

Kingston William Henry Giles

The Prime Minister



William Kingston
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«Public Domain»

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Having resolved to employ myself, during a prolonged residence in Portugal, in writing some work of fiction on that country, it struck me that the Times of the Marquis of Pombal would afford a good subject, untouched, as it is, by any other author. For a considerable time I delayed commencing my undertaking, almost in despair of finding the necessary materials. I wrote frequently to Lisbon to procure information, and mentioned my purpose to several Portuguese friends, who, at length, put at my disposal all the documents they possess relating to the private history of their families. From them I have composed the following work.

I enjoyed, also, free access to the public Library at Oporto, a magnificent establishment, containing many thousand volumes, in all languages. Nor must I omit to mention the courteous attention I received from Senhor Gandra, the chief Librarian, in aiding me in my search for the works I required. Here I found several valuable volumes, in French and Italian, relating to the administration of the Marquis of Pombal, and the intrigues of the Jesuits; and some, in Portuguese, giving an account of the earthquake.

The Library is established in a large building, formerly the Convent of S. Lazaro, the principal room vying in size and elegance with any of which the first cities in Europe can boast. There are, also, numerous other apartments, occupying the entire floor of the edifice, now crowded with books, which it will take many years to arrange.

My history commences in the summer of 1755, the year of the great earthquake of Lisbon, some time before which period, the weak, bigoted, and profligate King John the Fifth of Portugal, after allowing his country to sink into a state bordering on ruin, had finished his pernicious reign, and worthless life, being succeeded by his son, Joseph the First.

Though in the character of Joseph there appears to have been, in some respects, but a slight improvement over that of his father, he was certainly less superstitious; while he possessed the valuable quality of appreciating the talents of others, which caused him to select as his adviser, Sebastião Joseph de Carvalho, afterwards created Marquis of Pombal, one of the most energetic men his country has ever produced. Carvalho was now at the head of the administration, and had begun that system of reform, (which ended but with his fall from power,) although he had not then succeeded in gaining that implicit confidence of his sovereign which he afterwards possessed. For the particulars of the history and state of the country antecedent to the time I speak of, I refer my readers to the introduction to the “Memoirs of Pombal,” lately published, written by the Secretary to the Marquis of Saldanha, Mr Smith, though in many points I differ from that gentleman in the view he takes of the great Minister’s character and actions.

The Marquis of Saldanha is a descendant of Pombal; and his Secretary has naturally been biassed in favour of his patron’s ancestor. The only book he appears to have consulted, besides the documents in the State Paper Office, is that above-mentioned, which I have before me, in Portuguese, though written originally in French, by an admirer of the Minister. Mr Smith’s work did not reach me at Oporto, until my own manuscript had been forwarded to England; which circumstance I mention, to exonerate myself from any appearance of ingratitude in speaking thus of a person of whose labours I might be supposed to have taken advantage. When any similarity appears, we have drawn from the same source.

To excuse the barbarous executions of some of the first nobility in Portugal, Mr Smith says, that some of equal cruelty have taken place in France and Germany. To show that the complaints made by the victims of the Minister’s iron policy, who crowded the prisons, were unjust, he cites a memoir, in manuscript, written in prison, by the unfortunate Marquis d’Alorna, who, he says, makes querulous

complaints of not having his linen changed sufficiently often, though he had frequent intercourse with his family.

I have perused an exact copy of the MS. Mr Smith has seen, if not the identical one. In it, the unhappy Marquis speaks indignantly of the dark, narrow, and damp cell which was his abode in the Junguiera prison for many years, he being scarcely supplied with the common necessaries of life, while the Marchioness was confined in some other equally wretched place, separated from her children, who were distributed in different convents. The husband states that he received one letter from his wife, written with her left hand, she having lost the use of her right side from a rheumatic complaint, brought on by the dampness of her lodging. A year or so afterwards another reached him, written by holding the pen in her mouth, she having then lost the use of both her hands. This was the sort of free intercourse the Minister allowed, and, it must be remembered, neither were found guilty of any crime. The Marquis mentions the history of many of his fