybody is long since asleep, and all the doors are closed."

"What shall we do, then?"

"Pardieu! why, we will bivouac. The night is magnificent. The heavens display all their jewelry; the air is warm and balmy; what better could we desire?"

"Oh, nothing, of course!" Louis replied, laughingly.

"Well, then, we have, as you see, time to chat a little."

"Chat, brother! why, we have done nothing else since morning."

"Pardon me, I don't agree with you. We have talked much, about all sorts of things, of the country in which we are, and of the manners of the inhabitants, little as we know about them; but we have not talked in the manner I mean."

"Explain yourself more clearly."

"Look you, brother; an idea has just struck me. We know not what adventures await us in that city, yonder, before us. Well! before we enter it, I should like to have a sort of final conversation with you."

The young men took off their horses' bridles, that the animals might have the advantage of a few tufts of grass which sprang up here and there; and, stretching themselves luxuriously upon the ground, they lit their cigars.

"We are in America," Valentine resumed; "in the country of gold, upon that soil where, with intelligence and courage, men of our age can in a few years amass princely fortunes!"

"Do you know, my friend——" interrupted Louis.

"Oh, perfectly!" said Valentine, cutting him short. "You are in love, and you are seeking the object of your love; that's understood: but that does not at all interfere with our projects—quite the contrary."

"How is that?"

"Pardieu! that's plain enough. You know, do you not, that Doña Rosario—that's her name, I think—"

"Yes."

"Very well, then; you know she is rich, do you not?"

"There's no doubt of that."

"Ay, ay! but be it understood, not rich as with us: that is to say, some fifty thousand francs a year—a paltry pittance!—but rich as people are here—a dozen times over millionaires!"

"Probably she may be," the young man said impatiently.

"That's capital! You must understand, then, that when we have found her, for we *shall* find her, and that soon, you can only demand her hand by producing a fortune equal to her own."

"The devil! I never thought of that," said the young man.

"I know you did not; you are in love; and, like all other men afflicted with that disease, you think of nothing but the person you love. Fortunately, however, I am with you, to think for both; and whenever you have spoken to me of love, I have replied by reminding you of fortune."

"That is true. But how is fortune to be made so promptly?"

"Ah! ah! you have come to that question at last," Valentine said, laughing.

"I know no profession," Louis continued, following his own idea.

"Nor I either. But let not that alarm you; people succeed best in things they don't understand."

"What's to be done?"

"I will think of it; so set your mind at rest. But you must be well convinced of one thing, and that is, that we have set foot in a land where the ideas are quite different from those of the country we have left; where the manners and customs are diametrically opposite."

"You mean to say—"

"I mean to say that we must forget all we have learnt, in order that we may remember but one thing—our desire quickly to make a colossal fortune."

"By honourable means?"

"I am acquainted with no other," Valentine replied, seriously. "And remember, brother, that in the country in which we at present are, the point of honour is not at all the same as in France, and many things which with us would appear false coin are here deemed good and passable. On this point a word to the wise! You understand me, don't you?"

"Nearly, I think."

"Very well! Imagine we are in an enemy's country, and must act accordingly."

"But——"

"Do you wish to marry the woman you love?"

"Can you ask me such a question?"

"Allow me to act, then, as I see best! But, above all, when chance throws a good opportunity in our way, let us be careful not to miss it."

"Act just as you please."

"Well, that is all I had to say to you;" and throwing away the remains of his cigar, he rose from his recumbent position.

They were soon again in the saddle, and, at a foot's pace, resumed their way towards the city, chatting as they went.

Midnight was striking by the clock of the Cabildo at the moment when they entered Santiago by the Canada. The streets were deserted and silent.

"Everybody is asleep," said Louis.

"So it seems," Valentine replied. "Let us look out, notwithstanding. If we find no door open, we can then but compound for a night's bivouac, as I suggested."

At this moment two pistol shots were heard, mingled with the gallop of horses.

"What can that be?" said Louis. "Assassination is going on here!"

"Forward! cordieu!" replied Valentine.

They clapped spurs to their horses, and galloped at full speed in the direction whence the sound proceeded. They soon reached a narrow street, in the middle of which two men on foot were bravely contending with five on horseback.

"Have at the horsemen!" Valentine shouted; "help the weaker party!"

"Be of good heart, gentlemen!" said Louis; "help is at hand!"

And timely help it was for Don Gregorio and his friend. A minute later, and they must have succumbed. The providential arrival of the Frenchmen quickly changed the appearance of the fight. Two horsemen fell dead from pistol shots fired by the young men; while a third, knocked down by Don Gregorio, was silently strangled by Cæsar. The other two thought it high time to decamp, leaving their fair prisoner behind them. She had fainted; and Don Tadeo, leaning against the wall of a house, was upon the point of following her example. Valentine, with the presence of mind acquired in his old profession of a Spahi, secured the horses of the bandits killed in the skirmish.

"Quick, gentlemen! to the saddle!" Valentine said to the Chilians.

Louis had already dismounted, and was attending to the young lady.

"Do not leave us," Don Gregorio remarked; "we are surrounded by enemies."

"Fear nothing!" said Valentine, "we are quite at your service."

"Many thanks!—A little assistance, if you please, to place my friend, who is wounded, on horseback."

Once in the saddle, Don Tadeo declared he felt sufficiently strong to keep his seat without help. Don Gregorio placed the still inanimate young lady before him.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "nothing remains for me but to thank you most cordially, if your business will not allow you to remain longer with us."

"I beg to repeat, caballeros, that we are at your service."

"We have no pressing demand upon our time; we will not leave you till we are assured you are in safety," Louis said, with animation.

"Follow me, then," said Don Gregorio, with a bow; "and do not spare the horses; it is an affair of life and death."

And the four horsemen set off as fast as their horses could bear them.

"Eh! eh!" said Valentine, in an undertone to his foster brother. "Here is an adventure that promises something! We are losing no time at Santiago! What think you?"

"We shall see!" Louis replied, in a more thoughtful tone.

No light had gleamed out, no window had been opened, during the combat. The

streets remained silent and gloomy; the city seemed abandoned. Nothing was to be heard but the clatter of the horses' feet upon the rough pavement of the streets through which they galloped. The cathedral clock struck two as they passed across the Plaza Mayor. Don Tadeo could not repress a sigh of relief when glancing at the spot where on, only a few hours before, he had so miraculously escaped death.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL BUSTAMENTE.

Don Tadeo was right, when, on seeing General Bustamente pass, he said he was on his way to visit his mistress. It was, in fact, to the residence of the Linda the General was going. On arriving at the gate, one of his men dismounted, and knocked. But no one answered; and at a sign from the General, the soldier knocked louder. But still all remained silent; there was no movement within. He began to feel uneasy. This silence was the more extraordinary from the General's visit having been announced, and he was, consequently, expected. "Oh! oh!" he said, "What is going on here? Knock again, Diego, and knock in a way to make yourself heard!"

The soldier knocked with all his strength, but still uselessly. Don Pancho's brow contracted; he began to fancy some misfortune must have occurred.

"Break open the door!" he cried.

The order was instantly obeyed; and the General, followed by his escort, entered the house. In the Patio all dismounted.

"Be prudent," said the General in a low voice to the corporal who commanded the escort; "place sentinels everywhere, and keep a sharp look-out whilst I search the house."

After giving these orders, the General took his pistols from his holsters, and, followed by some of his lancers, entered the house; but everywhere the silence of death prevailed. After passing through several apartments, he arrived at a door, which, being a little ajar, allowed a stream of light to pass. From the other side of this door proceeded something like stifled groans. With a kick of his foot, one of the lancers dashed open the door; the General entered, and a strange spectacle presented itself to his astonished eyes! Doña Maria, tightly bound, and gagged, was fastened to the foot of a damask bed, saturated with blood. The furniture was broken and disordered, whilst two dead bodies, lying in a pool of blood, made it evident that the room had been the scene of a desperate conflict.

The general ordered the dead bodies to be removed, and then desired to be left alone with the lady. As soon as the lancers had departed he shut the door, and approaching the Linda, he hastened to release her from her bonds. She was senseless.

On turning round to place the pistols he had retained in his hands on the table, he

drew back with astonishment, and almost with terror, as he perceived the dagger standing erect in the middle of it. But this instinctive feeling lasted only a moment. He went quickly up to the table, seized the dagger, which he carefully drew out, and eagerly took up the paper it had pinned down.

"The tyrant Don Pancho Bustamente is cited at the expiration of ninety-three days!"

"THE DARK-HEARTS."

he read in a loud, harsh tone, and then crushed the paper violently in his hand. "Sangre de Dios! Will these demons always make a mock of me? Oh! they know that I show no mercy, and that those who fall into my hands——"

"Escape!" said a hollow voice, which made him start involuntarily.

He turned sharply round, and beheld the Linda, with her vicious eye fixed upon him with a demoniacal expression. He sprang towards her.

"Thank God!" he cried warmly, "you are again restored to your senses. Are you sufficiently recovered to explain the scene that has taken place here?"

"A terrible scene, Don Pancho!" she replied, in a tremulous voice; "a scene, the bare remembrance of which still freezes me with terror."

"Are you strong enough to describe it to me?"

"I hope so," she replied. "Listen to me attentively, Don Pancho, for what I have to tell concerns you, perhaps, more than me."

"You mean this insolent summons, I suppose?" he remarked, showing it.

She glanced over it, and replied—

"I did not even know that such a paper had been addressed to you. But listen to me attentively."

"In the first place, have the goodness to explain to me what you just now said."

"Everything in its turn, General; I will not fail to explain everything, for the vengeance I thirst for must be complete."

"Oh!" he said, a flash of hatred gleaming from his eye, "set your heart at ease on that head,—whilst avenging myself, I will avenge you."

The Linda related to the General what had passed between her and Don Tadeo in the fullest details—how the Dark-Hearts had snatched him from her hands, and the threats they had addressed to her on leaving her. But, with that talent which

all women possess, of making themselves appear innocent in everything, she represented as a miraculous piece of awkwardness on the part of the soldiers charged to shoot him, the fact of Don Tadeo being alive after his execution. She said that, attracted by the hope of avenging himself upon her, whom he suspected of being no stranger to his condemnation, he had introduced himself unseen into her house, where by a strange chance she happened to be alone, having that evening permitted her servants to be present at a *romeria* (a fête), from which they were not to return before three o'clock.

The General had not for an instant the idea of doubting the veracity of his mistress. The situation in which he had found her,—the incredible news of the resurrection of his most implacable enemy, altogether so confused his thoughts, that suspicion had no time to enter his mind. He strode about the room with hasty steps, revolving in his head the most extravagant projects for seizing Don Tadeo, and, above all, for annihilating the Dark-Hearts,—those never-to-be-caught Proteuses, who so incessantly crossed his path, thwarted all his plans, and always escaped him. He plainly saw what additional strength the escape of Don Tadeo would give to the patriots, and how much it would complicate his political embarrassments, by placing at their head a resolute man who could have no longer any considerations to preserve, but would wage war to the knife with him. His perplexity was extreme; he instinctively felt that the ground beneath him was mined, that he was walking over a volcano, but he had no power to denounce to public opprobrium the enemies who conspired his ruin. The recital made by his mistress had produced the effect of a thunderclap upon him; he knew not what measures to employ in order to counteract the numerous plots in action against him on all sides, and simultaneously. The Linda did not take her eyes off him for a moment, but watched upon his countenance the various feelings aroused by what she told him.

We will, in a few words, introduce to the reader this personage, who will play so important a part in the course of the following history.^[1] General Don Pancho Bustamente, who has left in Chili a reputation for cruelty so terrible that he is generally called *El Verdugo*, or the executioner, was a man of from thirty-five to thirty-six years of age, although he looked near fifty, a little above the middle height, well made, and of good carriage, announcing altogether great corporeal strength. His features were tolerably regular, but his prominent forehead, his grey eyes deeply set beneath the brows, and close to his hook nose, his large mouth and high cheek bones, gave him something of a resemblance to a bird of prey. His chin was square, an indication of obstinacy; his hair and moustache, beginning to be streaked with grey, were trained and cut in military fashion. He

wore the magnificent uniform, covered at every seam with gold embroidery, of a general officer.

Don Bustamente was the son of his own works, which was in his favour. At first a simple soldier, he had, by exemplary conduct and more than common talents, raised himself, step by step, to the highest rank of the army, and had in the last instance been named minister-at-war. Then the jealousy which had been silent whilst he was confounded with the crowd, was unchained against him. The General, instead of despising calumnies which might have died out of themselves, gave them some degree of foundation, by inaugurating a system of severity and cruelty. Devoured by an ambition which nothing could satisfy, all means were deemed good by him for the attainment of an object he secretly aimed at, which was the overthrow of the republic and government of Chili, and the formation of Bolivia and Araucania into one state, of which he would cause himself to be proclaimed Protector—an object which, besides the almost insurmountable difficulties it presented, ever appeared—owing to the universal hatred which the General had aroused against himself—to slip further from his grasp each time he thought he was about grasping it.

At the moment we bring him on the scene, he found himself in one of the most critical circumstances of his political career. He had in vain shot the patriots *en masse*—conspiracies, as always happens in such cases, succeeded each other without interruption, and the system of terror which he had inaugurated, far from intimidating the population, appeared, on the contrary, to urge them on to revolt. Secret societies were formed; and one of these, the most powerful and the most terrible, that of the Dark-Hearts, enveloped him in invisible nets in which he struggled in vain. He foresaw that if he did not hasten on the *coup d'état* he meditated, he should be lost beyond redemption. After a rather long silence, the General placed himself by the side of the Linda.

"We will be avenged!" he said, in a deep tone; "be but patient."

"Oh!" she replied, bitterly, "my vengeance has commenced!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I have caused Doña Rosario del Valle, the woman Don Tadeo de Leon loves so passionately, to be carried off."

"You have *done* that?" said the General.

"Yes, and in ten minutes she will be here."

"Oh! oh!" he exclaimed; "and do you mean to keep her with you?"

"With me!" she cried; "No, I thank you, General. I hear that the Pehuenches are very fond of white women; I will make them a present of her."

"Oh!" Don Pancho muttered, "women will be always our masters! they alone know how to revenge themselves! But," he added aloud, "have you no fear lest the man to whom you have confided this mission should betray you?"

She smiled with terrible irony,

"No," she said; "that man hates Don Tadeo more than I do, if that be possible; he is working out his own vengeance."

At the same instant steps were heard in the chamber preceding the room.

"You will see, General—here is my emissary. Come in!" the Linda cried.

A man appeared; his face was pale and haggard; and his clothes, torn and disordered, were stained in various places with blood.

"Well!" she exclaimed, in a tone of intense anxiety.

"All has failed," answered the man, breathless with haste and terror.

"What!" the Linda shouted, with a cry like that of a wild beast.

"There were five of us," the man continued, quite unmoved, "and we carried off the *señorita*. All went on well till within a short distance from this house, when we were attacked by four demons, who came I know not whence."

"And you did not defend yourselves, miserable cowards!" interrupted the General violently.

The bandit gave him a cold look, and continued impassively—

"Three of our number are dead, and the leader and myself wounded."

"And the girl?" the Linda asked passionately.

"The girl was recaptured by our opponents. The Englishman has sent me to you to learn if you still wish him to carry off Doña Rosario?"

"Would he attempt it again?"

"Yes. And this time, he says, he is certain to succeed if the conditions are the same."

A smile of contempt played round the lips of the courtesan.

"Repeat to him this," she replied; "not only shall he receive the hundred ounces

if he succeeds, but, still further, he shall have a hundred more; and that he may be in no doubt of my promise," she added, rising and taking from a drawer a rather heavy bag which she handed to the bandit, "give him this; there is the half of the sum, but bid him despatch!"

The man bowed.

"As to you, Juanito," she continued, "as soon as you have acquitted yourself of this mission, return, for I shall, perhaps, want you here. Begone!"

The bandit disappeared instantly.

"Who is that man?" the General asked.

"A poor devil whom I saved some years ago from certain death. He is devoted to me, body and soul."

"Hum!" said the general, "he has rather too cunning an eye not to be a rogue."

The Linda shrugged her shoulders.

"You are mistrustful of everybody," she said.

"That is the way not to be deceived."

"Or to be deceived the more easily."

"Perhaps so. Well, you see this abduction, so admirably planned, and the success of which was certain, has failed."

"I can only repeat what you yourself said to me just now."

"What is that?"

"Patience! But, pray, what are your present plans?" The General rose.

"Whilst you are carrying on against our enemies," he said, in a low, stern tone, "a guerilla warfare of ambuscades and treacheries, I, on my part, will wage an open war against them—a war in the face of the sun, but as merciless as yours. Their blood shall flow in streams over all the territories of the Republic. The Dark-Hearts have summoned me in ninety-three days. Well, I take up the gauntlet they have thrown to me."

"That is well!" the Linda replied. "And now let us so arrange our plans that they may not fail like their predecessors. We must come to an end with these miserable plotters, and in doing so, take a revenge that will make an impression on others."

"It shall be a vengeance! I will stake my head on the game. Oh," he added, "I hold them! I have found the means I sought to make them all fall into my hands; let them sleep for a while in deceitful security, but their awakening shall be terrible!"

And, having saluted the Linda with the greatest courtesy, the General retired.

"I leave you a few soldiers to watch over your safety till the return of your servants," he said, as he went out.

"Thank you, thank you!" she replied, with a bland smile.

The Linda, when left alone, instead of seeking the repose so necessary after the excitement of the night, remained plunged in deep thought. At sunrise she was still in the same place, in the same position. She was still reflecting, but her features became animated; a sinister smile curled her pale lips; and her eyes, though apparently fixed upon vacancy, emitted portentous flashes. Suddenly she sprang up, and passing her hand rapidly over her brow, as if to efface its wrinkles, she cried, in a tone of triumph—

"And I, too, will succeed!"

[1] Reasons of the highest consideration oblige us to change the names and the portraits of the personages of this history, as the majority still exist. But we vouch for the correctness of the facts we relate.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SPY.

When the young lady was delivered, the four men set off as fast as they could go, with regard to her ease. In ten minutes they were out of the city, and with the change of the road their speed was increased. The route they took was that which leads to Talca.

"Eh, eh!" Valentine said, laughing, to his foster brother; "we seem to be playing at prisoners' bars. We enter the city by one gate, to leave it immediately by another. We shall not have an opportunity of seeing the capital of Chili this time."

With the exception of these few words, to which Louis only replied by a careless

shrug of the shoulders, no other conversation took place during the hour which their rapid journey lasted. By the pale light of the moon the trees on each side of the road seemed to defile like a legion of melancholy phantoms. Ere long the white walls of a *chacra* (large farm) stood out upon the horizon.

"Here we are," said Don Gregorio, pointing with his finger.

They reached the house in a few minutes. The gate was open, but a man was standing evidently on the watch. The fugitives dashed like a hurricane into the *patio*, and the gates were immediately closed behind them.

"What has happened, Tio Pepito?" Don Gregorio asked, before he was quite off his horse, of the man who appeared to have expected him.

"Nothing, *mi amo*" (my master), "nothing of consequence," replied Tio Pepito, a little thick-set man, with a round face, lit up by two grey eyes, sparkling with cunning.

"Have not the persons I expected arrived?"

"Pardon me, *mi amo*. They have been at the *chacra* more than an hour. They say they must begone immediately; they are waiting for you impatiently."

"That's well. Announce my arrival to them, and tell them I shall be at their service in two or three minutes."

The mayoral, for this man was the major-domo of the *chacra*, entered the house without reply. Don Tadeo also, who seemed to know perfectly well where he was, disappeared, bearing the young girl in his arms. The two Frenchmen were left alone with the *chacrero*, who advanced towards them.

"Now that you are, as we suppose, for the present at least, in safety, sir," said Valentine, "we have only to take our leave of you."

"Not so!" Don Gregorio exclaimed; "it must not be so. *Diable!* as you Frenchmen say," he added, smiling; "chance does not so often procure us such friends as you, to allow us to part with you thus when we have met you. You will remain here, if you please. Our acquaintance must not terminate so."

"If our continuing here can be of any service to you," Louis replied, courteously, "we are at your command."

"Thank you," he said, in a slightly agitated voice, and pressing their hands warmly; "I shall never forget that I owe to you the lives of myself and my friend. In what way can I be of service to you?"

"Well," Valentine said, laughing, "in every way, and no way, as it may happen, caballero."

"Explain yourself," Don Gregorio replied.

"*Dame!* it is clear enough; we are strangers in this country."

"When did you arrive?" the Chilian said, examining them attentively.

"Faith! very recently. You are the first persons we have spoken to."

"That is well," Gregorio said, slowly. "I told you that I was at your service, did I not?"

"Yes, and we sincerely thank you; although we hope never to have occasion to remind you of this obliging offer."

"I perfectly appreciate your delicacy; but a service like the one you have rendered me and my friend is an eternal bond. Take no heed of your future fortune, it is made."

"Pardon me, pardon me!" said Valentine, earnestly; "we do not understand one another at all; you mistake us. We are not men who expect to be paid for having acted as our hearts dictated. You owe us nothing."

"I do not propose or pretend to pay you, gentlemen. I only wish, in order to attach you to me, to propose to you to share my good or evil fortune; in a word, I offer myself to you as a brother."

"In that case we at once accede," said Louis, "and will endeavour to prove ourselves worthy of such an offer."

"I have no doubt you will. Only I beg you not to be misled by my words; the life I am leading at present is full of perils."

"I can suppose that," said Valentine, with a laugh. "The scene at which we have been present, and the *denoûment* of which we perhaps hastened, makes it pretty evident that your existence is not of the most peaceful nature."

"What you have as yet seen is nothing. Do you know nobody in this country?"

"Nobody."

"Your political opinions, then, are unformed?"

"As regards Chili, completely."

"Bravo!" Don Gregorio exclaimed, with delight; "if we agree on that point our

compact will be for life and death."

"We do agree," said Valentine, laughing; "and if you conspire—"

"Well?" the Chilian asked, fixing an inquiring look upon him.

"Why, we will conspire, too, pardieu! That is agreed."

The three men exchanged a cordial pressure of the hand, and then Don Gregorio called the major-domo to conduct them to the chamber which was prepared for them.

"Good night! or rather good morning!" he said, on quitting them.

"Come!" said Valentine, rubbing his hands, "matters are going on well. We shall not want for amusement here."

"Hum!" Louis replied, with a tone of something like uneasiness; "conspire!"

"Well, and what better?" said Valentine. "Does that frighten you? Remember, my friend, that the best fishing is in troubled waters."

"In that case," Louis remarked, taking up the gay humour of his companion, "if my presentiments are just, ours will be miraculous."

"I expect so, firmly," said Valentine, bidding good night to the major-domo, who retired, after bowing respectfully.

The *cuarto* (chamber) in which the young men found themselves, was whitewashed, and entirely destitute of furniture, with the exception of two oak frames furnished with dressed hides, which served as beds, a massive table with twisted feet, and four seats covered with leather. In a corner of the room burned a little green wax light before a badly-engraved print supposed to represent the Virgin.

"Eh!" said Louis, casting a glance around him, "our friends, the Chilians, do not seem to consult comfort much."

"Bah!" Valentine replied, "we have all that we require. A man can sleep soundly anywhere when he is fatigued. This chamber is better than the bivouac we were threatened with."

"You are right. Let us take a little rest then, for we don't know what tomorrow has in reserve for us."

In a quarter of an hour they were both fast asleep. At the moment the Frenchmen went into the house with the major-domo, Don Tadeo came out by another door.

"Well?" Don Gregorio asked, anxiously.

"She is asleep. Her terror is abated," Don Tadeo replied. "The joy she experienced at seeing me, whom she believed dead, brought about a very salutary crisis."

"I am glad to hear it! In that quarter, then, we may be at ease?"

"Completely."

"Do you feel yourself strong enough to be present at an important interview?"

"Is it necessary that I should be present?"

"I think it quite right that you should hear the communications that one of my emissaries is about to make me."

"It is very imprudent of you," said Don Tadeo, "to receive such a man in your own house!"

"Oh! do not alarm yourself! I have known him for a long time. Besides, he is not aware whose house he is in; he was brought hither blinded, by two of our brethren. In addition to which, we shall be masked."

"Well! since you desire it, I am at your commands."

The two friends, after having covered their faces with black velvet masks, entered the apartment in which were the persons who waited for them. This apartment, which served as a dining room, was very large, and furnished with a long table; it was faintly illumined by two sconces, in which burned small candles of yellow tallow, yielding so doubtful a light that objects could be seen but indistinctly. Three men, wrapped in variegated ponchos, and with broad-brimmed hats pulled down over their eyes, were carelessly smoking their slender *papelitos*, whilst warming themselves round a copper *brasero*, placed in the middle of the apartment, and in which some olive-stones were slowly burning. At the entrance of the leaders of the Dark-Hearts, these men rose.

"Why," asked Don Tadeo, who at the first glance recognized the emissary, "why did you not wait, Don Pedro, for the meeting tomorrow, at the *Quinta Verde*, to communicate to the council the revelations you have to make?"

The man thus named as Don Pedro bowed respectfully. He was an individual of about thirty-five years of age. He was tall, and his countenance, as sharp as the blade of a knife, wore a cunning, roguish expression.

"What I have to state only indirectly concerns the Dark-Hearts," he said.

"Then, of what importance is it to us?" Don Gregorio interrupted him.

"But it greatly concerns the leaders, particularly the King of Darkness."

"Explain yourself then, for he is before you," Don Tadeo remarked, taking a step forward.

Pedro darted a look at him which seemed to endeavour to penetrate through the tissue of his mask.

"What I have to say will be brief," he replied,—*"I leave to you the care of judging of its importance. General Don Bustamente will be present at the meeting tomorrow."*

"Are you sure of that?" the two conspirators exclaimed with a degree of astonishment that denoted incredulity.

"It was I who persuaded him to do so."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"Are you ignorant, then," Don Tadeo exclaimed with great warmth, "in what manner we punish traitors?"

"I am no traitor; on the contrary, I deliver into your hands your most implacable enemy."

Don Tadeo replied only by a suspicious glance.

"The General then is ignorant?"

"Of everything," said Don Pedro.

"With what purpose, then, does he wish to introduce himself among us?"

"Can you not guess? For that of obtaining your secret."

"But he risks his life."

"Do you forget that every adept must be introduced by a sponsor, who alone knows him? No one sees his face. Well, *I* introduce him," he added, with a smile of strange significance.

"That is true. But if he should suspect you of treachery?"

"I must undergo the consequences; but he will not suspect me."

"Why not?" Don Gregorio asked.

"Because," the spy replied, with a cynical smile, "for ten years the General has employed me, and during those ten years he has had only cause to praise me for the services I have rendered him."

A momentary silence followed.

"Here!" said Don Gregorio, after a long pause, "this time it is not ten ounces, but twenty, that you have earned. Continue to be faithful to us."

And he placed a heavy purse in his hands. The spy seized it with a gesture of avidity, and concealed it quickly under his poncho.

"You shall have no reproach to make me," he replied, with a bow.

"I hope we shall not," said Don Tadeo, with difficulty repressing an expression of disgust. "Only remember, we should be merciless."

"I know it."

"In that case, farewell."

"Farewell till tomorrow."

The men who had brought him, and who during the conversation had remained motionless, at a sign from Don Gregorio approached the spy, bandaged his eyes again, and led him away.

"Is that fellow a traitor?" asked Don Gregorio, as he listened to the retreating steps of the horses.

"It is our duty to suppose him one," the King of Darkness replied, gravely.

The two friends, instead of seeking the repose which must have been so necessary to them, talked together for a long time, in order to arrange all the measures of safety which were required by the importance of the scene about to take place on the morrow at the meeting of the conspirators. In the meantime Don Pedro had been quickly led back to Santiago. On arriving at one of the gates, his guides left him, disappearing in opposite directions. As soon as he was alone, he removed the handkerchief from his eyes.

"Hum!" he said, with a sinister smile, as he tossed up in his right hand the purse Don Gregorio had given him. "Twenty ounces make a purse of gold. Now let us see if General Bustamente is as liberal as his enemies. By the Virgin! the news I carry him are worth something to him! Let us try to get the best price for them."

After having cast his eyes around to see if the coast was clear, he set off at a

sharp trot towards the government palace, muttering to himself—

"Bah! times are hard. If a man did not manoeuvre a little, he would find no means of bringing up his family honestly."

This reflection, of a rather dubious morality, was accompanied by a grimace, the expression of which would have given Don Tadeo cause for suspicion if he had seen it.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOVE.

On the morrow the two Frenchmen were awakened by the rays of the sun. The day promised to be a brilliant one, for there was not a cloud in the heavens. A light vapour, full of penetrating odours, arose slowly from the earth, drawn up by the beams of the sun, whose warm influence increased every minute. The morning breeze refreshed the air, and invited them to inhale it. The young men, perfectly recovered from their fatigue, sprang cheerfully from their humble beds and dressed themselves in haste.

The chacra, of which they had only a glimpse the night before by moonlight, was an immense farm, consisting of extensive buildings, and surrounded by fields in full cultivation. The greatest animation prevailed everywhere. Peons, mounted on half wild horses, were driving out the cattle to the artificial meadows, whilst others were running about after the horses they were getting together, in order to lead them to the drinking place. In the patio the major-domo was overlooking the women and girls engaged in milking. In short, this residence, which had appeared to them so silent and dismal the night before, assumed by daylight an appearance of life and cheerfulness delightful to contemplate.

The cries of the peons mingled with the lowing of the cattle, the barking of the dogs, and the crowing of the cocks, and formed that melodious concert which is only to be heard on a farm, and which always rejoices the heart.

It is a justice that we willingly render here to the Chilian republic when we say that it alone of the southern states of America appears to understand that the wealth of a country consists not in the number of its mines, but in the

encouragement given to cultivation; and that this country, while possessing rich mines of gold, silver, and precious stones, only places their produce in the second rank, whilst it reserves its principal solicitude for agriculture. Chili is as yet young as a nation. There manufactures and the arts are in their infancy; but the farms are numerous, the fields well cultivated, and soon this country will be called upon, there is no doubt, through its system of labour, to become the entrepôt of the other American powers, which it already provides in a great measure with corn and wine, from Cape Horn to California.

Behind the chacra extended a well-kept up garden, in which oranges, pomegranates, and citrons, planted in the open ground, grew amidst limes, apples, plums, and all the other fruits of Europe. Louis was agreeably surprised at the aspect of this garden, with its numerous alleys, in which a thousand birds of brilliant colours warbled gaily under the foliage of the tufted thickets of jasmine and honeysuckle. Whilst Valentine went, followed by Cæsar, to look at the operations of the peons and smoke his cigar in the patio, Louis felt himself led by his dreamy spirit to indulge in poetical reveries, and to seek a few minutes' solitude in the Eden which lay before him. Urged by an unknown power, intoxicated by the sweet odours which embalmed the atmosphere, he glided into the garden, casting around him a vaguely questioning look.

The young man went dreaming along the garden walks, mechanically pulling to pieces with his fingers a rose which he had gathered. He had walked thus for nearly an hour, when he was roused by a slight noise among the leaves, at a short distance from him. He instinctively raised his head, just in time to catch a glimpse of a light white robe which was disappearing among the trees, but too late to completely distinguish the person who wore it, and who appeared to trip over the dewy grass like a white phantom. At the sight of this mysterious apparition the young man felt his heart bound in his breast; he stopped trembling, and the emotion he felt was so powerful, that he was forced to lean against a tree for support.

"What can be the matter with me?" he murmured to himself, as he wiped the cold perspiration from his brow. "I am mad!" he continued, with a forced smile. "I think I see her everywhere. Heavens! I love her so deeply that, in spite of myself, my imagination brings her before me unceasingly. That girl, of whom I just caught a glimpse, is probably the same we last night so miraculously saved. Poor child! Fortunately she did not see me; I should have frightened her. Better avoid her by going out of the garden; in my present state I should alarm her."

And, as always happens in such cases, he set off, on the contrary, in the very

footsteps of her he had only caught a glimpse of, but whom, by one of the instinctive feelings of sympathy which come from God, and which science can never explain, he had nevertheless recognized.

The young girl, reclining in the depths of an arbour, like a hummingbird in its bed of muss, with a pale face, and her eyes cast down to the earth, was listening, pensive and sad, to the joyous melodies which the birds chanted in her absent ear. All at once, a slight noise made her start and raise her head. The Count was before her! She uttered a faint cry, and endeavoured to fly.

"Don Louis!" she exclaimed.

She had recognized him. The young man sank on his knees at the entrance of the arbour.

"Oh!" he cried, in a voice trembling with emotion, and with an accent of the most earnest entreaty, "for pity's sake, remain, madam!"

"Don Louis!" she repeated, already recovered, and feigning the most perfect indifference. Young girls, even the purest, possess in a high degree the talent of concealing their feelings, and of deceiving persons with regard to the emotions they really experience.

"Yes, it is I, madam," he continued, with an accent of the most respectful passion; "I, who, to see you again, have abandoned everything!"

The young lady displayed some slight surprise.

"For Heaven's sake!" he resumed, "allow me once more, if but for an instant, to contemplate your adored features! Oh!" he added, with a look of deep affection, "my heart had told me you were here, before my eyes had perceived you."

"Caballero," she said, in a tremulous voice, "I do not understand you."

"Oh, fear nothing from me, madam!" he interrupted her vehemently; "my respect for you is as profound as——"

"Pray, caballero," she said, earnestly, "rise; if anyone should surprise you thus!"

"Madam," he replied, "the avowal I have to make to you, requires me to remain in the position of a suppliant!"

"Oh, caballero!"

"I love you, madam!" he said, in broken accents; "I know not what gives me the boldness to pronounce a word which in France I did not venture to breathe in

your ear, and which I have never allowed to pass from my heart to my lips. But even if you banished me from your presence for ever, once again I must tell you that I love you, madam; and if you do not return my love, I shall die!"

The maiden looked at him for a moment with a melancholy air; a tear trembled on her long eyelashes; she took a step towards him, and holding out her hand, upon which he imprinted a burning kiss, said softly,—

"Rise."

The Count obeyed. Doña Rosario sunk back upon the bench behind her, and appeared plunged in profound and painful meditation. Both remained silent, Louis watching her with intense anxiety, and a throbbing heart. At length she raised her head, and exhibited a countenance bathed in tears.

"Caballero," she said in a melancholy tone, "if God has permitted us to meet once again, it is because, in His divine goodness, He has judged that a decisive explanation should take place between us."

The young man appeared anxious to speak.

"Do not interrupt me," she continued, "or I shall not have the courage to finish what I have to say to you. You love me, Louis; your presence here is an incontestable proof of it—you love me; and yet how many times, during my short residence in France, have you cursed me in secret, accusing me of coquetry, or, at least, of unaccountable levity!"

"Madam!"

"Oh!" she said, with a faint smile, "since you have avowed your love for me, I will be frank with you, Louis; and although it be my duty to deprive you of all future hope, I am at least anxious to justify the past, and leave you a remembrance of me that nothing can tarnish!"

"Oh, madam! why do you repeat such things to me?"

"Why?" she said, with a look full of melancholy, and in a voice harmonious as the sigh of an Æolian harp, "because I have faith in that love, so warm, so young, so true; which neither daily indignities nor vast distances have been able to conquer—because, in short, I also love you! do you not plainly see that, Louis?"

On hearing this confession, so ingenuous, and made in a tone so sorrowful that the young girl appeared no longer to belong to earth, the Count felt struck by a terrible presentiment; his heart was wrung with doubtful agony. Trembling,

bewildered, he gazed on her with the fixed and desperate eye of one condemned to death, who is listening to the reading of his sentence.

"Yes!" she resumed, with feverish eagerness; "yes, I love you, Louis, I shall always love you; but never, never, can we be united."

"Oh, that is impossible!" he cried, raising his head vehemently.

"Listen to me," she said, in a tone of authority; "I do not order you to forget me, Louis; a love like yours is eternal: alas! I feel that mine will last as long as my life. You see, my friend, I am frank; I do not speak to you as a maiden ought to speak; I unfold my heart before you, leaving you to read it as you would your own. Well, this love, which would be for us the height of felicity,—this communion of two spirits, which blend with each other to form one blissful whole,—this boundless happiness must be dispersed for ever, without chance of recovery, without hesitation!"

"Oh, I cannot consent!" he exclaimed, in a voice broken by sobs.

"But it must be so, I tell you!" she continued, wild with anguish. "Great Heaven! what more do you require of me? Must I confess everything to you? Well, then, since it must be so, know that I am a miserable creature, condemned from my birth, pursued by a terrible hatred, which follows me step by step, which watches me incessantly; and some day—tomorrow, perhaps today—will crush me without mercy! Obligated to change my name constantly; flying from city to city, from country to country; wherever I may go, this implacable enemy, whom I do not know, and against whom I cannot defend myself, pursues me without intermission."

"But I will defend you!" the young man said, with confident energy.

"And I, on my part, am not willing that you should die!" she replied, with an accent of ineffable tenderness. "To attach yourself to me is to court destruction. I went to France to seek a place of refuge. I was obliged to quit that hospitable land with the greatest suddenness. Arrived here only a few weeks since, but for you, last night, I should have been lost! No, no, I am condemned; I know I am, and I am resigned; but I will not drag you down in my fall! Alas! I am, perhaps, doomed to suffer tortures still more horrible than those I have hitherto endured! Oh, Louis, in the name of the love which you have for me, and which I fully share, leave me the supreme consolation in my wretchedness of knowing that you are safe from the torments which overwhelm me!"

At this moment Valentine's voice was heard at a short distance, and Cæsar came

wagging his tail to his master. Doña Rosario gathered a blossom of the *suchil* which grew close to them, and presented it to the young man, after having for a moment inhaled its sweet odour.

"Here," she said, "my friend, accept this flower, the only memorial, alas! that will remain with you of me."

The young man concealed the flower in his bosom.

"Someone is coming," she continued, in broken accents. "Swear, Louis! swear to quit this country as soon as possible, without endeavouring to see me again."

The Count hesitated.

"Oh!" he cried, "some day, perhaps,——"

"Never on earth. Have I not told you that I am condemned? Swear, Louis, that at least I may hope to meet you again in heaven."

She pronounced these words with such a tone of despair, that the young man, overcome, in spite of himself, made a gesture of assent, and let the almost inarticulate words escape his lips,—

"I swear to do so!"

"Thanks! thanks!" she cried wildly, and hurriedly imprinting a kiss upon the brow of her prostrated lover, she disappeared with the lightness of a fawn amidst a thicket of standard roses, at the moment when Valentine became visible at the turning of the walk.

"Why brother," the soldier said gaily, "what the deuce are you about here, at the bottom of the garden? Breakfast is waiting for you. I have been looking for you this hour; and if it had not been for Cæsar, I should not have found you now."

The Count turned towards him, his face lathed in tears, and threw his arms round his neck.

"Brother! brother!" he cried, in an accent of despair; "I am the most unhappy of men!"

Valentine looked at him in astonishment. The Count had fainted.

"What on earth is all this about?" said the soldier, casting a suspicious look around him, and laying his foster brother, who was motionless as a corpse, gently upon a grassy bank.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUINTA VERDE.

Not far from Rio Claro, a charming little city, built in a delicious situation between Santiago and Talca, there was then, and probably is still, upon a hill commanding an extensive view, a pretty *quinta*, with white walls and green shutters, coquettishly concealed from indiscreet eyes by a thicket of trees of various sorts—oaks, acajous, maples, palms, aloes, cactus, &c., which sprang up and intertwined within each other in such a fashion around it as to form an almost impregnable rampart. It is difficult to explain how, in such a period of convulsions and overthrows, this delicious habitation had hitherto escaped, as if by a miracle, from the devastation and pillage which incessantly menaced it, and which fell without intermission around it, enveloping it, as it were, in a network of ruins, without, however, having ever troubled that tranquil dwelling, although the human tempest had frequently howled beneath its walls, and, in the shade of night, it had often seen the red torches of incendiaries gleam; all at once, though no one knew why, and as if by enchantment, the cries of murder ceased, and the torches became extinguished and harmless in the hands of the men who, a minute before, had waved them about madly. This habitation was named the "Quinta Verde."

By what prodigy had this house, so simple in appearance, and so like the rest, avoided the common fate and remained alone, perhaps, of all the houses of the Chilian plains, calm and tranquil in the midst of general confusion, equally respected by the two parties contending for power, and surveying carelessly from the top of its pretty *mirador* the revolution raging at its feet, which carried away, as in an infernal whirlwind, cities, villages, houses, fortunes, and families? This is what many people, at various periods, had been anxious to know, though they had never been able to find out. Nobody ostensibly inhabited this quinta, in which, on certain days, noises were heard which filled with a superstitious terror the worthy *guasos* living in the neighbourhood.

The day after that on which the events occurred which open this history, the heat had been oppressive, the atmosphere heavy, and the sun had gone down amidst a flood of purple vapour, the precursors of a storm which burst with fury as soon as night had completely closed in. The wind bent down the trees as it whistled through them, the collision of the branches producing a melancholy sound; the heavens were black, not a star was to be seen; and large grey clouds coursed

rapidly across the zenith, covering all nature with a leaden pall. In the distance resounded the howlings of wild beasts, among which was occasionally mingled the hoarse, sharp barking of stray dogs.

Nine o'clock struck slowly from a distant steeple; the sound of the metal, repeated by the echoes from the hills, vibrated with a plaintive tone over the deserted landscape. The moon, fitfully emerging from behind the clouds which veiled her, spread for a few seconds a pale and trembling light over the scene, giving it a fantastic aspect. This fugitive ray of doubtful light, nevertheless, enabled a small troop of horsemen, who were painfully ascending a winding path on the side of a mountain, to distinguish, at a few paces before them, the black outline of a house, from the top window of which beamed like a pharos a red, uncertain light. This house was the "Quinta Verde."

At about four or five paces in advance of the troop rode two horsemen, muffled carefully in their cloaks, the flaps of their hats pulled down over their eyes, appeared, in the darkness, to be a needless precaution; but it, nevertheless, showed that these personages were very anxious not to be recognized.

"Heaven be praised!" said one of these horsemen to his companion, as he pulled up his horse, to look searchingly around him, as far as the darkness would permit; "I hope we shall soon be there."

"In a quarter of an hour, at latest, General, we shall be at the end of our journey."

"Do not let us stop, then," the one addressed as General said; "I am impatient to penetrate into this abominable den."

"One moment, General!" the first speaker continued. "It is my duty to warn your Excellency that there is still time to retreat; and that would, perhaps, be the more prudent step."

"Please to observe this, Diego," said the General, fixing upon his companion a look which gleamed in the semi-obscurity like that of a tiger-cat—"in the circumstances in which I am placed, prudence, as you understand the word, would be cowardice. I am quite aware what I am called upon to do by the confidence placed in me by my fellow citizens; our position is most critical: the liberal reaction is raising its head in all quarters, and we must put an end to this ever-reviving hydra. The news of Don Tadeo's escape from death has spread with the rapidity of a train of gunpowder; all the malcontents of whom he is the leader, are in almost open action; if I were to hesitate to strike a great blow and crush the head of the serpent which hisses in my ears, it would tomorrow, perhaps, be too late; hesitation has always been the ruin of statesmen in affairs of

importance."

"And yet, General, if the man who has furnished you with this information should—"

"Be a traitor? Well, that is possible—ay, even probable; therefore, I have neglected nothing that may neutralize the consequences of a treachery which I foresee."

"By the Virgin! General, in your place, however—"

"Thank you, old comrade, thank you for your solicitude; but enough of this subject, you ought to know me well enough to be sure that I shall never flinch from my duty."

"I have nothing more to do, then, but to wish your Excellency well through your undertaking; for you know you must arrive alone at the Quinta Verde, and I can escort you no farther."

"Very well, wait here then; make your men dismount for a time, keep a sharp watch, and execute punctually the orders I have given you. I am going on."

Diego bowed respectfully, but with an air of anxiety, and withdrew his hand, which had been placed on the bridle of the General's horse. The latter more carefully enveloped himself in his cloak, the folds of which had become too loose, and gave the usual jockey signal to excite his horse. At this well-known sound the horse pricked up its ears, and being thoroughbred, although fatigued, set off at a gallop.

After a few minutes of this rapid travelling, the General stopped; but it appeared as if his journey was completed, for, dismounting, he threw the bridle on his horse's neck, with as little care what became of it as if it had been a hack post-horse, and walked with a firm step towards the house, which he had held in view some time, and from which he was now not more than ten paces distant. This was soon cleared. When he reached the gate, he stood for a second and looked around him, as if endeavouring to penetrate the darkness; but all was calm and silent. In spite of himself, the General was seized with that vague fear which takes possession of the most courageous man when in face of the unknown. But General Bustamente, whom the reader has no doubt recognized, was too old a soldier to suffer himself to be mastered long by an impression, however strong it might be; with him this had lasted but an instant, and he almost immediately recovered his usual coolness.

"What the devil! am *I* afraid?" he murmured, with an ironical smile, and going

boldly up to the gate, he knocked three times at equal intervals with the pommel of his sword. In an instant his arms were seized by invisible hands, a bandage was placed over his eyes, and a voice, faint as a breath, murmured in his ear—

"Make no resistance, twenty poniards are at your breast; at the first cry, at the least opposition, you are a dead man. Reply categorically to our questions."

"All these threats are needless," the General replied, in a calm voice; "as I came here of my own free will, I can have no intention of resisting—ask, and I will answer."

"What do you come to seek here?" the voice said.

"The Dark-Hearts."

"Are you ready to appear in their presence?"

"I am," the General replied, still impassive.

"Do you dread nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Let your sword fall."

The General quitted his hold of his sword, and felt at the same moment that his pistols were taken from him.

"Now, step forward without fear," said the voice.

The prisoner found himself instantly at liberty.

"In the name of Christ, who died upon the cross for the salvation of the world, Dark-Hearts, receive me among the number of your brethren!" the General then said, in a low and firm voice.

The double gates of the Quinta Verde flew open before him, and two masked men, each holding a dark lantern in his hand, the focus of which he directed on the stranger's face, appeared in the entrance.

"There is still time," said one of the unknown; "if your heart be not firm, you may retreat."

"My heart is firm."

"Come on, then, as you think yourself worthy to share our glorious task, but tremble if you have the least intention of betraying us," said the masked man, in a deep, sonorous voice.

The General felt, notwithstanding the recklessness of his character, a cold shudder run through his limbs at these words; but he quickly surmounted this involuntary emotion.

"It is for traitors to tremble," he replied; "for my part, I have nothing to fear."

And he boldly stepped into the Quinta Verde, the doors of which closed after him with a dull, heavy sound. The bandage which covered his eyes, and which had prevented those who had interrogated him from recognizing him, notwithstanding their efforts to do so, was then removed. After proceeding for more than a quarter of an hour along a circular corridor, lighted only by the red flickering flame of the torch carried by the guide through this labyrinth, the General was suddenly stopped by a door in front of him. He turned hesitatingly towards the masked men, who had followed him step by step.

"What do you wait for?" said one of them in reply to his mute interrogation. "Is it not written, *Knock and it shall be opened unto you?*"

The General bowed in sign of acquiescence, and knocked loudly at the door. The folding panels drew back silently into the wall, and the General found himself at the entrance of a vast hall, whose walls were covered with long red draperies, gloomily enlightened by a bronze lamp and several chandeliers suspended from the ceiling, which shone in an uncertain manner upon the countenances of about a hundred men, who, with naked swords in their hands, fixed their eyes upon him through the black masks which concealed their faces. At the bottom of this hall was a table covered with a green cloth, at which were seated three men. Not only were those three men masked, but, as a further precaution, before each of them a lighted torch was planted on the table, the dazzling flame of which allowed them to be but vaguely seen. Against the wall was a crucifix, between two hourglasses surmounted by a death's-head with a poniard run through it.

The General manifested no emotion at this imposing *mise en scène*. A smile of disdain curled his lip, and he stepped boldly forward. At this moment he felt a light touch on the shoulder, and, on turning round, perceived that one of the guides was holding out a mask to him. In spite of the precautions he had taken to disguise his features, he eagerly seized it, placed it on his face, folded his cloak round him, and entered.

"*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti!*" he said.

"*Amen!*" all present replied, in a sepulchral tone.

"*Exaudiat te Dominus, in die Tribulationis,*" said one of the personages behind

the table.

"*Impleat Dominus omnes petitiones tuas*," the General replied, without hesitation.

"*La Patria!*" the first speaker rejoined.

"*O la Muerte!*" replied the General.

"What is your purpose in coming here?" the man who up to this time alone had spoken, asked.

"I wish to be admitted into the bosom of the elect."

There was a momentary silence.

"Is there anyone among us who can or will answer for you?" the masked man then asked.

"I cannot say; for I do not know the persons among whom I find myself."

"How know you that?"

"I suppose so, as they, as well as I, are masked."

"The Dark-Hearts," said the interrogator in a deep tone, "consider not the countenance; they search souls."

The General bowed at this sentence, which appeared to him to border upon the ridiculous. The interrogator continued:—"Do you know the conditions of your affiliation?"

"I know them."

"What are they?"

"To sacrifice mother, father, brothers, relations, friends, and myself, without hesitation, to the cause which I swear to defend."

"What next?"

"At the first signal, whether it be by day or night, even at the foot of the altar, in whatever circumstance I may be placed, to quit everything, in order to accomplish immediately the orders that shall be given me, in whatever manner they may be given, and whatever may be the tenor of that order."

"Do you subscribe to these conditions?"

"I subscribe to them."

"Are you prepared to swear to submit yourself to them?"

"I am prepared."

"Repeat, then, after me, with your hand upon the Gospels, the words I am about to dictate to you."

"Dictate!"

The three men behind the table rose; a Bible was brought, and the General resolutely placed his hand upon the book. A faint murmur ran through the ranks of the assembly. The president struck the table with the hilt of his dagger, and silence was re-established. This man then pronounced in a slow and deep toned voice the following words, which the General repeated after him without hesitation:—

"I swear to sacrifice myself, my family, my property, and all that I can hope for in this world, for the safety of the cause defended by the Dark-Hearts. I swear to kill every man, be he my father, be he my brother, who shall be pointed out to me. If I fail in my faith, if I betray those who accept me as their brother, I acknowledge myself to be worthy of death; and I, beforehand, pardon the Dark-Hearts who may inflict it upon me."

"So far well!" replied the president, when the General had pronounced the oath. "You are now our brother."

He then rose, and stepping across the hall, stood full in front of the General.

"Now," he said in a solemn threatening voice, "answer me, Don Pancho Bustamente. As you, of your own free will, take a false oath before a hundred persons, do you think we should commit a crime in condemning you, since you have had the audacity to place yourself in our power?"

In spite of his assurance, the General could not repress a start of terror.

"Remove the mask which covers this man's face, so that everyone may know that it is he! Ah! General; you have entered the lion's den, and you will be devoured."

The noise of a distant commotion was heard.

"Your soldiers are coming to your rescue," the president resumed, "but they will come too late, General; prepare to die!"

These words fell like the blow of a mace upon the brow of him who found himself thus outwitted; he, nevertheless, did not yet lose heart; the noise

evidently approached; and there could be no doubt but that his troops, who surrounded the Quinta Verde on all sides, would soon gain possession of it; all he wanted was time.

"By what right," he said haughtily, "do you constitute yourselves judges and executioners of your own sentence?"

"You are one of us, and are bound by our sentence," the president replied, with an ironical smile.

"Beware of what you are about to do, gentlemen," the General added in a haughty tone; "remember I am minister-at-war!"

"And I am King of Darkness," the president cried in a voice that froze the very blood of the General; "my dagger is more sure than the muskets of your soldiers; it does not let its victims escape. Brethren, what chastisement does this man deserve?"

"Death!" the conspirators replied.

The General saw that he was lost.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DEPARTURE.

Sergeant Diego, when left by General Bustamente a few paces from the Quinta Verde, was very uneasy regarding the fate of his leader, and entertained dismal presentiments. He was an old soldier, and well acquainted with all the machinations and treacheries practised in this country between inveterate enemies. He had been far from approving of the General's undertaking, for he knew better than anyone how little confidence ought to be placed in spies. Constrained, ostensibly, to obey the order he had received, he had resolved, *in petto*, not to leave his leader without help in the wasps' nest into which he had cast himself headlong. Diego entertained for General Bustamente, under whose orders he had served ten years, a profound regard, which entitled him to certain freedoms, and his entire confidence. He immediately placed himself in relation with two other officers of the detachment, ordered, like himself, to watch the mysterious house whose dark outline cut gloomily across the cloudy sky, and

around which there was a close blockade. He was walking about, biting his moustache, and swearing to himself, determined, if the General did not come out within half an hour, to obtain an entrance by force, if necessary, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder. He turned sharply round, stopping short in an oath that was passing his lips, and saw a man standing before him: it was Don Pedro.

"Is that you?" he asked, as soon as he recognised him.

"Myself," the spy replied.

"But where the devil do you come from?"

"No matter; do you wish to save the General?"

"Is he in danger?"

"In danger of death."

"*Demonios!*" the sergeant shouted; "he must be saved!"

"For that purpose I am here; but don't speak so loud."

"I will speak as you like, provided you will tell me."

"Nothing!" Don Pedro replied, "for there is not a minute to be lost."

"What is to be done?"

"Listen! A detachment must feign an attack upon the gate by which the General entered; another will watch the environs, for the Dark-Hearts have roads known only to themselves; you, with a third detachment, will follow me; I will undertake to introduce you into the house—is that agreed upon?"

"Perfectly."

"Make haste, then, to inform your colleagues; time presses."

"Instantly; where shall I find you again?"

"Here."

"Very well; I only ask five minutes," and he strode away in haste.

"Hem!" thought Don Pedro, as soon as he was alone; "we should be prudent when we wish affairs to be profitable; from what I heard, they will condemn the General, and they must not be allowed to go as far as that, for my interests would suffer too seriously; I have manoeuvred so as to be safe from all suspicion; if I succeed, I shall be more in favour with the General than ever, without losing the

confidence of the conspirators."

"Well!" he said, as he saw Diego coming towards him.

"Everything is done," replied the sergeant, out of breath. "I am ready."

"Come on, then, and God grant it may not be too late!"

"Amen!" said the soldier.

Everything was done as had been arranged; whilst one detachment vigorously attacked the gate of the Quinta Verde, Don Pedro led the troops commanded by Diego to the opposite side of the house, where a low window was open; this window was grated, but several bars had been removed beforehand, which left the entrance easy. Pedro commanded the soldiers to be silent, and they entered the house one by one. Guided by the spy, they advanced stealthily, without meeting with obstacles of any kind. At the end of a few minutes they came to a closed door.

"This is it!" said Pedro, in a low voice.

At a sign from the sergeant, the door was beaten in with the butt end of their muskets, and the soldiers rushed into the room. It was nearly empty, its only occupant being a man stretched motionless upon the floor. The sergeant sprang towards him, but recoiled with a cry of horror—he had recognised his leader—General Bustamente lay with a dagger sticking upright in his breast. To the hilt of the dagger was tied a long black strip, upon which were written these words in red ink:

"The Justice of the Dark-Hearts!"

"Oh!" cried Diego; "Vengeance! Vengeance!"

"Vengeance!" the soldiers repeated, with rage, mingled with terror.

The sergeant turned round towards Pedro, whom he believed to be still by his side; but the spy, who alone could guide them in their researches, had thought it prudent to steal away. As soon as he saw that what he dreaded had happened, he had disappeared without anybody observing his departure.

"No matter!" said Diego. "If I demolish this den of assassins, from bottom to top, and don't leave stone upon stone, I swear I will find these demons, if they are buried in the centre of the earth."

The old soldier began searching in all directions, whilst a surgeon who had followed the detachment paid attention to the wounded man, whom he

endeavoured to restore to his senses.

The Dark-Hearts, as the spy had truly said, had paths known only to themselves, by which they had quietly departed, after having accomplished their terrible vengeance, or executed their severe justice, according to the point of view in which an act of this nature and importance is viewed. They were already far off in the country, safe from all danger, while the soldiers were still ferociously searching for them in and about the house.

Don Tadeo and Don Gregorio returned together to the chacra, and were astonished, on their arrival, to find Valentine, whom they supposed to be in bed and asleep long before, waiting for them at that late hour, to request a few minutes' conversation. In spite of the very natural surprise which the demand at such a singular hour excited, the two gentlemen, who supposed the Frenchman had serious reasons for acting thus, granted his request, without making the least observation. The conversation was long—so long, that we think it useless to repeat it here in detail, but will satisfy ourselves with giving our readers the end of it, which sums it up perfectly.

"I will not insist," said Don Tadeo, "although you will not tell us your motives. I believe you to be too considerate a man, Don Valentine, not to be convinced that the reasons which force you to leave us are serious."

"Of the greatest seriousness," the young man replied.

"Very well. But on leaving this place, in which direction do you intend to bend your steps?"

"Faith! I own frankly—besides, you know already that I and my friend are in search of fortune—that all directions are the same to us, since we must, above everything, depend upon chance."

"I am of your opinion," replied Don Tadeo, smiling. "Listen to me, then. I possess large estates in the province of Valdivia, which it is my intention to visit shortly. What prevents you going that way in preference to any other?"

"Nothing, that I know of."

"I, at this moment, stand in need of a man whom I can depend upon, to undertake an important mission into Araucania, to one of the principal chiefs of the people of that country. If you are going to the province of Valdivia, you will be obliged to traverse Araucania in its whole length. Are you willing to undertake this commission? Will that inconvenience you?"

"Why should I not?" said Valentine. "I have never come face to face with savages; I should like to see what sort of people they are."

"Very well; now is your opportunity. That is agreed upon then. You wish to start tomorrow, do you not?"

"Tomorrow! Today, if you please—in a few hours, for it will not be long before the sun will be up."

"That is true. Very well, then; at the moment of your departure, my major-domo shall place, on my part, written instructions in your hands."

"Caramba!" said Valentine, laughing; "here am I transformed into an ambassador!"

"Do not joke, my friend," said Don Tadeo, seriously. "The mission I confide to you is delicate—dangerous, even; I do not conceal that from you. If the papers of which you will be the bearer are found upon you, you will be exposed to great dangers. Are you still willing to be my emissary?"

"Pardieu! Wherever there is danger there is pleasure. And what is the name of the person to whom I am to remit these despatches?"

"They are of two descriptions. The latter only concerns yourself; during the course of your journey you can make yourself acquainted with them; they will instruct you in certain matters you should know in order to secure the success of your mission."

"I understand—and the others?"

"The others are for Antinahuel, that is, the Tiger Sun, and must be delivered into his own hands."

"A queer name that!" Valentine replied, with a laugh. "And where am I to find the gentleman rejoicing in such a formidable title?"

"By my faith, my friend," replied Don Tadeo, "I know no more than you do."

"The Araucano Indians," interrupted Don Gregorio, "are a rather wandering race, and it is sometimes difficult to find the one you are in search of."

"Bah! I shall find him, be assured of that."

"We do entirely rely upon you."

"In a few hours, as I have told you, I shall myself set out to place in a convent in Valdivia the young lady whom you so fortunately saved; it will, therefore, be in Valdivia I shall await your answer."

"I beg your pardon, but I have not the least idea where Valdivia is," observed Valentine.

"Don't be uneasy on that account; any child in this country can direct you the way thither," Don Gregorio replied.

"Thanks."

"And now, if you change your mind when we meet again, and consent to remain among us, remember we are brothers, and do not hesitate to inform me of your

new determination."

"I can neither, reply yes or no, sir; if it depended upon me, we should continue to see each other frequently."

After exchanging a few more friendly expressions, the three men separated. At sunrise, Louis and Valentine, mounted on magnificent horses, which Don Tadeo had forced them to accept, rode away from the chacra, followed by Cæsar. Valentine had received his despatches from the hands of the major-domo. As they were quitting the farm Louis turned round instinctively, as if to salute with a last look a spot he abandoned for ever, and which contained all that was dear to him. A window was gently opened, and the face of the fair girl appeared through the small interval, bathed in tears. The two young men bowed respectfully towards the necks of their horses, and with a deep sigh from Louis, they moved on as the window closed.

"Adieu! oh, adieu for ever!" murmured Louis, choking with emotion.

"Ah, perhaps!" said Valentine; and, to rouse his friend from his grief, he put his horse into a gallop, and they soon lost sight of the chacra in the windings of the road.

Within four hours from their departure Don Tadeo and Don Gregorio likewise set out on their journey to Valdivia, for the purpose of placing Doña Rosario in the convent. But the enemy of whom they thought they had relieved themselves at the Quinta Verde, was not dead; the dagger of the King of Darkness had not proved more sure than the bullets of the General. The two enemies were destined soon to meet again. Notwithstanding the seriousness of the wound he had received, thanks to the intelligent cares lavished upon him, but more particularly, thanks to his excellent constitution, General Bustamente was soon in a convalescent state. Don Pancho and the Linda, from that time united by the strongest of ties—a common personal hatred—prepared to take their revenge upon Don Tadeo, and that of the bitterest nature. The General signalized his restoration to health by cruelties of the most flagrant kind towards every man suspected of liberalism, and by inaugurating throughout the republic a pitiless system of terror. Don Tadeo was pronounced outlawed; his friends were cast into dungeons, and their property was confiscated; and then, when the General thought that all these vexations must bring his enemy to bay, and he had nothing to dread from him or his partizans, under the pretence of visiting the provinces of the Republic, he set out for Valdivia, accompanied by his mistress.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MEETING.

As the principal incidents of this history are now about to take place in Araucania, we think it necessary to give our readers some account of this people, who alone of all the nations the Spaniards encountered in America, succeeded in resisting them, and had, up to the time we treat of, preserved intact their liberty and almost all their territory. The Araucanos or Moluchos inhabit the beautiful country situated between the rivers Biobio and Valdivia, having on one side the sea, and on the other the great Cordilleras of the Andes. They are thus completely enclosed within the Chilian republic, and yet, as we have said, have always remained independent. It would be a great error to suppose these Indians savages. The Araucanos have adopted as much of European civilization as suited their character and their mode of living, and have rejected the rest. From the most remote times these peoples had formed a national body, strong and compact, governed by wise laws rigorously executed. The first Spanish conquerors were quite astonished to find in this remote corner of America, a powerful aristocratic republic, and a feudalism organized almost upon the same plan as that which prevailed in Europe in the thirteenth century. We will here enter into a few details of the government of the Araucanos, who proudly style themselves *Aucas*—free men. These details concerning a people too little known, up to this day, cannot fail to interest the reader.

The principal chiefs of the Araucanos are the Toquis,^[1] the Apo-Ulmens, and the Ulmens. There are four Toquis, one for each territorial division; they have under their orders the Apo-Ulmens, who, in their turn, command the Ulmens. The Toquis are independent of each other, but confederated for the public good. Titles are hereditary, and pass from males to males. The vassals or Mosotones are free; in time of war alone they are subject to military service; but, in this country, and it is this which constitutes its strength, every man in a condition to bear arms is a soldier. It may easily be understood what the chiefs are when we state that the people consider them only as the first among their equals, and that their authority is consequently rather precarious; and if, now and then, certain Toquis have endeavoured to extend their authority, the people, jealous of their privileges, have always found means to keep them within the bounds prescribed by their ancient usages.

A society whose manners are so simple, and interests so little complicated,

which is governed by wise laws, and all the members of which have an ardent love of liberty, is invincible, as the Spaniards have many times found to their cost. After having, in several attempts, endeavoured to subdue this little corner of land, isolated amidst their own territory; they have ended by acknowledging the futility of their efforts, and have tacitly admitted their defeat by renouncing for ever their projects of obtaining dominion over the Araucanos, with whom they have contracted alliances, and across whose territory they now peacefully pass on their road from Santiago to Valdivia.

The Carampangue—in the Araucano idiom, refuge of lions—is a charming stream, half torrent, half river, which comes bounding down from the inaccessible summits of the Andes, and, after many capricious windings, loses itself in the sea two leagues to the north of Arauco. Nothing can be more beautiful than the banks of the Carampangue, bordered by smiling valleys, covered with woods, with apple trees loaded with fruit, rich pastures in which animals of all kinds range and feed at liberty, and high mountains, from the verdant sides of which hang, in the most picturesque positions, clusters of cabins, whose whitewashed walls shine in the sun, and give life to this enchanting landscape.

On the day when we resume our narrative, that is, on a beautiful morning in July—called by the Indians the month of the sun—two horsemen, followed by a magnificent black and white Newfoundland dog, were ascending, at a sharp trot, the course of the river, following what is called a wild beast's track, scarcely marked in the high grass. These men, dressed in the Chilian costume, surging up suddenly amidst this wild natural scene, formed, by their manners and their vestments, a contrast with everything which surrounded them; a contrast of which they probably had no idea, for they rode as carelessly through this barbarous country, abounding in perils and ambushes without number, as they would have done along the road from Paris to Saint-Cloud. These two men, whom the reader has, no doubt, recognized, were the Count Louis de Prébois-Crancé and Valentine Guillois, his foster brother. They had passed in turn through Maulé, Talca, and Concepción; and on the day we meet them again, in the middle of Araucania, they had been full two months on the road, travelling philosophically along with their dog Cæsar upon the banks of the Carampangue. This was the 14th of July, 1837, at eleven o'clock in the morning.

The young men had passed the night in an abandoned *rancho* which they had fallen in with on their way, and at sunrise resumed their journey; so that they now began to be sensible of the calls of hunger. Upon taking a survey of the spot

where they found themselves, they perceived a clump of apple trees, which intercepted the rays of the sun, and offered them a shelter for their repast and a little rest. They dismounted and sat down at the foot of a large apple tree, leaving their horses to browse upon the young branches so abundant around them. Valentine knocked down a few apples with a stick, opened his *alforjas*—large cloth pockets placed behind the saddle—drew out some sea biscuit, a piece of bacon, and a goat's milk cheese, and the two young men began eating gaily, sharing their provisions with Cæsar in a brotherly way, whilst he, seated gravely in front of them, followed with his eyes every morsel they put into their mouths.

"Caramba!" said Valentine, with a satisfied smile; "it is comfortable to have a little rest, after having been on horseback from four o'clock in the morning."

"Well, to tell the truth, I must own I am a little fatigued," Louis confessed.

"My poor friend, you are not, as I am, accustomed to long journeys. It was stupid of me not to remember that."

"Bah! on the contrary, I am getting accustomed to them very well; and besides," he added, with a sigh, "physical fatigue makes me forget——"

"Ah! that's true," Valentine interrupted; "come! I am happy to hear you speak thus—I see you are becoming a man!"

Louis shook his head sorrowfully.

"No," he said, "you are mistaken. As the malady which undermines me is without remedy, I endeavour to play a manly part."

"Yes, hope is one of the supreme illusions of love; when it can no longer exist, love dies."

"Or he who experiences it," said the young man, with a melancholy smile.

This was followed by a silence, which Valentine at length broke.

"What a charming country!" he cried, with feigned enthusiasm, for the purpose of giving the conversation another direction, as he swallowed, with delectation, an enormous piece of bacon.

"Yes, but the roads are very bad."

"Who knows?" said Valentine, with a smile: "they say the roads to Paradise are of that kind; this may be the way thither." Then addressing the dog, "And you, Cæsar, what do you think of our journey, old boy?"

The dog wagged his tail, fixing his eyes, sparkling with intelligence, upon the speaker's face, whilst he eagerly devoured all that was given to him. But he stopped suddenly in his masticating operations, pricked up his ears, turned his head sharply round, and barked furiously.

"Silence, Cæsar!" said Valentine; "what do you bark in that manner for? You know right well we are in a desert, and that in a desert there is nobody but the devil!"

But Cæsar continued to bark without heeding his master.

"Hum!" said Louis, "I do not agree with you; I think that the deserts of America are thickly peopled."

"Well, perhaps you are right."

"The dog's barking is not usual; we ought to take precautions."

"I will see," said Valentine; and addressing the Newfoundland, "Come! come! hold your tongue, Cæsar! You are tiresome! What's the matter with you? What teases you? Do you scent a stag? Caramba! That would be a glorious godsend for us."

Here he rose, and cast an inquiring glance around, but he immediately stopped, and seized his rifle, making a sign to Louis to do the same, in order to be prepared for whatever might happen.

"Diable!" he said, "Cæsar was right, and I must confess myself a stupid fellow. Look yonder, Louis!"

The other turned his eyes as directed.

"Oh! oh!" he said; "what is this?"

"Hum! I believe we shall soon discover."

"With God's help!" Louis replied, cocking his rifle.

Ten Indians in war costume, and mounted on magnificent horses, were drawn up within twenty paces of the travellers, though the latter were quite unable to comprehend how they had succeeded in approaching so near to them without being discovered. Notwithstanding Valentine's efforts, Cæsar continued to bark furiously, and endeavoured to rush upon the Indians. The American warriors, motionless and impassible, made neither gesture nor movement, but they surveyed the Frenchmen so closely and persistently, that Valentine, not very patient in his nature, began to find himself excessively annoyed.

[1] This word comes from the verb *toquin*, which means to *judge*, to *command*.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PUELCHES.

"Eh! eh!" said Valentine, whistling sharply to his dog, who immediately came to him; "these fellows do not seem to have friendly intentions; we must be upon our guard: who knows what may happen?"

"They are Araucanos," said Louis.

"Do you think so? Then they are devilish ugly!"

"Well, now, for my part, I think them very handsome."

"Ah, yes; that may be in an artistic point of view. But, ugly or handsome, we will await their coming."

The Indians talked among themselves, and continued to look at the young men.

"They are consulting to determine with what sauce they shall eat us," said Valentine.

"Not at all——"

"Bah! I tell you they are."

"Pardieu! they are not cannibals!"

"No? So much the worse; that's a defect. In Paris, all the savages exhibited in public are cannibals."

"You madman! you laugh at everything."

"Would you prefer my weeping a little? It appears to me that at this moment our position is not so seducing in itself that we should seek to make it more dismal."

These Indians were for the most part men of from forty to forty-five years of age, clothed in the costume of the Puelches, one of the most warlike tribes of Upper Araucania; they wore the poncho floating from the shoulders, the calzoneras fastened round the hips and falling to the ankle, the head bare, the hair long, straight, and greasy, gathered together by a red ribbon, which encircled

the brow like a diadem, and the face painted of various colours. Their arms consisted of a long lance, a knife, a gun hanging from the saddle, and a round buckler, covered with leather, ornamented with horsehair and human scalps.

The man who appeared to be their chief was a man of lofty stature, expressive features, hard and haughty, but still displayed a certain frankness, a very rare quality among Indians. The only thing which distinguished him from his companions was a feather of the eagle of the Andes, planted upright on the left side of his head, in the bright red ribbon that confined his hair.

After having consulted with his companions for a few minutes, the chief advanced towards the travellers, making his horse curvet with inimitable grace, and lowered the point of his lance in sign of peace. When within three paces of Valentine, he stopped, and, after saluting him ceremoniously, in the Indian fashion, by placing his right hand on his breast, and slowly bowing his head twice, he said to him in Spanish:—

"My brothers are Muruches—foreigners,—and not Culme-Huinca—despicable Spaniards. Why are they so far from the men of their own nation?"

This question, asked in the guttural accent, and with the emphatic tone peculiar to the Indians, was perfectly understood by the young men, who, as we have before observed, generally spoke Spanish themselves.

"Hum!" Valentine said to his companion, "here is a savage who appears to have a little curiosity about him—what think you?"

"Bah!" Louis replied, "answer him, at all events that will do no harm."

"Why, no, that is true; we cannot easily be more compromised than we are already."

And turning towards the chief, who waited impassibly,

"We are travelling," he said, laconically.

"What! alone, thus?" asked the chief.

"Does that astonish you, my friend?"

"Do my brothers fear nothing?"

"What should we fear?" said the Parisian in a bantering tone. "We have nothing to lose."

"What! not even your hair?"

Louis could not refrain from laughing, as he looked at Valentine.

"Ah! ah! what, he is laughing at the disordered state of my hair, is he, the ugly wretch?" Valentine grumbled, vexed at the observation of the chief, and quite mistaking his intentions. "Stop a bit!" then he added, in a loud voice, "Have the goodness to pass on, gentlemen savages. Your remarks are not pleasant, I can assure you."

He cocked his rifle, and lifted it to his shoulder, as if taking aim at the chief. Louis, who had attentively followed the progress of the conversation, without saying a word imitated the action of his friend, directing the barrel of his rifle towards the group of Indians. The chief had, doubtless, understood but little of the speeches of his adversaries, but far from appearing terrified at the menacing attitude they assumed, he seemed to contemplate with pleasure the martial and firm deportment of the Frenchmen; and putting gently on one side the weapon pointed against his breast, said in a conciliatory tone:

"My friend is mistaken. I have no intention of insulting him. I am his *penni*—brother—and his companion's likewise. Were not the palefaces eating when I and my young men came up?"

"Faith! yes, chief, you say true," interrupted Louis, with a smile; "your sudden appearance stopped the progress of our humble repast."

"Part of which is very much at your service," continued Valentine, pointing with his finger to the provisions spread upon the grass.

"I accept your offer," said the Indian, cordially.

"Bravo!" cried Valentine, throwing down his rifle, and preparing to resume his seat on the grass; "to table, then!"

"Yes," replied the chief, "but upon one condition."

"What is that?" the young men asked together.

"That I shall furnish my part."

"Agreed," said Louis.

"Well, that is but fair," Valentine added; "and it will be the more acceptable, from our not being rich, and having but meagre fare to offer you."

"The bread of a friend is always good," the chief said, sententiously.

"That is admirably answered! But, at this moment, unfortunately, our bread is

only stale biscuit."

"I will remedy that;" and the chief said a few words in the Molucho language to his companions, who began to rummage in their alforjas, and quickly produced maize tortillas, some charqui, and several leathern bottles filled with chica—a sort of cider made of apples and Indian corn. The whole was placed upon the grass before the two Frenchmen, who were wonderstruck at the sudden abundance which had succeeded without any transition to their late short commons. The Indians dismounted, and sat down in a circle round the travellers. The chief, then turning towards his guests, said with a pleasant smile—

"Now, then, let my brothers eat."

The young men did not require the cordial invitation to be repeated, but vigorously attacked the provisions so frankly offered. For the first few minutes silence prevailed among the party, for all were too well engaged to talk; but as soon as appetite was a little appeased, conversation was resumed.

Of all men, Indians, perhaps, understand the laws of hospitality the best. They have an instinct of social conventions, if such an expression may be allowed, which makes them divine at once, with infallible correctness, what the questions are that may be properly addressed to their guests, and the point at which they should stop to avoid committing any indiscretion. The two Frenchmen, who for the first time found themselves in contact with Araucanos, could not overcome the surprise caused by the knowledge of life, and the noble and frank manners of these men, whom, on the faith of accounts more or less false, they were accustomed, in common with all Europeans, to consider as gross savages, almost destitute of intelligence, and quite incapable of any delicacy of behaviour.

"My brothers are not Spaniards?" the chief said, half interrogatively.

"That is true," Louis replied; "but how did you discover that?"

"Oh!" he said, with a disdainful smile, "we are well acquainted with those *chiaplos*—wicked soldiers. They are too old enemies to allow us to commit an error with regard to them. From what island do my brothers come?"

"Our country is not an island," Valentine observed.

"My brother is mistaken," the chief said emphatically; "there is but one country that is not an island, and that is the great land of the Aucas."

The two young men bowed their heads before an opinion so peremptorily put forth—all discussion became impossible.

"We are Frenchmen," Louis replied.

"Frenchmen! ah! a good brave nation! We had several French warriors in the time of the great war."

"What!" said Louis, with excited curiosity, "have French warriors fought with you?"

"Yes," the chief remarked, proudly; "warriors with grey beards, and breasts marked with honourable scars, which they received in the wars of their island, when they fought under the orders of their great chief, Zaléon."

"Napoleon?" said Valentine, quite astonished.

"Yes; I believe it is so the palefaces pronounce his name. Did my brother know him?" the chief added, with ill-concealed curiosity.

"No," replied the young man. "Although born in his reign, I was never able to get sight of him, and he is now dead."

"My brother is mistaken," said the Puelche, solemnly; "such warriors as he do not die. When they have performed their task upon earth they go to Paradise—to hunt with Pillian, the master of the world."

The young men bowed, as if convinced.

"It is very singular," said Louis, "that the reputation of that powerful genius should have spread to the most remote and unknown regions of the globe, and be preserved pure and brilliant among these rude men; whilst in that France, for which he did everything men invariably seek to lessen it, and even to destroy it."

"Like all their compatriots, who, from time to time, traverse our hunting grounds, our brothers have, doubtless, trading purposes in coming among us. Where are your goods?" said the chief.

"We are not traders," replied Valentine; "we came to visit our brothers, the Araucanos, of whose wisdom and hospitality we have heard much."

"The Moluchos love the French," the chief said, flattered by the compliment; "my brothers will be well received in our villages."

"To what tribe does my brother belong?" asked Valentine, inwardly delighted at the good opinion the Indians entertained of his compatriots.

"I am one of the principal Ulmens of the sacred tribe of the Great Hare," the chief said, proudly.

"Thank you—one word more."

"Let my brother speak; my ears are open."

"We are in search of a Molucho chief, to whom we have a message from a friend of his, with whom he has had much dealing."

"What is the chief's name?"

"Antinahuel."

"Good!"

"Does my brother know him?"

"I know him. If my brothers will follow me they shall see the toldo of a chief in which they shall be received like pennies. When they have rested, if they desire it, I will myself conduct them to Antinahuel, the most powerful Toqui of the four Uthal-Mapus of the Araucano confederacy."

"What province is governed by Antinahuel?"

"The Piré-Mapus, that is to say, the interior of the Andes."

"Thanks, brother."

"Will my brothers accept the offer I have made them?"

"Why should we not accept it, chief, if, as I believe, it is made in earnest?"

"Let my brothers come, then," the chief said, with a smile; "my toldería is not far off."

The breakfast was over, and the Indians were mounting.

"We may as well go," said Valentine, in French. "This Indian appears to speak cordially and honestly, and it will give us a capital opportunity of studying interesting manners and customs. What do you think, Louis?—It may prove very amusing."

"Well, I see no harm that accepting the invitation can do."

"God speed us, then!"

And with a bound he was in his saddle, imitated by Louis.

"Forward!" cried the chief, and the party set off at a gallop.

"Well, it must be allowed," said Valentine, in his cheerful way, "that these savages, if savages they are, have some redeeming qualities belonging to them. I

begin to take a warm interest in them. They are true Scotch mountaineers for hospitality. I wonder what my regimental comrades, and more particularly my old friends of the Boulevard du Temple, would say if they could see me now! Houp! After me, the end of the world!"

Louis laughed at this outburst of the incorrigible *gamin*, and, without further inquiries, the young men gaily abandoned themselves to the guidance of their new friends, who, after leaving the banks of the river, directed their course towards the mountains.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BLACK JACKAL.

In order to make the facts which follow intelligible, we are obliged here to relate an adventure which happened more than twenty years before the period at which our history commences.

Towards the end of the month of December, 1816, on a cold, rainy night, a traveller, mounted on an excellent horse, and carefully wrapped in the folds of an ample cloak, was following at a round trot the road, or rather the blind path, on the mountains which leads from Cruces to San-José. This man was a rich landowner, who was making a journey into Araucania, for the purpose of treating with the Indians for a large number of cattle and sheep. Having left Cruces about two o'clock in the afternoon, he had been delayed on his way by settling some business with various *guasos*, and he was hastening to gain a hacienda he possessed at some leagues from the spot where he then was, and where he reckoned upon passing the night.

The country at the time was not in a state of tranquillity. For several days past the Puelches had appeared in arms upon the frontiers of Chili, and made incursions into the territories of the republic, burning the chacras, and carrying off the families they surprised. These marauders were commanded by a chief named The Black Jackal, whose cruelty spread terror among the people exposed to his depredations.

It was, therefore, with some anxiety, mixed with secret apprehensions, that the man we have spoken of made all speed along the desolate road which led to his

hacienda. Every minute only added to his fears. The storm, which had threatened all day, burst forth at last with a fury of which we have no conception in our climates. The wind roared loudly through the trees, bending some, and uprooting others. The rain fell in torrents, and the lightning became so vivid, that the horse began to plunge and rear, and refused to advance. The rider spurred the restive animal, and endeavoured, as well as the darkness would permit, to discover whereabouts he was. After surmounting immense difficulties, he saw at length, in the distance, the shadow of the walls of his hacienda, and the lights which shone like guiding stars, when suddenly his horse bounded on one side in such a way as almost to unseat him. When, with much trouble, he had recovered his command of the animal, he looked round to see what could have frightened it so, and perceived, with terror equal to the horse's, several men of sinister appearance standing motionless before him. The horseman's first movement was to seize his pistols, in order to sell his life as dearly as he could, for he had no doubt he had fallen into an ambuscade of bandits.

"Keep your hands from your weapons, Don Antonio Quintana," said a rough voice; "we desire neither your life nor your money."

"What do you want then?" he replied, in a tone that showed he was a little reassured by that frank declaration, though he still kept on the defensive.

"Hospitality for this night, in the first place," said the other.

Don Antonio endeavoured to ascertain if he knew the man who was speaking to him, but he could not distinguish his features through the darkness.

"The doors of my dwelling always fly open to the stranger," he remarked; "why have you not knocked at them?"

"Knowing you must come this way, I preferred waiting for you."

"What else do you desire of me, then?"

"I will tell you under your own roof; the open road is a place ill adapted for imparting confidence."

"If you have nothing more to say to me now, and are as willing as I am to get under shelter, we will continue our journey."

"Go on, then; we will follow you."

Without exchanging another word, they directed their course towards the hacienda. Don Antonio Quintana was a resolute man, as the manner in which he had replied to the men who had so rudely barred his passage proved him. In spite

of the fluency with which the one who had spoken employed the Spanish language, he had, at the first word, by his guttural accent, perceived he was an Indian; and with him fear had immediately given way to curiosity, and he had not hesitated to grant the hospitality asked, knowing that the Araucano, Puelches, Hueliches, or Moluchos, never violate the roof under which they are welcomed, and that the hosts who shelter them are held sacred.

On arriving at the hacienda, Don Antonio found he was not mistaken; the men who had accosted him in so strange a manner were really Indians. There were four of them, and with them was a young woman with a child at the breast. The hacendero welcomed them to his dwelling with all the minute forms of Castilian courtesy, and gave orders to his peones or Indian domestics, terrified at the savage appearance of the strangers, to assist them with everything they might desire.

"Eat and drink," he said, "you are at home, here."

"Thanks!" replied the man, who had till that time been spokesman. "We accept your offer with as good a will as you give it, as far as regards food, of which we stand most in need."

"Will you not rest till day?" asked Don Antonio; "the night is dark, and the weather frightful for travelling."

"A black night is what we desire; besides, we must depart immediately. Now, allow me to put my second request to you."

"Explain yourself," said the Spaniard, examining the speaker attentively.

The latter was a tall, well-made man, of about forty; his strongly-marked features and his commanding eye proclaimed that he was accustomed to exercise authority.

"It was I," he said, without preamble, "who directed the last invasion made upon the palefaces of the frontiers. My mosotones were all killed yesterday in an ambuscade by your lanceros; the three you see with me are all that remain of a troop of two hundred warriors; the others are dead. I myself am wounded, hunted, tracked like a wild beast; we are without horses to rejoin our tribe, without weapons to defend ourselves if we are attacked on the plain. I come to ask of you the means of escape from our pursuers. I will neither deceive nor surprise your good faith. I am bound to tell you the name of the man whose safety you hold in your hands. I am the greatest enemy of the Spaniards; my life has been passed in contending with them. In a word, I am The Black Jackal, the

Apo-Ulmen of the Black Serpents."

On hearing this redoubtable name the Chilian could not suppress a start of terror; but immediately recovering his self-possession, he replied in a calm voice, and in a kind tone.

"You are my guest, and you are unfortunate, two titles sacred with me. I desire to know nothing more; you shall have horses and arms."

A smile of ineffable sweetness lit up the countenance of the Indian.

"One last prayer," he said.

"Speak."

The chief took by the hand the young Indian squaw, who had remained cowering and weeping in a corner, rocking her child in her arms, and presented her to Don Antonio.

"This woman belongs to me; this child is mine," he said, "and I confide them both to you."

"I will take charge of them; the woman shall be my sister, the child my son," the hacendero replied kindly, and after the Indian fashion.

"The Apo-Ulmen will remember!" said the Puelche chief, in a voice trembling with emotion.

He imprinted a kiss upon the brow of the poor little creature, who smiled upon him, cast upon the woman a look beaming with tenderness, and rushed out of the house, followed by his companions. Don Antonio supplied them with arms and horses, and the four Indians disappeared in the darkness.

Many years passed away ere Don Antonio heard anything of the Black Jackal; the woman and the child remained at the hacienda, and were treated as if they had been members of the Chilian's family. The hacendero had been married; but, unfortunately, after a year, which promised to be the commencement of a long and happy union, the wife died when giving birth to a beautiful little girl, whom her father named Maria. The two children grew up together, watched over by the anxious solicitude of the Indian woman, loving each other like brother and sister.

At length, one day, a numerous troop of Puelches, magnificently equipped and mounted, arrived at Rio-Claro, the town in which Don Antonio resided. The chief of these Indians was the Black Jackal, who came to redemand his wife and son of him to whom he had intrusted them. The interview was very affecting.

The chief forgot his Indian stoicism; he gave himself up to the feelings which agitated him, and enjoyed the happiness of finding again, after such a length of time, the two beings he held dearest in the world. When it became necessary to depart, and the children learnt they were to be separated, they shed abundance of tears. They had been accustomed from their infancy to live together, and they could not comprehend why they were not to continue to do so.

Don Antonio had extended his traffic over different parts of the frontiers; he possessed chacras, in which the breeding of cattle was carried on upon a vast scale. The Black Jackal, who had sworn a perpetual friendship, became of great use to him in his business transactions; he often put him in the way of making excellent bargains with his compatriots, and, what was still more serviceable, protected his property from the depredations of plunderers. Every year Don Antonio visited all his chacras in Araucania, and passed a couple of months among the tribe of the Black Serpents, with his friend, the Black Jackal. His daughter accompanied him in all these journeys, on account of the friendship that existed between the children. Things went on thus for many years.

At the period when our history commences, the Black Jackal was dead: he had fallen, like a brave warrior, with his weapons in his hand, in a combat on the frontier; his son, Antinahuel, now about thirty-five years of age, who promised to tread in his footsteps, had been elected Apo-Ulmen in his place, and afterwards Toqui of his Uthal-Mapus or province, which made him one of the principal men of Araucania. Don Antonio had likewise died, shortly after the marriage of his daughter, Doña Maria, with Don Tadeo de Leon, brought to an untimely grave by his grief at her misconduct, which had produced terrible scandal in the upper classes of Santiago.

Doña Maria for some years past had only seen Antinahuel at long intervals; but between them their friendship remained as warm as in the days of their childhood; and, on the part of the Indian warrior, it was carried so far that he obeyed the least caprice of the young woman as an imperative duty. Great, then, was the astonishment of the warriors of the tribe of the Black Serpents, when, in the evening of the day on which we have resumed our story, they saw Doña Maria arrive on horseback, accompanied only by two peons, at their *toldería*, and go straight towards the rancho of the Toqui. On perceiving her, the usually gloomy face of the chief was suddenly lighted up with an expression of gladness.

"Eglantine of the Woods!" he cried, in a joyous tone, "does my sister then still remember the poor Indian?"

"I have come to visit the toldo of my brother," she said, turning her brow towards him, upon which he impressed a kiss; "my heart is sad, grief devours me—and I have remembered my brother."

The chief cast a look upon her of anxiety, mingled with sorrow.

"Although it be to trouble that I owe the visit of my sister, I am, nevertheless, rejoiced to see her."

"Yes," she resumed, "when we are in trouble we think of our friends."

"My sister has done well in thinking of me; what can I do for her?"

"My brother can render me a great service."

"My life is my sister's; she knows she can dispose of it at her pleasure."

"Thank you! I was certain I could depend upon my brother."

"Everywhere, and at all times."

After bowing respectfully to Doña Maria, he led her into his rancho, where his mother had prepared everything worthy of the visit of one whom for so many years she had loved as a daughter.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO OLD FRIENDS.

Antinahuel—the Tiger Sun—was at this time a man of about thirty-five years of age. In stature he was tall, and in his carriage majestic; everything in his person announced a man accustomed to command, and made to rule over his fellows. As a warrior, his reputation was immense, and his mosotones held him in superstitious veneration. Such was, physically, the man whom Doña Maria de Leon came to visit; what he was, morally, we shall soon see.

The cloth was laid in the toldo,—we make use of the expression, the cloth was laid, advisedly, because the Araucano chiefs are perfectly well acquainted with European customs, and almost all possess dishes, plates, and silver spoons and forks. It is true, they only make use of these upon great occasions, and for the purpose of display; for, as to themselves, they carry frugality and plainness to an

excess, and when they are alone with their families, are content to eat with their fingers.

Doña Maria seated herself at the table, and made a sign to Antinahuel, who stood respectfully beside her, to keep her company, and to take his place opposite to her. It was clear to the Indian chief that his sister, as he called her, who for some years had completely neglected him, must have been induced by some powerful interest to seek him thus in his remote village. But what could the interest be which led a delicate woman, accustomed to all the luxurious comforts of life, to undertake a long and perilous journey in order to come and talk with an Indian in a miserable *toldería*, hidden in the midst of the desert?

On her side, the young woman was a prey to still greater uneasiness, for she was anxious to discover whether, in spite of her neglect of the chief, she had preserved the boundless power she had formerly exercised over that Indian nature, which civilization had softened rather than subdued; she feared lest the long forgetfulness in which she had left him had made her lose her prestige in his eyes, and that coolness and indifference might have succeeded to the warm friendship of early days.

When the repast was ended, a peon brought in the *maté*^[1] the infusion of the Paraguay herb which, with the Chilians, takes the place of tea, and of which they are very fond. Two chased cups, placed upon a filagree salver, were presented to Doña Maria and the chief; they lit their maize *pajillos*, and smoked, whilst sipping their *maté*, reflectively. After a few minutes' silence, which was beginning to be embarrassing to both, Doña Maria, who perceived that Antinahuel was resolved to act on the defensive, determined to open the attack.

"My brother," she said, with a smile, "is surprised at my sudden arrival at his *toldería*."

"It is true; the Eglantine of the Woods has appeared unexpectedly amongst us, but she is not the less welcome on that account."

And he bowed.

"I am glad to observe that my brother is as gallant as ever."

"No; I love my sister, and I am happy to see her, after being so long deprived of her presence."

"I know your friendship for me, Penni; our childhood was passed together, but it is a long time since that time. You are now one of the *caraskens*, whilst I am only, as formerly, a poor woman."

"The Eglantine of the Woods is my sister, her least wishes shall always be sacred with me."

"Thanks, Penni! But let us drop this conversation, and talk of our early years, which, alas! so quickly glided away."

"Yesterday exists no longer," he said, sententiously.

"That's true," she replied, with a sigh; "why, indeed, should we talk of times that can never come back?"

"Does my sister intend to return to Chili?"

"No; I have left Santiago for a time; I intend, for a season, to take up my abode in Valdivia; I left my friends to continue their route, whilst I came on to pay my respects to my brother."

"Yes, I know that the man whom the palefaces call General Bustamente, though scarcely cured of a dangerous wound, set off, a month ago, to visit the province of Valdivia, I, myself, intend shortly to visit that city."

"There are many palefaces from the South there at present."

"Among these strangers are there any that I know?"

"Good heavens! how can I tell? Yes, there is one, Don Tadeo, my husband."

Antinahuel raised his head in astonishment.

"I thought he had been shot!" he said.

"He was."

"Well?"

"He escaped death, though grievously wounded."

The artful woman endeavoured to read what impression the news she had so coolly imparted made upon the stoical face of the Indian.

"Listen to me, my sister," he resumed, after a minute's pause; "Don Tadeo is still your enemy, is he not?"

"More so than ever."

"Good!"

"Not content with having basely abandoned me, and having torn from me my child, the innocent creature who alone consoled me and enabled me to support

the sorrows with which he has overwhelmed me, he has crowned his insults by publicly paying his addresses to another woman, whom he takes with him everywhere, and who is at this moment his companion at Valdivia."

"Hum!" the chief said, carelessly.

Accustomed to Araucanian manners, which permit every man to take as many wives as he can support, he found the action of Don Tadeo perfectly natural. This did not escape Doña Maria: an ironical smile curled for a second the corners of her lips, and she continued, negligently, but looking earnestly in the face of the chief—

"Yes, the woman is called, as I hear, Doña Rosario de Mendoz; and is, they say, a beautiful creature!"

That name, pronounced with such apparent indifference, produced the effect of a clap of thunder upon the chief; he sprang up, his face inflamed, and his eyes sparkling.

"Rosario de Mendoz, did you say, my sister?" he shouted.

"Good heavens! I hardly know," she replied. "I have only heard her name—I believe that may be it—but," she added, "what interest can my brother take in it?"

"Oh! none," he said, as he quietly resumed his seat. "Why does not my sister avenge herself upon the man who has abandoned her?"

"To what purpose? and, besides, what vengeance can I hope for? I am but a weak and timid woman, without friends, without support; in short, alone."

"And I?" said the chief; "what am I, then?"

"Oh!" she replied, warmly; "I would not on any account that my brother should constitute himself the avenger of an insult which is personal to myself."

"My sister is mistaken; in attacking this man I avenge my own insult."

"My brother must explain himself—I do not understand him."

"That is what I am going to do."

"I am all attention."

At this moment Antinahuel's mother entered the toldo, and, approaching the chief, said in a humble, but sad tone,—

"My son is wrong in thus recalling old remembrances, and opening ancient

wounds again."

"Woman!" the Indian replied, "Retire! I am a warrior! My father left me a vengeance. I have sworn, and I will accomplish my oath!"

The poor mother left the toldo with a sigh. The Linda, whose curiosity was excited to the highest degree, awaited impatiently the chief's explanation. Without, the rain fell pattering upon the leaves of the trees; at intervals a blast of night wind, loaded with uncertain sounds, came whistling through the ill-joined boards of the toldo, and caused the flame of the torch which lighted it to waver unsteadily. The two speakers, though absorbed in their own reflections, involuntarily lent an ear to these nameless sounds, and felt a depression of spirits they could not account for. The chief raised his head, and inhaling, one after another, several mouthfuls of smoke from his pajillo, which he puffed out brusquely, commenced in a low voice,—

"Although my sister is almost a child of the nation, as my mother nursed her, she has never been made acquainted with the history of my family. The history I am about to relate will reveal to her that I have against Don Tadeo de Leon an old hatred, ever kept alive; and which, if I have to the present moment appeared to allow to slumber, it has been because that man was the husband of my sister: the conduct of Don Tadeo towards my sister frees me from the promise I had made myself, and leaves me liberty of action."

Doña Maria bowed assentingly.

"When the vile Spaniards," he continued, "conquered Chili, and reduced its cowardly inhabitants to slavery, they dreamt of subjugating Araucania in its turn, and marched against the Aucas, whose frontiers they violated. My sister sees that I take up my recital from the beginning. The Toqui Cadegual was one of the first to convoke a grand council of the nation, on the plain of the Carampangue. Named Toqui, one of the four Uthal-Mapus, he gave battle to the palefaces. The conflict was terrible! It lasted from the rising to the setting of the sun. Many Molucho warriors departed for the happy prairies of the Eskennane, but Pillian did not abandon the Aucas; they were conquerors, and the Chiaplo fled like timid hares before the terrible lances of our warriors. Numbers of palefaces fell into our hands; among them was a powerful chief, named Don Estevan de Leon. The Toqui Cadegual might have employed his rights, and have killed him, but he did nothing of the kind: so far from it, he led him to his toldo, and treated him with kindness, as a brother. But when did Spaniards ever show themselves grateful for a kindness? Don Estevan, forgetful of the sacred duties of

hospitality, seduced the daughter of the man to whom he owed his life, and, one day, disappeared with her. The grief of the Toqui was immense at this unworthy and disloyal treachery. He swore to wage from that time a pitiless war against the palefaces, and he kept his oath: all Spaniards taken by them, whatever their age or sex, were massacred. These terrible reprisals were just, were they not?"

"Yes," said the Linda laconically.

"One day, Cadegual, surprised by his ferocious enemies, fell, covered with wounds, into their hands, after a heroic resistance, during which all his brave Mosotones had allowed themselves to be killed by his side. In his turn, as it happened, Cadegual was in the power of Don Estevan de Leon. The Spanish chief recollected the man who had, years before, saved his life. He was merciful. After cutting off the hands, and scooping out the eyes of his prisoner, he restored to him his daughter, of whom he was tired, and sent him back to his nation. The Toqui was led back by his child, whom he pardoned. When he joined his tribe, Cadegual called together his relations, related to them what he had suffered, showed them his bleeding and mutilated arms, and, after having made his sons and all his relations swear to avenge him, he allowed himself to die of hunger, that he might not survive his shame."

"Oh, that is frightful!" Doña Maria cried, affected, in spite of herself.

"That is nothing yet!" the chief resumed, with a bitter smile; "let my sister listen to the sequel. From that time, an implacable destiny has always hung over the two families, and continually brought the descendants of the Toqui Cadegual in contact with those of Captain Don Estevan de Leon. During three centuries, this ardent, inveterate struggle has lasted between the two families, and will never terminate but by the extinction of one, or perhaps both of them. Up to the present time, the advantage has almost always been on the side of the Leons; the sons of the Toqui have very often been conquered, but they have always remained firm and implacable, ready to re-commence the combat at the first signal. At the present day, the family of Don Estevan has but one representative, Don Tadeo—a representative formidable through his courage, his fortune, and the immense influence, he exercises over his compatriots. He, personally, has never injured the Aucas; he seems even to be ignorant of the inveterate hatred which exists between his family and that of the Toqui; but the descendants of Cadegual do not forget it: they are strong, numerous, and powerful in their turn; the hour of vengeance has struck, they will not let it escape! My sister," he continued, in a voice almost rising to a shout; "my sister, my ancestor was the Toqui Cadegual, and I thank you for having warned me that not only my enemy is not dead, but

that he is within my reach!"

"Your mother asked you properly, Penni, why should you revive old hatreds? Peace now reigns between the Chilians and the Aucas: let my brother beware; the whites are numerous; they have many warlike, disciplined soldiers."

"Oh," he replied, with a sinister look; "I am sure of succeeding, for I have my nymph."

Indians of high rank all entertain a firm belief that they have a familiar genius, who is bound to obey them.

Doña Maria feigned to yield to this reason; she had succeeded in putting the hunter upon the scent of the game she wished to destroy, and it was of very little importance to her what motive made him obey her. She knew perfectly well that the hatred alleged by the chief was nothing but a pretext, and that the real cause remained hidden in the depths of his heart. Although she had a clear idea of what it was, she affected not to have the least suspicion of it.

She continued talking with Antinahuel for some time longer about indifferent subjects, and then retired to a chamber which had been prepared for her. It was late, and she wished to set out for Valdivia at daybreak. She was sufficiently well acquainted with the companion of her childhood to know that, now the tiger was roused, it would not be long before he started in quest of the prey which she had marked down for him.

As for the Toqui, the whole night passed away without his thinking of taking a moment's repose; he remained plunged in profound and agitating reflections.

[1] The Chilians borrowed the mate from the Araucanos, who think it a great delicacy, and have a particular talent for making it. This is the manner in which they prepare it:—They put into a coffee cup a spoonful of the Paraguay herb, to which they add a lump of sugar, which they leave upon the fire till it is a little burnt; they squeeze a few drops of lemon juice into it, with some cinnamon and a clove; they then fill the cup up with boiling water. The maté being now ready, they introduce a silver tube of the thickness of a quill, pierced with small holes at its lower end, by means of which the maté is drawn up,—at the risk, be it remembered, of horribly scalding the mouth, as always happens to strangers when they first partake of the luxury, to the great amusement of the Chilians. Drinking maté is so common in Chili, as to be what coffee is in the East; it is taken after every repast, and presented to every visitor. In ceremonial parties, a single tube serves for all the persons assembled.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SORCERER.

On the same day, a *toldería*, situated at some miles from Orano, on the banks of the Carampangue, was a scene of the greatest commotion. The women and warriors assembled in front of a *toldo*, on the threshold of which was exposed a corpse, lying as it were in state, upon a bed of branches, were uttering cries and groans, which were mingled with the deafening sound of drums and flutes in most dismal discord, and the continuous howling of dogs, whom all this din rendered furious. In the middle of the crowd, by the side of the body, stood a man advanced in years, tall in stature, and clothed in the costume of a woman, who appeared to direct the ceremony, making extraordinary gestures and contortions, accompanied by scarcely human yells. This man, of a ferocious aspect, was the *machi*, or sorcerer of the tribe; the motions he affected, the cries he uttered, were intended to protect the body against the attacks of the evil genius, supposed to be eager to get possession of it. At a sign from him the music and groans ceased; the evil genius, conquered by the power of the *machi*, had given up the contest, after a sharp struggle, and abandoned the body which it was beyond his power to obtain. The sorcerer then turned towards a man of lofty stature and commanding countenance, who stood near him leaning upon a long lance.

"Ulmen of the powerful tribe of the Great Hare," he said, in a sepulchral tone, "thy father, the valiant Ulmen, who has been ravished from us by Pillian, is no longer in dread of the influence of the evil genius, whom I have forced to depart;

he now hunts in the happy prairies of the Eskennane with the just warriors: all the rites are accomplished—the hour for surrendering his body to the earth has arrived!"

"Stop!" the chief replied, warmly; "my father is dead, but who has killed him? A warrior does not succumb thus, in a few hours, unless some secret influence has weighed upon him, and dried up the springs of life in his heart. Answer me, O machi, inspired by Pillian! Tell me the name of the assassin! My heart is sad, and can only be comforted by avenging my father."

At these words, pronounced in a firm voice, a shudder crept through the ranks of the people assembled in a group round the body. The machi, after having looked searchingly round, cast down his eyes, crossed his arms upon his breast, and appeared to reflect.

The Araucanos only think one sort of death possible—that on the field of battle; they do not suppose any one can lose his life by either accident or disease; in these two cases they always attribute death to the action of an occult power, and are persuaded that some enemy of the defunct has cast the charm upon him that has killed him. In this persuasion, at the period of the funeral ceremonies, the relations and friends of the dead person call upon the machi to denounce the assassin to them. The machi is obliged to point him out; it would be in vain for him to endeavour to make them comprehend that the death of their relation is natural, for their fury would be immediately turned against him, and he would become their victim.

In this hard alternative, the machi takes good care not to hesitate; the murderer is the more easily pointed out through his non-existence, and from the sorcerer being in no danger of being suspected of deception. Generally, in order to make his own interests agree with those of the relations who claim a victim, he gives up one of his own personal enemies to their vengeance; when—but that is rare—the machi has no enemies, he fixes upon someone at hazard. The pretended murderer, in spite of his protestations of innocence, is immolated without mercy.

It may be easily understood how perilous such a custom is, and what an influence it gives the sorcerer in the tribe; an influence we are obliged to admit which he abuses under all circumstances, without the least scruple.

Fresh personages, among whom were Valentine and his friend, had arrived at the village, and, attracted by curiosity, mingled with the crowd collected round the body. The two Frenchmen could not comprehend anything of this scene till their guide had briefly explained it to them; then they followed the different phases of

it with great interest.

"Speak!" said the Ulmen, after a short pause. "Does not my father know the name of the man of whom we must demand an account of this murder?"

"I know him," the sorcerer replied, in a solemn tone.

"Why, then, does the inspired machi preserve silence, when the dead body cries for vengeance?"

"Because," the machi said, looking this time the newly-arrived chief full in the face, "there are powerful men who laugh at human justice."

The eyes of the crowd turned to the man whom the sorcerer appeared indirectly to point out.

"The guilty man," the Ulmen cried, in a loud voice, "whatever be his rank in the tribe, shall not escape my just vengeance; speak without fear, priest of fate! I swear that the man whose name passes your lips shall die!"

The machi drew himself up majestically; he raised his arm slowly, and, amidst the general anxious curiosity, he, with his finger, pointed to the chief who had offered such cordial hospitality to the strangers, saying, in a loud, ringing voice —

"Accomplish your oath, then, Ulmen—that is the assassin of your father, Trangoil-Lanec cast the charm upon him which has killed him!"

And the machi veiled his face with the corner of his poncho, as if overwhelmed with grief at making the revelation.

The sorcerer's terrible words were succeeded by the silence of astonishment. Trangoil-Lanec was the last man in the tribe who would have been suspected. He was beloved and venerated by all for his courage, frankness, and generosity. The first sensation of surprise over, a general movement took place in the crowd; all drew back from the supposed murderer, leaving him face to face with the chief of whose death he was accused. Trangoil-Lanec remained impassive, a smile of disdain passed over his lips, he dismounted from his horse, and waited.

The Ulmen walked slowly towards him, and when within a few paces, asked, in a sorrowful voice—

"Why didst thou kill my father, Trangoil-Lanec? He loved thee, and I, was not I thy Penni?"

"I have not killed thy father, Curumilla," the chief replied, with a tone of

frankness that would have convinced a man less prejudiced than the one he addressed.

"The machi has said so."

"The machi lies."

"No, the machi cannot lie—he is inspired by Pillian; thou, thy wife, and thy children must die; the law decrees that it shall be so."

Without deigning to reply, the chief threw down his arms, and went and placed himself beside the stake of blood, planted in front of the medicine toldo, which contains the sacred idol. A circle was formed, of which the stake formed the centre; the wife and children of the chief were brought up, and were prepared immediately for the sacrifice; for the funeral ceremony of the chief could not be completed before the execution of his murderer. The machi was triumphant. One man alone in the tribe had ventured to hold up his hand against his robberies and rogueries, and that man was about to die and leave him absolute master. Upon a sign from Curumilla, two Indians seized the chief, and, in spite of the tears and sobs of his wives and children, they prepared to fasten him to the stake.

The two Frenchmen had anxiously watched the spectacle of this infamous drama; Louis was disgusted with the rascality of the machi and the credulity of the Indians.

"Oh!" he said, to his friend, "we cannot allow this murder to be accomplished."

"Hum!" muttered Valentine, stroking the ends of his light moustache, and casting a glance around him, "hum! there is a great number of them."

"What matters it how many?" Louis replied, impetuously; "I will not be the witness of such iniquity, if I die for it. I will attempt to save the life of that unfortunate man, who so frankly offered us his friendship."

"The fact is," Valentine said, pensively, "this Trangoil-Lanec, as they call him, is a very worthy fellow, for whom I feel a warm sympathy; but what can we do?"

"Pardieu!" Louis said, seizing his pistols, "throw ourselves between him and his enemies; we can each of us kill five or six."

"Yes, and the others will kill us, without our having succeeded in saving the man for whom we devote ourselves. A bad means that! Let us try to find some other."

"We must be quick, then; the torture is about to commence."

Valentine struck his forehead, and cried, with a jeering laugh—

"Bah! I have it! Trick must serve our turn—leave it to me; my old trade of a mountebank will do! Help me, if I want it; but, for heaven's sake, swear to remain calm!"

"I swear I will, if you save him."

"Be satisfied—against rogue I'll play rogue and a half; these savages shall see I can be more cunning than they."

Valentine urged his horse into the middle of the circle, and shouted—

"Stop a minute!"

At the unexpected appearance of this man, whom nobody had yet observed, all turned round and looked at him with astonishment. Louis, with his hands on his pistols, watched his movements with anxiety, ready to fly to his succour, if he needed it.

"We will not joke," continued Valentine, "we have not time for that. You are a set of fools, and your machi is laughing at you. What! would you kill a man without a moment's reflection, because a rogue bids you do so? Caramba! I have taken it into my head to prevent your committing such a folly—I will do it, too!"

And placing his hand upon his hip, he looked round with an intrepid glance. The Indians, according to their strange custom, listened to this speech without evincing surprise, even by a gesture. Curumilla approached him.

"My pale brother must retire," he said, calmly; "he is unacquainted with the laws of the Puelches; this man is condemned, he must die; the machi has pointed him out as a murderer."

"I repeat to you, you are fools!" said Valentine shrugging his shoulders; "your machi is no more a conjurer than I am; I again tell you, he is cheating you, and I will prove it, if you will let me."

"What says my father?" said Curumilla to the machi, who stood cold and motionless by the side of the body.

The machi smiled disdainfully.

"When did the white man ever speak truth?" he replied, with a sneer. "Let this one prove what he asserts, if he is able."

"Good!" the Ulmen said; "the Murucho may speak."

"Pardieu!" cried Valentine. "Notwithstanding the bold-faced assurance of this

individual, I shall find it no difficult matter to prove that he is an impostor."

"We are attentive," said Curumilla.

The Indians drew round with intense curiosity. Louis could not at all make out what his friend proposed to do. He could only suppose that some extravagant idea had crossed his brain, and was as impatient as the rest to see how he would come through his dangerous undertaking with honour.

"One moment!" said the machi, with perfect assurance. "What will my brothers do if I prove my accusation true?"

"The stranger must die," said Curumilla, coolly.

"I accept the terms," Valentine replied, resolutely. Placed thus in the necessity of explaining himself, the Frenchman drew himself up to his full height, and, knitting his brows, exclaimed pompously—

"I, too, am a great medicine man!"

The Indians bowed reverentially. The science of Europeans is perfectly established among them; they respect without disputing it.

"It was not Trangoil-Lanec," continued the Frenchman, with the greatest audacity, "who killed the chief; it was the machi himself."

A start of astonishment pervaded the assembly.

"I!" cried the machi, in a voice of amazement.

"You, yourself, and you know it well," replied Valentine, giving him a look that made him tremble.

"Stranger," said Trangoil-Lanec, with the majesty of a martyr, "it is no use to interpose in my favour; my brothers believe me guilty, and innocent though I am, I must die."

"Your devotion to your laws is noble, but in this case it is absurd," Valentine replied.

"This man is guilty," the machi persisted.

"Let us put an end to this, then," replied Trangoil-Lanec; "kill me!"

"What say my brothers?" Curumilla asked of the crowd, who pressed anxiously around him.

"That the Murucho medicine-man be allowed to prove the truth of his words,"

replied the warriors with one voice.

They loved Trangoil-Lanec, and in their hearts desired that he should not die. On the other hand, they entertained for the machi a hatred which the profound terror he inspired them with scarcely sufficed to make them conceal.

"Very well," said Valentine, "this is what I propose."

All were silent as the grave. The Frenchman drew his sword, and waved the bright blade before the eyes of the spectators.

"You see this weapon," said he, in a pompous tone; "I will put it into my mouth, and swallow it up to the hilt. If Trangoil-Lanec is guilty, I shall die; if he is innocent, as I affirm, Pillian will help me, and I shall draw forth the sword from my body without suffering a wound."

"My brother speaks like a courageous warrior," said Curumilla; "we are ready to behold."

"I will not suffer it!" Trangoil-Lanec shouted. "Does my brother want to kill himself?"

"Pillian is judge!" Valentine replied, with a smile of strange expression, and with an air of conviction admirably well played.

The two Frenchmen exchanged a glance. The Indians are perfect children in their love of spectacle, and the extraordinary proposal of the Parisian seemed to them to admit of no reply.

"The trial! the trial!" they shouted.

"Very well," said Valentine; "let my brothers behold, then."

He first placed himself in the proper position adopted by jugglers when they exhibit this feat in public places; then introducing the blade of the sword into his mouth, in a few seconds the whole of it disappeared. During the performance of this trick, which in their eyes was a miracle, the Puelches watched the bold Frenchman in breathless terror. They could not comprehend how a man could perform such an operation without deliberately killing himself. Valentine turned on all sides, so that everyone might be convinced of the reality of the fact; then he deliberately withdrew the blade from his mouth, as bright as when it came from the sheath. A cry of enthusiasm burst from the crowd: the miracle was evident.

"One minute more," he said; "I have still something to demand of you."

Silence was in an instant re-established.

"I have proved to you, in an incontrovertible manner, that the chief is not guilty—have I not?"

"Yes! yes!" they shouted simultaneously; "the paleface is a great medicine man! he is beloved by Pillian!"

"Very well. Now, then," he added, with a sardonic smile directed towards the machi, "your machi should prove in his turn that I have calumniated him, and that it was not he who killed the Apo-Ulmen of your tribe. The dead chief was a great warrior; it ought to be avenged."

"Yes," the warriors cried, "he ought to be avenged."

"My brother speaks well," observed Curumilla; "let the machi be put to the proof."

The unfortunate machi perceived at once that he was lost. He became livid, and a cold perspiration bathed his temples, whilst a convulsive tremor shook his limbs.

"This man is an impostor," he muttered, in a voice scarcely audible; "he abuses your good faith."

"Perhaps I am," said Valentine; "but, in the meantime, imitate me."

"Here," said Curumilla, holding out the sword to the machi, "if you are innocent, Pillian will protect you, as he has protected my brother."

"Caramba! that is certain; Pillian always protects the innocent, and you are about to be a proof of it," said the Parisian, in whom the revived spirit of the *gamin* was now triumphant.

The machi cast around a look of despair; all eyes were expressive of impatience and curiosity; the unhappy wretch perceived but too plainly that he could look for help to nobody, and he formed his resolution instantly—he determined to die as he had lived, deceiving the crowd to the last minute.

"I fear nothing," he said, in a firm voice; "this steel will be harmless to me. You desire that I should go through the trial—I will obey. But, beware! Pillian is angry with your conduct towards me; the humiliation you impose upon me will be avenged by the terrible scourges which he will inflict upon you."

At these words of their prophet the Puelches were moved. They hesitated. For many long years they had been accustomed to place entire faith in his predictions, and they experienced a kind of fear in thus daring to accuse him of

imposture. Valentine saw at a glance what was passing in their hearts.

"Capitally well played," he said, replying by a knowing wink to the triumphant smile of the machi; "now it is my turn. Let my brothers take heart!" he added, in a loud, firm voice. "No misfortune threatens them; this man speaks thus because he is afraid to die; he knows he is guilty, and that Pillian will not protect him."

The machi darted a glance at him gleaming with hatred, seized the sword, and, imitating as well as he knew how what he had seen, with desperate quickness plunged the blade down his throat. A stream of black blood sprang from his mouth, his eyes glared hideously, his arms shook convulsively, he staggered two steps forward, and fell flat upon his face. The people crowded round him—he was dead.

"Let this lying dog be thrown to the vultures," said Curumilla, kicking the lifeless body with contempt.

"We are brothers for life and death," cried Trangoil-Lanec, embracing Valentine.

"Well," the young man said with a smile, to his friend, "I think I have not got very badly through that affair—eh? You see, it is well, sometimes, to have practised many trades; even that of a mountebank may serve at need."

"Do not calumniate your heart and courage," Louis replied, warmly pressing his hand; "you have; saved the life of a man."

"Aye; but I have killed another."

"Oh, he was a guilty wretch!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE OBSEQUIES OF AN APO-ULMEN.

The emotion caused by the death of the machi gradually died away, and order was re-established. Curumilla and Trangoil-Lanec, abjuring any feeling of enmity, exchanged a fraternal embrace, amidst the frantic applause of the warriors, who loved both the chiefs.

"Now my father is avenged, we can restore his body to the earth," Curumilla observed. Then, advancing towards the strangers, he bowed to them, saying—

"Will the palefaces assist at the obsequies?"

"We will," Louis replied.

"My toldo is large," the chief continued; "my brothers will do me honour by consenting to inhabit it during their sojourn with the tribe."

Louis was about to reply, but Trangoil-Lanec hastily prevented him.

"My brothers the palefaces," he said, "have deigned to accept my poor hospitality."

The young men bowed in silence.

"Good!" the Ulmen continued. "Of what consequence is that? Whichever be the toldo the Muruches may choose, I shall consider them as my guests."

"Many thanks, chief," Valentine replied; "be assured that we are grateful for your kindness."

The Ulmen then took leave of the Frenchmen, and resumed his place by the side of his father's corpse, and the ceremonies commenced. The Araucanos are not, as some travellers have led us to believe, a people destitute of any faith; on the contrary, their faith is warm, and their religion rests upon bases which are not deficient in grandeur. They have no dogma, and yet they recognize two principles—that of good and that of evil.

The first, named Pillian, is the Creating God; the second, named Guécubu, is the Destroying God. Guécubu is in a state of continual struggle with Pillian, endeavouring to disturb the harmony of the world, and destroy what exists; by which we see that the doctrine of Manicheism was embraced by the barbarians of both the old and the new world, who, being unable to penetrate the causes of good and evil, have imagined two contrary principles. In addition to these two principal deities, the Araucanos recognize a considerable number of secondary genii, who assist Pillian in his contest with Guécubu. These genii are males and females; the latter are all virgins, for—and it is a refined idea which we could not expect in a barbarous people—procreation is not necessary in the supernatural world. The male gods are named Géru, or lords; the females, Amey-Malghen, or spiritual nymphs.

The Araucanos believe in the immortality of the soul, and, consequently, in a future life, in which the warriors who have distinguished themselves on earth hunt in game-abounding prairies, surrounded by everything they have loved. Like all American aborigines, the Araucanos are extremely superstitious. Their

worship consists in assembling in the medicine toldo, where there is a shapeless idol, said to represent Pillian. They weep; they utter loud cries, with numberless contortions; and sacrifice to him a sheep, a cow, a horse, or a *chilihueque*.

At a signal from Curumilla, the warriors drew back to give place to the women, who surrounded the body, and began to walk in a circle, singing in a low and plaintive tone the noble feats of the deceased. At the expiration of about an hour, the cortege moved off after the corpse, which was borne by the four most renowned warriors of the tribe, and directed its course towards a hill where the place of sepulture was prepared. Behind followed the women, casting handfuls of hot ashes over the traces left by the passage of the funeral train; so that if the soul of the defunct should have any inclination to return to its body, it would not be able to find the way to his toldo, or come and trouble his heirs.

When the body was laid in the grave, Curumilla cut the throats of his father's dogs and horses, which were placed near him, to enable him to hunt in the happy prairies. Within reach of his hand was placed a certain quantity of provisions for the nourishment of himself and the *tempulazzy*, or boatman, appointed to convey him to the other country, and into the presence of Pillian, where he is to be judged according to his good or evil actions. Earth was then thrown in upon the body. But, as the defunct had been a renowned warrior, a heap of stones was collected, of which a pyramid was formed; then everyone walked slowly once more round the tomb, pouring upon it a great quantity of chica. The relations and friends returned dancing and singing to the village, where awaited them one of those Homeric repasts of Araucanian funerals called *cahuins*, which last till all the partakers lie upon the ground utterly intoxicated.

Beyond a little natural curiosity, our travellers did not take much interest in the ceremony or feast; they were fatigued, and preferred a short repose. Trangoil-Lanec guessed their thoughts; and, as soon as the procession returned, he left his companions, and offered to conduct the young men to his dwelling. They availed themselves of his kindness with alacrity. Like all Araucanian huts, this was a vast wooden building, covered with whitewashed mud, in the form of a rectangle, the roof being a terrace. This simple, airy residence displayed, in its interior, a perfect Dutch cleanliness.

Trangoil-Lanec, as we have said, was one of the richest and most respected chiefs of his tribe, and had eight wives. Polygamy is allowed among the Moluches. When an Indian is desirous of marrying a woman, he declares his purpose to her parent, and fixes the number of animals he is willing to give. His conditions being accepted, he comes with a few friends, carries off the young

woman, throws her on the saddle behind him, and gallops off to the woods, in the depths of which the couple remain three days. On the fourth they return; he slaughters a young mare in front of the hut of the father of his bride, and the marriage festivities begin. The abduction of the bride, and the sacrifice of the mare, take the place of a civil contract. After this fashion an Araucano is at liberty to marry as many wives as he can support. And yet, the first wife, who bears the title of unem domo, or legitimate wife, is most honoured; she has the direction of the household, and is the superior of the others, who are called inam domo, or secondary wives. All inhabit the same toldo, but in different apartments, where they employ themselves in bringing up their children, in weaving ponchos with the wool of guanacos and chilihuegues, and in preparing the dish which an Indian woman is bound to place every day on the table of her husband. Marriage is held sacred, and adultery is considered the greatest of crimes; the man and woman who should commit it would inevitably be assassinated by the husband and his relations, unless they redeemed their lives by means of a compensation imposed by the injured husband. When an Araucano leaves his home, he confides his wives to his relations, and, on his return, if he can prove that they have been unfaithful to him, he has the right of demanding of the guardians all he thinks proper to ask; so that the relations are interested in watching them. This strictness of morals only regards married women; others enjoy the greatest liberty, and take advantage of it without any person presuming to find fault with them.

The two Frenchmen, thrown so suddenly into the midst of these strange manners and customs, were some time before they could comprehend Indian life. Valentine, in particular, was completely at a loss; he was in a state of perpetual astonishment, which, however, he took good care should not appear in his words or in his actions; for the adventure of the machi had raised him so high in the estimation of the inhabitants of the toldero, that he dreaded, with reason, lest the smallest indiscretion should cast him down from the pedestal upon which he maintained his erect position.

One evening, when Louis was preparing, as he frequently did, to visit the various toldos, in order to inquire after the sick, and administer to them all the relief his limited knowledge of medicine permitted, Curumilla came to the two strangers to invite them to be present at the cahuin given by the new machi, who had been elected that day, in place of the dead one. Valentine promised that they would come. From what we have said before, it may easily be comprehended what an enormous influence a sorcerer possesses over the members of the tribe; the choice is therefore difficult to make, and is seldom a good one. The sorcerer is

generally a woman: when it is a man, he assumes the female costume, which he wears for the rest of his life. In almost all cases the science is inherited.

After smoking a considerable number of pipes, and making endless speeches, the Araucanos had chosen, as a successor to the machi, an old man, of a mild, kindly character, who, during the course of his long existence, had only made friends. The repast was, as may be supposed, copious, abundantly furnished with ulpo, the national dish of the Araucans, and moistened with an incalculable number of couis of chicha. Among the other delicacies which figured at the feast was a large basket filled with hard eggs, which the Ulmens swallowed in emulation of each other.

"Why don't you eat some eggs?" said Curumilla to Valentine. "Do you not like them?"

"On the contrary, chief, I am very fond of eggs, but not cooked in that fashion; I have no inclination to choke myself, thank you."

"Oh! yes," the Ulmen said; "I understand; you prefer them raw."

Valentine burst into a Homeric fit of laughter.

"Not better than these," he said, when he had recovered his gravity; "I like eggs boiled in the shell; I like omelettes, or pancakes, but neither hard nor raw, if you please."

"What do you mean by that? Cooked eggs must be hard."

The young man looked at him with astonishment, and then said to him in a tone of profound compassion—

"Now, really, chief, do you mean to say you are only acquainted with hard eggs?"

"Our fathers have always eaten them thus," the Ulmen replied, quietly.

"Poor people! how I pity them! They have been ignorant of one of the greatest enjoyments of life. Well, my friend," he exclaimed, raising his voice with jocular enthusiasm, "I am determined you shall adore me as a benefactor to humanity! In short, I will endow you with soft-boiled eggs, and with omelettes; at least, the remembrance of me shall not die from among you. When I am gone, and you eat one of those two dishes, you will think of me."

In spite of his sadness, Louis could not help laughing at the burlesque humour and inexhaustible cheerfulness of his foster brother, in whom, at every minute,

the gamin prevailed over the serious man. The chiefs welcomed with joy the offer of the spahi, and asked, with loud cries, on what day he would carry his promise into execution.

"Oh, I will not make you wait long," he said; "tomorrow, on the square of the toldería, and before all the assembled tribe of the Great Hare, I will show you how you must set about boiling an egg, and making an omelette."

At this promise, the satisfaction of the chiefs mounted to the highest pitch, the couis of the chica circulated with increased vivacity, and the Ulmens soon found themselves sufficiently intoxicated to begin to sing as loud as they could shout, and all together,—a sort of music that produced such an effect upon the two Frenchmen, that they made their escape, stopping their ears. The feast was kept up long after their departure.

CHAPTER XXII.

EXPLANATIONS.

We will now return to the chacra of Don Gregorio Peralta, to which Doña Rosario had been conducted after her miraculous deliverance. The first days that followed the departure of the two Frenchmen were sufficiently devoid of incident: Doña Rosario, shut up in her bedroom, remained almost continually alone. The poor girl, like all wounded spirits, sought to forget reality, by taking refuge in dreams, in order to collect and preserve piously in the depths of her heart the few happy remembrances which had so rarely gilded with a ray of sunshine the sadness of her existence. Don Tadeo, completely absorbed in his imperative political combinations, could only see her now and then, and but for a few minutes at a time. Before him, she endeavoured to appear cheerful, but she suffered the more from being obliged to conceal in her own bosom the sorrow which consumed her. She occasionally crept down into the garden; she stopped under the arbour in which her meeting with Louis had taken place, and remained hours together thinking of him she loved, and whom she had driven from her for ever.

This poor child, so beautiful, so mild, so pure, so worthy of being loved, was condemned by an implacable destiny continually to lead a life of suffering and

isolation; without a relation, without a friend to whom she might impart the secret of her grief. She was little more than sixteen, and already her bruised heart shrank back upon itself; her colour faded, her step became languid, her large blue eyes, swimming in tears, were incessantly raised towards heaven, as the only refuge that remained for her; she appeared to hold to the earth only by a slight thread, which the least fresh shock of adversity would snap.

The maiden's story was a strange one. She had never known her parents; she had no remembrance of the kisses of her mother—those warm caresses of childhood, which make even mature age tremble with joy. From her earliest days, she could only remember being alone, always alone, in the hands of the mercenary and indifferent. The innocent joys of childhood remained unknown to her; she had known nothing of them but their weariness and sadness, and had ever been deprived of those friendships of early youth which, by insensibly preparing the mind for affectionate expansion, give birth to smiles in the midst of tears, and console with a kiss.

Don Tadeo was the only person who was attached to her; he had never abandoned her, but watched with the greatest care over her material well-being, smiled upon her, and ever gave her good and pleasant counsels: but Don Tadeo was much too serious a man to comprehend the thousand little cares which the education of a young girl requires. She could only entertain for him that profound, yet respectful friendship which forbids those ingenuous confidences which can only be made to a mother, or to a companion of the same age. The visits of Don Tadeo were surrounded by an incomprehensible mystery; sometimes, without apparent cause, he made her suddenly quit people to whom he had confided her, and took her away with him, after ordering her to change her name, upon long tours. It was thus she had been to France: then, he quite as unexpectedly brought her back to Chili, sometimes to one city, sometimes to another, without ever condescending to explain to her the reasons for her leading such a wandering life.

Constrained by her isolation to depend only upon herself, forced to reflect as soon as the first rays of reason enlightened her brain, the maiden, though so delicate and fragile in appearance, was endowed with an energy and firmness of character of which she was ignorant, but which supported her unconsciously; and if the hour of danger arrived, would be of infinite use to her. She had often, urged by the instinct of curiosity so natural to her age in the exceptional position in which she was placed, sought by adroit questions to seize the thread that might guide her in this labyrinth; but all had proved useless—Don Tadeo

remained mute. One day only, after having for a long time contemplated her with an expression of sadness, he had pressed her to his heart, and said in a trembling voice,—

"Poor child! I will protect you against your enemies!"

Who could those formidable enemies be? Why were they so inveterate against a girl of sixteen, who knew nothing of the world, and had never injured a human being? These questions, which Doña Rosario was continually asking herself, always remained unanswered. She only caught a glimpse in her life, of one of those terrible mysteries which bring death to the imprudent who persist in endeavouring to discover them; her days, therefore, were passed in continual fears, engendered by her imagination.

One evening, when, sad and thoughtful as usual, and buried in the depths of an easy chair, in her bedchamber, she was turning over the leaves of a book which she was not reading, Don Tadeo entered the room. He saluted her, as he always did, by a kiss on her brow, took a seat, placed himself in front of her, and after looking at her for a moment with a melancholy smile, said quietly,—

"I wish to speak with you, Rosario."

"I am all attention, dear friend," she replied, endeavouring to smile.

But before we report this conversation, we must present our readers with a few necessary explanations. Like all the other countries of South America, Chili, for a long time depressed beneath the Spanish yoke, had conquered its independence, more through the weakness of its ancient master than by its own proper strength. The system followed by the Spanish authorities from the beginning had checked in the people of these countries the development of the philosophical ideas which give man a consciousness of his own value, render him one day apt to achieve liberty, and ripe to enjoy it within just limits. We have said, in a preceding work, that the Americans of the South have none of the virtues of their ancestors, but, to make up for it, they possess all their vices. Destitute of that early education without which it is impossible to do or even to conceive great things, the Chilian nation, free by an unexpected chance, found itself immediately the sport of a few intriguing men, who concealed beneath high-sounding words of patriotism a boundless ambition. The newly-freed country struggled in vain; the innate carelessness of its inhabitants, and the levity of their character, formed an invincible object to any amelioration.

At the epoch at which we have arrived, Chili was labouring under the oppression of General Bustamante. This man, not contented with being minister of a

republic, dreamt of nothing less than causing himself to be proclaimed the chief of it, under the title of protector. The realization of this idea was not impossible. From its geographical position, Chili is almost independent of those troublesome neighbours who, in the states of the old world, keep watch over all the acts of a nation, and are, ready to put in their *veto* as soon as their own interest appears to be threatened. On one side separated from Upper Peru by the vast and almost impassable desert of Atacama, Bolivia alone might hazard some timid observations; but the General cherished secret hopes of including that republic itself in the new confederation; on the other side, immense solitudes and the Cordilleras separated it from Buenos Aires, which had neither the will nor the power to oppose his projects. One people alone could make a war with him, which he should dread, and they were the Araucanos; that little nation, driven like an iron wedge into Chili, disturbed the General's plans seriously. He resolved to treat with the Araucano Toqui, while determined, at the same time, when his projects should have succeeded, to unite all his forces to conquer that country which had so long resisted the Spanish power. In a word, General Bustamente dreamt of creating at the southern extremity of America, with Chili, Araucania, and Bolivia confederated, a rival nationality to the United States. Unfortunately for the General, there was not in him the stuff to make a great man; he was simply a *parvenu*, an ignorant and cruel soldier.

When America raised the standard of revolt against the mother country, numerous secret societies were formed at all points of the territory, the most redoubtable, beyond contradiction, being that of the Dark-Hearts. The men who placed themselves at the head of this society were all intelligent and well informed, mostly educated in Europe, who, having seen in the field of action the great principles of the French revolution, wished, by applying them in their own country, to regenerate the nation. After the proclamation of Chilian independence, the secret societies, having no longer an object, disappeared. One alone persisted in remaining permanent—that of the Dark-Hearts. This society was not willing that license should assume the mantle of liberty: it felt that it had a great and holy mission to fulfil, and that its task, so far from being terminated, was scarcely commenced. It was necessary to instruct the people, to render them worthy of taking their place among nations, and, above all, to deliver them from the tyrants who wished to enslave them. This mission the society of the Dark-Hearts laboured incessantly to carry out, struggling constantly against oppressive powers, which succeeded each other, and destroying them without mercy. Proteus-like and intangible, the members of this society escaped the most active researches: if by chance some few of them fell in the arena, they died with head

erect, confident in the future, and leaving to their brethren the care of continuing their task.

The recovery of General Bustamente caused the Dark-Hearts a momentary stupor; but Don Tadeo, who had caused the news of the miraculous manner in which he had survived his execution to be spread universally, revived their spirits by placing himself again at their head. Not that either courage or hope had failed them. However great the skill of the machinations employed by the General to insure the success of his plans, the Loyal-Hearts, who had confederates everywhere, foresaw and defeated them. They watched all his movements with the greatest care, for they were quite aware that the moment was drawing near when their enemy would throw off the mask. They had heard of the departure of the convalescent General for Valdivia. For what reason, as his health was still so uncertain, and repose so necessary, had he gone to that remote province? That must be learnt at any price, and they must prepare against any eventuality.

In a meeting of the society, future measures were agreed upon; it was moreover resolved that the King of Darkness should at the same time repair to Valdivia, in order, if advisable, to take the initiative in resistance. But Don Tadeo could not think of leaving Doña Rosario behind him, exposed to the unprincipled attacks of the Linda. He alone could defend the young girl; was he not her only support? As soon, then, as the Dark-Hearts had dispersed, Don Tadeo returned to the chacra, and went straight to Doña Rosario's chamber.

"My dear child," he said, "I have sad news to inform you of."

"Speak, my kind friend," she replied.

"Urgent affairs require my presence as soon as possible in Valdivia."

"Oh!" she cried, with an expression of terror, "you will not leave me here, will you?"

"At first I intended to do so, this retreat appearing to me to unite all the guarantees for security; but cheer up, my child! I have changed my mind; I have fancied you would prefer accompanying me?"

"Oh, yes," she said, eagerly; "you are always kind. When do we set out?"

"Tomorrow, dear child, at sunrise."

"I shall be ready," she replied, holding up her pretty face towards him, that he might impress his customary kiss upon her brow.

Don Tadeo retired, and Rosario immediately set about the preparations for her journey. Of what consequence was it to her whether she were in one place or another, since she was doomed to suffer everywhere? And who can say whether the poor girl, without daring to avow it to herself, did not entertain the hope of again seeing him she loved? Love is a divine sunbeam that illumines the darkest nights.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHINGANA.

Valdivia, founded in 1551 by the Spanish conqueror Don Pedro de Valdivia, is a charming city, two leagues from the sea, upon the left bank of a river, which large vessels can easily ascend into the fertile valley of Guadallanguen. The aspect of the city, the advanced post of civilization in these remote countries, is most agreeable; the streets are large, uniformly built; the white houses, only one story high, on account of the frequency of earthquakes, are terrace-roofed. Here and there rise in the air the steeples of the numerous churches and convents, which occupy more than a third of the city. It is astonishing to what an extent convents are multiplied in South America. It might be supposed that the New World was the land of promise for monks; they appear to rise out of the earth at every step. Thanks to the extensive commerce which Valdivia carries on by means of its port, which is visited by the numerous whalers fishing in those seas, and ships which come there to refit, after doubling Cape Horn, or before passing it,—its streets have more animation than is generally to be met with in American cities.

Don Tadeo arrived in Valdivia, accompanied by Don Gregorio and Doña Rosario, on the evening of the sixteenth day after his departure from his friend's chakra. They had used all diligence, and for that country, where there are no other means of travelling but on horseback, it might be considered a quick journey. If the two gentlemen had thought proper to do so, they might have entered the city about three o'clock in the afternoon, but they deemed it advisable that no one in a place where so many people knew them should be made aware of their arrival: in the first place, because the causes which brought them there required the greatest secrecy; and, further, because Don Tadeo was forced to

conceal himself, in order to avoid the police agents of the president of the republic, who had orders to arrest him wherever they might meet with him. Fortunately, in these countries the police never arrest anybody when not absolutely compelled, unless those whom they pursue come and deliver themselves up into their hands—an event, we may safely say, that rarely happens.

As during his sojourn at Valdivia, his manner of living must be regulated by the affairs which brought him there, he could not openly keep house or appear in public, Don Tadeo went straight to the convent of the Ursulines, and committed the young lady he had brought with him to the care of the abbess, who was not only his relation, but was a worthy person, in whom he had perfect confidence. Doña Rosario accepted without hesitation the asylum which was offered to her, and where she fancied she should be safe from the attacks of her invisible enemies. Don Tadeo took an affectionate leave of her and the venerable abbess, and hastened to a house of the calle San-Xavier, where Don Gregorio, who had left him on entering the city, to avoid observation, awaited his coming.

"Well?" asked Don Gregorio, as soon as he saw him.

"She is in safety; at least I suppose so," Don Tadeo replied, with a sigh.

"So much the better, for we must redouble our precautions."

"Why so?"

"After leaving you I made inquiries; I observed, I questioned people as I walked about and loitered at the port and the Almeda."

"Well, what have you learnt?"

"As we imagined, General Bustamente is here."

"Already?"

"He arrived three days ago."

"What reason could be so important as to bring him here?" said Don Tadeo, with an uneasy expression. "Oh, I will know!"

"Another thing: who do you think accompanies him?"

"The executioner, no doubt!" said Don Tadeo, with an ironical smile.

"Almost as bad," Don Gregorio replied.

"Whom do you mean, then?"

"The Linda!"

The chief of the Dark-Hearts turned deadly pale.

"Oh," he said, "that woman! for ever that woman! you must be mistaken, my friend; it is impossible!"

"I have seen her."

Don Tadeo walked about in great agitation for several minutes; then, stopping short in front of his friend, said, in a husky voice—

"Dear Don Gregorio, are you certain you have not been misled by a resemblance? Are you quite sure it was she?"

"You had just left me, and I was coming hither, when the sound of horses made me turn my head, and I saw, I repeat I saw, the Linda; she also appeared to have just arrived at Valdivia; two lancers escorted her, and an arriero led the baggage mules.

"Oh!" said Don Tadeo, "will the infernal malice of that demon ever pursue me?"

"My friend," Don Gregorio remarked, "in the path we have undertaken to tread, every obstacle must, unhesitatingly, be destroyed."

"What, kill a woman?" the gentleman said, with horror.

"I do not say that, but place her in such a position that she cannot possibly injure anyone. Remember, we are Dark-Hearts, and, as such, we ought to be without pity."

"Silence!" Don Tadeo murmured, as two low, quick taps were struck on the door.

"Come in!" cried Don Gregorio.

The door opened, and Don Pedro showed his polecat face. He did not recognize the two men whom, in the various meetings he had had with them, he had always seen masked.

"God preserve you, gentlemen!" he said, with a profound bow.

"What is your pleasure, sir?" Don Gregorio asked, in a coldly-polite tone, while returning his salutation.

"Sir," said Don Pedro, looking about for a seat which was not offered him, "I have just arrived from Santiago."

Don Gregorio bowed again.

"On my departure from that city, a banker in whose hands I had placed funds, gave me several bills; among others this, addressed to Don Gregorio Peratla, payable at sight."

"That is my name, sir; be so kind as to hand it to me."

"As you see, sir, the bill is for twenty-three ounces."

"Very well, sir," replied Don Gregorio, as he took it, "allow me to examine it."

Don Pedro bowed in his turn, whilst Don Gregorio, approaching a flambeau, looked attentively at the bill of exchange, put it into his pocket, and took some money from his purse.

"Here are the twenty-three ounces, sir," he said, giving them.

The spy took them, counted the gold pieces, examining them attentively, and then put them into his pocket.

"It is very singular, sir," he said, just as the two gentlemen thought they were about to be relieved of his presence.

"What is it, sir?" asked Don Gregorio; "do you not find the amount right?"

"Oh, pardon me, perfectly right; but," he added, with a slight hesitation, "I thought you had been a merchant?"

"And what leads you to think otherwise?"

"Because I see no desks."

"They are in another part of the house," Don Gregorio replied; "I am a private trader."

"Oh, very well, sir."

"And, if I had not thought you had pressing need of the money—"

"Very pressing!" the other interrupted.

"I should have begged you to call again tomorrow, for, at this late hour, my cashbox is closed."

And thereupon he waved his hand, rather haughtily, as dismissing him. Don Pedro retired, visibly disappointed.

"That is a double-faced fellow, I am sure," said Don Gregorio; "I should not wonder if he were a spy of the General."

"Oh, I know him!" Don Tadeo replied; "I have about me proofs of his treachery. He has been a necessary instrument; at present he may injure us. He must be crushed."

Don Gregorio drew from his pocket the bill which had been presented to him, and holding it to Don Tadeo—

"Look at this," he said.

This bill, payable at sight, appeared perfectly like others. It was drawn in the usual form: *At sight, please pay, &c. &c.*; but, in two or three places, the pen, too hard, no doubt, had spluttered and formed a certain number of little black spots, of which some were almost imperceptible. It appeared that these black spots had a meaning for the two men; for as soon as Don Tadeo had cast his eyes over the bill, he seized his cloak, and folded himself in it.

"It is Heaven that protects us!" he said; "we must go thither without delay."

"That is my opinion, likewise," Don Gregorio replied, holding the bill to the light, and burning it till there was not a particle of it left. The two men took each a long dagger and a brace of pistols, which they concealed under their clothes—the conspirators were too well acquainted with their country to neglect these precautions—they pulled the flaps of their hats over their faces, and wrapping themselves up to the very eyes, like two lovers or seekers of adventures, they descended into the street.

It was one of those splendid nights unknown in our foggy climates; the sky, of a dark blue, was thickly studded with an infinite number of stars, among which conspicuously shone the brilliant Southern Cross; the air was embalmed with a thousand odours, and a light sea breeze refreshed the atmosphere, which had been heated by the torrid sunbeams during the past day. The two men passed silently and rapidly through the joyous groups which traversed the streets in all directions. It is in the evening that the Americans leave their homes to take the air and enjoy the freshness.

The conspirators appeared to hear neither the enticing sounds of the vihuela which vibrated in their ears, nor the refrains of sambacuejas which flew in gusts from the chinganas, nor the bursts of fresh, silvery laughter of the black-eyed, rosy-lipped girls, who elbowed them on their way. They walked thus for a long time, turning round at intervals to ascertain if they were followed, plunging by degrees into the lowest quarters of the city, and at length stopped at a house of mean appearance, from which issued the loud but not very melodious strains of music eminently national.

This house was a chingana, a name which has no equivalent in French or English. A Chilian chingana presents so eccentrically droll an appearance, that it would defy the pencil of Callot, and is beyond all description. Let the reader figure to himself a low room, with smoky walls, the floor of which is but beaten earth, and rendered filthy by the detritus left by the feet of incessantly arriving and departing visitors. In the centre of this den, lighted only by a smoky lamp called a *candil*, by which it is impossible to distinguish more than the shadows of the customers, are seated four men upon stools. Two of them are twanging wretched guitars, which have lost most of their strings, with the backs of their hands; the third plays the tambourine with his thumbs upon a crippled table, striking it with all his might; whilst the fourth rolls between his hands a piece of bamboo six feet long, split into several strips, which yield the most discordant sound that can possibly be imagined. The four musicians, not content with the formidable clatter made by their instruments, shout, at the very top of their voices, songs which we can neither venture to repeat nor translate.

All this infernal noise is made to excite the dancers, who flutter about, assuming the most lascivious postures they can invent, amidst the hearty applause of the spectators, who writhe with delight, stamp their feet with pleasure, and sometimes, carried away by the harmony, thunder out all together, the burthen of the song, with the musicians and dancers. Amidst this disturbance, these cries and stampings, wind in and out the master of the establishment and his waiters, armed with couis of chicha, bottles of aguardiente, and even guarapo, to slake the thirst of the customers, who, to do them justice, the more they drink the more thirsty they become, and the more they wish to drink.

Twice or thrice in the course of an evening, it may happen that some of the guests, more heated than the rest, or seized by the demon of jealousy, take it into their heads to quarrel. Then knives are drawn from the polena, ponchos are rolled round the left arm to serve as bucklers, the music ceases, and a circle is formed round the combatants. The sanguinary contest begins, and when one of the combatants has fallen, he is carried into the street, the music is resumed, the dance recommences, and no more is thought of the poor wounded or dying man.

It was in front of one of these establishments that the chief of the Dark-Hearts and his friend had stopped; they did not hesitate. Pulling up the folds of their cloaks so as to completely conceal their faces, they entered the chingana: in spite of the pestilential atmosphere which nearly choked them, they passed unnoticed through the drinkers, and gained the further end of the room. The cellar door stood ajar; they opened it softly, and disappeared down the steps. After

descending ten of these, they found themselves in a cellar, where a man, leaning over a barrel, which he appeared to be occupied in putting in its place, said to them, without interrupting his work—

"Would you like some aguardiente de pesco, some mescal, or some chica?"

"Neither the one nor the other," Don Tadeo replied; "we wish for some French wine."

The man sprang up as if moved by a spring. The two adventurers had put on their masks.

"Do you wish to have it white or red?" the man asked.

"Red—as red as blood," said Don Tadeo.

"Of what year?" the unknown rejoined.

"Of that vintaged on the 5th of April, 1817," said Don Tadeo.

"Then you must come this way, gentlemen," the man replied, with a respectful bow; "the wine you do me the honour to call for is extremely valuable; it is kept in a separate cellar."

"To be drunk at Martinmas," Don Tadeo remarked.

The man, who seemed only to wait for this last reply to his question, smiled with an air of intelligence, and laid his hand lightly on the wall. A stone turned slowly round upon itself, without the least noise, and opened a passage to the conspirators, which they immediately entered, and the stone instantly returned to its place.

In the chingana, the cries, the songs, and the music had acquired an intensity really formidable; the joy of the tipplers was at its height.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TWO ULMENS.

If we were writing a romance instead of a true history, there are certain scenes of the recital which we would pass over in silence. The one which follows would certainly be of this number; and yet, though of a rather hazardous puerility, it

carries with it its lesson, by showing what is the influence of the early habits of a miserable life, even upon natures the best endowed, and how difficult it is, at a later period, to shake them off. We will add, to the praise of Valentine, the man of whom we are speaking, that his gaminism, if we may be allowed to employ such a term, was much more feigned than real, and that his aim, in allowing himself to be sometimes led away by it, was to bring a smile to the lips of his foster brother, and thus cheat the sorrow that was undermining his peace.

This necessary preamble being gone through, we will resume the course of our narrative, and, abandoning for a time Don Tadeo and his friend, we will request the reader to follow us back to the tribe of the Great Hare. The looked-for morrow was a great day for the tribe, a day expected with impatience by all housekeepers, who were about to learn how to discover, to use Valentine's word, a new dish, which promised to please the palates of their race. As soon as it was daylight, men, women, and children assembled on the great Square of the village, and formed numerous groups, in which the merit of the unknown dish about to be revealed to them was discussed. Louis, for whom the experiment his friend was going to make had very little interest, wished to remain in the toldo; but Valentine insisted upon his being present at the experiment, and much against his will, he consented.

The Parisian was already at his post, standing in an open spot, in the middle of the Square, watching with a laughing eye the anxious or incredulous expression by turn displayed upon the faces directed towards him. A table, which was to serve for his culinary preparations, a lighted brasier, upon which boiled an iron pot filled with water, a kitchen knife, an enormous frying-pan, found I know not where, a sort of tub, a wooden spoon, some parsley, a bit of bacon, some salt, some pepper, and a basket full of fresh eggs, had been prepared at his desire by the cares of Trangoil-Lanec.

All eagerly looked for the arrival of the Apo-Ulmen of the tribe, with which the exhibition was to commence. A kind of dais had been erected for him in front of the operator, and when he had taken his lighted calumet from the hands of his pipe-bearer, he bent a little on one side and whispered a few words in the ear of Curumilla, who stood respectfully beside him. The Ulmen bowed, came down from the dais, went straight to the Parisian to tell him he might begin, and then resumed his post.

Valentine returned the salutation of this master of the ceremonies, took off his poncho, which he folded up and laid carefully at his feet, and turning up his sleeves above his elbows with the studied grace of a performer, he leant slightly

forward, placed his right hand upon the table, and assuming the tone of a vendor of quack medicines who boasts of the efficacy of his nostrums to gaping clowns, he thus commenced his demonstration in a loud voice and with a perfectly clear utterance:—

"Illustrious Ulmens, and you redoubtable warriors of the noble and sacred tribe of the Great Hare, listen attentively to what I have the honour of explaining to you. In the beginning of time the world did not exist; water and clouds, which continually clashed against each other in space, then formed the universe. When Pillian created the world, as soon as at his voice man had issued from the bosom of the red mountain, he took him by the hand, and pointing to all the productions of the earth, the air, and the water, he said to him,—'Thou art the king of creation: consequently, animals, plants, and fishes all belong to thee, and are, each in proportion with its strength, instincts, or conformation, to minister to thy welfare and thy happiness in the world in which I have placed thee; thus the horse shall bear thee with fiery speed across the deserts, fleecy lamas and sheep clothe thee with their wool, and nourish thee with their succulent flesh.' When Pillian had analyzed, one after the other, the diverse qualities of the animals, before proceeding to the plants and fishes, he stopped at the hen, which was moving carelessly about, and picking up the grains of corn scattered on the ground. Pillian took her by the wings, and showing her to man, said, 'Here is one of the most useful animals I have created for thy service; boiled in a pot, the hen will afford thee an excellent broth when thou art sick; roasted, its white flesh will acquire a delicious flavour; of her eggs thou canst make omelettes with herbs, omelettes with mushrooms, omelettes with ham, and, above all others, with bacon. If thou art indisposed, and solid food should be too heavy for thy weak stomach, thou canst boil her eggs in the shell, and then thou wilt say something, indeed!'

"Thus," continued Valentine, attitudinizing before the Indians, who, with open mouths and staring eyes, lost not a single word he uttered, whether they understood it or not, whilst, in spite of his secret grief, Louis literally writhed with laughter; "thus it was that Pillian spoke to the first man at the commencement of ages; you were not there, Araucano warriors, it is therefore not astonishing that you know nothing about it; neither was I there, it is true; but, thanks to the talent we white men possess of transmitting our thoughts from age to age, by means of writing, these words of the Great Spirit have been carefully collected, and have come down to us in their purity. Without further prelude, I am going to have the honour of producing before you a boiled egg! Listen to me; it is as simple as saying good-day, and within the reach of the most limited

capacity. In order to enjoy a boiled egg, two things are necessary—in the first place, an egg, and then, some boiling water! You take the egg in your fingers, thus, you uncover your saucepan, you place the egg in a spoon and deposit it carefully in the saucepan, where you allow it to boil gently three minutes. Mind, three minutes, neither more nor less: pay attention to that important detail, for a longer time would compromise the success of your operation. There it is!"

The action suited the word; the three minutes were past: Valentine took out the egg, beheaded it, sprinkled a little salt on it, and presented it to the Ulmen with some long strips of maize bread. All this was performed with the most imperturbable seriousness, amidst the profound silence of the attentive crowd. The Apo-Ulmen proceeded to taste this wonderful egg with the most deliberate gravity. An air of doubt appeared for a second on his lips, as he raised the first mouthful towards them; but, by degrees, the features of his broad face expanded under the influence of joy and pleasure, and he at last exclaimed enthusiastically,

—

"Wah! It is good! Very good!"

Valentine returned to his brasier with a modest smile, and set about boiling eggs, which he distributed among the Ulmens and principal warriors, who quickly mingled their felicitations with those of the Apo-Ulmen. A delirious joy took possession of the poor Indians, and Valentine could hardly keep his ground, so eagerly did they press round him, to examine closely his mysterious mode of cooking the eggs. At length, calm was re-established, and the curiosity of the majority was satisfied. The Apo-Ulmen, who had not been able to make his voice heard in the tumult, was able to restore a little order, and obtain silence. Valentine looked at his public with an air of satisfaction. From that moment the Indians were believers—the most incredulous were convinced, and all awaited with impatience the continuation of his experiments.

"Listen to me!" he continued, striking a sharp blow on the table with the knife he held in his hand; "listen to me, but, above all, observe closely how I proceed. A boiled egg was child's play to me, but the omelette requires to be considered seriously, and executed with care, in order to obtain that finish, that smoothness, flavour, and perfection so much prized by real judges. I am about to make a bacon-omelette, and when I name that, I name the most exquisite dish in the world! Whilst explaining to you the manner in which you should set about it, I will produce it: follow my reasonings closely, and observe attentively the manner in which I mingle the various ingredients which enter into the composition of this dish. To make a bacon omelette, I must have bacon, eggs,

salt, pepper, parsley, and some butter—there they are, as you see, all on that table. Now I will mix them."

Then, with incredible address, and the greatest quickness, he commenced a monster bacon-omelette, of at least sixty eggs, while continuing his explanation with inexpressible freedom and copiousness. The interest of the Indians was warmly excited, their enthusiasm betraying itself by shouts, leaps, and laughter; but it was carried to its height, and the stamping, crying, and screaming became terrific, when the Puelches saw Valentine seize the long handle of the frying-pan with a firm grasp, and toss the omelette three different times into the air, without any apparent effort, and with the style and ease of a finished cook. When the omelette was done to the moment, the Frenchman placed it upon a dish, taking care to double it with the talent which *cordons bleus* alone possess, and was then preparing to carry it smoking to the Apo-Ulmen, but he, enticed by the flavour of the boiled egg, and with appetite excited to the highest pitch, spared him that trouble; for he forgot all decorum, and rushed towards the table, followed by the principal Ulmens of the tribe. The success of the Parisian was enormous. Never, in the history of the divine art, did a cook obtain such a glorious triumph! Valentine, with the modesty peculiar to men of real talent, stole away from the honours they wished to pay him, and hastened to conceal himself with his friend in the toldo of Trangoil-Lanec.

On the morrow of this eventful day, at the moment when the young men were about to leave the quarters they inhabited in common, their host presented himself, followed by Curumilla. The two chiefs saluted them, sat down upon the beaten earth which served instead of flooring, and lit their pipes. Louis, already accustomed to the ceremonious habits of the Araucanos, and convinced that their friends had something of importance to say, reseated himself, as did also his foster brother, and awaited patiently the expected communication. When the chiefs had deliberately smoked out their pipes, and shaken the last ashes upon their nails, they replaced them in their belts, and, after exchanging a glance, Trangoil-Lanec began:—

"Are my pale brothers still resolved to leave us?"

"Yes," replied Louis.

"Has Indian hospitality been wanting towards them?"

"So far from that, chief," the young man said, warmly pressing his hands, "you have treated us like children of your own tribe."

"Then why leave us?" Trangoil-Lanec asked; "we know not what we lose, do we

ever know what we shall find?"

"You are right, chief; but you know we came into this country for the purpose of visiting Antinahuel," Louis observed.

"And does my golden-haired brother," for so he called Valentine, "absolutely wish to see him?"

"Absolutely," replied the young man.

The two chiefs exchanged a second glance.

"He shall see him," replied Trangoil-Lanec; "Antinahuel is at his village."

"Good!" said Valentine. "In that case we will set out tomorrow."

"My brothers shall not go alone."

"What do you mean by that?" Valentine asked.

"The Indian soil is not safe for palefaces; my brother has saved my life, I shall follow him."

"My brother has preserved me a friend," said Curumilla, who had till that time preserved silence; "I shall follow him."

"You cannot think of such a thing, chief," Valentine remarked. "We are travellers whom chance knocks about at its pleasure; we know not what destiny has in reserve for us, nor whither it will conduct us, after having seen the man to whom we are sent."

"What does it signify?" Curumilla replied; "where you go, we will go."

The young men were greatly moved by such frank and noble devotion.

"Oh!" Louis exclaimed, warmly, "it is impossible! your friends, your wives, and your children."

"Our wives and children will be taken care of by our relations until our return."

"My friends, my good friends," said Valentine, with emotion, "you are wrong; we cannot impose such a sacrifice upon you, we will not consent to it for your sake; I have already told you, we are ignorant of what awaits us, or what we shall do; allow us to go alone."

"We will follow our pale brothers," Trangoil-Lanec said in a tone that admitted of no reply; "my brothers are not acquainted with the llanos; four men are a force in the desert—two men are dead."

The Frenchmen contested the matter no longer, they accepted the offer of the Ulmens, and did so the more readily, because they plainly perceived what an immense advantage these men would be to them. They were accustomed to a life in the woods, they knew all its mysteries, and had fathomed all its depths. The chiefs took leave of their guests, to prepare for their departure, which was irrevocably fixed for the next day. At sunrise, a small party, composed of Louis, Valentine, Trangoil-Lanec, and Curumilla, all four mounted upon excellent horses of that mixed Andalusian and Arabian breed, which the Spaniards imported into America, and Cæsar, who trotted at their side in close file, left the *toldería*, escorted by all the members of the tribe shouting: "Come back again! come back again!—A good journey! a good journey!"

After repeated farewells to these worthy people, the four travellers directed their course towards the *toldería* of the Black-Serpents, and soon disappeared in the numberless defiles formed by the *quebradas*.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SUN-TIGER.

In the state of anarchy in which Chili was plunged at the period of our history, the parties were numerous, and everyone was manoeuvring in the shade, as skilfully as possible, in order to gain possession of power. General Bustamente, as we have stated, aimed at nothing less than the protectorate of a confederation similar to that of the United States, which, then but little understood, dazzled his ambition. He could not divine that those ancient outlaws, those sectarian fanatics exiled from Europe, those thriving merchants, had already begun to dream in America of a universal monarchy, a senseless Utopia, the application of which will one day cost them the loss of that so-called nationality of which they are so proud, and which, in reality, does not exist. Probably General Bustamente did not look so far into the future, or, if he did divine the tendencies of the Anglo-Americans, perhaps he dreamt of himself following also that ambitious aim, as soon as his power should repose upon solid bases.

The Dark-Hearts, the only true patriots in this unhappy country, on their side, wished that the government should adopt measures of a rather democratic nature, but they had no intention to overturn it, for they were persuaded that a revolution could only be prejudicial to the general welfare of the nation. Beside General Bustamente and the society of the Dark-Hearts, a third party, more powerful, perhaps, than the two first, was at work silently, but active. This party was represented by Antinahuel, the toqui of the most important Uthal-Mapus of the Araucanian confederacy. We have said that from its geographical position, this little insignificant republic is placed like a wedge in the Chilian territory, which it separates sharply in two. This position gave Antinahuel immense power. All Araucanos are soldiers; at a signal from their chiefs, they take up arms, and are able, in a few days, to get together an army of experienced warriors. The republicans and the partizans of Bustamente were fully aware how much it was to their interest to attach the Araucanos to their party; with the aid of these ferocious soldiers victory would be certain. Already had the King of Darkness and Bustamente made proposals to Antinahuel,—of course, unknown to each other. These overtures the redoubtable toqui had appeared to listen to, and had feigned to reply to both, for the following reasons:—

Antinahuel, in addition to the hereditary hatred which his ancestors had bequeathed to him against the white race, or perhaps on account of that hatred, had dreamt, since he had been elected supreme chief of an Uthal-Mapus, not only of the complete independence of his country, but moreover of reconquering all the territory which the Spaniards had deprived it of; he hoped to

drive them back to the other side of the Cordilleras of the Andes, and restore to his nation the splendour it had enjoyed before the arrival of the whites in Chili. And this patriotic project Antinahuel was just the man to carry through. Endowed with vast intelligence, at once daring and subtle, he allowed himself to be stopped by no obstacle, conquered by no reverse. Almost entirely brought up in Chili, he spoke Spanish perfectly, was thoroughly acquainted with the manners of his enemies, and by means of numberless spies spread everywhere, he was well informed with regard to the Chilian policy, and of the precarious situation of those whom he wished to conquer; he habitually took advantage of the dissensions which separated them, and feigned to lend an ear to the propositions made to him on all parts, in order, when the moment should arrive, to crush his enemies one after the other, and be left alone standing.

He wanted a plausible pretext for keeping his Uthal-Mapus under arms, without inspiring the Chilians with mistrust: and this pretext General Bustamente and the Dark-Hearts supplied him with by their preparations. No one could be surprised, for this reason, at seeing, in a time of peace, the toqui gather together a numerous army on the Chilian frontiers, since, *in petto*, either party flattered itself that this army was destined to aid its cause. The conduct of the toqui was, therefore, most skilful; for he not only inspired mistrust in no one, but, on the contrary, gave hopes to all. The position was becoming serious; the hour for action could not long be delayed; and Antinahuel, whose measures were all prepared, awaited impatiently the moment for beginning the struggle.

Things were at this point on the day when Doña Maria came to the *toldería* of the Black-Serpents, to visit the friend of her childhood. As soon as she awoke, the Linda gave orders for her departure.

"Is my sister going to leave me already?" said Antinahuel, in a tone of mild reproach.

"Yes," Doña Maria replied, "my brother knows that I must reach Valdivia as quickly as possible."

The chief did not press her stay; a furtive smile played round his lips. After Doña Maria was on horseback, she turned towards the toqui.

"Did not my brother say he should be soon in Valdivia?" she asked, in a perfectly well-played tone of indifference.

"I shall be there as soon as my sister," he replied.

"We shall see each other again, then?"

"Perhaps we may."

"We must!"

This was said in a positive tone.

"Very well," the chief replied, after a moment's pause; "my sister may depart—she shall see me again."

"Till then, farewell, then," she said, and rode away at a quick pace.

She soon disappeared in a cloud of dust, and the chief returned thoughtfully to his toldo.

"Woman," he said, to his mother, "I am going to the great toldería of the palefaces."

"I heard everything last night," the Indian woman replied, sorrowfully; "my son is wrong."

"Wrong! how, or why?" he asked, passionately.

"My son is a great chief; my sister deceives him, and makes him subservient to her vengeance."

"Or rather my own," he replied, in a singular tone.

"The young white girl has a right to the protection of my son."

"I will protect the Pearl of the Andes."

"My son forgets that she of whom he speaks saved his life."

"Silence, woman!" he shouted, in a passionate tone.

The Indian woman held her peace, but sighed deeply.

The chief summoned his mosotones, and selecting from among them a score of warriors upon whom he could place entire reliance, ordered them to be ready to follow him within an hour. He then threw himself upon a bench, and sank into serious and agitating reflections. Suddenly a great noise was heard from without, and the chief sprang from his recumbent position, and went to the door of his toldo. He was surprised to see two strangers, mounted upon excellent horses, and preceded by an Indian, advancing towards him. These strangers were Valentine and Louis, who had left their friends a short distance from the toldería.

Valentine, on leaving the village of the Puelches, had opened the letter addressed to himself, and placed in his hands by the major-domo, with a recommendation

not to open it till the last minute. The young man was far from expecting the contents of this strange missive. After carefully reading it, he communicated it to his friend, saying—

"Here, read this, Louis;—hem! who knows but that this singular letter is the first step to our fortune?"

Like all men in love, Louis was sceptical upon every subject that did not bear some relation to his passion, and he returned the paper, shaking his head.

"Politics burn the fingers," he said.

"Yes, of those who don't know how to handle them," Valentine replied, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Now, it is my opinion that in this country, in which it has pleased fate to drop us, the most promising element of fortune we have at command happens to be those very politics which you so much disdain."

"I must confess, my friend, that I care very little for these Dark-Hearts, of whom I know nothing, and who have done us the honour to affiliate us."

"I do not share your opinion at all; I believe them to be resolute, intelligent men, and am persuaded they will, some day, gain the upper hand."

"Much good may it do them! But of what consequence is that to us Frenchmen?"

"More than you may think for; and I am determined, immediately after my interview with this said Antinahuel, to go directly to Valdivia, in order to be present at the meeting they appoint."

"As you please," said the Count, carelessly. "As such is your advice, we will go thither; only I warn you that we shall risk our heads. If we lose them, it will be all very well; but I wash my hands of the matter beforehand."

"I will be prudent, caramba! My head is the only thing I can call my own," Valentine replied, laughing, "and be assured I will not risk it for nothing. Besides, do you not partake of my curiosity to see how these people understand politics, and in what a fashion they set about conspiring?"

"Well, that may become interesting; we travel partly for instruction; let us gain it, then, when it offers itself."

"Bravo! that's the way in which I like to hear a man speak. Let us go and seek the redoubtable chief to whom we have a letter to deliver."

Trangoil-Lanec and Curumilla were too prudent to venture to let Antinahuel know of the friendship which bound them to the two Frenchmen. Without

suspecting the reasons which induced their friends to present themselves to the toqui, they foresaw that a day might come when it would be advantageous that their relations should be unknown. When they arrived, therefore, at a short distance from the toldería, the Indian warriors remained concealed in a secluded corner, keeping Cæsar with them, and allowing the two Frenchmen to continue their route to the village of the Black-Serpents, with whom, in addition, they had not lately been upon the best terms.

The reception given to the Frenchmen was most friendly; for in time of peace the Araucanos are exceedingly hospitable. As soon as they perceived the strangers, they crowded round them; and as all the Indians speak Spanish with astonishing facility, Valentine had no difficulty in making himself understood. One warrior, more polite than the rest, took upon himself to be their guide through the village, in which, of course, they were at a loss. He led them to the toldo of the chief, in front of which were drawn up twenty horsemen, armed, and apparently waiting.

"That is Antinahuel, the great toqui of the Inapire-Mapu," said the guide, emphatically, pointing with his finger at the chief, who at that moment came out of his toldo, attracted by the noise.

"Thank you," said Valentine; and the two Frenchmen advanced rapidly towards the toqui, who, on his part, made a few steps to meet them.

"Eh, eh!" Valentine said, in a subdued voice, to his companion; "here is a man with a good bearing, and with a rather intelligent air for an Indian."

"Yes," Louis replied, in the same tone, "but he has a contracted brow, a sinister look, and compressed lips—he inspires me with very little confidence."

"Bah!" said Valentine, "you are too difficult by half; did you expect to find an Indian an Antinous or an Apollo Belvedere?"

"No; but I should like a little more open frankness in his look."

"Well, well, we shall see."

"I do not know why, but that man produces the effect of a reptile upon me; he inspires me with invincible repulsion."

"Oh, nonsense! you are too impressionable. I am sure that the man, who, I cannot deny, has the air of a thorough rascal, is, at bottom, one of the best fellows in the world."

"God grant I may be deceived! But I experience, on seeing him, a feeling for which I cannot account; it seems as if a kind of presentiment warned me to be on

my guard against that man, and that he will be fatal to me."

"All folly! What relations can you ever have with this individual? We are charged with a mission to him; who knows whether we may ever see him again? and then what interests can connect us with him hereafter?"

"You are right; and I do not know what makes me think as I have said; besides, we shall soon know what we have to trust to on his account—here he is."

The adventurers were, in fact, at that moment in front of the chief's toldo. Antinahuel stood before them; and, although appearing to be giving orders to his men, examined them very attentively. He stepped towards them quickly, and, bowing with perfect politeness, said, in a pleasant tone, and with a graceful gesture—

"Strangers, you are welcome to my toldo. Your presence rejoices my heart. Condescend to pass over the threshold of this poor hut, which will be yours as long as you deign to remain among us."

"Thanks for the kind words of welcome you address to us, powerful chief," Valentine replied. "The persons who sent us to you assured us of the kind reception we might expect."

"If the strangers come on the part of my friends, that is a further reason why I should endeavour to make their abode here as agreeable as my humble means will allow me."

The two Frenchmen bowed ceremoniously, and alighted from their horses. At a sign from the toqui, two peons led the horses away to a vast corral behind the toldo.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MATRICIDE.

We have repeatedly said that in times of peace the Araucanos are exceedingly hospitable. This hospitality, which on the part of the warriors is cordial and simple, on that of the chiefs becomes extravagant. Antinahuel was far from being a rude Indian, attached though he was to the customs of his fathers; and although in his heart he hated not only the Spaniards, but indiscriminately all

belonging to the white race, the half-civilized education he had received had given him ideas of comfort completely above Indian habits. Many of the richest Chilian farmers would have found it impossible to display greater luxury than he exhibited when his caprice or his interest led him to do so. On the present occasion, he was not sorry to show strangers that the Araucanos were not so barbarous as their arrogant neighbours wished it to be supposed, and that they could, when necessary, rival even them. At the first glance, Antinahuel had discovered that his guests were not Spaniards; but, with the circumspection which forms the foundation of the Indian character, he confined his observations to his own breast. It was with the kindest air and in the most winning tone of voice that he pressed them to enter his toldo.

The Frenchmen followed him in, and with a gesture he requested them to be seated. Peons placed a profusion of cigars and cigarettes upon the table, near a tasty filigree brasero. In a few minutes other peons entered with the maté, which they respectfully presented to the chief and his guests. Then, without the silence being broken—for the Araucanian laws of hospitality require that no question should be addressed to strangers until they think proper to speak themselves—each sipped the herb of Paraguay, while smoking. This preliminary operation being gone through, Valentine rose.

"I thank you, chief, in the name of myself and my friend, for your cordial hospitality."

"Hospitality is a duty which every Araucano is jealous to fulfil!"

"But," replied Valentine, "as I have been given to understand that the chief is about to set out on a journey, I do not wish to detain him."

"I am at the orders of my guests; my journey is not so pressing as not to admit of being put off for a few hours."

"I thank the chief for his courtesy, but I hope he will soon be at liberty."

Antinahuel bowed.

"A Spaniard has charged me with a letter for the chief."

"Ah!" the toqui exclaimed, with a singular intonation, and fixing a piercing look upon the face of the young man.

"Yes," the Frenchman continued; "and that letter I am about to have the honour of handing to you."

And he put his hand to his breast, to take out the letter.

"Stop!" said the chief, laying his hand upon his arm, as he turned towards his servants; adding, "leave the room." The three men were left alone.

"Now you may give me the letter," he continued.

The chief took it, looked carefully at the superscription, turned the paper in all directions in his hand, and then, with some hesitation, presented it to the young man.

"Let my brother read it," he said; "the whites are more learned than we poor Indians: they know everything."

Valentine gave his countenance the most silly expression possible.

"I cannot read this," he said, with well-assumed embarrassment.

"Does my brother then refuse to render me this service?" the chief pressed him.

"I do not refuse you, chief; only I am prevented doing what you request by a very simple reason."

"And what is that reason?"

"It is that my companion and I are both Frenchmen."

"Well, and what then?"

"We speak a little Spanish, but we cannot read it."

"Ah!" said the chief, in a tone of doubt; but, after walking about, and reflecting a minute, he added,—"Hem! that is possible."

He then turned towards the two Frenchmen, who, on their part, were, in appearance, impassive and indifferent.

"Let my brothers wait an instant," he said; "I know a man in my tribe who understands the marks which the whites make upon paper: I will go and order him to translate this letter."

The young men bowed, and the chief left the apartment.

"Why the devil did you refuse to read the letter?" Louis asked.

"In good truth," Valentine replied, "I can scarcely tell you why; but what you said of the expression of this man's countenance, produced a certain effect upon me. He inspires me with no confidence, and I am not anxious to be the depository of secrets which he may some day reclaim in a disagreeable manner."

"Yes, you are right! We may, some day, congratulate ourselves upon this

circumspection. Hush! I hear footsteps."

And the chief re-entered the room.

"I know the contents of the letter," he said; "if my brothers see the man who charged them with it, they will inform him that I am setting out this very day for Valdivia."

"We would, with pleasure, take charge of that message," replied Valentine; "but we do not know the person who gave us the letter, and it is more than probable we may never see him again."

The chief darted at them a stolen and deeply suspicious glance.

"Good! Will my brothers remain here, then?"

"It would give us infinite pleasure to pass a few hours in the agreeable society of the chief, but with us time presses; with his permission, we will take our leave."

"My brothers are perfectly free; my toldo is open for those who leave it, as well as for those who enter it."

The young men rose to depart.

"In what direction are my brothers going?"

"We are bound for Concepción."

"Let my brothers go in peace, then! If their course lay towards Valdivia, I would have offered to journey with them."

"A thousand thanks, chief, for your kind offer; unfortunately we cannot profit by it, for our road lies in a completely opposite direction."

The three men exchanged a few more words of courtesy, and left the toldo. The Frenchmen's horses had been brought round; they mounted, and after having saluted the chief once more, they set off. As soon as they were out of the village, Louis, turning to Valentine, said,—

"We have not an instant to lose. If we wish to reach Valdivia before that man, we must make all speed. Who knows whether Don Tadeo may not be awaiting our arrival impatiently?"

They soon rejoined their friends, who looked for them anxiously, and all four set off at full speed in the direction of Valdivia, without being able to explain to themselves why they used such diligence. Antinahuel accompanied his guests a few paces out of his toldo. When he had taken leave of them, he followed them

with his eyes as far as he could see them, and when they disappeared at the extremity of the village, he returned thoughtfully and slowly to his toldo, saying to himself,—

"It is evident to me that these men are deceiving me; their refusal to read the letter was nothing but a pretext. What can be their object? Can they be enemies? I will watch them!"

When he arrived in front of his toldo, he found his mosotones mounted, and awaiting his orders.

"I must set out at once," he said; "I shall learn all yonder, and, perhaps," he added, in a voice so low that he could hardly hear it himself, "perhaps I shall find *her* again. If Doña Maria breaks her promise, and does not give her up to me, woe, woe be to her!"

He raised his head, and saw his mother standing before him. "What do you want, woman?" he asked, harshly; "this is not your place!"

"My place is near you when you are suffering, my son," she mildly replied.

"I suffering! You are mad, mother! age has turned your brain! Go back into the toldo, and, during my absence, keep a good watch over all that belongs to me."

"Are you, then, really going, my son?"

"This moment," he said, and sprang into his saddle.

"Where are you going?" she asked, and seized his horse's bridle.

"What is that to you?" he replied, with an ugly glance.

"Beware! my son; you are entering on a bad course. Guérubu, the spirit of evil, is master of your heart."

"I am the best and sole judge of my actions."

"You shall not go!" she exclaimed, as she placed herself resolutely in front of his horse.

The Indians collected round the speakers looked on with mute terror at this scene; they were too well acquainted with the violent and imperious character of Antinahuel not to dread something fatal, if his mother persisted in endeavouring to prevent his departure.

The brows of the chief lowered—his eyes gleamed like lightning—and it was not without a great effort that he mastered the passion boiling in his breast.

"I will go!" he said, in a loud voice, and trembling with rage; "I will go, if I trample you beneath my horse's hoofs!"

The woman clung convulsively to the saddle, and looked her son in the face.

"Do so," she cried; "for, by the soul of your father, who now hunts in the blessed prairies with Pillian, I swear I will not stir, even if you pass over my body!"

The face of the Indian became horribly contracted; he cast around a glance which made the hearts of the bravest tremble with fear.

"Woman! woman!" he shouted, grinding his teeth with rage; "get out of my way, or I shall crush you like a reed!"

"I will not stir, I tell you!" she repeated, with wild energy.

"Take care! take care!" he said again; "I shall forget you are my mother!"

"I will not stir!"

A nervous tremor shook the limbs of the chief, who had now attained the highest paroxysm of fury.

"If you will have it so," he cried, in a husky, but loud voice, "your blood be upon your own head!"

And he dug the spurs into the sides of his horse, which plunged with pain, and then sprung forward like an arrow, dragging along the poor woman, whose body was soon but one huge wound. A cry of horror burst from the quivering lips of the terrified Indians. After a few minutes of this senseless course, during which she had left fragments of her flesh on every sharp point of the road, the strength of the Indian woman abandoned her; she left her hold of the bridle, and sank dying.

"Oh!" she said, in a faint voice, and following, with a look dimmed by agony, her son, as he was borne away like a whirlwind, "my unhappy son! my unhappy ____"

She raised her eyes towards heaven, clasped her mangled hands, as if to offer up a last prayer, and fell back.

She died pitying the matricide, and pardoning him. The women of the tribe took up the body respectfully, and carried it, weeping, into the toldo. At the sight of the corpse, an old Indian shook his head several times, murmuring in a prophetic tone,—

"Antinahuel has killed his mother! Pillian will avenge her!"

And all bowed down their heads sorrowfully: this atrocious crime made them dread horrible misfortunes in the future.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE JUSTICE OF THE DARK-HEARTS.

Don Tadeo and his friend Don Gregorio were introduced, after exchanging several passwords, into a subterraneous apartment, the entrance to which was perfectly concealed in the wall. The door closed immediately after them; the two men turned round sharply, but all signs of an opening had disappeared. Without taking further notice of this circumstance, which they no doubt had expected, they cast an inquiring glance around them, in order to obtain some knowledge of the locality. The place was admirably chosen for a meeting of conspirators. It was an immense apartment, which must have served for a long time as a cellar, as was made evident by the essentially alcoholic emanations still floating in the air; the walls were low and thick, and of a dirty red colour; a lamp with three jets, hanging from the roof, far from dispersing the darkness, seemed only to render it in a manner visible. In a recess stood a table, behind which a man in a mask was seated, near to two empty seats. Men enveloped in cloaks, and all wearing black velvet masks, were gliding about in the darkness, silent as phantoms.

Don Tadeo and his friend exchanged a glance, and without speaking a word, proceeded to take their places in the empty seats. As soon as they were seated, a change came over the meeting: the low whispering which had been heard till that moment ceased all at once, as if by enchantment. All the conspirators gathered in a single group in front of the table, and with arms crossed upon their chests, waited earnestly. The man who before the arrival of Don Tadeo had appeared to preside over the meeting arose, and casting round a confident glance on the attentive crowd, said—

"On this day the seventy-two *ventas* of the Dark-Hearts, spread over the territories of the republic, are assembled in council. In all of them the taking up of arms, of which we, the *venta* of Valdivia, will instantly give the signal, will be

decreed. Everywhere men faithful to the good cause, true lovers of liberty, are preparing to commence the struggle with Bustamente. Will you all, comrades, who are here present, when the hour strikes, descend frankly and boldly into the arena? Will you sacrifice, without reserve, your family, your fortune, and even your life, if necessary, for the public good?"

He ceased, and a funereal silence prevailed in the assembly.

"Answer!" he resumed; "what will you do?"

"We will die!" the band of conspirators murmured, like a sinister and terrible echo.

"That is well, my brothers," Don Tadeo said, rising suddenly. "I expected no less from you, and I thank you. I have long known you all, and felt that I could depend upon you—I, whom none of you know. These masks which conceal you one from another, are but transparent gauze for the chief of the Dark-Hearts—and I am the King of Darkness! I have sworn that you shall live as free men, or that I will die! Before twenty-four hours have passed away, you will hear the signal you have so long waited for, and then will commence that terrible struggle which can only end in the death of the tyrant; all the provinces, all the cities, all the towns will rise *en masse* at the same instant; courage, then! You have only a few hours longer to suffer. The war of ambushes, surprises, of subterranean treacheries is ended; war, frank, loyal, open, in the face of the sun, is about to begin; let us show ourselves what we always have been, firm in our faith, and ready to die for our opinions! Let the chiefs of sections draw near."

Ten men left the ranks, and placed themselves silently ten paces from the table.

"Let the corporal of chiefs of sections answer for all," said Don Tadeo.

"I am the corporal," said one of the masked men; "the orders expedited from the Quinta Verde have been executed; all the sections are warned; they are all ready to rise at the first signal; each will take possession of the posts that are assigned it."

"So far well! How many men have you at your disposal?"

"Seven thousand three hundred and seventy-seven."

"Can you depend upon them all?"

"No."

"How many are there lukewarm or irresolute?"

"Four thousand."

"How many firm and convinced?"

"Nearly three thousand; but for these I will be answerable."

"That is well! we have even more than we want; the brave will attract others. Return to your places."

The chiefs of sections drew back,

"Now," Don Tadeo continued, "before we separate, I have to call down your justice upon one of our brothers, who, having entered deeply into our secrets, has been false to the society several times for a little gold; I have the proofs in my hands. The circumstances are of the utmost importance; one word—a single word—may ruin our cause and us! Say, what chastisement does this man deserve?"

"Death!" the conspirators responded, coolly, but simultaneously.

"I know this man," Don Tadeo continued; "let him come forth from the ranks, and not oblige me to tear off his mask, and hurl his name in his face."

No one stirred.

"This man is here—I can see him; for the last time, let him step forth, and not crown his baseness by seeking to avoid the punishment he merits."

The conspirators cast suspicious glances at each other; the assembly seemed moved by an extreme anxiety; the man, however, upon whom the King of Darkness called, persisted in remaining confounded amongst his companions.

Don Tadeo waited for an instant, but finding that the man whom he summoned imagined he should remain unknown, and not be discovered beneath his mask, he made a signal, and Don Gregorio rose and advanced towards the group of conspirators, which opened at his approach, and laid his hand roughly on the shoulder of a man who had instinctively retreated before him, until the wall forced him to stop.

"Come with me, Don Pedro," he said, and he dragged rather than led him to the table, behind which stood Don Tadeo, calm and implacable.

The guilty spy was seized with a convulsive trembling, his teeth chattered, and he fell upon his knees, crying with terror:

"Mercy, my lord, mercy!"

Don Gregorio tore off his mask, and revealed the face of the spy, whose features, horribly contracted by fear, and of an ashy paleness, were really hideous.

"Don Pedro," Don Tadeo said, in a stern voice, "you have several times sought to sell your brothers of the society; it was you who caused the death of the ten patriots shot upon the Place of Santiago; it was you who betrayed the secret of the Quinta Verde to the soldiers of Bustamente; this very day, even, scarcely two hours ago, you held a long conversation with General Bustamente, in which you agreed to deliver up to him tomorrow the principal chiefs of the Dark-Hearts: is that true?"

The miserable wretch had not a word to say in his defence; confounded, overwhelmed by the irresistible proofs accumulated against him, he hung down his head in utter abandonment.

"Is this true?" Don Tadeo reiterated.

"It is true," he murmured, in a scarcely audible voice.

"You acknowledge yourself guilty?"

"Yes," he said, with a heart-stifling sob; "but grant me life, noble seigneur, and I swear——"

"Silence!"

The spy was struck with mute despair.

"You have heard, companions and friends, how this man confesses his own crimes; for the last time, what punishment does he deserve for having sold his brothers?"

"Death!" replied the Dark-Hearts, without hesitation.

"In the name of the Dark-Hearts, of whom I am king, I condemn you, Don Pedro Saldillo, to death, for treachery and felony towards your brethren. You have five minutes to make your peace with Heaven," Don Tadeo said, sternly.

He placed his watch upon the table, and drawing a pistol from his belt, cocked it deliberately. The sharp noise of the hammer made the condemned man shudder with fear. A profound silence prevailed in the vault; the hearts of these implacable men might be heard beating in their breasts. The spy cast around wild, despairing glances, but beheld nothing but angry eyes gleaming upon him through hideous masks. Over the vault, in the chingana, they continued dancing, and faint puffs of *sambacuejas* penetrated, at intervals, mixed with uproarious

bursts of laughter, even to the awful scene beneath. The contrast of this riotous mirth with the terrible act of justice which was being carried out, had something appalling in it.

"The five minutes are past," said Don Tadeo, in a firm voice.

"A few minutes more! a few minutes, my lord!" the spy implored, wringing his hands in despair. "I am not prepared; you cannot kill me thus! In the name of all you hold most dear, let me live!"

Without appearing to hear him, Don Tadeo lifted his pistol, and the miserable culprit rolled upon the ground, with his brains scattered around him.

"Oh!" he cried, as the pistol was aimed, "be accursed, ye assassins!" His death prevented the utterance of more.

The conspirators stood cold, impassive spectators of the scene. As soon as the stern act of justice was completed, at a signal from the chief, several men opened a trap in the floor which covered a hole half filled with quick lime; the body was thrown into it, and the trap closed again.

"Justice has been done, brothers," said Don Tadeo, solemnly; "go in peace, the King of Darkness watches over you."

The conspirators bowed respectfully, and disappeared one after the other, without uttering a word. At the end of a quarter of an hour no one remained in the vault but Don Tadeo and Don Gregorio.

"Oh!" said Don Tadeo, "Shall we always have thus to combat treachery?"

"Courage! my friend; you have yourself said, in a few hours war will commence in the face of day."

"God grant I may not be deceived! This contest in the dark makes frightful demands upon the mind; my heart begins to fail me!"

The two conspirators regained the chingana, in which the dancing, laughing, and drinking were going on with undiminished spirit; they passed through so as not to be observed, and came out into the street. They had hardly walked fifty steps when they were joined by a man, who, to their great surprise, proved to be Valentine Guillois.

"God be praised for bringing you here so opportunely!" said Don Tadeo.

"I hope I am punctual," the Parisian remarked, with a gay laugh.

Don Tadeo pressed his hand warmly, and drew him towards his residence, where our three personages soon arrived.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE TREATY OF PEACE.

General Bustamente had come to Valdivia under the pretence of himself renewing the treaties which existed between the republic of Chili and the Araucanian Confederation. This pretext was excellent in the sense that it permitted him to concentrate a considerable force in the provinces, and gave him, besides, a plausible reason for receiving the most powerful Ulmens of the Indians, who would not fail to come to the meeting, accompanied by a great number of mosotones. Every time a new president is elected in Chili, the minister at war renews the treaties in his name. General Bustamente had, up to this moment, neglected to do so: he had good reasons for that.—

This ceremony, in which a great retinue is purposely displayed, generally takes place in a vast plain situated upon the Araucanian territories, and not at a great distance from Valdivia. By a curious coincidence, the pretext of the General suited equally well the interests of the three factions which, at this period, divided this unhappy country. The Dark-Hearts had skilfully profited by it to prepare the resistance they meditated, and Antinahuel, feigning to wish to pay the greatest honours to the war minister of the President of the republic, had collected a real army of his best warriors in the environs of the place chosen for the solemnity.

Such was the state of things, and of the various parties with regard to each other, at the time we resume our narrative. The enemies were about to come face to face; it was evident that each, being well prepared, would endeavour to take advantage of the opportunity, and that a shock was imminent; but how would it be brought about? Who would set fire to the mine, and cause all those passions, those grudges, those ambitions, so long restrained, to explode? Nobody could say!

The plain on which the ceremony was to take place was vast, covered with high grass, and belted by mountains verdant with lofty trees. The plain, crossed by

woods and lines of apple trees, loaded with fruit, was divided in two by a meandering river, which flowed gently along, balancing on its silver waters numerous troops of black-headed swans; here and there, through the breaks of the thickets, might be seen the pointed nose of a vicuna, which, with ear erect, and eye on the watch, seemed to sniff the breeze, and all at once bounded away into the distance.

The sun was rising majestically in the horizon when a measured noise of tinkling bells proceeded from a wood of apple trees, and a troop of half a score mules, led by the mother mare, and driven by an arriero, debouched into the plain. These mules carried diverse objects for an encampment, provisions, and even some bales of clothes and linen. At twenty paces behind the mules, came a rather numerous troop of horsemen. When they arrived at the banks of the little river we have spoken of, the arriero stopped his mules, and the party dismounted. In an instant the bales were unpacked and arranged with care, so as to form a perfect circle, in the centre of which a fire was lighted. Then a tent was erected in this temporary camp, and the horses and mules were hobbled.

This party, whom, no doubt, our readers have already recognized, were Don Tadeo, his friends the Frenchmen, the Indian Ulmens, with Doña Rosario, and three servants. By a strange coincidence, at the same time that they were arranging their camp, another party nearly as numerous established theirs on the opposite bank of the river, exactly in face of them. The leader of this was Doña Maria. As frequently happens, it had pleased chance to bring into propinquity irreconcilable enemies, who were only separated from each other by a distance of fifty yards at the most. But was this entirely owing to chance?

Don Tadeo had no suspicion of this dangerous proximity, or he would probably have done everything in his power to avoid it. He had cast a vacant glance at the caravan opposite to him, without taking any further heed of it, being absorbed in thoughts of the highest importance. Doña Maria, on the contrary, knew perfectly well, what she was about, and had placed herself where she was with the skill of an able tactician. In the mean time, as the morning advanced, the number of travellers kept increasing on the plain; by nine o'clock it was literally covered with tents; a free space only being reserved around an old half ruined chapel, in which mass was to be celebrated before the commencement of the ceremony.

The Puelches, who had descended from their mountains in great numbers, had passed the night in making joyous libations around their campfires; many of them were sleeping in a state of complete intoxication; nevertheless, as soon as the arrival of the minister of the Chilian republic was announced, they all sprang

up tumultuously, and began to dance, and utter cries of joy. On one side arrived General Bustamente at a canter, surrounded by a brilliant staff, all glittering with gold lace, and followed by a numerous troop of lancers; whilst on the other side came, at a gallop, the four Araucano Toquis, followed by the principal Ulmens of their nation, and a great number of mosotones.

These two troops, which hastened to meet each other amidst the *vivas* and cries of joy of the crowd, raised immense clouds of dust, in which they disappeared. The Araucanos in particular, who are excellent jinetes, a term used in this country to designate good horsemen, indulged in equestrian eccentricities, of which the so-much vaunted Arab fantasias can give but a faint idea; for they are nothing in comparison with the incredible feats performed by these men, who seem born to manage a horse. The Chilians had a much more serious bearing, from which they would gladly have freed themselves, if human respect had not restrained them.

As soon as the two troops met, the chiefs dismounted and ranged themselves, the Ulmens, armed with their long, silver-headed canes, behind Antinahuel, and the three other Toquis and the Chilians behind General Bustamente. It was the first time the Tiger-Sun and the General had met. Each of these two men, therefore, equally good politicians, equally false and equally ambitious, and who, at the first glance, understood one another, contemplated his rival with intense earnestness.

After exchanging a few salutes, impressed with a rather suspicious cordiality, the two bands retrograded from each other a few paces, to afford room for the commissary-general and four Capitanes de Amigos. These officers are what they call in the United States Indian agents; they serve as interpreters and agents to the Araucanos, for trade, and all that concerns their transactions with the Chilians. It must be observed that all these Indians speak Spanish perfectly well; but they never will use it in appointed meetings. These Capitanes de Amigos, who, for the most part, are half-breeds, are much beloved and respected. They arrived, leading a score of mules loaded with presents, destined by the President of the Republic for the principal Ulmens. For, be it noted, when Indians treat with Christians, they consider nothing settled till they have received presents: it is for them a proof that the other party does not wish to deceive them; they constitute an earnest which they require to bind the bargain, and prove that they are treated in good faith. The Chilians, who, unfortunately for them, had long been accustomed to Araucanian habits, had taken good care not to forget this important condition.

Whilst the commissary-general was distributing the presents, General Bustamente repaired to the chapel, where a priest, who had come purposely from Valdivia, celebrated mass. After mass, the speeches commenced, as soon as the minister of the republic and the four Toquis of the Uthal-Mapus had embraced. These speeches, which were very long, resulted in mutual assurances that they were satisfied with the peace which reigned between the two peoples, and that they would do all in their power to maintain it as long as possible. We think it our duty to beg our readers to observe, in justice to the two speakers, that one was not more sincere than the other, and that they did not mean one word they said, since in their hearts they determined to break their promises as soon as possible. They appeared, however, very well satisfied with the comedy they were playing, and they terminated it by a final embrace, more close and warm than the first, but equally false.

"Now," said the General, "if my brothers, the great chiefs, will please to follow me, we will plant the cross."

"No," Antinahuel replied, with a honied smile, "the cross must not be planted in front of the stone toldo."

"Why not?" the General asked, with astonishment.

"Because," the Indian replied, in a tone of decision, "the words we have exchanged must remain buried on the spot where they have been pronounced."

"That is just!" said the General, bowing his head in sign of assent. "It shall be done as my brother desires."

Antinahuel smiled proudly.

"Have I spoken well, powerful men?" he asked, looking at the Ulmens.

"Our father, the Toqui of the Inapire-Mapu, has spoken well," the Ulmens replied.

The Indian peons then went to fetch from the chapel, upon the floor of which it lay, a cross of at least thirty feet in height, which they brought to the spot where the conferences had been held. All the chiefs and the Chilian officers ranged themselves around it; the troops forming a vast circle at a respectful distance. After the pause of an instant, of which the priest took advantage to bless the cross with that off-hand carelessness which distinguishes the Spanish clergy in America, it was planted in the ground. At the moment it was about to gain its upright position, Antinahuel interposed.

"Stop!" he said to the Indians armed with spades; and turning towards the General, "Peace is well assured between us, is it not?" he asked.

"Yes, certainly," the General replied.

"All our words are buried under this cross?"

"All of them."

"Cover them with earth then," he said to the peons, "that they may not escape, and that war may not be rekindled between us."

"When this ceremony was accomplished, Antinahuel caused a young lamb to be brought, which the machi slaughtered near the cross. All the Indian chiefs bathed their hands in the still warm blood of the quivering animal, and daubed the cross with hieroglyphic signs, destined to keep away Guécubu, the genius of evil, and prevent the words from escaping from the spot in which they were buried. In conclusion, the Araucans and the Chilians discharged their firearms in the air, and the ceremony was ended. General Bustamente then coming up to the Toqui of the Inapire-Mapu, passed his arm through the chiefs in a friendly manner, saying in an ingratiating tone—

"Will not my brother, Antinahuel, come for an instant in my tent, to taste a glass of aguardiente de Pisco and take maté?—he would render his friend happy."

"Why should I not?" the chief replied, smiling, and in the most good-humoured tone.

"My brother will accompany me!"

"Lead on, then."

Both moved off, chatting upon indifferent subjects, directing their course towards the General's tent, which had been pitched within gunshot of the place where the ceremony had taken place. The General had given his orders beforehand, so that everything was prepared to receive the guest he brought with him magnificently, as for the success of his projects he had so great an interest in pleasing him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ABDUCTION.

Whilst the ceremony we have described was being accomplished, a terrible event was passing not far from it, on the banks of the river, in the camp of Don Tadeo de Leon. The three parties which divided Chili, and aimed at governing it, had, as if of one accord, chosen the day for the renewal of the treaty to throw off the mask and give their partisans the signal of revolt. Don Tadeo, who feared everything from Doña Maria and the General's spies, had consented, but with regret, that Rosario should accompany him to the plain, to be present at the ceremony; he had taken her from the convent, and brought the young girl with him, inwardly pleased that she would thus not be in Valdivia during the serious events that were there preparing.

Doña Rosario, to tell the truth, had only consulted her love in the request she had made of her guardian; the desire of seeing unobserved, for a few hours, the object of her affections, had dictated it. Don Tadeo, who could not on any account be present at the ceremony, being obliged to conceal himself, took the two young Frenchmen aside as soon as his little encampment was arranged. It was then about seven o'clock in the morning, and the crowd began to flock to the plain. The King of Darkness cast a prudent and searching look around, but, reassured by the complete solitude that prevailed, he at length decided upon explaining to the young men, who were astonished at this strange proceeding, all that appeared so unusual and inconsistent in his conduct.

"Caballeros," he said, "since I have had the honour of knowing you, I have concealed nothing from you, and you know all my secrets; this day must decide the question of life or death to which, from my boyhood, I have devoted all the energies of my mind. I must leave this spot instantly, and return to Valdivia. It is in that city that the first blow will be struck, within a few hours, against the tyrant, and the struggle I expect will be terrible. I am not willing to expose the young lady whom you know, and whose life you have already saved, to the chances of it. I confide the care of her to one of you, the other will accompany me to the city. In the event of any fatal mischance happening to me, I will place in his hands a paper, which will inform you both of my intentions, and of what I wish you to do with that poor child, who is all I hold dear on earth, and whom I leave with the greatest pain. Which of you, gentlemen, will take charge of Doña Rosario during my absence?"

"Be at ease, Don Tadeo, go where your duty calls you," Louis answered, in a solemn but agitated tone; "I swear that while I live no danger, either near or

distant, shall assail her; to reach her it must pass over my dead body."

"Receive my warmest thanks, Don Louis," the Dark-Heart replied, somewhat surprised, and yet affected by the manner of the Frenchman; "I place implicit faith in your words; I know you will keep your vow at all risks; besides, in a few hours I hope I shall be back, and here she can have nothing to dread."

"I will watch over her," the young man said, quietly.

"Once again I thank you."

Don Tadeo left the young men, and returned to the tent where Doña Rosario, reclining in a hammock, was gently swinging herself, and indulging in perhaps pleasing reveries. On seeing her guardian, she sprang up eagerly.

"Do not disturb yourself, my child," said Don Tadeo, putting her back with a gentle hand, "I have but two words to say to you."

"I am always attentive to you, my kind friend."

"I have come to bid you farewell."

"Farewell, Don Tadeo!" she exclaimed, in great terror.

"Oh! comfort yourself, timid darling! only for a few hours."

"Ah! that is all!" she said, with a smile of satisfaction.

"Certainly, all! There is in this neighbourhood an exceedingly curious grotto. I was foolish enough to let some words slip concerning it this morning before Don Valentine, and that demon of a Frenchman," he added, with a smile, "insists upon my showing it to him; so that, in order to get rid of his importunities, I have been obliged to comply."

"You have done quite right," she said, eagerly; "we are under great obligations to those two French caballeros, and what he asked is such a trifle!"

"That it would have been uncourteous on my part to refuse him," Don Tadeo interrupted, "therefore I have not. We shall set off directly, in order to be the sooner back. Be as cheerful as you can during our absence, dear child."

"I will endeavour," she said, absently.

"Besides, I shall leave Don Louis to take care of you; you can chat together, and the time will quickly pass away."

The young girl blushed as she stammered—"Come back soon, dear friend."

"Time to go and return, that is all; adieu, then, darling!"

Don Tadeo left the tent, and rejoined the young men.

"Adieu, Don Louis!" he said. "Are you ready, Don Valentine?"

"Ready!" the Frenchman replied, laughing; "Caramba! I should be in despair at losing such an opportunity of judging whether you understand getting up revolutions as well as we Frenchmen do."

"Oh! We are but young at the work yet," Don Tadeo remarked; "and yet we begin to have some idea of the matter, I assure you."

"Good-bye, Louis, for a time," said Valentine, pressing his friend's hand; and stooping towards his ear, he added—"Be thankful to your stars, do you not see that Heaven protects your love?" The young man only replied by shaking his head despondingly, and sighing deeply. A peon had brought the horses for the two Chilians and the Frenchman, and they were soon in the saddle. They set off at a quick pace, and were quickly lost in the high grass and the windings of the road. Louis returned pensively to the camp, where he found Doña Rosario alone in her tent; the two Indian chiefs, attracted by curiosity, having gone in the direction of the chapel, where, mingled with the crowd, they might be present at the ceremony. The arrieros and the peons had not been long in following their example.

The young girl was seated on a heap of dyed sheepskins in front of the tent, dreamily looking at, but without seeing, the clouds which were driven across the heavens by a strong breeze. Doña Rosario was a charming girl of sixteen, slender, fragile, and delicate, small in person, whose least gestures and least movements possessed inexpressible attractions. Of a rare kind of beauty in America, she was fair; her long silky hair was of the colour of ripe golden corn; her blue eyes, in which were reflected the azure of the heavens, had that melancholy, dreamy expression which we attribute only to angels, and young girls who are beginning to love; her nose, with its pinky nostrils, was inclined to be aquiline; while her mouth, rather serious, with rosy lips set off by teeth of dazzling whiteness, and her skin of pearl-like purity, altogether made her a charming creature.

The noise of the approaching young man's steps roused her from her reverie. She turned her head in the direction, and looked at him with inexpressible sadness, although a faint smile played upon her lips.

"It is I," said the Count, in a low, inarticulate voice, bowing respectfully.

"I knew of your coming," she replied, in a sweetly-toned voice. "Oh! why did you return to me at all?"

"Be not angry with me for drawing near you once more. I endeavoured to obey you; I left the spot you resided in, without, alas! even the hope of seeing you again; but destiny has decided otherwise."

She gave him a long and eloquent look.

"Unfortunately," he continued, with a melancholy smile, "you are condemned for some hours to endure my presence."

"I must resign myself to it," she said, extending her hand to him cordially.

The young man imprinted a burning kiss upon the white, soft hand he held.

"And so we are left alone!" she said gaily, but withdrawing her hand.

"Good heavens! yes, nearly so," he replied, falling in with her humour. "The Indian chiefs and the peons, overcome by curiosity, have joined the crowds, and kindly procured us a *tête-à-tête*."

"In the midst of ten thousand people!" she said, smiling.

"That is all the better; everyone is engaged with his own affairs, without troubling himself about those of others; and we can speak to each other without the fear of being interrupted by importunate persons."

"True," she said, thoughtfully; "it is frequently amidst a crowd that we find the greatest solitude."

"Does not the heart possess that great faculty of being able to isolate itself when it pleases—to fold itself, as it were, within itself?"

"And is not that faculty often a misfortune?"

"Perhaps it is," he replied, with a sigh.

"But how comes it?" she said, with a half-smiling air, in order to change the conversation, which was becoming a little too serious. "Pardon my giddy impertinence! How comes it, I say, that you, of whom I sometimes caught a glimpse at Paris, during my short sojourn there, and who then enjoyed, if I was not mistaken, a brilliant position, should meet me here so far from your country?"

"Alas! madam, my history is that of many young men, and may be summed up in two words—weakness and ignorance."

"That is but too true; that is the history of nearly all the world, in Europe as well as in America."

At this moment a great noise reached them from the camp. Doña Rosario and the Count were placed so as not to be able to see what was passing in the plain.

"What is that noise?" she asked.

"Probably the tumult of the festival which reaches us: should you like to be present at this ceremony?"

"To what purpose? Those cries and that tumult terrify me."

"And yet, I thought it was you who asked Don Tadeo to see this."

"A silly girl's caprice," she said, "which passed away as soon as conceived."

"But was it not Don Tadeo's intention to——"

"Who can tell Don Tadeo's intention?" she interrupted, with a sigh.

"He appears to love you tenderly?" Louis hazarded, timidly.

"Sometimes I am on the point of believing so; he pays me the most delicate attentions, shews me the tenderest care; then at other times he appears to endure me with, pain—he repulses me—my caresses annoy him."

"Singular conduct!" the Count observed; "this gentleman is your relation, there can be no doubt."

"I do not know," she replied ingenuously; "when alone and pensive, my thoughts stray back to my early years. I have some vague remembrance of a young and handsome woman, whose black eyes smiled upon me constantly, and whose rosy lips lavished affectionate kisses upon me; and then, all at once, a complete darkness comes over my brain, and memory entirely fails me. As far back as I can recollect, I find nobody but Don Tadeo watching over me, everywhere and always, as a father would do over his daughter."

"Perhaps, then," said the Count, "he is your father."

"Listen. One day, after a long and dangerous illness which I had just gone through, and in which Don Tadeo had night and day watched over my pillow for more than a month, happy at seeing me restored to life, for he had been fearful he should lose me, he smiled upon me tenderly, kissed my brow and my hands, and appeared to experience the most lively joy. 'Oh!' I said, as a sudden thought rushed across my mind; 'oh! you are my father! None but a father could devote

himself with such abnegation for his child!' and throwing my arms round his neck, I concealed my tear-laden face on his chest. Don Tadeo arose, his countenance was lividly pale, his features were frightfully contracted; he repulsed me roughly, and strode hastily about the chamber. I Your father! I! Doña Rosario!' he cried, in a husky voice, 'you are a silly, poor child! Never repeat those words again; your father is dead, and your mother, likewise, long, long ago. I am not your father—never repeat that word—I am only your friend. Yes, your father, at the point of death, confided you to my care, and that is why I am bringing you up, that is why I watch over you; as to me, I am not even your relation!' His agitation was extreme; he said many other things which I do not now remember, and then he left me. Alas! from that day I have never ventured to ask him for any account of my family."

A silence ensued; the two young people were pensively thoughtful: the simple and touching recital of Doña Rosario had strongly affected the Count. At length he said, in a tremulous voice,—

"Let *me* love you, Doña Rosario!"

The maiden sighed.

"To what could that love lead, Don Louis?" she said sadly,— "to death, perhaps!"

"Oh!" he exclaimed madly; "and it would be welcome, if it came in your defence!"

At this very instant, several individuals rushed into the tent, uttering discordant cries. Quick as thought, the Count threw himself before the young girl, a pistol in each hand. But, as if Heaven had decreed that he should accomplish the wish he had just uttered, before he had time to defend himself, he was struck to the earth, stabbed by several machetes. In falling, he saw, as if in a dream, Doña Rosario seized by two individuals, who fled away with her in their arms. With an incredible effort, the young man succeeded in getting on his knees, and afterwards in rising altogether. He beheld the ravishers hastening towards their horses, which were being held at a short distance by an Indian. He took aim at the flying wretches, crying, with a faint voice, "Murder! Murder!" and fired.

One of the ravishers fell, uttering an imprecation of rage. The Count, exhausted by the superhuman effort he had made, staggered like a drunken man; the blood gushed from his ears, his sight grew dim, and he rolled senseless upon the ground.



CHAPTER XXX.

THE PROTEST.

The three travellers returned with such speed to Valdivia, that it scarcely took them an hour and a half to traverse the distance which divided the plain from the city. They passed on their way General Don Pancho Bustamente, at the head of a detachment of lanceros, and attended by a numerous staff; but the Dark-Hearts, employing their usual precautions, escaped notice. Don Tadeo cast an ironical glance at his enemy.

"Look," he said, with a somewhat malignant smile, to Don Gregorio, "at our worthy general; he fancies himself already protector. What a majestic bearing he affects!"

"Yes," said Don Gregorio, with the same expression; "but between the cup and the lip he may find there is room for a mischance."

It was striking ten as they entered Valdivia. The city was almost deserted: for all who were not detained at home by urgent business had gone to the plain, to be present at the renewal of the treaties between the Chilians and the Araucanos. This ceremony strongly interested the inhabitants of the province: it was for them a guarantee of tranquillity for the future; that is to say, the liberty of carrying on with safety their commercial transactions with the Indians. More than all the other provinces of Chili, Valdivia had cause to dread hostilities with its redoubtable neighbours. Separated entirely from the territory of the republic, when left to its own resources, the least movement among the Moluchos annihilated its commerce. If the inhabitants appeared to have emigrated for a time, it was not the same with the soldiers; the numerous garrison, composed—a thing unheard of in time of peace—of fifteen hundred men, had been still further increased within the last two days, principally in the course of the preceding night, by two regiments of cavalry, and a battery of artillery.

For what purpose was this calling together of forces, which nothing appeared to justify? The few inhabitants who remained in the city experienced a vague uneasiness on this head, for which they could not account. There is a singular fact that we wish to point out here, but which we by no means take upon ourselves to explain, because it has always seemed to us inexplicable. When a great event, whatever it may be, is about to be accomplished in a country, a vague presentiment seems to warn the inhabitants; men and things assume an unusual aspect; nature itself, associating with this disposition of men's minds,

grows sensibly darker; a magnetic fluid rushes through the veins; a painful pressure weighs upon every breast; the atmosphere becomes heavy; the sun loses its brilliancy; and people only communicate their impressions to each other in a suppressed voice; in short, there is in the air something incomprehensible, but I know not what, which says to man in a dismal tone, "Beware! a catastrophe threatens thee!" And this fatal presentiment is so general, that when the event takes place, and the crisis is over, every one instinctively cries, "I felt it!" And yet no one could say why he foresaw the cataclysm.

It is the sentiment of self-preservation which God has placed in the heart of man—that sentiment which constitutes his safeguard, and is so strong, that when danger approaches him, it cries to him, "Beware!" Valdivia was at this moment oppressed by the weight of an unknown apprehension. The few citizens who remained in the city hastened to regain their homes. Numerous patrols of cavalry and infantry traversed the streets in all directions; cannon rolled along with portentous noise, and were planted at the corners of all the principal places. At the cabildo a crowd of officers and soldiers went in and out with a busy air; couriers succeeded each other unceasingly, and after having delivered the orders with which they were charged, set off again at full speed.

At the same time, at the corners of streets, men wrapped in large cloaks, and with hats pulled down over their eyes, harangued the workmen and the sailors of the port, and formed groups, which every instant became more numerous. In these groups, arms, gun barrels, bayonets, and pike heads began to glitter in the sun. When these mysterious men were satisfied that they had accomplished their task in one place, they went to another. Immediately after their departure, as if by magic, barricades were raised behind them, and impeded the passage. As soon as a barricade was terminated, an energetic-looking sentinel, a workman with bare arms, but with a callous hand, brandishing a gun, an axe, or a sabre, placed himself at its summit, and bade all who approached go another way.

On entering the city, Don Tadeo and his companions found themselves completely barricaded. Don Tadeo smiled triumphantly. The three men cleared the barricades, which were thrown open at their approach, and the sentinels bowed to them as they passed. We have forgotten to say that all three were masked. There was something striking in the march of these three phantoms, before whom all obstacles gave way. If now and then a stray citizen ventured to ask timidly who those three masked men were, he received for answer, "It is the King of Darkness and his lieutenants;" and the citizen, trembling with fear, crossed himself, and went his way hastily.

The three men thus arrived at the entrance of the Plaza Mayor. There two pieces of mounted cannon barred their passage, and the artillerymen were at their guns waiting, match in hand. At a sign from Don Tadeo, the officer who commanded approached him. He leant down upon the neck of his horse and said a few words to the officer in a whisper; the latter bowed respectfully, and, turning to his soldiers, said—

"Let these gentlemen pass."

In all the cities of Spanish America there is a monumental fountain in the centre of the Plaza Mayor. It was towards this fountain that Don Tadeo conducted his companions. A hundred individuals, scattered here and there, and who appeared to expect him, drew together at his approach.

"Well," Don Tadeo asked Valentine, "how do you like our ride?"

"Delightful," the other replied, "only I fancy we shall shortly come to blows, and hear the hissing of bullets."

"I hope so," said the conspirator, coolly.

"Ah! ah!" the young man remarked, "all is for the best, then?"

"You are about to be present at a very interesting spectacle."

"Oh! I depend upon you for that. For my part, I am glad at not having lost such an opportunity."

"Is it not one?"

"Pardieu!—yes. It is astonishing how travelling instructs one," he added, in the form of a parenthesis.

The individuals assembled near the fountain surrounded them with every mark of the profoundest respect. These were the faithful—the Dark-Hearts—upon whom perfect dependence was to be placed.

"Gentlemen," said Don Tadeo, "the struggle is about to commence. I desire at length that you should know me, that you should be informed who the man is who commands you."

And he threw off his mask. A burst of enthusiasm broke from the ranks of the conspirators. "Don Tadeo de Leon!" they cried with astonishment, mingled with a species of veneration for the man who had suffered so much for the common cause.

"Yes, gentlemen," Don Tadeo replied, "the man whom the creatures of the tyrant condemned to death, and whom God has miraculously preserved, in order to be the instrument of His vengeance today."

All the conspirators pressed tumultuously round him. These men of spontaneous impressions, and essentially superstitious, no longer doubted of victory, since they had at their head the man whom God, as they believed, had so manifestly protected. Don Tadeo had calculated upon this manifestation to heighten the ardour of the conspirators, and to augment still further the prestige he enjoyed. The result had answered his expectations.

"Is everyone at his post?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Are arms and ammunition distributed?"

"To everybody."

"Are all the barricades completed?—all the gates of the city guarded?"

"All."

"That is well. Now wait."

And quiet was re-established.

All these men had known Don Tadeo for a long time; they appreciated his character at its true value; they had already vowed to him a boundless friendship; and now they knew that Don Tadeo and the King of Darkness were the same person, they were ready to lay down their lives for him. The news of the revelation which had been made near the fountain spread through the city with the rapidity of a train of gunpowder, and added greatly to the fermentation which already prevailed. Whilst the few words were being exchanged between the chief of the conspirators and his party, a regiment of infantry had formed in front of the cabildo, flanked right and left by two squadrons of horse.

"Attention!" Don Tadeo commanded.

A sensation of impatience pervaded the men grouped around him.

"Eh! eh!" Valentine murmured, with that mocking, short laugh that was peculiar to him; "this is going on capitally! Caramba! we shall soon have some fun!"

The gates of the cabildo were thrown open violently, and a general, followed by a brilliant staff, took his station on the top step of the great staircase; next several

senators made their appearance in full costume, and formed a group round him. At a signal from the general, the drums beat for a time, to secure attention and silence. When all was quiet, a senator, who held a roll of paper in his hand, came forward a few steps, and prepared to read.

"Bah!" said the General, seizing his arm, "Why lose your time in reading that rubbish? Leave it to me."

The senator, who asked no better than to be freed from the dangerous commission with which, very much against his will, he had been charged, rolled up his papers, and retreated to the rear. The general assumed a commanding posture, placed his hand upon his hip, with the point of his sword on the ground, and said in a voice audible in every corner of the place—

"People of the province of Valdivia, the sovereign senate, assembled in congress at Santiago de Chili, has unanimously passed the following resolutions:—

"1st. The various provinces of the Chilian republic shall be composed of independent states united under the title of the Confederation of the United States of South America.

"2nd. The valiant and most excellent general, Don Pancho Bustamente, has been elected Protector of the Chilian Confederation."

"People, cry with me—'Long live the Protector Don Pancho Bustamente!'"

The officers grouped round the General, and the soldiers drawn up in the place, shouted—

"Long live the Protector!"

But the people were mute.

"Hum!" the general murmured to himself; "they do not display much enthusiasm."

A man came forward from the group collected round the fountain, and advanced boldly to within twenty paces of the soldiers. This man was Don Tadeo de Leon; his countenance was calm and his bearing firm and collected. He made a sign with his hand.

"What is your will?" the general shouted.

"To reply to your proclamation," the King of Darkness said, intrepidly.

"Speak! I hear you," the general replied.

Don Tadeo bowed with a significant smile.

"In the name of the Chilian people," he said, in a loud, clear voice, "the senate of Santiago de Chili, composed of creatures sold to the tyrant, is declared traitorous to its country."

"Miserable fellow! what do you dare to say?" the General cried, angrily.

"No insults, if you please! Allow me to terminate the answer I have to give you," Don Tadeo replied, coolly.

The General, involuntarily brow-beaten by the heroic courage of this man, who, alone, unarmed before a triple row of muskets ready to be directed towards his breast, had dared to speak in this loud, firm tone, and overcome by that ascendancy which a great character always exercises, bit the pommel of his sword with rage.

"In the name of the people," Don Tadeo, still calm and stoical, continued, "Don Pancho Bustamente is declared a traitor to his country, and as such is degraded from his titles and his power. Liberty! Chili!"

"Liberty! Chili!" the populace assembled on the square shouted with the greatest enthusiasm.

"Oh, this is too audacious!" the General cried, pale with anger. "Soldiers, seize that rebel!"

Several soldiers stepped forward; but, quicker than thought, Don Gregorio and Valentine had sprung to Don Tadeo's side, and dragged him back with them among the people.

"Cordieu!" cried Valentine, pressing his hands enough to crush them, "you are a troublesome man! but I love you the better for it."

The General, outrageous at seeing his enemy escape, shouted silence. "In the name of the Protector," he said, "I command that rebel to be given up!"

Hisses and hootings were the only reply.

"Fire!" the General commanded, who, even before the last insulting manifestation, had perceived that no half measures were possible. The muskets were lowered, and a formidable discharge pealed like thunder. Several men fell, killed or wounded.

"Chili! Liberty! down with the oppressor!" the people shouted, arming themselves with everything they could lay their hands on. A second discharge

resounded, followed closely by a third. The ground was, in an instant, strewn with the dead and dying; but the patriots showed no disposition to disperse; on the contrary, under the incessant fire of the soldiers, they organized a resistance, and soon replied by a few shots to the incessant platoon firing which was decimating them. The combat became mutual; the revolution had commenced.

"Hum!" the General muttered to himself, "I have undertaken a rather awkward mission."

But, essentially a soldier, and endowed to the highest degree with that spirit of passive obedience which distinguishes all who have grown old in harness, he prepared either to chastise the insurgents severely, or die at his post.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SPANIARD AND INDIAN.

It was not, as may well be believed, through fear, that General Bustamente had absented himself from Valdivia at the moment when one of his lieutenants so boldly proclaimed him from the top of the steps of the cabildo, before the populace. No, General Bustamente was one of those soldiers of fortune of whom so many are found in America, accustomed to set his life upon a cast of the die, and to be turned aside by nothing in the world from the accomplishment of his projects. He had hoped, by the means of the forces he had concentrated in this remote province of the republic, that the inhabitants, taken unawares, would only offer an insignificant resistance, and that he should be able, by joining his troops with those of Antinahuel, to make a forced march through Araucania, gain possession of Concepción, and thence, keeping the gathering snowball in motion, and dragging his companions after him, arrive at Santiago in time to prevent any movement, and oblige the inhabitants to capitulate and accept, as an accomplished fact, the change of government inaugurated by him in the distant provinces of the republic.

This plan was not deficient in audacity, or even in a certain degree of policy; it comprised great chances of success. Unfortunately for General Bustamente, the Dark-Hearts, whose spies were everywhere, had got wind of this project, and had countermined it by taking advantage of the opportunity offered them by their

enemy to unmask their own batteries. We have seen under what conditions the struggle between the two parties had commenced in Valdivia. The General, who was ignorant of what was passing, felt in a state of perfect security. As soon as he was in his tent with Antinahuel, he let fall the curtain which closed it behind them, and, by a gesture, invited the toqui to be seated.

"Sit down, chief," he said, "I have something to say to you."

"I am at the orders of my white brother," the Indian replied, with a bow.

The General attentively examined the man before him; he endeavoured to read on his countenance the various feelings that acted upon him; but the features of the Indian were marble; no impression was reflected by them.

"Let us speak frankly, loyally, and as friends who wish no better than to understand each other plainly," he said.

Antinahuel bowed reservedly to this appeal to frankness, and the General continued—

"At this moment the people of Valdivia are constituting me, by acclamation, protector of a new confederation, formed of all the states."

"Good!" said the chief, with an almost imperceptible shake of the head; "is my father sure of that?"

"Certainly I am. The Chilians are tired of the continual agitations which disturb the country; they have forced this heavy burden upon me; but I owe myself to my country, and I will not disappoint the hopes my compatriots place in me."

These words were pronounced in a hypocritical tone of self-denial, of which the Indian was not in the least the dupe. A smile flitted across the lips of the chief, which the General affected not to perceive.

"To be brief," he continued, quitting the mild, conciliatory tone in which he had till that time spoken, to assume a more decided and abrupt manner, "are you prepared to keep your engagements?"

"Why should I not keep them?" Antinahuel remarked.

"Will you march with me to assure the success of my projects?"

"Let my father order, I will obey."

This readiness was displeasing to the General.

"Come," he said, angrily, "let us put an end to this; I have not time to enter into a

contest of wits with you, or follow you through a labyrinth of Indian circumlocutions."

"I do not understand my father," Antinahuel replied, impassively.

"We shall never get to the end, chief," the General said, stamping his foot, "if you will not answer me categorically."

"I listen to my father; let him ask, I will reply."

"How many men can you have under arms within twenty-four hours?"

"Ten thousand," the chief said, drawing himself up proudly.

"All experienced warriors?"

"All."

"What do you require of me for them?"

"My father knows."

"I accept of all your conditions but one."

"Which is that?"

"The surrender of the province of Valdivia to you."

"Is not my father going to make up for that province on another side?"

"How so?"

"Am I not to assist my father in conquering Bolivia?"

"Yes."

"Well, then?"

"You are mistaken, chief, it is not the same thing; I may enlarge the Chilean territory, but honour forbids me to diminish it."

"Let my father reflect; the province of Valdivia was anciently an Araucanian Uthal-Mapus."

"Very possibly, chief; but, according to that principle, all Chile was Araucanian previous to the discovery of America."

"My father is mistaken; the Inca Sinchiroca had, a hundred years before, conquered the Chilean land as far as the Rio-Maulé."

"You seem to be well acquainted with the history of your country, chief," the

General observed.

"Does not my father know the history of his?"

"That is not the question, now; do you accept my proposals or not?"

The chief appeared to reflect for an instant.

"Well!" the General exclaimed, impatiently, "time presses."

"That is true; I will, therefore, go and command a council, composed of the Apo-Ulmens and Ulmens of my nation, and submit the words of my father to them."

The General with difficulty suppressed an expression of anger.

"You must, doubtless, be joking, chief," he said—"your words cannot be serious."

"Antinahuel is the first toqui of his nation," the Indian replied, haughtily; "he never jokes."

"But you must give me your answer now—at once—in a few minutes!" cried the General; "who knows whether we may not be obliged to march within an hour from this time?"

"It is my duty, as much as it is my father's, to enlarge the territory of my people."

At this moment the gallop of a horse was heard approaching; the General flew to the entrance of the tent, where an orderly officer appeared. The face of this officer was bathed with perspiration, and spots of blood stained his uniform.

"General!" he said breathlessly.

"Silence!" the latter hissed, pointing to the chief, who, though apparently indifferent, followed all his movements attentively. The General turned towards Antinahuel.

"Chief," he said, "I have orders to give to this officer—pressing orders; if you will permit me, we will resume our conversation presently."

"Good!" replied the chief; "my father need not inconvenience himself; I can wait."

And after bowing, he left the tent slowly.

"Oh!" said the General to himself, "you demon! if, some day, I have you in my power!"

But perceiving that anger was making him forget himself, he turned towards the

officer, who stood motionless:

"Well, Diego," he said, "what news have you?—are we conquerors?"

"No," the officer replied, shaking his head; "the people, excited by those incarnate demons, the Dark-Hearts, have rebelled."

"Oh!" the General cried, "shall I never be able to crush them? What has taken place?"

"The people have raised barricades; and Don Tadeo de Leon is at the head of the movement."

"Don Tadeo de Leon!" said the General.

"Yes, he who was so clumsily shot."

"Oh! this is war to the death then!"

"A part of the troops, seduced by their officers, who have sold themselves to the Dark-Hearts, have passed over to their side; at this moment they are fighting in all the streets with the fiercest inveteracy. I had to pass through a shower of bullets to come and inform you."

"We have not an instant to lose."

"No; for though the soldiers who have remained faithful to you are fighting like lions, I can assure you they are closely pressed."

"Maldición!" the General howled; "I will not leave stone upon stone of that accursed city!"

"Yes, but, in the first place, we must reconquer it, General, and that will prove rather a rough job, I promise you," replied the old soldier, who had preserved his blunt speech throughout.

"Very well!" said Bustamente; "let 'boot and saddle' be sounded, and every horseman take a foot soldier behind him."

Don Pancho Bustamente was a prey to the most violent rage; for several instants he stamped about his tent, like a wild beast in its cage. This unexpected resistance, in spite of all the measures of precaution he had taken, exasperated him. Suddenly the curtain of his tent was raised. "Who is there?" he cried. "Ah! chief, is that you? Well, what do you say?"

"I saw the chief come out, and I thought that perhaps my father would not be sorry to see me," the other replied, courteously.

"And you were right; I am delighted to see you; forget all we have said, chief; I accept all your conditions; are you satisfied, this time?"

"Yes. Including Valdivia?"

"That above all!" said the General, with concentrated rage.

"Ah!"

"Yes, and as that province has revolted, in order to be able to give it to you, I must bring it back to its duty, must I not?"

"To be sure you must!"

"Well, as I have it at my heart to fulfil all my engagements to you, I am going instantly to march against that city; will you help me to subdue it?"

"That will be but just, as I shall labour for myself."

"How many horsemen have you at hand?"

"Twelve hundred."

"Good!" said the General, "they will be more than we shall want."

"The troops are ready," said Diego, entering the tent, "and only await your Excellency's orders."

"To saddle, then; let us be gone! let us be gone! And you, chief, will you not accompany us?"

"Let my father move onward! my mosotones and I will tread in his steps quickly."

Ten minutes later, General Bustamente, with his soldiers, was again galloping along the road to Valdivia. Antinahuel followed him with his eyes attentively; then he rejoined his Ulmens, saying between his teeth, "Let us leave these Moro-Huincas to slaughter each other a little while; it will always be time enough to fall into the party."

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN THE MOUNTAIN.

Doña Rosario was so terrified, and such mortal anguish assailed her on beholding the Count fall under the knives of the assassins, that she fainted. When she recovered her senses, it was dark night. For several minutes her confused thoughts whirled about in her brain; and she endeavoured, but for a long time in vain, to recover the violently broken thread of her ideas. At length light returned to her mind; she breathed a deep sigh, and murmured in a low voice full of terror:

"My God! my God! what has happened to me?"

She then opened her eyes, and cast around a despairing look. We have said it was a dark night; but what made the darkness more complete for the poor girl, was a heavy covering of some kind which was spread over her face, as well as her person. Then, with that patience which characterizes all prisoners, and which is merely the instinct of liberty, the poor child endeavoured to ascertain what her position was. As well as she could judge, she was lying upon the back of a mule, between two bales; a cord, which passed round her waist, prevented her from rising, but her hands were free. The mule had that rough, irregular trot, peculiar to its species, which made the young girl suffer terribly at every step. Some horse cloths had been thrown over her, no doubt to protect her from the heavy dews of the night, or perhaps to prevent her from making out what road she was going. Doña Rosario, gently, and with great precaution, slipped the covering down from her face: after a few efforts her head was completely free. She then looked around her; but all was dark. The moon, closely veiled by the clouds which passed over its pale disc, only yielded, at rare intervals, a weak, uncertain light. By lifting her head softly, the young girl could distinguish several horsemen, riding before and behind the mule which carried her. As well as she could make out, from the obscurity which surrounded her, these horsemen were Indians.

The rather numerous party—it apparently consisted of a score of individuals—followed a narrow road deeply inclosed between two abrupt mountains, the rocky masses of which, throwing their shadow over the road, augmented the darkness. This road rose with a gentle ascent; and the horses and mules, probably fatigued with a long journey, travelled at a foot pace. The young girl, scarcely recovered from her fainting, had not been able to judge of the time that had elapsed since her abduction; and yet, by collecting her remembrances, and thinking at what hour she had been the victim of this odious attempt, she calculated that twelve hours must have passed away since she was made a prisoner. Overcome by the effort she had been forced to make in order to look

around her, the poor girl let her head sink back again, stifling a sigh of despondency; and closing her eyes, as if to isolate herself the more, she plunged into sad and deep meditations.

She was at least ignorant of whom she was with. Many times, it was true, Don Tadeo had spoken to her of an inveterate enemy, inveterate for her destruction; of a woman whose hatred watched her incessantly, ready to sacrifice her on the first favourable opportunity. But who was this woman? What cause had she for her hatred? Was she in the hands of this woman at that moment? And if so, why had she not already sacrificed her to her vengeance? From what motive had she been spared? For what punishment was she reserved?

These thoughts and many others came in crowds to assail the maiden's bewildered mind. This uncertainty was for her an atrocious torture; at that moment, the truth would, perhaps, have been a consolation. Man is so constructed, that what he is most in dread of is the unknown; what he is ignorant of, assumes instinctively, in the prepossessed eyes of one whom a terrible danger menaces, gigantic proportions, a thousand times more terrific than the danger itself. The diseased imagination creates for itself phantoms which reality, however horrible it may be, puts to flight. In a word, the condemned prisoner who is led to punishment suffers more from the apprehensions which the fear of the death awaiting him inspires him with, than the physical pain of that death itself will cause him. Such was, at this moment, the situation of Doña Rosario; her mind, filled with inquietude and dark presentiments, made her dread nameless sufferings, the mere thought of which froze the young blood in her veins.

The caravan still proceeded; it had left the ravine, and was climbing a path traced along the edge of a precipice, at the base of which could be heard the dull murmur of invisible water. At times, a stone, half-broken beneath the hoof of a mule, became detached, and rolled with a sinister noise down the side of the mountain, to engulf itself in the waters, into which it plunged with a dull splash, the sound of which ascended from the abyss. The wind howled through the pines and larches, the clashing branches of which showered a deluge of dry cones upon the travellers. At intervals the owl, and the screech owl, concealed in the crevices of the rocks, poured out into the night their plaintive notes, breaking the silence dismally. Furious barkings were heard in the distance; by degrees they grew nearer, and ended by forming a frightful concert, broken by the sharp voices of women and children, endeavouring to quiet them; lights appeared, and the caravan stopped. They had evidently arrived at the halt, at which they were

to pass the rest of the night.

The maiden cast an anxious but cautious look around her; but the flame of the torches agitated by the wind would not permit her to see anything but the dark outlines of some buildings and the shadows of several individuals who flitted about her, with cries and laughter—nothing more. The people of the escort were busily employed in unsaddling the horses and unloading the mules, amidst cries and oaths, and did not appear to bestow the least attention upon the young girl.

A considerable time passed away; Doña Rosario did not know to what to attribute this unaccountable forgetfulness. At length she felt that someone took the mule by the bridle, and she heard him shout in a hoarse voice, *Arrea!*—the word with which the arrieros are accustomed to excite their beasts. Had she, then, been deceived? Was it not here they were to stop? What was the meaning of the halt, then? Why did a portion of the escort leave her?

Her uncertainty was not of long duration; at the end of ten minutes at most, the mule stopped again, and the man who led it approached Doña Rosario. This man, clothed in the costume of the Chilian peasantry, wore an old straw Panama hat, the large brim of which, pulled down over his face, prevented her distinguishing his features. At the sight of this individual, the young girl felt an involuntary shudder run through her frame. The peasant, or pretended peasant, without addressing a word to her, withdrew the covering which enfolded her, untied the cord which bound her to the mule, and taking her in his arms, carried her with as much ease as if she had been a child, into a detached cabin a few paces distant, the door of which, standing open, seemed to invite them to enter.

The interior of this cabin was dark. The young girl was laid upon the ground with a care and attention she did not expect. At the moment when he let her sink softly down from his arms to the ground, the man bent his head down towards her, and in a voice as inaudible as a breath, he whispered, "Courage! and hope!" and recovering himself quickly, went hastily out of the cabin, closing the door after him.

As soon as he was gone, Doña Rosario sprang upon her feet. The two words pronounced by the unknown had sufficed to restore her presence of mind, and remove all her terrors. Hope, that universal panacea, that supreme good, which God, in His infinite mercy, has given to the unfortunate to help them to suffer, had suddenly re-entered her heart; she felt herself become strong, and ready to engage in the struggle with her unknown enemies. She knew now that a friend watched in secret over her, and, if required, his assistance would not be wanting;

therefore it was almost with impatience, though still with fear, that she waited for her ravishers to signify their intentions.

The place in which she was confined was completely dark. At the first moment she in vain endeavoured to distinguish anything in this chaos; but, by degrees, her eyes became accustomed to the darkness, and, in front of her, she perceived a faint light, which flitted between the badly-joined boards of a door. She then, with great precaution, for fear of arousing her invisible guardians, and stretching out her hand to keep her from contact with any obstacle she could not see, advanced cautiously, and listening attentively, towards the side from which came the light—a light which attracted her as instinctively as a flame attracts the imprudent moth whose wings it burns.

The nearer she approached, the more distinct the light became, and the sound of a voice reached her ears. At length her extended hands touched the door, and leaning forward, she applied her eye to the chink. She stifled a cry of surprise, and, as at that moment the conversation, which had been for a short time interrupted, recommenced, she listened with intensity.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE WATCH.

What she heard, but still more what she saw, necessarily powerfully interested Doña Rosario. In a vast room, dimly lighted by one of those yellow candles which the Chilians call *velas de cebo*, fastened to the wall by means of a ring, a woman, still young, and very handsome, attired in a riding dress of great richness, was seated on an ebony chair, covered with Cordova leather. With her right hand she played with a gold headed whip, and was speaking in an animated tone to a man who stood respectfully before her, hat in hand. This man, as well as Doña Rosario could make out, was the same who had carried her into the *cuarto*. The woman, whom Doña Rosario did not recollect ever to have seen, was no other than Doña Maria, the shameless courtesan, who, under the name of the Linda, enjoyed such a scandalous celebrity.

Doña Maria's position threw the light of the candle full upon her face, and gave Doña Rosario an opportunity of distinguishing her features. She contemplated

them with deep interest, for she felt instinctively that this woman was the enemy who, from her birth, had fatally followed her steps. She imagined that a decisive conference between her and the unknown was about to take place, and that in a few minutes her fate would be made known to her. And yet, at the aspect of this woman, whose bent brows, clear and haughty look, coldly compressed lips, and cruel words, revealed with the hatred which devoured her, it was neither a feeling of terror, nor a feeling of hatred, that the young girl experienced. Without knowing why, a sadness and an undefined pity for the very woman who was giving orders that made her shudder, took possession of her. She listened breathlessly, fascinated, scarcely knowing whether what she heard was really true, and fancying herself at times under the influence of some terrible hallucination.

The two speakers, who knew not that they were either watched or overheard, resumed their conversation in an unrestrained voice. Doña Rosario, we may well suppose, did not lose a single word.

"How is it," said the Linda, "that Joan has not come? I expected him."

The man thus questioned cast a sharp look around him, and rolling up the broad brim of his hat in his fingers, replied with ill-dissembled embarrassment—

"Joan sent me in his place."

"And by what right," said the Linda, in a haughty tone, "does the fellow presume to confide to others the care of accomplishing the orders I give him?"

"Joan is my friend," the man replied.

"What are the ties that unite you to me:" she asked, contemptuously.

"The mission you charged him with is accomplished."

"Ay—but faithfully?"

"The woman is there," he said, pointing to the room in which Doña Rosario was; "during the journey she has spoken to nobody, and I can guarantee that she does not know to what place she has been brought."

At this assurance the look of Doña Maria softened a little, and it was in a less sharp and haughty tone she continued—

"But why did Joan give up his place to you?"

"Oh!" the man said with a feigned bluntness, belied by his cunning eye, "for a very simple reason; Joan is at this moment attracted towards the plain by the

black eyes of the wife of a paleface, which sparkle like fireflies in the night. The woman's toldo is built in the country, near the toldería which you call, I think, Concepción. Although such conduct be unworthy of a warrior, his heart is flying constantly towards this woman, in spite of himself, and until he gain possession of her, he will never be in his senses."

"Well, then," the Linda interrupted, stamping her foot with vexation, "why does not the fool carry her off?"

"I proposed that to him."

"And what did he say?"

"He refused."

Doña Maria shrugged her shoulders with a smile of disdain. "Still," she remarked, "all that does not tell me who you are."

"I! I am an Ulmen in my tribe; a great warrior among the Puelches," he replied, proudly.

"Ah!" she said, with an air of satisfaction, "you are an Ulmen of the Puelches, are you? Good! then I can depend upon your fidelity."

"I am the friend of Joan," he remarked simply, with a respectful bow.

"Do you know the woman whom you have brought here?" the Linda asked, darting at him a mistrustful glance.

"How should I know her?"

"Are you ready to obey me in everything?"

"My obedience will depend on my sister; let her speak, and I will answer."

"This woman is my enemy," said the Linda.

"Must she die?" he asked, roughly, without lowering his eyes before the searching glances of the Linda.

"Oh, no!" she cried eagerly; "these Indians are brutes—they understand nothing of vengeance! What use would her death be to me? It is her life I want."

"Let my sister explain; I do not comprehend."

"Death! that is nothing but a few instants of suffering, then all is over."

"White death may be so, but an Indian death must be called for many hours before it answers."

"I wish her to live, I tell you!"

"She shall live. Ah!" he added, with a sigh, "the toldo of a chief is empty, its fires are extinguished."

"Oh! oh!" the Linda interrupted; "have you no wives?"

"They are dead."

"And where is your tribe at this moment?"

"Oh!" said the Indian, "far from here—ten suns' march, at least. I was returning to rejoin the warriors of my toldería, when Joan charged me with this mission."

There was a short silence, during which the Linda appeared to be reflecting. Doña Rosario redoubled her attention—she felt she was about to know her fate.

"And pray," Doña Maria resumed, fixing her keen eyes upon the Indian, "what great interest detained you on the plains near the seashore?"

"None; I came, as the other Ulmens did, to renew the treaties."

"Had you no other reasons?"

"None at all."

"Listen to me, chief. You have, doubtless, admired the four horses fastened at the gate of this house?"

"They are noble beasts," the Indian replied, his eyes glistening with the desire of possessing them.

"Well, it only depends upon yourself that I should give them to you."

"Oh! oh!" he cried, joyfully, "what must I do for that?"

"Obey me," said the Linda, with a smile.

"I will obey," he replied.

"Whatever I command you?"

"Whatever my sister commands."

"That is well; but remember what I am going to say to you. If you deceive me, my vengeance will be terrible—it will follow you everywhere."

"Why should I deceive my sister?"

"Because your Indian race is so constituted—astute and roguish, ever ready to

betray."

A sinister flash gleamed from the downcast eye of the Puelche warrior; nevertheless, he replied in a calm tone—

"My sister is mistaken; the Araucanos are loyal."

"We shall see," she coldly remarked. "What is your name?"

"The Musk Rat."

"Very well; listen, Musk Rat, to what I am going to say."

"My ears are open."

"This woman, who, according to my orders, you brought here, must never again revisit the shores of the sea."

"She shall never see them again."

"I do not wish her to die—understand that; she must suffer," the Linda added, in a tone which made the unhappy girl tremble with fear.

"She shall suffer."

"Yes," said Doña Maria, with sparkling eyes, "I wish that, during a long course of years, she may suffer a martyrdom at every instant; she is young, she will have time to call upon death to deliver her from her misery before it deigns to listen to her. Beyond the mountains, far in the deserts, in the virgin forests of the Grou-Chaco, I am told that hordes of Indians exist who are ferocious and sanguinary, and bear a deadly hatred towards all of the white race."

"Yes," said the Puelche, in a melancholy tone, "I have heard of these men from the chiefs of my tribe; they live only for murder."

"That is it!" she said, with sinister delight. "Well, chief, do you think yourself able to traverse these vast deserts, and reach the Grou-Chaco?"

"Why should I not?" the Indian replied, raising his head proudly, "Do there exist obstacles strong enough to resist the Araucano warrior in his course? The puma is the king of the forests, the vulture that of the heavens; but the Aucas is the king of the puma and the eagle; the desert is his—Guatechu has given it to him; his horse and his lance render him invincible and master of immensity."

"Then my brother will accomplish this journey, which is impossible?"

A disdainful smile played for an instant round the lips of the savage warrior.

"I will accomplish it," he said.

"Good! my brother is a chief—I perceive he is one now."

The Puelche bowed modestly.

"My brother will go there, then, and when he arrives in the Chaco, he will sell the pale girl to the Guayacuras."

The Indian did not allow any mark of astonishment to be perceived upon his face.

"I will sell her," he replied.

"That is well!—my brother will be faithful?"

"I am a chief; I have but one word, my tongue is not forked; but why should I take this pale woman so far?"

Doña Maria cast a penetrating glance at him—a suspicion crossed her mind—the Indian perceived it.

"I only made a simple observation to my sister; it concerns me little, and she need not answer me if she does not think proper," he said, with indifference.

The brow of the Linda became serene again.

"The remark is just, chief; I will answer it. Why take her so far, you asked me; because Antinahuel loves this woman—his heart is softened by her—and perhaps he will suffer himself to be moved by her prayers, and restore her to her family. But it shall not happen; she shall weep tears of blood; her heart shall break under the incessant pangs of grief; she shall lose everything, even hope!"

After uttering these words, Doña Maria arose, with head erect, sparkling eyes, and extended arm; there was in her aspect something fatal and terrible, which terrified even the Indian, by nature so difficult to move.

"Go," she cried, in a tone of command, "before she departs for ever, I will see this woman once—only once, and speak with her for a few minutes; she shall at least know me: bring her hither!"

The Indian went out silently; this woman, so beautiful and so cruel, terrified him—she inspired him with horror.

Doña Rosario, on hearing this atrocious sentence pronounced against her, fell senseless to the ground.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FACE TO FACE.

The door of the cuarto in which Doña Rosario was confined was thrown open, and the Puelche warrior appeared; he held in his hand a rude earthen lamp, the flame of which, although feeble, sufficed to distinguish objects. He had replaced his shabby hat upon his head, and its wide brim served as a mask to his features.

"Come with me!" he said, in a rough voice, to the maiden.

Conscious of the inutility of a resistance which could only be dangerous to her amidst the bandits who surrounded her, and bowing her head with resignation, she followed her guide in silence. Doña Maria had resumed her place in the ebony chair; with arms crossed, and her head hanging upon her bosom, she was buried in dark meditations. At the slight noise made by the footsteps of the young lady, she drew herself up, a flash of hatred gleamed from her dark eyes, and with, a gesture she commanded the Indian to retire. The Puelche obeyed.

The two women examined each other intensely; their looks crossed; the hawk and the dove were face to face. A deathlike silence reigned in the apartment; at intervals the wind came in gusts and dismal moanings, through the ill-joined boards of the doors, shook the old building to its foundation, and agitated the flame of the only candle that illumined the vast gloomy room in which the two women were. After a sufficiently long pause, the Linda, who, with that instinct which women possess in such a high degree, had examined in detail, one by one, the numerous beauties of the charming girl who stood pale and trembling before her, at length spoke—

"Yes," she said, in a hollow voice, as if speaking to herself, and overcome by the evidence of the fact, "yes, this girl is beautiful; she has everything to make her an object of love—to see her must be to love her; well, this beauty, which up to this time has been her joy and her pride, grief shall wither rapidly; before one year has passed away I am resolved that she shall become an object of pity and contempt for all. Oh!" she added, in a piercing, shrill voice, "I have her at length within the power of my vengeance!"

"What have I done to you, madam, that you should hate me thus?" the maiden asked, in a plaintive voice, the sweet and melodious accent of which would have

softened anyone but her to whom she spoke.

"What have you done to me, silly creature?" the Linda cried, bounding up like a wounded lioness, and placing herself close in front of Doña Rosario—"what have you done to me?" and then added, with a loud laugh—"Ah! ah! that's true, *you* have done nothing to me!"

"Alas, madam! I do not even know you; this is the first time I have been in your presence; I, a poor young girl, whose life to the present time has passed away in retirement—how can I have offended you?"

"Yes, I allow it," the Linda replied; "you have done nothing to me; and, personally, as you have just said, I have nothing to reproach you with; but, by making you suffer, learn that it is upon *him* I avenge myself."

"I do not understand what you mean, madam," the maiden said, simply.

"Senseless fool, do not play with the lioness who is ready to devour you, or pretend to feign an ignorance of which I am not the dupe; if you have not already divined my name, I will tell it you—I am Doña Maria, whom they call the Linda—do you understand me now?"

"Not more than I did before, madam," replied Doña Rosario, with an accent of frankness that shook the belief of her persecutor, in spite of herself; "I have never even heard that name."

"Can that be true?" she cried, doubtingly.

"I swear it is."

Doña Linda strode about the apartment with long, hasty steps. Doña Rosario, more and more astonished, looked stealthily at this woman, without being able to account to herself for the emotion which her presence, and the sound of her voice, caused her to experience; it was not fear, still less was it joy, but an incomprehensible mixture of sadness, joy, pity, and terror; an undefinable feeling, which, far from creating repulsion, drew her towards a woman whose odious projects were no secret to her, and from whom she knew she had so much to dread. Singular sympathy; what Doña Rosario felt towards the Linda, the Linda felt towards Doña Rosario: in vain she called to her aid the remembrance of all the wrongs with which she fancied she had to reproach the man whom she wished to strike in the person of the young girl; in the innermost recesses of her heart, a voice, which constantly gained strength, spoke to her in favour of the maiden whom she was about to sacrifice to her hatred; the more she endeavoured to overcome this sentiment, for which she could not account, the

more powerless she found her efforts become; at length, she was on the point of being softened.

"Oh!" she murmured, passionately, "what is going on within me? Am I weak enough to allow myself to be subdued by the tears of that paltry creature?"

Like Indian warriors, who, when fastened to the stake of blood, sing their own exploits to encourage them to endure bravely the tortures which their executioners silently prepare, the Linda recalled the maddening remembrance of all the outrages Don Tadeo had loaded her with; and with flashing eyes and trembling lips, she stopped short in front of Doña Rosario.

"Listen to me, girl," she said, in a voice which passion caused to tremble, "this is the first and last time we shall be in the presence of each other; and you shall know why I bear you such hatred. What you will learn will be hereafter, perhaps, a consolation to you, and help you to bear with courage the miseries I reserve for you," she added, with the laugh of a demon.

"I will listen to you, madam," Rosario replied, meekly, "although I am certain that what you are about to say cannot, in any sense, render me guilty with respect to you."

"Do you think so?" the Linda said, in a tone of ironical compassion; "well, then, listen; we have time to talk, as you will not leave this place for an hour."

This allusion to her approaching departure made the poor girl shudder, by recalling to her all that the departure threatened.

"A woman," the Linda continued, "a young and beautiful woman, more beautiful than you, fragile child of cities, whom the least storm bends like a weak reed—a woman, I say, had for love married a man, also young, and handsome as the evil angel before his fall, who with perfidiously golden words, by opening before her immense and unknown horizons, had so seduced her, the poor, poor girl, that in a few days he induced her to abandon stealthily the roof which had sheltered her infancy, and to which her aged father in vain recalled her up to the day of his death, that he might bless and pardon her."

"Oh, that is frightful!" cried Doña Rosario.

"Why so? as he had married her, morality was satisfied, in the eyes of the world. This woman was pure, and could thenceforward move with head erect before the crowd which had hailed her fall with laughter and contempt. But everything passes away in this world, and most quickly of all, the love of the most passionate man. Only a year after marriage this woman, alone in the most retired

room of her dwelling, wept over the remembrance of the happiness which had left her for ever. Her husband had deserted her! A child born of this union, a little fair girl, a rosy-lipped cherub, whose eyes reflected the azure of the heavens, was the sole consolation which in her misfortunes was left to the poor abandoned mother. One night, when she was plunged in sleep, her husband stole like a thief into her house, seized the child, in spite of the cries of the desolate mother, who threw herself in tears at his feet, and implored him by all he held sacred in the world. After roughly repulsing the despairing mother, who sank dying on the cold slabs of the floor, this heartless and pitiless man disappeared with the child."

"And the mother?" Doña Rosario anxiously asked, much affected by the story which the Linda told, entirely to her own advantage.

"The mother," she continued, in a low, broken voice, "the mother was doomed never to see her child again. She never has seen her! Prayers, threats, everything in turn, have been employed without success. And now, this mother, who adores her child, and would sacrifice her life for her,—this mother has vowed a hatred against this man, whom she so fondly loved, and who showed no pity to her, which no vengeance can satisfy! Now, then, young girl, do you know the name of this mother? Say, do you know it? No, you do not? Well, then, I am this mother! and the man who ravished from her all her happiness—the man whom she hates as she does the demon whose heart he bears, is Don Tadeo de Leon!"

"Don Tadeo!" Rosario cried, starting back with surprise.

"Yes!" the Linda said, furiously; "yes, Don Tadeo, your lover!"

The maiden sprang towards Doña Maria, and seizing her arm violently, and placing her face, inflamed with anger, close to that of the courtesan, who was stupefied at the energy she could not have expected from this delicate creature, cried indignantly,—

"What have you dared to say, madam? Don Tadeo my lover! It is false, madam!"

"Can this be true?" the Linda asked, eagerly. "Can I have been so grossly mistaken? But then," she added, mistrustfully, "who are you? and by what title does he keep you always with him?"

"I will tell you who I am, madam!" Rosario replied, proudly.

All at once the hasty gallop of several horses was heard from without, mingled with cries and oaths.

"What can the matter be?" said Doña Maria, turning pale.

"Oh!" said Doña Rosario, clasping her hands fervently; "oh, my God! are you sending me liberators?"

"You are not free yet," the Linda said, with a bitter smile.

The tumult increased greatly; the door, violently pushed from without, flew open, and several men rushed into the room.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE REVOLT.

The multiplicity of the scenes we have to describe, and the exigencies of our story, compel us to abandon Doña Rosario and the Linda, and return to Valdivia, where the revolt had assumed the gigantic proportions of a revolution. Electrified by the heroic conduct of the King of Darkness, the patriots fought with the greatest obstinacy. The Dark-Hearts appeared to have the gift of ubiquity; their numbers increased, they were everywhere at the head of the insurgents, exciting them by gesture and voice; but, above all, by their example. The city was completely cut up by barricades, against which the few troops who remained faithful to General Bustamente struggled in vain. Beaten back by the enemies who on all sides rose up against them to the thousand times repeated cries of "Our country!" "Chili Liberty!" the soldiers retreated, step by step, abandoning, one after another, the different posts of which they had been in possession at the commencement of the action, and rallied upon the Plaza Mayor, the outlets of which they had barricaded in their turn.

The city was in the power of the insurgents; for as the battle from this moment was concentrated at one point, it was not difficult to foresee with which party the victory would remain; for the soldiers, discouraged by the ill success of their *coup de main*, and sensible of being the champions of a lost cause, only fought to obtain honourable conditions. General Bustamente's officers, and the senators whom he had brought with him as partizans, trembled when thinking of the fate that awaited them if they fell into the hands of their enemies. Success justifies everything: from the moment they failed to succeed they became traitors to their country, and, as such, had no right to a capitulation. They therefore excited their

soldiers to fight valiantly, promising them speedy assistance, and trying to revive their courage by telling them that their adversaries were merely citizens, whom they could easily overcome if they made a bold attempt, or even resisted for an hour longer.

The general who commanded the garrison, and whom we saw upon the steps of the cabildo read with so much arrogance the decree which changed the form of government, bit his lips with rage and performed prodigies of valour, to give Bustamente time to arrive. As soon as he saw the turn things had taken, he sent off an express for the General with the utmost promptitude. This express was Diego, the old soldier who was so devoted to General Bustamente.

"Lieutenant," he said, in conclusion, "you see in what a position we are; you must reach the General at all risks."

"I will reach him, General; be at ease on that head!" Diego replied, intrepidly.

"And I will endeavour to hold out till your return."

Don Diego, before he finished speaking, had ridden desperately at the ranks of the insurgents, spurring on his horse, and waving his sword with menacing rapidity round his head. The Dark-Hearts, astonished by such an attack on the part of a single man, at the first moment unconsciously opened their ranks before him as to a canister shot, incapable of resisting the impetuous shock of this apparently invulnerable demon, who mowed down all that came in his way. Diego skilfully took advantage of the disorder produced on the enemy by his furious assault; he kept pushing on, and, after incredible efforts, succeeded in getting out of the city. As soon as he was in safety, the overexcitement which till that time had sustained him, suddenly sank, and at a few paces from the gates he was forced to stop to take breath, and restore his confused ideas to a little order. The old soldier washed the sides and nostrils of his horse with a little brandy and water; and as soon as this duty was performed, aware that the fate of his companions depended upon his speed, he sprang into his saddle and set off with the fleetness of an arrow.

The General did not delay his return to Valdivia a minute, for he felt that success would be an immense advantage to him; and a check, if he were beaten, irreparable. As a conqueror, his march to Santiago would be nothing but a triumphant march; the authorities of the cities he passed through would rival each other in ranging themselves beneath his standard; whereas, if he were forced to abandon Valdivia as a fugitive, he would be tracked like a wild beast, and obliged to seek safety in a prompt flight, either in Bolivia or Buenos Aires,

and the projects he had nourished so long, and of which he believed he had beforehand assured the success, would be deferred, or perhaps destroyed for ever. Thus the General was a prey to one of those cold furies, which are so much more terrible, because they cannot be exhibited outwardly.

The horsemen advanced amidst a cloud of dust raised by their precipitate course, rushing along the road like a whirlwind, and with a noise like thunder. Two lances' length in advance of the soldiers, Don Pancho, bending over the neck of his horse, with pale brow and clenched teeth, galloped at full speed, keeping his eyes fixed upon the lofty steeples of Valdivia, whose dark shadows became more enlarged on the horizon every minute. Within half a mile of the city he halted his squadron. The sharp pattering of musketry resounded strongly, mingled at intervals with the dismal, rolling bass of cannon; the battle, therefore, must still be going on. The General hastened to make his last preparations before attempting an attack he hoped would prove decisive. The foot soldiers dismounted, and formed in platoons, and firearms of all kinds were loaded.

The troops brought up by the General were not numerous from the European point of view, according to which we are accustomed to see great masses in conflict; they, at most, did not exceed eight hundred men. In Europe it is customary to say that victory is most likely to attend large battalions: in America, where the largest armies are frequently of not more than three thousand men, this idea becomes naturally modified, and it is generally the most skilful or the most brave man who remains master of the field of battle.

Don Pancho was a rough soldier, accustomed to the struggles of civil wars, which, for the most part, consist of audacious *coups de main*. Endowed with courage bordering on rashness, and devoured by ambition, he prepared, with the greatest coolness, to re-establish his compromised affairs by an irresistible attack. The country in the neighbourhood of Valdivia is a real English garden, interspersed with thickets, apple orchards, copses, and slender streams of water rippling away to the river. It was very easy for the General to conceal his arrival. Two soldiers were detached as scouts, in order to learn the state of things. At the expiration of a few minutes they returned. The outskirts of the city were deserted, the insurgents had driven the troops back into the centre, and, according to the scouts, with the imprudence of citizens metamorphosed suddenly into soldiers, they had left no reserve, or even placed sentinels, to secure their rear against a surprise.

This information, instead of restoring confidence to the General, made him knit his brows; he thought it must be a manoeuvre, and whilst his officers were

laughing with all their might at the able tactics of the insurgents, he judged it necessary to redouble his precautions. The troops were divided into two bodies, which, in case of need, were to support each other; and, as they were attacking a city entirely barricaded, the lancers were ordered to dismount, and reinforce the infantry. Only one squadron of a hundred horsemen remained in the saddle, concealed about a quarter of a mile from the place, in order to support a retreat, or to put the fugitives to the sword, if the surprise succeeded. These arrangements made, the General made an earnest address to his soldiers, to whom he promised, in the event of success, the pillage of the city. He then placed himself at the head of the first detachment, and gave the order, "March! Forward!"

The troops advanced in the Indian fashion, taking advantage of every inequality in the ground, and of every tree to conceal themselves, and arrived thus, without giving alarm, to within pistol shot of the city. The dead silence which continued to prevail around him, contrasted in a dismal manner with the musketry and cannon which became more audible as they advanced, and greatly increased the General's anxiety. A dark presentiment warned him that he was threatened by some great danger, which he knew not how to avoid, from being ignorant of what kind it might be. The least hesitation at this critical minute might bring on irreparable misfortunes. The General grasped the hilt of his sword firmly in his clenched hand, and turning towards his soldiers, shouted in a loud, clear voice, "Forward!"

The detachment, which only awaited this order, rushed forward shouting, and, at double-quick time, cleared the space between them and the city. Windows, doors, all were closed; and had it not been for the distant report of musketry, the city might have been thought deserted. The first detachment, finding no obstacles before them, continued their march; and the second detachment also entered. But then, all at once, behind, before, and on the flanks of the troops, a loud cry burst forth; and at every window appeared men with muskets in their hands. Don Pancho Bustamente was surrounded, he had allowed himself to be taken—pardon us the triviality of the comparison—like a rat in a trap. The soldiers, astonished for a second, soon recovered themselves; they faced front and rear, and attacked the double barrier that enclosed them: but though they desperately rushed against it, they could not force it. They then plainly perceived they were lost, that they could expect no quarter, and prepared to die like brave men.

The General cast fierce and desperate glances around him, looking, but

unsuccessfully, for a point of issue from the menacing forest of bayonets crossed before him, and which enclosed him as in a steel network. Some authors have amused themselves at the expense of the wars and battles of the Americans, in which they say the two armies always take care to place themselves out of reach of cannon shot, so as never to have a single man killed. This pleasantry, which is in very bad taste, has assumed the proportions of a calumny it is but just to refute, for it attacks the honour of the Americans of the South, who, I unhesitatingly assert, are endowed with intrepid courage—a courage that was brilliantly displayed during the wars of independence against the Spaniards. Unhappily, at present this courage is employed in fratricidal struggles, without any understood object. Thrice the soldiers rushed upon the insurgents, and thrice were they repulsed with enormous loss. The battle was horrible, without mercy on either side; they fought hand to hand, foot to foot, breast to breast, to the last breath, only falling to die. The troops, decimated by this frightful carnage, gradually gave ground; the space they occupied became narrower and narrower, and the moment did not appear distant when they would disappear under the popular flood which continued to ascend, and threatened to engulf them under its irresistible mass. The General collected about fifty men resolved to die or open a passage, and he made a desperate attempt. It was a collision of giants. For a few minutes, the two masses launched one against the other remained almost motionless, from the force of the blow with which they met; Don Pancho, flourishing his sword around him, and standing in his stirrups, struck down all who opposed his passage.

Suddenly a man placed himself before him, like a rock which rises from the depths of the sea. At the sight of him the General paused, in spite of himself, with a stifled cry of surprise and rage. This man was Don Tadeo de Leon, his mortal enemy; whom he had once condemned to death, and who had, in a miraculous manner, survived his execution. But, now! God seemed to place him fatally before him, to be the instrument of his vengeance, and the cause of his ruin and his shame.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LION AT BAY.

"My God!" said the General, "am I the dupe of an hallucination?"

"Ah! ah!" the King of Darkness exclaimed, with an ironical smile, "you recognize me then, General?"

"Don Tadeo de Leon!" Don Pancho cried, in horror. "Do the dead then arise from the tomb? Oh! I hoped that what I heard was false. It is you!"

"Yes," Don Tadeo replied, in a stern voice, "you are not mistaken, Don Pancho; I am Don Tadeo de Leon, whom you caused to be shot upon the Plaza Mayor of Santiago. Your spies have informed you correctly."

"Man or demon," the General shouted, half choking with rage, "I will not yield to you! I will fight you as a man, and send you back again to the hell from which you have escaped!"

His enemy smiled disdainfully.

"Your hour has arrived, Don Pancho," he said; "you are due to the justice of the Dark-Hearts."

"You do not hold me yet, wretched traitor! If I cannot conquer, I can die, weapon in hand, like a soldier."

"No, your hour has struck, I tell you; you are ours, you shall die, but not the death of a soldier; you shall be executed by our justice!"

"If that be the case," the General yelled, brandishing his sword, "come and take me!"

Don Tadeo did not deign a reply; he gave a signal, and a lasso whizzed through the air, launched by an invisible hand, and fell round the General's shoulders. Astonished by this unexpected attack, before he could make the least possible resistance, he received a terrific shock, lost his stirrups, was pulled from his horse, and dragged amongst the insurgents. The astounded General, half mad with rage and shame, exhausted himself in vain efforts; nearly strangled by the lasso which flayed his neck, his face assumed a purple tint; his eyes, injected with blood, seemed starting from their sockets, and a white foam flowed from the corners of his discoloured lips. Don Tadeo contemplated him for a moment with a mixture of pity and triumph.

"Free him from that slipknot," he said. "Secure his person, but treat him with respect."

The soldiers, terrified at this prompt capture, which they had not at all expected,

stood downcast and silent; in their stupor forgetting even the use of their arms. Don Tadeo turned towards them:

"Surrender," he shouted, "surrender! the man who misled you is in our power; your lives shall be spared."

The soldiers consulted each other for an instant with their eyes; and then, as if by a spontaneous movement, they threw down their muskets, crying aloud:

"Chili! Chili! liberty! liberty!"

"That is well!" said Don Tadeo; "leave the city, encamp at the distance of a mile, and await the orders which shall soon be transmitted to you."

The conquered soldiers, with downcast looks, followed the road they had traversed an hour before; they passed through the silent ranks of the insurgents, which opened to give them passage. Without loss of time, Don Tadeo, followed by a crowd of his partisans, directed his course towards the Plaza Mayor, where the battle still raged. The soldiers, solidly intrenched in the Plaza, and masters of the cabildo, fought valiantly, hoping still for the assistance of General Bustamente, of whose fate they were ignorant. Although reduced to a small number, these troops occupied a formidable position, in which it was almost impossible to force them, without resolving to suffer great loss. Persuaded that they only required to gain time, the soldiers fought with the energy of despair, defending inch by inch the barricade behind which they were sheltered.

But the day was passing away, their ammunition was growing exhausted, a great number of their comrades were stretched dead at their feet, and nothing could support them but the hope that the succour so impatiently expected was at hand. In the heat of their own contest they had not heard the noise of the battle fought by Don Pancho at the city gates, in which but few shots had been fired, as it had been principally decided by cold steel. Discouragement, however, began to affect the bravest, the general who commanded even felt his energy diminish, and he looked around him with great anxiety.

Dejected, and with downcast eyes, the senator, who had been the bearer of the fatal proclamation, trembled in all his limbs; he regretted, but too late, having thrown himself into this hornet's nest; and he offered up the most magnificent vows to the innumerable saints of the golden Spanish legend, if they would bring him safe and sound through the perils which surrounded him. The worthy man had not any warlike instincts; and we can safely affirm, without fear of contradiction, that if he had had the slightest suspicion that things would have taken the turn they did, he would have remained quiet in his charming quinta of

Corro-Azul, in the environs of Santiago, where his life glided away so softly, so happily, and, above all, so free from care. Unfortunately, as it sometimes happens in this nether world, where, whatever Candide may say, everything is not for the best, in the best of worlds, Don Ramón Sandias—so the worthy senator was named—had not been able duly to appreciate the charms of that calm life; ambition had gnawed at his heart, though he had nothing to wish for; and he had, as we have seen, plunged up to the neck in a hornet's nest, from which he did not know how to emerge.

At every shot he heard, the poor senator jumped like a Guanaco, with startled eyes; and when, now and then, in spite of the precautions he had taken, the sinister hissing of a bullet resounded in his ear, he threw himself flat on his face, murmuring all the prayers that his troubled memory could recall.

At first, the contortions and cries of Don Ramón had very much amused the officers and soldiers among whom accident had placed him; they had even taken delight in augmenting his terrors; but, at length, as happens more frequently in such cases than people fancy, the pleasantries had ceased; Don Ramón's terrors had communicated themselves to the laughers, who saw, with fright, that their position was becoming every minute more desperate.

"The devil take the poltroon!" the General at length cried, angrily; "cannot you keep your trembling limbs still? Caspita! console yourself, they won't kill you more than once."

"Ah! that is very easy for you to say," the senator replied, in a broken voice; "I am no soldier; it is your trade to be killed, it is all one to you."

"Hum!" said the General, "not quite so much so as you may think; but comfort yourself; if this goes on a little longer, we shall all go together."

"What is that you say?" the poor man muttered, with redoubled fear.

"Caramba! it is clear as day, if Don Pancho does not make haste and come, all of us here will die."

"But I do not wish to die!" said the senator, bursting into tears; "I am no soldier. Oh! I implore you, my good, my inestimable Don Tiburcio Cornejo, let me go away!"

The General shrugged his shoulders.

"What consequence can it be to you?" the senator continued, in a supplicating tone; "do save my life! show me which way I can get out of this cursed confusion."

"Eh! how the devil do I know?" the General said, impatiently.

"Well, now, look here," said the senator; "you owe me two thousand piastres, which I won of you at Monte, do you not?"

"What then?" the General, vexed at this ill-timed remark, said, sharply.

"Get me away from here, and I will cry quits."

"You are a fool, Don Ramón; do you think if I could get safely away from here, that I would remain?"

"I see what you are," said the senator, despondingly; "you are but a false friend, you desire my death, you thirst for my blood."

In short, the poor man was almost mad; he knew not what he said, terror had deprived him of the little sense he ever possessed. But, in reality, the position became every instant more critical; the carnage was horrible, the soldiers fell one after another beneath the bullets of the insurgents, who were sheltered by every corner of the plaza. Two or three sorties attempted by the troops had been vigorously repulsed; and hence, decimated as they were, all they could possibly

do now was to prevent their intrenchments from being carried.

All at once the senator bounded forward like a chamois; he made directly to the General, and seized his arm.

"We are saved!" he cried; "thanks be to God! we are saved!"

"Hilloh! what's the matter now, Don Ramón? What bee has stung you? are you really mad?"

"I have not been stung," the senator replied, as fast as he could speak, "nor am I mad; we are saved; I tell you, we are saved!"

"Well, how? what is it? Is Don Pancho coming at last?"

"Don Pancho, indeed! I wish he were at the devil!" "Well, what is it, then?"

"Why, do you not see, yonder? look, behind the barricade which blocks the entrance of the Calle de la Merced."

"What is there to see?"

"Why, a flag of truce! a white flag!"

"Ah!" said the General, eagerly, "let us look! let us look!"

And he did look.

"True!" he said, at the expiration of a minute. "Success to all cowards, say I, for having good eyes; I did not see it."

"Ay, but I did," said Don Ramón, rubbing his hands, quite revived, and marching off with great glee. But, at that moment, a nearly spent ball came ricocheting and whizzing close to his ear.

"Lord, have mercy upon me!" he cried, falling flat on his face, and so remaining, as motionless as if he were dead, although he had not received a scratch.

In the meantime, the General had likewise caused a flag of truce to be hoisted on his intrenchments, and had given orders for the firing to cease. The noise of the combat being hushed, the senator, like a rabbit relieved from alarm, raised his head a little; reassured by the silence which prevailed, he sat up, looking on all sides with the greatest anxiety, and, at length, convinced that the peril was over, he contrived to get upon his legs, which, however, trembled so frightfully under him, that they could scarcely support him.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TRUCE.

As soon as the flag of truce was hoisted, firing at once ceased on both sides. The troops at bay, who had ceased to hope for succour, were not sorry to find that the insurgents saved their military honour by being the first to demand a parley. General Cornejo, in particular, was tired of the hopeless combat, which he had bravely maintained all the morning.

"Well, Don Ramón," he said, addressing the senator in a more cordial tone than he had before employed, "I think I have found means to enable you to escape without striking a blow; so what we agreed to stands good, does it not?"

The senator looked at him with a bewildered air; the worthy man had not the least recollection of what he had either said or done while the balls were whistling round him.

"I do not at all understand you, General," he replied.

"Poor man! pretend to be innocent, do!" said the General, laughing, and slapping him on the shoulder; "do you wish to persuade me you are like the Guanacos, which lose their memory through trembling with fear?"

"Upon my honour," said the senator, "I swear, Don Tiburcio, that I have not the least remembrance of having promised you anything."

"Ah! well, it is possible, for you were devilishly frightened. Come, I will refresh your memory: pay attention!"

"You will give me great pleasure."

"Well, I doubt that! but that is of no consequence. You said to me, on the spot where we now stand, not more than half an hour ago, that if I found the means of securing your escape, safe and sound, you would hold me quits for the two thousand piastres I lost to you, and owed you."

"Do you flatter yourself that that is the truth?" said the senator, whose avaricious instincts began to revive, as fear departed.

"I am sure it is. Ask these gentlemen," the General asked, turning towards some officers who stood by.

"Oh, certainly! true to the letter," they said, with a laugh.

"Ah! ah!"

"Yes, and as I would not listen to you, you added—"

"What!" Don Ramón, who knew of old the man he had to deal with, said, with a start—"do you mean to say that I added something?"

"The devil! yes," said the other. "You added this; and I repeat your own words. You said, as plainly as you could speak—'And I will give a thousand piastres in addition.'"

"Oh, that is not possible!" the senator ejaculated, quite beside himself.

"Perhaps I did not understand you?"

"That must be it."

"Do you admit you mentioned the two thousand?" asked the General, quietly.

"Not at all! not at all!" replied Don Ramón, quite confounded by the laughter of the bystanders.

"Perhaps you meant more; well, we will not haggle about that."

"I never said a word of the kind!" the exasperated senator exclaimed.

"In that case," said the General, with a stern frown, and surveying him coolly, "you mean to say that I have told a falsehood."

Don Ramón became aware that he had made a false move, and drew back.

"Pardon me, my dear General," he said, in the most amiable voice possible, "you are perfectly right; I do now remember it was two thousand piastres I promised you in addition."

It was now the General's turn to be at a loss, for this generosity on the part of the senator, whose avarice was proverbial, confused him; he was suspicious of some snare or trick.

"But," Don Ramón added, with an air of triumph, "you have not saved me."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why, Santiago! as we are going to hold a parley, you are too late, and our bargain is void."

"Oh! oh!" said Don Tiburcio, with a jeering smile, "you think so, do you?"

"Caspita! I am sure of it."

"And yet you are deceived, my dear friend, as you shall judge: come with me, the flag of truce is now crossing the barricades, and in an instant you will learn that you have never been so near death as now."

"You are joking."

"I never joke about serious circumstances."

"In Heaven's name explain yourself!" said the poor senator, whose fears had all returned.

"Lord! it is the simplest thing in the world," said the General, carelessly; "I have but to declare to the leader of the revolt, and be assured I will not fail to do so, that I only acted by your orders."

"Well, but that is not true," interrupted Don Ramón, in great alarm.

"I know that," the General replied, bluntly; "but, as you are a senator, they will believe me, and you will be fully and fairly shot, and that will be a pity."

Don Ramón was thunderstruck by this piece of implacable logic; he found that he was in a hobble, from which he could not possibly escape without paying handsomely. He looked at his *friend*, who surveyed him with a pitilessly ironical smile, whilst the officers bit their lips to keep from laughing; he stifled a sigh, and resolving to make the best of it, very much against his will, he said, inwardly cursing the man who exposed him in such a cynical fashion—

"Well, Don Tiburcio, I admit that I owe you two thousand piastres, but *I* will pay you."

This was the only epigram he ventured to indulge in regarding the General's willingness to pay; but the latter was magnanimous, he took no notice of the offensive part of the speech, and rendered quite cheerful by the bargain he had concluded, he prepared to listen to the propositions of the officer with the flag of truce, who was brought to him with his eyes bandaged. This officer was Don Tadeo de Leon.

"What do you come here for?" the General asked.

"To offer you good terms, if you will surrender," Don Tadeo replied, in a firm voice.

"Surrender!" the General shouted with a laugh; "you must be mad, sir!" and, turning towards the soldiers who had brought Don Tadeo, he added, "Remove the bandage from the eyes of this caballero."

The bandage fell accordingly.

"Look round you," said the General, haughtily, "do we look like people asking for a favour?"

"No, General, you are a stout soldier, and your troops are brave; you ask no favour of us, it is we who come to you to offer to lay down our arms on both sides, and put an end to this fratricidal contest," Don Tadeo replied, with an air of grandeur.

"Who are you, may I ask, sir?" said the General, struck with the noble bearing of the man who was speaking to him.

"I am Don Tadeo de Leon, whom your leader ordered to be shot."

"You!" cried the General, "you here!"

"I, myself; and I have another name."

"Tell it to me, sir."

"I am called the King of Darkness."

"The leader of the Dark-Hearts!" the General murmured, starting, in spite of himself, and surveying the speaker with uneasy curiosity.

"Yes, General, I am the leader of the Dark-Hearts, but I am still something more."

"Explain yourself, sir," the General asked, who began to be in doubt how to behave toward the strange personage who was speaking to him.

"I am the leader of the men whom you term insurgents, but who have, in reality, only taken up arms to defend the institutions you have overthrown, and the constitution you have violated."

"Sir!" said the General, "your words——"

"Are severe, but just," continued Don Tadeo; "ask your own loyal, soldier's heart, General, and then tell me which side is right."

"I am not a lawyer, sir," Don Tiburcio replied impatiently; "you have yourself said that I am a soldier, and, as such, I confine myself to obeying, without discussion, the orders I receive from my leaders."

"Let us not lose time uselessly in idle speeches, sir; will you, or will you not, lay down your arms?"

"By what right do you make me such a proposal?" the General asked, whose pride revolted at being forced to hold a parley with a citizen.

"I could answer you," replied Don Tadeo, sternly, "that it is by the right of the stronger, and that you know as well as I do that you are combating for a lost cause, and that you are persisting without advantage in a senseless struggle; but I prefer addressing myself to your heart, and saying, why should brothers and fellow countrymen continue to cut each other's throats?—why should we any longer shed such precious blood? Make your conditions, General, and be assured that for the sake of protecting your soldier's honour, that honour which is ours also, as among the troops against whom we fight are our relations, friends, and countrymen, we will grant them as extensively as you can desire."

The General felt himself moved, this noble language had found an echo in his heart; he looked down on the ground, and reflected for several minutes; at length, raising his head, he replied—

"Sir, believe me it costs me much not to answer as I could wish what you have done me the honour to say to me; but I have a leader above me."

"In your turn please to explain yourself, sir," said Don Tadeo.

"I have sworn to Don Pancho Bustamente to defend his cause to the death."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, unless Don Pancho Bustamente were killed or a prisoner,—in either of which cases I should consider myself freed from my oath to him,—I will lay down my life for him."

"Is that the only reason that prevents you, General?"

"Yes, the only one."

"In case General Bustamente should be either killed or a prisoner, you would surrender?"

"Instantly, I repeat."

"Well," replied Don Tadeo, stretching out his arm in the direction of the barricade by which he had come, "look yonder, General."

Don Tiburcio looked in the direction indicated, and uttered a cry of surprise and sorrow. Don Pancho Bustamente appeared at the top of the barricade; his head was bare, and two armed men watched all his movements.

"Do you see him?" Don Tadeo asked.

"Yes," replied the General, sorrowfully; "we all surrender, sir;" and turning the point of his sword to the ground, he bent the blade with the intention of breaking it. Don Tadeo stopped him by seizing the sword, which he, however, returned to him immediately, saying—

"General, keep that weapon, it will serve you against the enemies of our country."

The General made no reply; he silently pressed the hand which the King of Darkness held out to him, and turning away to conceal the emotion which agitated him, he wiped away a tear that had fallen upon his grey moustache.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TWO ROGUISH PROFILES.

The city was quiet, the revolt was over, or, to speak more logically, the revolution was complete. The soldiers, after laying down their arms, had evacuated Valdivia, which was left completely in the power of the Dark-Hearts. As soon as peace was re-established, the Dark-Hearts gave orders that the barricades should be destroyed, and that all traces of the sanguinary struggle should be removed as quickly as possible. By the force of accomplished facts alone, Don Tadeo de Leon found himself quite naturally invested with power, and in command of the province, with the faculties of a dictator.

"Well," he asked Valentine, "what do you think of what you have seen?"

"Faith," the Parisian replied, with characteristic bluntness, "I think people must come to America to see how men can be caught with hook and line like simple gudgeons."

Don Tadeo could not refrain from smiling at this whimsical answer.

"Do not leave me," he said; "all is not over yet."

"I ask no better; but, our friends yonder, don't you think they will be very uneasy at our long absence?"

"Can you for a moment imagine that I have forgotten them? Within an hour you

will be at liberty. Come with me; I want to show you two faces to which our victory has given an expression very different from that which they generally wear."

"That will be curious," said Valentine.

"Yes," Don Tadeo replied, "or hideous, whichever you please."

"Hum! man is not perfect," said Valentine, philosophically.

"Fortunately not; if he were, he would be execrable," Don Tadeo remarked.

They entered the cabildo, the doors of which were guarded by a detachment of Dark-Hearts. The vast saloons of the palace were invaded by an eager crowd, who came to salute the rising sun; that is to say, they came to offer the spectacle of their baseness to the fortunate man, whom, no doubt, they would have stoned if success had not crowned his audacious attempt. Don Tadeo passed, without seeing them, through the ranks of these sycophants, the sworn courtiers of every authority, as void of honour as of shame, possessing but one single talent—that of making bendings to which it would seem impossible that the vertebral column of a man could attain, however flexible it may be. Valentine, who followed the footsteps of his friend, feigned to take for himself the greater part of the genuflexions meant for Don Tadeo, and bowed to the right and left with imperturbable coolness and assurance.

The two gentlemen, after many delays caused by the increasing crowd, which closed around them, reached at last a retired apartment, in which there were only two persons. These two persons were General Tiburcio and Senator Don Ramón Sandias. The physiognomy of these persons offered a striking contrast. The General, with a sad face and a pensive step, walked about the apartment, whilst the senator, luxuriantly reclining on a fauteuil, with a smile upon his lips, his visage expanded, and one leg thrown over the other, was fanning himself carelessly with an embroidered handkerchief of the finest cambric. At the sight of Don Tadeo, the General advanced rapidly towards him; as for the senator, he sat upright in his chair, assumed a serious look, and waited.

"Sir," the General said, in a low voice, "two words."

"Speak, General," replied Don Tadeo; "I am entirely at your disposal."

"I have some questions which I wish to put to you."

"You may be assured, General, that if it be in my power to answer you, I will not hesitate to satisfy you."

"I am convinced of that, and it is that which emboldens me to speak."

"I am all attention."

The General hesitated for a moment, but seemed at length determined.

"Good heavens, sir!" said he, "I am an old soldier, unacquainted with diplomacy; I had a friend, almost a brother, and I am a prey to mortal uneasiness on his account."

"And that friend?"

"Is General Bustamente. You must know," he added, warmly, "that we have been fellow soldiers thirty years; and I should wish—" here he stopped, as if in doubt, looking earnestly at the person he was addressing.

"You would like?" said Don Tadeo, quietly.

"To know the fate that is reserved for him."

Don Tadeo gave the General a melancholy glance.

"To what purpose?" he murmured.

"I beg of you."

"You insist on knowing?"

"I do."

"General Bustamente is a great criminal. While a leader in power, he wished to change the form of government against the will of the people from whom he held his position, and in contempt of the laws, which he shamelessly trampled underfoot."

"That is but too true," said the General, whose brow turned crimson.

"General Bustamente has been implacable during the course of his too long career; you know that he who sows the wind can only hope to reap the tempest."

"Hence!"

"The same implacability will be shown to him that he has shown to others."

"That is to say?"

"He will, in all probability, be condemned to death."

"Alas! I expected as much; but will this condemnation of which you speak, be long delayed?"

"Two days at most; the commission which must try him will be formed today."

"Poor friend!" said the General, piteously; "and that's the end! Will you grant me a favour, sir?"

"Name it."

"As the General must die, it would be a consolation to him to have a friend by his side."

"No doubt it would."

"Allow me to be his guard. I am sure he will be happy to know that it is I who have the duty of watching over him and leading him to death. And then I shall not, at least, abandon him till the last minute."

"So be it,—your request is granted. Have you anything else to say? I shall be happy to serve you."

"No, I thank you, sir; that is all I desired,—Ah! one word more!"

"Speak."

"Can I be allowed to take this guard soon?"

"Immediately, if you like."

"I thank you, sir."

And after profoundly bowing to Don Tadeo, the General quitted the room with a hasty step.

"Poor man!" said Valentine.

"Eh?" cried Don Tadeo.

"I said, poor man!"

"Oh, yes; I heard you plainly enough, but of whom were you speaking?"

"Of the unfortunate man who has just left us."

Don Tadeo shrugged his shoulders, and Valentine looked at him with surprise.

"Do you think you know whence the solicitude of this poor man, as you call him, for his friend arises?"

"Why, from his friendship for him; that is clear."

"You think so, do you?"

"I can think nothing else."

"Well, then, allow me to tell you you are completely mistaken; the poor General is only desirous to be near his companion in arms, that he may have the opportunity of suppressing the proofs of his complicity in the rash enterprise of yesterday; proofs which Don Pancho most likely has about him, and which the other wishes to destroy at all hazards."

"Can that be possible?"

"By Saint Jago, yes! He desires to be constantly with him, that he may not communicate with anyone—why, he would kill him, if necessary."

"Oh! this is infamous!"

"But so it is."

"Bah! it gives me a nausea."

"Well, do not be sick yet."

"Why not?"

"Because," Don Tadeo continued, pointing to the senator, "I think we have something here that will bring the agreeable feeling to its height."

As soon as Don Ramón saw the General leave the apartment, he quitted his easy chair, and advanced towards Don Tadeo, bowing obsequiously.

"To whom have I the honour of speaking?" said the King of Darkness, with studied politeness.

"Sir," the other replied, with a jaunty, gentlemanly air, "my name is Don Ramón Sandias, and I am a senator."

"How can I be of service to you, sir?" said Don Tadeo, bowing.

"Oh," Don Ramón replied, affectedly; "as regards myself, personally, I ask nothing."

"Indeed!"

"Caspita! no; I am rich, what more can I want? But I am a Chilian, a patriot, sir; and, what is more, a senator. Placed in an exceptional position, I am bound to give my fellow citizens unequivocal proofs of my devotion to the holy cause of liberty. Are you not of my opinion, sir?"

"Entirely."

"I have heard, sir, that the wretched cabecilla, the cause of this silly movement, which brought the republic within two inches of ruin, is in your hands."

"Yes, sir," replied Don Tadeo, with imperturbable coolness, "we have been fortunate enough to obtain possession of his person."

"You are, doubtless, going to bring this man to trial?" Don Ramón asked, in a somewhat familiar tone.

"Within forty-eight hours, sir."

"That is right, sir. It is thus that justice should be dealt to these shameless agitators, who, in contempt of the sacred laws of humanity, seek to plunge our beautiful country into the gulf of revolutions."

"Sir!"

"Pardon me for speaking thus," said Don Ramón, with well-feigned enthusiasm; "I feel that my freedom goes rather far, but my indignation carries me away, sir; it is quite time that these makers of widows and orphans should receive the exemplary chastisement they merit. I cannot think, without trembling, of the manifold evils that would have fallen upon us, if this miserable adventurer had succeeded."

"Sir, this man is not yet condemned."

"And that is exactly what brings me to you, sir. As a senator, and a devoted patriot, I claim of you the right which belongs to me, of presiding over the commission whose duty it is to sit in judgment upon him."

"Your request is granted, sir," Don Tadeo replied, who was unable to repress a smile of contempt.

"Thank you, sir!" said the senator, with an expression of joy; "however painful the duty may be, I shall know how to perform it."

After bowing deeply to Don Tadeo, the senator left the room in high spirits.

"You see," said Don Tadeo, turning to Valentine, "Don Pancho had two friends upon whom he thought he could depend: one took upon him to proclaim him, the other to defend him. Well, in one he finds a gaoler, in the other an executioner."

"It is monstrous!" said Valentine, with disgust.

"No," replied Don Tadeo; "it is logical, that's all;—he has failed."

"I have had enough of your politic men, with two faces, and neither of them a

true one," replied Valentine; "allow me to return to our friends."

"Begone, then, since you wish it."

"Thanks!"

"You will come back to Valdivia immediately, will you not?"

"Pardieu, will I!"

"Will you have an escort?"

"For what purpose?"

"Ah! that is true; I am always forgetting that you never apprehend danger."

"I am only anxious about our friends; that is why I leave you."

"Have you any cause for apprehension?"

"None; but yet, a vague uneasiness, which I can not account for, compels me to remain no longer away from them."

"Begone, then, as quickly as you please, my friend; but pray be watchful over the poor child, Rosario."

"Be at ease on that score; within three hours she shall be here."

"That is understood: a pleasant ride to you, and remember that I shall look for you with impatience."

"Time to go and return, that is all."

"Till then, adieu!"

Valentine left the room, went straight to the stables, saddled his horse himself, and set off at a gallop. He had told Don Tadeo the truth: a vague uneasiness disturbed him, he had a presentiment of some misfortune or another.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WOUNDED MAN.

Let us return to the Count de Prébois Crancé. When the abduction was committed, that part of the plain where Don Tadeo had pitched his camp was

deserted. The crowd, attracted by curiosity, had all gone to the side where the renewal of the treaties was taking place. Besides, the measures of the ravishers had been so judiciously taken, all had passed so quickly, without resistance, without cries or tumult, that no alarm had been given, and no one could suspect what was going on. The cries of "murder!" uttered by the wounded young man were too faint to be heard, and the pistol shots he had fired were confounded with the other noises of the festival.

Louis remained for a considerable time lying senseless in front of the tent, the blood flowing from two wounds. By a singular chance, the peons, the arrieros, and even the two Indian chiefs, who could not think there was anything to be dreaded, had all gone, as we have said, to be present at the ceremony. When the cross had been planted, and the toqui and the General had gone, arm in arm, to the tent of the latter, the crowd began to separate into little groups, and soon dispersed, each returning to the spot where he had established his temporary camp.

The Indian chiefs were the first to quit the scene; now that their curiosity was satisfied, they reproached themselves for having been so long absent from their friend. On approaching the little camp, they were surprised at not seeing Louis, and a certain appearance of disorder in the baggage filled them with uneasiness. They quickened their pace, and the nearer they drew the more evident this disorder became in their eyes, accustomed to remark those thousands of signs which escape the eyes of the white man. In fact, the passage left free in the inclosure formed by the bales, seemed to have been the scene of a struggle; the footmarks of several horses were strongly imprinted in the moist earth, and some bales had even been removed, as if to widen the entrance, and lay scattered about. All these indications were more than sufficient for the chiefs; they exchanged an anxious glance, and rushed into the camp.

Louis was still lying where the assassins had left him, stretched across the entrance of the tent, his discharged pistols in his hands, his head thrown back, his mouth half open, and his teeth clenched. The blood had ceased to flow. The two men looked at him for a moment with a feeling of stupor. His countenance was of a livid paleness.

"He is dead!" said Curumilla, in a voice stifled by emotion.

"He seems so," Trangoil-Lanec replied as he knelt down by the body.

He raised the young man's senseless head, untied his cravat, and opened his vest; then they perceived the two gaping wounds.

"This is a revenge!" he murmured.

"What is to be done?" said Curumilla, shaking his head discouragingly.

"Let us try to recover him—I hope he is not dead."

And then, with infinite address and incredible celerity, the two Indians bestowed upon the wounded man the most intelligent and most effective cares. For a long time all were useless. At length a sigh, faint as a breath, exhaled painfully from the oppressed breast of the young man; a slight flush tinted his cheeks, and, after several efforts, he opened his eyes. Curumilla, after having washed the wounds with clean cold water, applied a cataplasm to them of bruised oregano leaves.

"Loss of blood alone has made him faint," he said; "the wounds are wide, but not deep, and not at all dangerous."

"But what has been going on here?" Trangoil-Lanec asked.

"Hush!" said Curumilla, laying his hand upon his comrade's arm; "he speaks."

Indeed, the young man's lips did move silently; but, at length, he pronounced with a great effort, and in a voice so low that the Indians scarcely heard it—that single word which for him contained everything—

"Rosario!"

Then he sank back again.

"Ah!" cried Curumilla, as if a sudden light had broken upon him, "where is the young palefaced maiden?" and he sprang into the tent, "I understand it all now!" he said, returning quickly to his friend.

The Indians lifted up the wounded man gently in their arms, and carried him into the tent, where they placed him in Rosario's empty hammock. Louis recovered his senses, but almost immediately was overcome by a profound drowsiness. After having made him as comfortable as they could, the two Indians left the tent, and began, with the instinct of their race, to seek on the ground for indications they could ask of no witness, but which would show them traces they could understand. Now that the murder and the abduction had taken place, it became necessary to get upon the track of the ravishers, and endeavour, if possible, to save the young girl. After minute researches, which did not last less than two hours, the Indians returned to the front of the tent; they sat down, face to face, and smoked for a few minutes in silence.

The peons and arrieros had returned from the ceremony, and expressed the

greatest terror on learning what had taken place during their absence. The poor people did not know what to do; they trembled when they reflected upon the responsibility which rested upon them, and upon the terrible account Don Tadeo would require of them. After the two chiefs had smoked a few minutes, they extinguished their pipes, and Trangoil-Lanec began:

"My brother is a wise chief, let him say what he has seen."

"I will speak, since my brother desires it," Curumilla replied, bowing his head; "the pale maiden with the blue eyes has been carried off by five horsemen."

To this Trangoil-Lanec made a sign of assent.

"These five horsemen came from the other side of the river; their footmarks are strongly imprinted on the ground, which was wetted in the places where the horses trod with their dripping hoofs; four of these horsemen are Huiliches, the fifth is a paleface; when they reached the entrance of the camp, they stopped and consulted an instant, then four of them dismounted; the trace of their footsteps is visible."

"Good!" said Trangoil-Lanec, "my brother has the eyes of a Quanaco; nothing escapes him."

"Of the four horsemen who dismounted, three are Indians, as is easily perceived by the impression of their naked feet, the great toe of which, accustomed to the stirrup, is very wide apart from the other toes; but the fourth is a Muruche, for the rowels of his spurs have left deep marks all around. The three first have crept up to the tent, where Don Louis was talking with the young blue-eyed maiden, and, consequently, with his back towards those who came towards him; he was attacked unexpectedly, and fell without having time to defend himself: then the fourth horseman sprang forward like a puma, seized the maiden in his arms, and after jumping a second time over the body of Don Louis, went straight to his horse, followed by the three Indians. But Don Louis got up, first on his knees, and then on his feet; he fired his pistols at the ravishers, and one of them fell mortally wounded. It was the paleface, for a pool of blood marks the place of his fall, and, in his agony, he pulled up the grass with his clenched hands; then his companions dismounted again, took him up, and fled. Don Louis, after discharging his pistols, had a faintness come over him, and fell down again: that is what I have learnt."

"Good!" Trangoil-Lanec replied, "my brother knows everything; after taking up the body of their comrade, the ravishers crossed the river, and went in the direction of the mountains. Now, what will my brother do?"

"Trangoil-Lanec is an experienced chief, he will wait for Don Valentine; Curumilla is younger, he will go upon the track of the ravishers."

"My brother has spoken well; he is wise and prudent; he will find them."

"Yes, Curumilla will find them," the chief replied, laconically.

After saying these words, he arose, saddled his horse, and left the camp; Trangoil-Lanec soon lost sight of him. He then returned and took his place by the wounded man. The day passed away thus. The Spaniards had all left the plain; the Indians, for the most part, had followed their example; there only remained a few tardy Araucanos; but these, also, were preparing to depart. Towards evening, Louis found himself much better; he was able, in a few words, to relate to the Indian what had passed; but he told him nothing new, he had divined it all.

"Oh!" said the young man, as he ended, "Rosario! poor Rosario is lost!"

"My brother must not be depressed with grief," Trangoil-Lanec replied softly; "Curumilla is upon the track of the ravishers; the young pale maiden will be saved!"

"Do you seriously tell me that, chief? Is Curumilla really in pursuit of them?" the young man asked, fixing his anxious eyes upon the Indian; "can I indeed hope that?"

"Trangoil-Lanec is an Ulmen," the Araucano replied proudly: "no lie has ever soiled his lips, his tongue is not forked; I repeat that Curumilla is in pursuit of the ravishers. Let my brother hope; he will see again the little bird which sings such sweet songs in his heart."

A sudden flush crossed the young man's face at these words; a sad smile curled his pale lips; he gently pressed the hand of the chief, and closing his eyes, he sank gently back in the hammock. All at once the furious galloping of a horse was heard from without.

"Good!" Trangoil-Lanec murmured, looking at the wounded man, whose regular breathing proclaimed that he was sleeping peacefully: "what will Don Valentine say to all this?"

And he strode out hastily to meet the Parisian, whose face was the picture of anxiety.

"Chief!" he cried, in a tremulous voice, "can what the peons say be true?"

"Yes!" the chief replied coolly.

The young man sank down, as if thunder-struck. The Indian seated him gently upon a bale, and placing himself beside him, pressed his hand, saying in a soothing tone:

"My brother has much courage."

"Alas!" the young man exclaimed, in an agonized voice, "Louis, my poor Louis, dead, assassinated! Oh!" he added, with a terrible gesture, "I will avenge him! I will solely live to accomplish that sacred duty!"

The chief looked at him for an instant attentively.

"What does my brother mean?" he asked; "his friend is not dead."

"Oh! why do you seek to deceive me, chief?"

"I speak the truth; Don Louis is not dead," the Ulmen replied, in such an imposing voice that it carried conviction to the wounded heart of the young man.

"Oh!" he cried, impetuously, and springing up, "he lives!—is that possible?"

"He has received two wounds."

"Two wounds!"

"Yes, but my brother can be comforted, they are not dangerous; in a week, at latest, they will be cured."

Valentine remained for an instant stupefied by this good news, after the catastrophe which the peons and arrieros had announced to him.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, throwing himself into the arms of the chief, whom he pressed with a kind of frenzy to his breast, "it is true, is it not?—his life is not in danger?"

"No, no, my brother can reassure himself; loss of blood alone reduced him to the state of torpor into which he fell. I will answer for his recovery."

"Thanks! thanks, chief! I can see him, may I not?"

"He is asleep."

"Oh! I will not wake him, be assured of that; I only wish to see him."

"See him, then," Trangoil-Lanec replied, smiling.

Valentine went in. He looked at his friend, peacefully sleeping; he leant softly

over him, and impressing a kiss upon his brow, whispered—

"Sleep, dear brother, I will watch."

The lips of the wounded man moved; he murmured—

"Valentine, save her!"

The Parisian knitted his brow, and drew himself up again.

"Come here, chief," he said to Trangoil-Lanec, "and tell me the details of what has passed, that I may know how to avenge my brother, and save her he loves."

The two men quitted the tent.

CHAPTER XL.

AHAUCANIAN DIPLOMACY.

Antinahuel had not remained long inactive. Scarce had General Bustamente's escort disappeared in the cloud of dust, ere he remounted his horse, and, followed by all the Araucano chiefs, crossed the river. When he arrived on the other bank, he planted his lance in the ground, and turned towards the herald who was beside him, ready to execute his orders.

"Let the three toquis, the Ulmens, and the Apo-Ulmens meet here in an hour," he said; "the fire of council shall be lighted on this spot for a grand council. Begone!"

The herald bowed down to his horse's neck and set off at full speed. Antinahuel cast a glance around him. All the chiefs had regained their huts; one warrior alone remained. On perceiving him a smile stole over the lips of the toqui. This warrior was a man of lofty stature, proud carriage, and haughty countenance, whose piercing look conveyed a fierce and cruel expression. He appeared to be in the prime of life, that is to say, about forty years of age; he wore a poncho of exceedingly fine lama wool, striped with striking colours, while the long silver-headed cane which he held in his hand proclaimed him an Apo-Ulmen. He replied to the toqui's smile by a look of intelligence, and, bending to his ear, said, with an accent of gratified hatred—

"When the cougars tear each other to pieces, they prepare a rich quarry for the

eagles of the Andes."

"The Puelches are eagles," Antinahuel replied; "they are masters of the other side of the mountains; they leave to the Huiliche women the care of weaving their ponchos."

At this sarcasm, launched against the Huiliches, a fraction of the Araucano people, who devote themselves principally to agriculture and the breeding of cattle, the Apo-Ulmen frowned.

"My father is severe with his sons," he said, in a husky voice.

"The Black-Stag is a formidable chief in his nation," Antinahuel remarked, in a conciliatory tone; "he is the first of the Apo-Ulmens of the province of the maritime country. His heart is Puelche; my soul rejoices when he is at my side. Why is it that the Ulmens are not of the same temper as he?"

"My brother has explained the reason. Obligated to live in continual trade relations with the miserable Spaniards, the tribes of the flat country have laid down the lance to take up the pickaxe: they have become cultivators; but let not my father be deceived,—the old spirit of their race still dwells within them, and on the day when they are called on to fight for their independence, all will rise at once to punish those who would attempt to enslave them."

"Can that be true?" Antinahuel cried, stopping his horse short, and looking in the speaker's face; "may they be depended upon?"

"What is the use of speaking of the subject at this moment?" said the Apo-Ulmen, with a bantering smile; "has not my father just come from renewing the treaties with the palefaces?"

"That is true," said the toqui, darting a keen look at the Indian warrior: "peace is secured for a long time."

"My father is a wise chief, that which he does is well done," the other replied, casting down his eyes.

Antinahuel was preparing to reply, when an Indian arrived at full speed, and, with a prodigy of skill which these matchless horsemen alone can execute, he stopped suddenly before the two chiefs, and stood as motionless as a statue of bronze. The panting sides of his horse, which ejected clouds from his nostrils, and was spotted with white foam, showed that he had ridden far and fast. Antinahuel looked at him for an instant.

"My son Theg-teg—the thunderer—has made a rapid journey."

"I have executed the orders of my father."

At these words, out of politeness, the Apo-Ulmen pressed the sides of his horse to retire, but Antinahuel laid his hand upon his arm.

"Black-Stag may remain," he said; "is he not my friend?"

"I will remain if my father wishes it," the chief answered, quietly.

"Let him remain, then; his brother has no secrets from him;" and turning to the still motionless warrior, he added, "my brother can speak."

"The Chiaplos are fighting," the latter replied; "they have dug up the hatchet and turned it against their own breasts."

"Oh!" the toqui exclaimed with feigned astonishment; "my brother must be mistaken, the palefaces are not cougars, to devour each other."

And he turned towards Black-Stag, with a smile of undefinable expression.

"Theg-teg is not mistaken," the Indian warrior replied, gravely; "his eyes have seen clearly: the stone toldería, which the palefaces call Valdivia, is at this moment a more ardent furnace than the volcano of Autaco, which serves as a retreat for Guécubu, the genius of evil."

"Good!" the toqui remarked, coldly, "my son has seen well; he is a warrior brave in battle, but he is likewise prudent; did he stand apart to rejoice, without seeking to learn which side prevailed?"

"Theg-teg is prudent, but when he looks he means to see; he knows all, my father may question him."

"Good! the great warrior of the palefaces set out from here to fly to the help of his soldiers; the advantage is with him."

The Indian smiled, but made no reply.

"Let my brother speak!" Antinahuel resumed; "the toqui of his nation interrogates him."

"He whom my brother names as the great warrior of the palefaces, is the prisoner of his enemies; his soldiers are dispersed like grains of wheat scattered over the field."

"Wah!" Antinahuel cried with feigned anger, "my brother has a lying tongue, what he says cannot be true; does the eagle become the prey of the owl? The great warrior has an arm strong as the thunder of Pillian. Nothing can resist it."

"That arm, however powerful, has not been able to save him; the eagle is captive: the courageous puma was surprised by cunning foxes; he has fallen, treacherously overcome, into the snare they had laid before his feet."

"But his soldiers? the great toqui of the whites had a numerous army."

"I have told my father; the chief being made captive, the soldiers, bewildered and struck with fear by Guécubu, fell beneath the blows of their angry enemies."

"The chiefs who were conquerors, no doubt, pursued them."

"What for? The palefaces are women without courage: as soon as their enemies weep and pray for pardon they forgive them."

At this news the toqui could not repress a movement of impatience, but he soon recovered himself.

"Brothers ought not to be inexorable," he said, "when they lift the hatchet against each other: they may wound a friend without wishing it. The pale warriors have done well."

The Indian bowed if as assenting.

"What are the palefaces doing now?" the chief continued.

"They are assembled round the council fire."

"Good! They are wise men. I am satisfied with my son," Antinahuel added, with a gracious smile; "he is a warrior, as skilful as brave; he may retire, and take the repose necessary after so long a journey." "Theg-teg is not fatigued; his life is my father's," the warrior said with a bow; "he may dispose of it at his pleasure."

"Antinahuel will remember his son," the toqui said with a sign of dismissal.

The Indian bowed respectfully to his chief, and pressing his knees whilst shortening the bridle, he made his horse perform a curvet, brought it to the ground with an extraordinary bound, and went off caracoling. The toqui looked after him in apparent abstraction; then addressing the Apo-Ulmen—

"What does my brother think of that which this man has said?" he asked.

"My father is the wisest of the toquis of his nation, the chief the most venerated by the Araucanian tribes; Pillian will breathe words into his mind which will mount to his lips, and which we shall listen to with respect," Black-Stag replied, evasively, fearing to compromise himself by too frank a reply.

"My brother is right," the toqui said, with a haughty glance; "I have my nymph!"

The Apo-Ulmen bowed with an air of conviction. We beg our readers to observe, with regard to this expression, which for the first time has fallen from our pen, that in the Araucanian mythology, besides an infinite number of gods and goddesses, there are what are called spiritual nymphs, who perform towards man the office of familiar genii. There is not a renowned chief among the Araucanos who does not glorify himself with the idea of having one of these in his service. Hence, what Antinahuel said, instead of disturbing Black-Stag, gave him, on the contrary, a greater veneration for his chief; for he also flattered himself with having a familiar spirit at his command, although he did not dare to proclaim it aloud. At this moment the Araucanian drums and trumpets sounded loudly—the *chasquis* were calling the chiefs to council.

"What will my father do?" asked the Apo-Ulmen.

"Man is weak," Antinahuel replied; "but Pillian loves his sons, the Moluchos, he will inspire the words I shall pronounce; my only desire is the happiness of the Araucano nation."

"My father has convoked the great Auca-coyog of the nation; did he then suspect the news he has just received?"

"Antinahuel knows everything," he answered, with a smile.

"Good! I know what my father thinks."

"Perhaps."

"Let my father remember the words I have spoken."

"My ears are open, my son may repeat them,"

"When cougars tear each other to pieces, they prepare a rich quarry for the eagles of the Andes."

"Good!" said Antinahuel, with a laugh; "my son is a great chief, let him follow me to the Auca-coyog, the warriors are waiting for us."

The two warriors exchanged a look of undefinable meaning; these two men, so cunning and dissimulating, had compromised themselves to each other without avowing anything. They directed their course at a gallop towards the spot where the principal chiefs awaited them, drawn up in a circle around a fierce fire, the smoke of which ascended in graceful eddies towards heaven.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE COUNCIL

The Araucanos, whom certain travellers, either ill-informed or of bad faith, persist in representing as savage men plunged in the most frightful barbarism, are, on the contrary, a relatively civilized people. Their government, the origin of which is lost in the night of time, and which, at the period of the Spanish conquest, was as well organized and carried out as easily as at the present day, is, as we have said in a preceding chapter, an aristocratic republic, with essentially feudal tendencies. This government, which affects all the appearances of the feudal system, has all its good qualities and all its defects. Hence, except in time of war, the toquis possess but the shadow of sovereignty, and the power resides in the entire body of the chiefs, who, in questions of importance, decide in a general diet, called the *Auca-coyog*, the great council, or council of free men, for such is the name they claim for themselves, and very justly, for no power has yet been able to subdue them. These councils are generally held in the presence of all, in a vast prairie.

Antinahuel had eagerly seized the pretext of the renewal of the treaties to try and obtain from the chiefs authority to carry into execution the projects which had been so long ripening in his brain. The Araucanian code, which contains all the laws of the nation, created an obligation for his doing so, from which even his renown and popularity were powerless to release him. But he hoped to overcome the opposition of the chiefs, or their repugnance to submit to his will, by means of his eloquence and the influence which, under many circumstances, he had exercised over the minds of the Ulmens, even those most determined to resist him.

The Araucanos cultivate with success the art of speaking, which among them leads to public honours. They make it a point to speak their own language well, and to preserve its purity by guarding particularly against the introduction of foreign words. They carry this so far, that when a white establishes himself amongst them, they oblige him to abandon his own name and take one of their country. The style of their speeches is figurative and allegorical. They call the style of parliamentary harangues *coyagtucan*; and it must be observed that these speeches contain all the essential parts of true rhetoric, and are almost all divided into three heads.

The few words we have said will suffice to show that the Araucanos are not so

savage as we have been led to suppose. In short, a small people, who, without allies, isolated at the extremity of the continent, have since the landing of the Spaniards on their coasts, that is to say, during three hundred years, constantly and alone resisted European armies composed of experienced soldiers and greedy adventurers, whom no difficulty was likely to stop, and who have preserved their independence and their nationality intact, are, in our opinion, respectable in every point of view, and ought not to be stigmatized as barbarians with impunity—the sad, despicable vengeance of those proud and impotent Spaniards, who have never been able to conquer them, and whose degenerate sons at this very day pay them a tribute, under the lying excuse of an annual offering.

We who, thrown by the chance of our adventurous travels among these indomitable tribes, have lived many days with them, have had an opportunity of judging soundly of these ill-understood people. We have been able to appreciate all that is really simple, great, and generous in their character. Terminating here this somewhat long digression, a tribute of gratitude paid to ancient and dearly-beloved friends, we will resume our narrative.

Antinahuel and Black-Stag arrived at the place where the chiefs were assembled. They dismounted and joined the groups of Ulmens. The chiefs, who were peacefully chatting together, at their arrival became silent, and, for a few minutes, not a word was heard in the assembly. At length Cathicara, the toqui of the Piré-Mapus, made a few steps towards the centre of the circle, and took the initiative.

Cathicara was an old man of seventy, of majestic bearing, and imposing countenance. A renowned warrior in his youth, now that many winters had wrinkled his brow and silvered his long hair, he enjoyed, by just title, a great reputation for wisdom in his nation. Descended from an old race of Ulmens, continually opposed to the whites, he was an inveterate enemy of the Chilians, against whom he had long waged war. He was acquainted with the secret views of Antinahuel, of whom he was the most devoted friend and partisan.

"Toquis, Apo-Ulmens and Ulmens of the valiant nation of the Aucas, whose immense hunting grounds cover the surface of the earth," he said, "my heart is sad; a cloud covers my mind, and my eyes, filled with tears, are constantly cast towards the ground; whence comes it that grief devours me? Why does the joyous song of the goldfinch no longer sound cheerfully in my ears? why do the rays of the sun seem less warm to me? why, in short, does nature appear less beautiful to me? Will you tell me, my brothers? You are silent; shame covers

your brows; your humbled eyes are cast down—have you nothing to reply? It is because you are a degenerate people! your warriors are women, who instead of the lance take up the spindle; because you bow basely beneath the yoke of these Chiaplos, these Huincas, who laugh at you, for they know that you have no longer blood red enough to contend with them! When, Aucas warriors, did impure owls and screech owls begin to make their nests in the eyrie of eagles? Of what use is this stone hatchet, the symbol of strength; this hatchet, which you have given me to defend you, if it is to remain inactive in my hands, and if I must descend into the tomb, towards which I am already hastening, without having been able to do anything for your enfranchisement?—Take it back again, warriors, if it is to be nothing but a vain, honorary ornament; for myself, my life has been too long—let me retire to my toldo, where, to my last days, it will be at least permitted me to weep over our independence, which is compromised by your weakness, and our glory eclipsed for ever by your cowardice!"

After uttering these words, the old man made a few paces backwards, staggering as if overcome by grief. Antinahuel sprang towards him, and appeared to lavish consolations upon him in a low voice. The speech had strongly moved the assembly, for the toqui was beloved and venerated by all. The Ulmens remained apparently silent and stoical; but their feelings of hatred had been powerfully stirred, and passion began to gleam from their eyes in ominous flashes. Black-Stag stepped forward.

"Father," he said, in a low, insinuating tone, and with a quiet air, "your words are rough; they have plunged our hearts in sadness; why have you been so severe with your children? Pillian alone is acquainted with the intentions of men. What do you reproach us with? with having done today what our fathers have always done before us, while they did not believe themselves in a position to contend victoriously against their enemies! No, owls and impure birds do not make their nests in the eyries of eagles. No, the Aucas are not women! They are valiant and invincible warriors, as their fathers were before them. Listen! listen to what the spirit reveals to me: the council with the Spaniards of today is null and void, because it has not taken place as the Admapu requires. The toqui has not presented to the chief of the palefaces the branch of the Cinnamon tree, the symbol of peace; the canes of the Apo-Ulmens have not been bound in a sheaf with the sword of the Huinca chief; the oath and the speeches have been pronounced upon the cross of the palefaces, and not upon the sheaf, as the law requires. I repeat, then, the Huinca-coyog is a nullity, nothing but a vain, laughable ceremony, to which we ought to attach no importance. Have I spoken well, powerful men?"

"Yes! yes!" the chiefs cried, brandishing their arms, "the Huinca-coyog is null!"

Antinahuel then took a few steps forward within the circle, with his head advanced, his eyes fixed on vacancy, and his arms extended, as if he heard and saw things which he alone could see and hear.

"Silence!" Black-Stag cried, pointing to him with his finger; "the great toqui is holding conference with his nymph!"

The chiefs experienced a sensation of terror while looking at the toqui. A solemn silence prevailed in the assembly. On his part, Antinahuel did not stir.

Black-Stag approached him softly, and, stooping towards his ear, asked,—

"What does my father see?"

"I see the warriors of the palefaces; they have dug up the war hatchet, and are fighting with one another."

"What more does my father see?" Black-Stag resumed.

"I see streams of blood, which redden the soil; the odour of that blood rejoices my heart, for it is the blood of palefaces shed by their brothers!"

"Does my father see anything more?"

"I see the great chief of the whites! he fights valiantly at the head of his soldiers! he is surrounded, he fights still! he is nearly falling—he falls—he is down—he is conquered! His enemies seize him!"

The Ulmens present at this scene looked on in stupefied amazement; it was incomprehensible to them. A smile of disdain curled the lips of Black-Stag, as he continued,—

"Does my father hear anything?"

"I hear the cries of the dying demanding vengeance upon their brothers!"

"Does my father hear anything else?"

"Yes; I hear the cries of Aucas warriors, long since dead, and they freeze me with terror!"

"What do they say?" the chiefs exclaimed unanimously, a prey to intense anxiety.

"What do the Aucas warriors say?"

"They say, 'Brothers, the hour is come! To arms! To arms!'"

"To arms!" the chiefs shouted, as with one voice. "To arms! Death to the

palefaces!"

The impulse was given, enthusiasm had seized all hearts; from this moment Antinahuel was able to raise the passions of the crowd to delirium at his pleasure. A smile of supreme satisfaction lighted his haughty countenance as he recovered apparently from his vision.

"Chiefs of the Aucas," he said, "what do you order me to do?"

"Antinahuel," Cathicara replied, throwing his stone hatchet into the fire, in which he was directly imitated by the other toquis; "there is now but one supreme hatchet in the nation, it is in your hands; let it be red up to the hilt in the blood of the vile Huincas; lead our Uthal-Mapus to battle—you have the supreme command! We give you the power of life and death over our persons. From this hour, you alone in the nation have the right to command us; whatever be your orders, we will accomplish them."

Antinahuel raised his lofty head, his brow radiant with pride: brandishing in his nervous hand his powerful war hatchet, the symbol of the dictatorial and boundless power which had just been conferred upon him, he said haughtily,—

"Aucas, I accept the honour you do me; I will prove worthy of the confidence you place in me. This hatchet shall never be buried till my body has served for food to the vultures of the Andes, or till the cowardly palefaces, against whom we are about to combat, shall have come upon their knees to implore pardon!"

The chiefs replied to these words by cries of joy and ferocious howlings. The Auca-coyog was terminated. Tables were placed, and a banquet gathered together all the warriors present at the council. At the moment when Antinahuel was seating himself in the high place reserved for him, an Indian, covered with perspiration and dust, approached him, and whispered a few words in his ear. The chief started; a nervous paroxysm shook his whole frame, and he arose a prey to the most lively agitation.

"Oh!" he cried, passionately, "it is to me alone that woman should belong!" and, addressing the Indian who had spoken to him, he added, "Bid my mosotones mount, and be prepared to follow me instantly."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE NIGHT JOURNEY.

Antinahuel beckoned Black-Stag to come to him, and the Apo-Ulmen did not delay. Notwithstanding the number and copiousness of the libations in which he had indulged, the face of the Araucano chief was as impassive, and his step as steady, as if he had only drunk water. When he arrived in front of the toqui, he bowed respectfully, and waited in silence till he was spoken to. The toqui, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and buried in serious reflections, was some time before he was aware of his presence. At length he raised his eyes; his countenance was dark, his eyes seemed to dart lightning, a nervous tremour agitated all his limbs.

"Is my father suffering?" Black-Stag asked, mildly and affectionately.

"I am," the chief replied.

"Guécubu has breathed upon the heart of my father; but let him take courage, Pillian will support him."

"No," Antinahuel replied; "the breath which dries my breast is a breath of fear."

"Of fear?"

"Yes; the Huincas are powerful. I dread the strength of their arms for my young men!"

Black-Stag surveyed him with astonishment.

"What signifies the power of the palefaces," he said, "when my father is at the head of the four Uthal-Mapus?"

"This war will be terrible; and I would conquer."

"My father will conquer. Do not all the warriors listen to his voice?"

"No," said Antinahuel, sorrowfully; "the Ulmens of the Puelches were not present at the council."

"That is true," Black-Stag murmured.

"The Puelches are the first among Aucas warriors."

"That is true, too," said Black-Stag.

"I suffer!" Antinahuel repeated.

Black-Stag laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"My father," he said, in an insinuating tone, "is a great chief; nothing is impossible to him!"

"What does my son mean?"

"War is declared. Whilst we attempt incursions into the Chilian territory, to keep our enemies in a state of uncertainty as to our plans, let my father mount with his mosotones upon his coursers more fleet than the wind, and fly upon the wings of the tempest to the Puelches. His words will convince them; the warriors will abandon everything to follow him and fight under his orders. With their assistance we shall conquer the Huincas, and the heart of my father will swell with joy and pride!"

"My son is wise! I will follow his counsels," the toqui answered, with a smile of mysterious expression; "but he has said war is resolved upon; the interests of my nation must not suffer from the short absence I am forced to make."

"My father will provide for that."

"I have provided for it," Antinahuel said, with a courteous smile; "let my son listen to me."

"My ears are open to receive the words of my father."

"At sunrise, when the fumes of the water fire are dissipated, the chiefs will ask for Antinahuel." Black-Stag nodded assent.

"I will place in the hands of my son," the chief continued, "the stone hatchet, the sign of my dignity. Black-Stag is a part of my soul, his heart is devoted to me; I name him my vice-toqui—he will take my place."

The Apo-Ulmen bowed respectfully before Antinahuel, and kissed his hand.

"Whatever my father orders shall be instantly executed," he said.

"The chiefs are of a proud character; their courage is fiery: my son must not give them time to cool, he must make them so compromise themselves, that they cannot afterwards retract."

"What are the names of these chiefs, that I may keep them in my memory?"

"They are the most powerful Ulmens of the nation. Let my son remember they are eight in number; each of them must make an incursion on the frontier, in order to prove to the Chiaplos that hostilities have commenced. The four

principal among them will immediately repair to Valdivia, to proclaim the declaration of war to the palefaces."

"Good!"

"These are the names of the Ulmens: Tangol, Qud-pal, Auchanguer, Colfunquin, Trumau, Cuyumil, and Pailapen. Does my son hear these names distinctly?"

"I have heard them."

"Has my son understood the sense of my words? Have they entered into his brain?"

"The words of my father are here," said Black-Stag, pointing to his forehead; "he may banish all uneasiness, and fly towards her who has taken possession of his heart."

"Good!" Antinahuel replied; "my son loves me, he will remember; after two suns he will find me at the toldería of the Black Serpents."

"The Black-Stag will be there, accompanied by his most valiant warriors; may Pillian guide the steps of my father, and may the god of war grant him success."

"Farewell, brother!" Antinahuel murmured, taking leave of his lieutenant.

Black-Stag bowed to the toqui and retired. As soon as he was alone, Antinahuel made a sign to the Indian whose news had caused his departure. During the conference of the two chiefs this man had stood motionless, at a sufficient distance to prevent his hearing what they said, but near enough to execute immediately the orders that might be given him. He drew near in obedience to the sign.

"Is my son fatigued?" the toqui asked.

"No; my horse alone wants rest."

"Well, my son shall have another horse; he will guide us."

Antinahuel, followed by the scout, advanced, without more words, towards a group of horsemen, who, leaning on their long lances, cast their black shadows gloomily into the night. These horsemen, about thirty in number, were the mosotones of the toqui. Antinahuel, at a bound, sprang upon a magnificent horse, held by the bridle by two Indians.

"Forward!" he cried, settling himself in his saddle, and plunging his spurs into the sides of the horse, which set off with the speed of an arrow.

The mosotones followed as quickly after, and the troop of horsemen glided through the darkness like a legion of gloomy phantoms, preceded by the scout. Who can express the terrible poetry of a night ride in the American deserts? The midnight wind had swept the heavens clear of clouds, and its vault, of a dark blue, appeared to be, like a monarch's robe, splendidly adorned with an infinite number of stars. The night had that velvety transparency peculiar to warm climates. At intervals, a puff of wind, loaded with indistinct sounds, scattered the dry leaves into the air, and was lost in the distance like a sigh.

The Araucanos, bending over the necks of their horses, whose nostrils emitted dense clouds of smoke, rode on, and on, and ever on, without casting even a look around them. And yet the desert they were traversing, so silently and so rapidly, poured floods of splendid harmonies into space. The murmur of water among the lianas and the glayeuls, the moaning of the wind among the leaves, or the confused noise of a thousand invisible insects, could be heard; at times, lights, fluttering through the foliage, danced upon the grass in the manner of wild fires; at distances were to be seen old trees, at the angles of ravines or the brink of precipices, standing like spectres, shaking their winding sheets of parasitical plants; a thousand rumours hovered in the air; nameless cries issued from dens hollowed under vast roots; stifled sighs descended from the hoary summits of the mountains: an unknown and mysterious world could be felt existing around. Everywhere, on the earth, in the air, was to be heard the great flood of life, which comes from God, passes away, and is incessantly renewed.

The Araucanos still continued their furious course, clearing torrents and ravines, and crushing under the hoofs of their flying coursers stones, the fragments of which rolled with a splash into the barrancas. At two lances, length, in front, by the side of the scout, Antinahuel, with his eyes ardently directed forward, kept urging on his horse, whose hard and loud breathing proclaimed fatigue. All at once a dark mass surged up in the distance, and then a voice was heard.

"We have arrived," the guide exclaimed.

"At last!" Antinahuel said, pulling up his horse, which could no longer stand when the impetus had ceased. They found themselves in a miserable village, composed of five or six huts falling to ruins, and which, at every gust of wind, threatened to tumble to pieces. Antinahuel, who expected the fall of his horse, disengaged himself quickly, and addressing the guide, who had likewise dismounted, asked—

"In which toldo is she?"

"Come," the Indian replied, laconically.

Antinahuel followed him.

They walked some steps without exchanging a word; the chief pressing his hand strongly on his breast, as if to keep down the beatings of his heart. After a hasty march of ten minutes, the two men found themselves in front of an isolated cabin, from the interior of which glimmered a feeble light. The Indian stopped, and turned towards Antinahuel.

"That is it," he said, stretching out his arm in the direction of the cabin.

The toqui turned round to ascertain whether his mosotones, whom, in his rapid course, he had left far behind, were rejoining him; and then, after the hesitation of a second, he approached the door and pushed it, saying in a low but determined voice—

"An end must be put to this!"

The door opened, and he entered.

CHAPTER XLIII.

TWO HATREDS.

Antinahuel found himself face to face with Doña Maria; by an instinctive movement each drew back a step, stifling a cry; a cry of stupor on the part of Antinahuel, of surprise on the part of the Linda.

"Oh!" sighed Doña Rosario, quite overcome, and bowing her head to avoid the ardent glance of the Indian chief—"Oh, Heaven! now I am really lost, indeed!"

Doña Maria had in a few seconds driven back to her heart the feelings which raged within her; and with a mild voice and a smiling face she addressed Antinahuel—

"My brother is welcome," she said, inviting him by a gesture to enter the cuarto; "to what happy chance do I owe his presence?"

"A happy chance for me, particularly," he replied, with a satirical smile, and endeavouring to compose his features.

The toqui was too well acquainted with the companion of his childhood not to know that he had in her a formidable adversary, with whom he must play close, in order to bring her to do his will.

"Well!" the Linda resumed, "will my brother deign to do me the pleasure of explaining the cause of his sudden appearance, which, not the less, fills me with delight?"

"Oh! the cause is very simple indeed, not worth mentioning; I did not hope, in any way, to meet my sister here; I must even confess, with all humility that I did not seek her."

"Ah!" said Doña Maria, feigning to be imposed upon, "I am doubly fortunate, then."

The chief bowed.

"It is the truth," he said.

"Good!" she thought; "now he is going to lie, let us see what villainy the demon will invent;" and then she added aloud, with a seducing smile, which displayed thirty-two little teeth of the purest pearl—"I am all ears, my brother can speak."

"As my sister knows, this village is on the route which leads to my toldería, I have naturally traversed it in returning to my tribe; the night is advanced, my mosotones require a few hours' rest; I resolved to encamp here. I entered the first rancho which presented itself to my view, this rancho in which you are temporarily sojourning, and I am grateful to the chance which, as I have told you, has done all this, and is alone guilty."

"Not bad for an Indian," murmured Doña Maria; "well, we will say no more about that."

"Eh!" said Antinahuel, feigning for the first time to perceive Doña Rosario, and advancing towards her; "who is this charming young woman?"

"A slave, not worthy of your notice," the Linda replied, sternly.

"A slave!" Antinahuel cried.

"Yes, a slave." The Linda clapped her hands, and the Indian we have seen talking with her entered.

"Take away this woman!" she said.

"Oh, madam!" Rosario exclaimed, falling on her knees, "can you be inexorable

towards a poor girl who has never injured you?"

The Linda gave her a fiery glance, and repulsed her with her foot.

"I ordered this girl to be taken away," she said, perilously.

At this flagrant insult, the blood rushed to the heart of the poor girl; her pallid brow flushed with scarlet, and drawing herself up majestically and proudly, she said in a piercing voice, the prophetic tone of which struck the Linda to the heart —

"Beware, madam! God will punish you! As you today are without pity for me, so the day will come when there will be no pity for you!"

And she left the room, after darting a look at her implacable enemy that made even her blench.

When Antinahuel and the Linda were left alone, a long silence ensued. The last words of Rosario had wounded the Linda like the stroke of a poniard; it was in vain she endeavoured to steel herself against the emotion she experienced. She felt herself conquered by the weak girl. She, however, gradually overcame the incomprehensible sensation that oppressed her. Passing her hand across her brow, as if to drive away the importunate idea that pursued her, she turned towards Antinahuel—

"No diplomacy between us, brother," she said, "we know each other too well to lose time in manoeuvring."

"My sister is right; let us speak frankly."

"The story of your return to your tribe is very clever, Antinahuel, but I do not believe a word of it."

"Good! then my sister knows the reason that brings me here."

"I do know it," she said, with an arch smile, which played like a sunbeam round her rosy lips.

Antinahuel made no reply. He began to walk in great agitation about the room, casting looks of anger and vexation towards the door by which Rosario had gone out. The Linda followed him with a keen and mocking eye.

"Well," she said, at the end of a minute, "will not my brother speak?"

"Why should I not speak?" he angrily replied. "Antinahuel is the most redoubtable chief of his nation, the proudest warriors bend their lofty brows

without hesitation before him!"

"I am waiting," she said, in a calm voice.

"A chief explains himself clearly, no one imposes upon him. My sister knows my hatred for the chief of the palefaces, of whom she has so much reason to complain."

"Yes, I know that man is the personal enemy of my brother."

"Well, then, my sister has in her hands the blue-eyed maiden, and she will give her to me, so that I may, in making her suffer, revenge myself on my enemy."

"My brother is a man, he does not know how to avenge himself: why should I give my prisoner up to him? Women alone possess the secret of torturing those they hate. Let my brother leave it to me," she added, with a vindictive smile; "the torments I shall invent will suffice, I swear, to satisfy a hatred much deeper than any he can feel."

Antinahuel, although his face remained impassive, shuddered inwardly at these odious words.

"My sister is boastful," he replied, "her skin is white, her heart knows not how to hate, let her leave it to the Indian chief."

"No," she passionately exclaimed, "I have fixed the fate of this woman; I will not give her to my brother."

"Will my sister then forget her promise, and falsify her oaths?"

"Of what promises and of what oaths do you speak, chief?"

"Of those," the Indian replied haughtily, "which my sister pronounced in the toldo of Antinahuel, when she came among his tribe to implore his assistance."

The Linda smiled.

"Woman is a mockingbird," she said, "the man who pays attention to her words is——"

"Good!" Antinahuel interrupted, "my sister shall keep her prisoner. Let my sister do her will; I will continue my route towards the toldería of my tribe."

The Linda looked at him with astonishment; the facility with which Antinahuel apparently renounced his projects seemed to her the more incomprehensible, from her knowing with what pertinacity he pursued his enterprises, when once he believed he had a chance of success. She resolved to know what she had to

trust to. At the moment when the chief made a step towards the door, she said.

"Is my brother going?"

"I am going," he replied.

"Has he, then, already terminated the affairs about which General Bustamente requested him to come and consult with him?"

"General Bustamente no longer stands in need of Antinahuel or of anyone else."

"Has he then succeeded so quickly?"

"Yes," he answered in an equivocal tone.

"Then," the Linda exclaimed, joyfully, "he is master of the city, and triumphs at last!"

Antinahuel appeared to hesitate for a minute—an ironical smile flitted across his lips.

"Will not my brother answer?" the Linda continued, with an impatience mingled with uneasiness.

"He whom my sister calls General Bustamente," he replied in a sharp tone, "no longer needs the assistance of anyone: he is a prisoner."

The Linda sprang up like a wounded lioness.

"A prisoner!" she cried. "Oh! my brother must be mistaken."

"He is a prisoner, and within three days will be dead."

The Linda was struck with stupor; this frightful news crushed all her hopes.

"Oh!" she murmured at length, "he shall not die!"

"He will die!" Antinahuel replied; "who can save him?"

"You, chief!" she said, emphatically grasping his arm.

"Why should I do it?" he remarked carelessly; "of what consequence is the life of the man to me?—the palefaces are not my brothers."

"No; but his life is precious to me, for the sake of my vengeance! He alone can deliver up my enemy to me! He shall live, I tell you!"

"Good! My sister will deliver him, then, as she is so anxious to save him."

"You alone could do it, chief, if you would," she observed.

Antinahuel fixed his eyes upon her.

"What makes you suppose I would?" he said.

"Listen to me, chief!" the Linda cried. "You love that woman—that puny, palefaced thing, do you not?"

The Indian started, but made no reply.

"Oh! do not endeavour to deceive me; you cannot blind the eyes of a woman. The hatred you bear to Don Tadeo is changed into love in your heart at the sight of this creature."

"Well! and suppose it should be so?" he said, evidently moved.

"An even-handed bargain with you then; give me General Bustamente," she remarked earnestly, "and I will deliver her up to you."

"Oh!" said Antinahuel, with a bantering smile, "a woman is but a mockingbird; the man who puts faith in her words——"

On hearing the chief throw in her face the words she herself had uttered only a few minutes before, she stamped with impatience.

"Well, then," she cried, almost bursting with rage, "take her then!—take the woman! and may my curses cling to her!"

Antinahuel uttered a tiger-like roar, and rushed out of the room.

"Ah!" cried the Linda in a hoarse voice, and with an expression impossible to be described, "may not the love of this wretch avenge me better than all the tortures I could have invented!"

In a few minutes the chief returned precipitately, his features distorted by fury and disappointment.

"She has fled!" he shouted. It was true. Rosario and the Indian to whose charge the Linda had given her had both disappeared. No one knew what had become of them. Antinahuel immediately dispatched his mosotones in all directions in search of them. The Linda was left in the toldo a prey to indescribable rage; she was cheated of her vengeance! She felt crushed under the weight of the helplessness to which she was reduced.



CHAPTER XLIV.

THE RETURN TO VALDIVIA.

Night was come; bending over the pillow of his friend, who was still buried in that lethargic sleep which generally follows great loss of blood, Valentine watched with anxious tenderness the changes which at times darkened his pale countenance.

"Oh!" he said, in a suppressed voice, clenching his hands with anger, "be thy assassins who they may, brother, they shall pay for their crime dearly."

The curtain of the tent was slowly raised, and a hand was laid upon the young man's shoulder. He turned quickly round; Trangoil-Lanec was before him. The face of the Ulmen was dark as night, and he appeared a prey to strong emotion.

"What is the matter, chief?" asked Valentine, terrified at his manner; "what has happened, in the name of Heaven? Have you any fresh misfortune to announce?"

"Misfortune incessantly watches over man," the chief remarked sententially; "he should be ready to receive it at all hours, like an expected guest."

"Speak then!" the young man asked, in a firm voice; "whatever may happen, I will not falter."

"Good, my brother is strong, he is a great warrior, he will not suffer himself to be cast down. Let my brother hasten; we must be gone!"

"Be gone!" cried Valentine, with a nervous start; "and my friend?"

"Our brother Louis will accompany us."

"Is it possible to move him?"

"It must be," the Indian said peremptorily; "the war hatchet is dug up against the palefaces, the Aucas chiefs have drunk firewater, the genius of evil is master of their hearts; we must depart before they think of us; in an hour it will be too late."

"Let us depart then," the young man replied, sorrowfully, convinced that Trangoil-Lanec knew more than he was willing to tell, and that some great danger threatened them, since the chief, who was a man of tried courage, had let fall that mask of stoicism which scarcely ever abandons the Indian.

Preparations for departure were made in all haste, and were soon terminated. The

hammock in which Louis reposed was solidly fastened to two long cross pieces of wood, and then, as it was, harnessed upon two mules without awakening him. The little band set out, employing the greatest precautions. They proceeded thus for more than an hour, without exchanging a word; the campfires of the Indians became every minute more faint in the distance, and they were, at least for the present, out of danger. Valentine approached Trangoil-Lanec, who rode at the head of the convoy.

"Where are we going?" he asked.

"To Valdivia," the chief replied; "it is there alone that Don Louis will be able to recover in safety."

"You are right," said Valentine; "but shall we remain inactive?"

"I will do what my brother the paleface wishes; am I not his penni? where he goes I will go—his will shall be mine!"

"Thank you, chief," the Frenchman replied, with emotion; "you have a brave and worthy heart."

"My brother saved my life," said the Ulmen earnestly; "that life is no longer mine, it belongs to him."

Whether it was that the Araucano chiefs did not perceive the departure of the strangers, or that, as is more probable, they did not think it worthwhile to pursue them, the little troop was not interrupted in its flight—for what other name could be given to this night march amidst the desert? They advanced slowly, on account of the wounded man, who could not, in his state of weakness and prostration, have supported the shaking of a more rapid pace.

Towards three o'clock in the morning, a few fugitive and uncertain lights, which flitted across the horizon, and with difficulty pierced through the fog, which at that hour of the night envelopes the earth like a winding sheet, announced to the party that they were approaching the city, and should soon be there. At the end of three quarters of an hour, they reached the gardens which envelope Valdivia like an immense bouquet of flowers, from the centre of which it seems to spring up. The party made a short halt, in order not to attract observation on entering the city, through the state of the horses and mules. From that time they had nothing to fear from the Indians.

"Is my brother acquainted with the city?" Trangoil-Lanec asked.

"Why do you ask that question?"

"For a very simple reason. In the desert, by night or by day, I can serve as a guide to my brother; but here, in this *toldería* of the whites, my eyes close—I am blind; my brother must conduct us."

"The devil!" said Valentine, quite disconcerted; "in that sense I am as blind as you, chief; it was only yesterday that I entered the city for the first time: and," he added, laughingly, "the bullets then whistled round in such a merry fashion, I had scarcely time to look about me, or to ask my way."

"Don't let that disturb you, señor," said one of the peons, who had heard the few words pronounced by the two men; "only tell me where you want to go, and I will undertake to conduct you."

"Hum!" Valentine replied; "where I want to go to? Caspeta! I cannot exactly say; all places are alike to me, provided my friend be in safety."

"Pardon me, señor," the arriero replied, "if I dare——"

"Oh, dare! dare! there's a good fellow! your idea is probably excellent; for myself, I confess at this moment my mind is as empty as a drum."

"Why, señor, should you not go to the residence of Don Tadeo de Leon, my master?"

"Pardieu!" cried Valentine, vexed at his own want of thought. "On my word, you are something like a guide! I do not go to Don Tadeo, because, simply, I don't know how to find the place, that's all."

"I know, señor; Don Tadeo is most likely at the *cabildo*."

"By Jove! that's true again; my powers of thought seem to have been driven out of my head; but which is the way to the *cabildo*?"

"I will show you, señor."

"That's well! this is an intelligent lad. Let us be moving, my friend."

"Forward, then!" cried the arriero. "*Ea! arrea mula!*" he shouted to his beasts.

In a few minutes they debouched upon the Plaza Mayor, opposite the *cabildo*. The city was still and silent; here and there traces of the sanguinary contest of the preceding day, heaps of broken furniture, or large trenches cut in the ground, gave evidence of the ravages caused by the insurrection. A soldier was marching with slow steps in front of the *cabildo*. At sight of the little party, he stopped, and cocked his musket.

"Who goes there?" he shouted sharply.

"*La Patria!*" Valentine replied.

"Go on, then!" said the soldier.

"Hum!" the young man murmured; "it appears not to be such an easy matter to obtain entrance; never mind," he added, "let us try. My friend," he said, in an insinuating voice, to the sentinel, who stood motionless before him; "we have business in the palace."

"Have you the password?"

"Santiago! no," Valentine answered, frankly.

"Then you cannot enter."

"And yet I wish very much to enter."

"Very possibly; but as you have not the password, I advise you to go on your way; for I swear, if you were the devil in person, I would not afford you a passage."

"My friend," said the Parisian, in a jeering tone, "you do not talk logically; if I were the devil, I should stand in no need of the password—I should get in in spite of you."

"Take care, señor," whispered the arriero; "that soldier is not unlikely to fire at you."

"Pardieu! that's what I reckon upon," said Valentine, laughing.

The peon looked at him in astonishment; he thought he was mad. The soldier, annoyed by this long conversation, and believing it of no use to stand wrangling with these jokers, presented his musket, crying angrily,—

"For the last time, go on, or I will fire!"

"I am determined I will go in!" Valentine replied, resolutely.

"To arms!" the soldier cried, and fired. Valentine, who had watched attentively all the soldier's movements, had slipped quickly from his horse, and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head. At the cry of the soldier and the report of his piece, several armed soldiers, followed by an officer with a lighted lantern in his hand, rushed tumultuously out of the palace.

"What is going on here?" the officer asked, in a loud voice.

"Ah!" Valentine cried, to whom the voice was not unknown, "is that you, Don Gregorio?"

"Who calls me?" said the latter; for, in fact, it was he.

"I, Valentine!"

"What! is it you, my friend, who are making all this disturbance?" replied Don Gregorio, advancing; "I thought it was nothing less than an attack."

"What the devil was I to do?" said the young man, laughing; "I had not the password, and I wanted to get in."

"Hum! none but a Frenchman would have such an idea as that."

"Is it not original?"

"Yes, but you risked being killed."

"Bah! we are always risking being killed, and yet we are not," said Valentine, carelessly; "I recommend my plan to you, under similar circumstances."

"Much obliged! but I do not think I shall ever try it."

"Ah! there you are wrong."

"Well, then, come in! come in!"

"That is all I want; particularly as I must see Don Tadeo instantly."

"I believe he is asleep."

"He must be awakened."

"Do you bring interesting news, then?"

"Yes," Valentine replied, becoming suddenly serious; "terrible news!"

Don Gregorio, struck with the tone in which the Frenchman had pronounced these words, had a presentiment of some misfortune, and asked no further. The arrieros bore the hammock, with Don Louis still asleep, into the cabildo. By the care of Don Gregorio he was carried to a bedchamber, and placed in a bed hastily provided.

"What does all this mean?" Don Gregorio said, in astonishment; "is Don Louis wounded?"

"Yes," Valentine replied, in a husky voice; "he has received two dagger wounds."

"But how did it all happen?"

"You will soon learn; but pray conduct me instantly to Don Tadeo."

"In heaven's name, come, then! your reserve alarms me."

And, followed by Valentine and Trangoil-Lanec, Don Gregorio plunged into the labyrinth formed by the numerous corridors of the palace, with which he seemed well acquainted.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FATHER REVEALS HIMSELF.

Don Tadeo had passed the greater part of the night in giving orders for the clearing away of the hideous traces left by the combat. He had named the magistrates charged with the police of the city. After having assured, as far as possible, the tranquillity and safety of the citizens, and sent several couriers to Santiago, and other centres of population, to inform them of what had taken place, worn out with fatigue, sinking with sleep, he had thrown himself, clothed as he was, upon a camp bed, to take a little repose. He had slept scarcely an hour that agitated sleep which is the lot of men upon whom the destinies of empires rest, when the door of the chamber was pushed violently open, a strong light gleamed in his eyes, and several men surrounded him. Don Tadeo awoke suddenly.

"Who is there?" he cried, endeavouring to recognise, in spite of the light which dazzled his eyes, the persons who so inopportunately disturbed his repose.

"It is I," replied Don Gregorio.

"Well, but you do not seem to be alone?"

"No, Don Valentine accompanies me."

"Don Valentine!" cried Don Tadeo, starting up, and passing his hand over his brow, to drive away the clouds which still obscured his ideas; "why, I did not expect Don Valentine before morning, at soonest; what serious reason can have induced him to travel by night?"

"A powerful reason, Don Tadeo," the young man remarked, in a melancholy voice.

"In Heaven's name! speak, then!" cried Don Tadeo.

"Be a man! be firm! collect all your courage to bear worthily the blow you are about to receive."

Don Tadeo walked two or three times round the room, with his head cast down, and his brow contracted; then stopped suddenly in front of Valentine with a pale brow, but with a stoical countenance. This man of iron had subdued nature within him; as if aware of the rudeness of the shock he was about to receive, he had ordered his heart not to break—his muscles not to quiver.

"Speak!" he said, "I am ready to hear you."

While uttering these words his voice was firm, his features calm. Valentine, though well acquainted with his courage, was struck with admiration.

"Is the misfortune you are about to announce to me personal?" said Don Tadeo.

"Yes," the young man replied, in a tremulous voice.

"God be praised! Go on, then; I listen to you."

Valentine perceived that he must not put the soul of this man to too hard a trial; he determined to speak.

"Doña Rosario has disappeared," he said; "she has been carried off during our absence; Louis, my foster brother, in endeavouring to defend her, has fallen, pierced by two sword thrusts."

The King of Darkness appeared a statue of marble; no emotion was perceptible upon his austere countenance.

"Is Don Louis dead?" he asked, earnestly.

"No," Valentine answered, more and more astonished; "I even hope that in a few days he will be cured."

"So much the better," said Don Tadeo, feelingly; "I am indeed glad to hear that."

And, crossing his arms upon his broad chest, he resumed his hasty walk about the room. The three men looked at each other, surprised at this stoicism, which to them was unintelligible.

"Will you then abandon Doña Rosario to her ravishers?" Don Gregorio asked, in a reproachful tone.

Don Tadeo darted at him a look charged with such bitter irony, that Don Gregorio quailed beneath it.

"Were the ravishers concealed in the entrails of the earth, I would discover them, be they who they may!" Don Tadeo replied.

"A man is on their track," said Trangoil-Lanec, advancing; "that man is Curumilla. He will discover them."

A flash of joy for a moment shot from the eye of the King of Darkness.

"Oh!" he murmured, with clenched teeth, "beware, Doña Maria, beware!"

He at once had divined the author of the abduction of Rosario.

"What do you intend to do?" said Don Gregorio.

"Nothing, till the return of our scout," he replied, coldly; and then turning towards Valentine, added—"Well, my friend, have you nothing else to announce to me?"

"What leads you to suppose I have not told you all?" said the young man.

"Ah!" Don Tadeo replied, with a melancholy smile, "you know, my friend, that we Spanish Americans, however civilized we may appear, are still semi-barbarians, and, as such, horribly superstitious."

"Well?"

"Well, then, among other follies of the same kind, we place faith in proverbs; and is there not one which somewhere says, that a misfortune never comes singly?"

"Good Heavens! do you take me for a bird of ill omen, Don Tadeo?"

"God forbid, my friend! only search in your memory, I am sure I am not mistaken, and that you have still something else to inform me of."

"Well, you are right, I have other news to announce to you; whether good or bad, I leave you to judge."

"I knew there was something more behind," said Don Tadeo, with a sad smile; "go on, my friend, let us hear this news, I am listening to you."

"Yesterday, as you know, General Bustamente renewed the treaties of peace with the Araucano chiefs."

"He did."

"I cannot tell what fugitive or what scout gave them information of what had taken place here; but by evening they had learnt the defeat and capture of the

General."

"I can understand that; go on."

"A kind of furious madness immediately seemed to possess them, and they held a great war council."

"In which, I suppose, they decided upon breaking the treaties; is not that it?"

"Exactly."

"And most likely determined upon war with us?"

"I suppose so; the four toquis cast the hatchet into the fire, and a supreme toqui was elected in their place."

"Ah! ah!" said Don Tadeo, "and do you know the name of this supreme toqui?"

"Yes; Antinahuel."

"I suspected as much," Don Tadeo cried, angrily; "that man has deceived us. He is a scoundrel only living by cunning, and whose devouring ambition leads him to sacrifice, when occasion offers, the dearest interests, and falsify the most sacred oaths. He has been playing a double game; he feigned to be the partisan of General Bustamente, as he appeared to be ours, building upon our mutual ruin his own fortunes and his future elevation. But he has thrown off the mask too hastily. By heaven! I will inflict a chastisement upon him, of which his compatriots shall preserve the remembrance, and which a century hence shall make them tremble with fear."

"Beware of the ears that, listen to you," said Don Gregorio, directing his attention by a look to the Ulmen, who stood quietly before him.

"Eh! what care I?" Don Tadeo replied, warmly; "if I speak thus, it is because I wish to be heard. I am a Spanish noble, and what my heart thinks my lips give utterance to; the Ulmen is welcome, if it seems good to him, to repeat my words to his chief."

"The Great Eagle of the Whites is unjust towards his son," replied Trangoil-Lanec, in a serious tone; "all Araucanos have not the same heart; Antinahuel is only responsible for his own acts. Trangoil-Lanec is an Ulmen in his tribe; he knows how to present at a council of chiefs: what his eyes see, what his ears hear, his heart forgets, his mouth repeats it not: why should my father address such unkind words to me, who am ready to devote myself to restore to him her he has lost?"

"That is true; I am unjust, chief, I was wrong in speaking so; your heart is true, your tongue is unacquainted with falsehood. Pardon me, and let me clasp your loyal hand in mine."

Trangoil-Lanec pressed warmly the hand Don Tadeo held out to him.

"My father is good," he said; "his heart is at this moment darkened by the great misfortune that has fallen upon him; but let my father be comforted, Trangoil-Lanec will restore the blue-eyed maiden to him."

"Thanks, chief! I accept your offer, you may depend upon my gratitude."

"Trangoil-Lanec does not sell his services, he is repaid when his friends are happy."

"Caramba!" cried Valentine, shaking the hand of the chief with all his might, "you are a worthy man, Trangoil-Lanec—I am proud of being your friend."

Then, turning towards Don Tadeo, he said—"I must bid you farewell, for a time. I confide my brother Louis to your care."

"Why do you leave me?" Don Tadeo asked, warmly.

"I must. I see your heart is breaking, in spite of the incredible efforts you make to appear impassive. I know not the nature of the tie which binds you to the unfortunate girl who has been the victim of an odious crime; but I can see the loss of her is killing you—now, with the assistance of Heaven, I will restore her to you, Don Tadeo; I will, or I will die in the endeavour."

"Don Valentine!" the gentleman exclaimed, strongly moved, "what do you propose to do? your project is wild; I cannot accept such devotion."

"Leave it to me. Caramba! I am a Parisian—that is to say, as obstinate as a mule; and when once an idea, good or bad, has entered into my brain, it has no chance of getting out, I swear to you. I shall only take the time to embrace my poor brother, and set off immediately. Come, chief, let us set ourselves upon the track of the ravishers."

"Let us be gone," said the Ulmen.

Don Tadeo remained for a moment motionless, his eyes fixed upon the young man with a strange expression; a violent conflict appeared to be going on within him; at length nature prevailed, he burst into tears; and, throwing himself into the arms of the Frenchman, he murmured, in a voice choked by grief—

"Valentine! Valentine! restore me my daughter!"

The father had at length revealed himself; the stoicism of the statesman had sunk before paternal love!—But human nature has its limits, beyond which it cannot go; the moral shock which Don Tadeo had received, the immense efforts he had made to conceal it, had completely exhausted his strength, and he sank upon the slabs of the floor like a proud oak struck by thunder. He had fainted. Valentine contemplated him for a moment with pity and grief.

"Poor father!" he said, "take courage, thy child shall be restored to thee!"

And he left the room with hasty steps, followed by Trangoil-Lanec, whilst Don Gregorio, kneeling by his friend, gave him the most earnest and kind attentions for the recovery of his senses.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CURUMILLA.

In order to explain to the reader the miraculous disappearance of Rosario, we are obliged to make a few retrograde steps, and return to Curumilla, at the moment when the Ulmen, after his conversation with Trangoil-Lanec, had thrown himself, like a staunch bloodhound, upon the track of the young girl. Curumilla was a warrior as renowned for his prudence and wisdom in council, as for his bravery in fight. Having crossed the river, he left his horse in the care of a peon who had accompanied him, as it would not only be useless to him, but, still further, because it might even be injurious by betraying his presence by the clatter of its hoofs upon the ground. Indians are expert horsemen, but they are indefatigable walkers. Nature has endowed them with incredible strength of muscles of the legs and hams; and they possess in the highest degree the knowledge of that rising and sinking gymnastic step, which, for some years past, has been introduced into Europe, particularly into France, in the marching of troops. They accomplish with incredible swiftness journeys which horses could hardly perform, always directing their course in a straight line, or as the bird flies, without regard to the difficulties that may arise in their way, no obstacle being sufficient to turn them from their course. This quality renders them particularly formidable to the Spanish Americans, who cannot obtain this facility of locomotion, and who, in time of war, find the redskins always before them at the moment they least expect them, and that almost always at considerable

distances from the spots where, logically, they ought to be.

Curumilla, after having carefully studied the prints made by the ravishers, at once divined the route they had taken, and the place they were bound to. He did not amuse himself with following them, for that would have been losing precious time; on the contrary, he resolved to cut across country, and wait for them at an elbow of the road he was acquainted with, where, at all events, he could ascertain their numbers, and, perhaps, save the young girl. This being determined, the Ulmen set off. He walked for several hours without rest, eye and ear on the watch, trying to penetrate the darkness, and listening patiently to the various noises of the desert. These noises, which are to us white men a dead letter, have for the Indians, who are accustomed to interrogate them, a special signification, in which they are never deceived; they analyse them, they decompose them, and often learn by this means things which their enemies have the greatest interest in concealing from them. However inexplicable this fact may at first appear, it is very simple. There exists no noise in the desert without a cause. The flight of birds, the passage of wild beasts, the rustling of leaves, the rolling of a stone down a ravine, the undulation of high grass, the friction of branches in the woods, are for the Indian valuable indications.

At a certain point with which he was acquainted, Curumilla laid himself down flat on his face, behind a block of rock, and remained motionless among the grass and bushes that bordered the route. He remained thus for more than an hour, without making the least movement. Whoever might have perceived him would have taken him for a dead body. The practised ear of the Indian, ever on the watch, at length caught in the distance the dull sound of the feet of horses and mules upon the dry and sonorous road. This noise grew rapidly nearer, and soon, from his hiding place, he perceived about twenty horsemen passing slowly along in the dark, within two lance lengths of him. The ravishers, emboldened by their numbers, and believing themselves secure from all danger, rode along in perfect security. The Indian raised his head softly, and leaning on his hands, followed them with his anxious eyes, and waited. They passed without seeing him. At some paces behind the troop, a horseman came along, leaving himself carelessly to the measured pace of his horse. His head occasionally sank upon his breast, and his hands had but a feeble hold of the reins. It was evident that this man was asleep in his saddle.

A sudden idea rushed like lightning through Curumilla's brain; gathering himself up, he stiffened the iron muscles of his legs, and, bounding like a tiger, leaped up behind the horseman. Before the latter, surprised by this unexpected attack, had

time to utter a cry, he pressed his throat in such a manner as, for the time, to render him incapable of calling for help. In the twinkling of an eye the horseman was gagged and thrown to the ground: then, securing the horse, Curumilla fastened it to a bush, and returned to his prisoner. The latter, with the stoical and disdainful courage peculiar to the aborigines of America, finding himself conquered, attempted no useless resistance; he looked at his conqueror with a smile of contempt, and waited for him to speak to him.

"Oh!" said Curumilla, who, upon leaning over him, recognised him, "is it you, Joan?"

"Curumilla!" the other replied.

"Hum!" the Ulmen murmured to himself, "I would rather it had been somebody else. What is my brother doing on this path?" he asked.

"Of what consequence is that to my brother?" said the Indian, replying to one question by another.

"We have no time to waste," the chief replied, unsheathing his knife; "let my brother speak."

Joan started; a shudder ran through his limbs at the blue light reflected by the long, sharp blade of the knife.

"The chief can question me," he said, in a husky voice.

"Where is my brother going?"

"To the *toldería* of San Miguel."

"Good! and for what purpose is my brother going there?"

"To place in the hands of the sister of the grand *toqui* a woman whom we have carried off this morning."

"Who ordered you to do so?"

"She whom we are going to meet."

"Who had the direction of this affair?"

"I had."

"Good! where does this woman expect the prisoner?"

"I have told the chief; at the *toldería* of San Miguel."

"In which *casa*?"

"In the last; the one which stands a little apart from the others."

"That is well! Let my brother exchange poncho and hat with me."

The Indian obeyed without a word, and when the exchange was made, Curumilla said—

"I could kill my brother; prudence would even require me to do so, but pity has entered my heart—Joan has wives and children, he is one of the brave warriors of his tribe; if I let him live, will he be grateful?"

The Indian had expected that he was going to die, but these words restored him to hope. He was not a bad man at bottom; the Ulmen knew him well, and was satisfied he would keep his promises.

"My father holds my life in his hands," Joan replied; "if he does not take it today, I shall remain his debtor—I will lay down my life at a sign from him."

"Very well!" said Curumilla, returning his knife to its sheath, "my brother may rise, a chief keeps his word."

The Indian sprang upon his feet, and fervently kissed the hand of the man who had spared him.

"What does my father command?" he asked.

"My brother must repair as fast as possible to the *toldería* which the Huincas name Valdivia. He will seek Don Tadeo, the Great Eagle of the Whites, and relate to him what has passed between us, adding, that I will save the prisoner, or die."

"Is that all?"

"Yes. If the Great Eagle requires the services of my brother, he will place himself without hesitation at his orders. Farewell! May Pillian guide my brother! and let him never forget that I was not willing to take the life that was in my power!"

"Joan will not forget," the Indian replied.

At a sign from Curumilla, he bent down in the high grass, crept along like a serpent, and disappeared in the direction of Valdivia. The chief, without losing an instant, jumped into the saddle and soon joined the little troop, who had continued jogging quietly along, without dreaming of the substitution that had just taken place. It was Curumilla who, while carrying the young girl into the house, had whispered hope and courage. These three words, in announcing to her that she had a friend watching over her, had restored her the strength

necessary for the struggle that awaited her.

After the unexpected arrival of Antinahuel, when, at the order of Doña Maria, Curumilla led away the prisoner, instead of reconducting her to the apartment in which she had been, he threw a poncho over her to disguise her.

"Follow me," he said in a low voice; "step out boldly, I will endeavour to save you."

The maiden hesitated; she was fearful of a snare. The Ulmen comprehended her feeling, and said quickly, in a low voice—

"I am Curumilla, one of the Ulmens devoted to the two Frenchmen, the friends of Don Tadeo."

Rosario startled imperceptibly.

"Go on," she replied in a firm tone; "happen what may, I will follow you."

And they left the hut together. The Indians, dispersed here and there, were busily talking over the events of the day, and did not observe them. The two fugitives proceeded for ten minutes without exchanging a word. The village was soon lost in the darkness; at length Curumilla stopped at a thick clump of cactus, behind which two horses stood, saddled and bridled.

"Does my sister find herself strong enough to mount on horseback, and ride a long distance?" he asked.

"To escape from my persecutors," she replied, in a broken voice, "I feel I have strength to do anything."

"Good!" said Curumilla, "my sister is courageous. Her God will help her!"

"It is in Him alone I place my hope," she said, with a sigh.

"To horse, then, and let us begone! minutes are ages!"

He unfastened the horses, they mounted, and set off at full speed, without any sound being produced upon the road by their hoofs, which Curumilla had covered with pieces of sheepskin. The maiden breathed a sigh of relief on feeling herself once more free, and under the protection of a devoted friend. The fugitives continued to ride at a rapid pace, in a direction diametrically opposite to the one they should have taken to return to Valdivia. Prudence required that they should not yet take any route on which, according to all possibilities, they would be looked for.

We must leave our friends in this critical position for the present; but those readers who feel an interest in the loves of Don Louis and Doña Rosario, will find their curiosity fully satisfied in the following volume of this series, called "The Pearl of the Andes."

THE END.

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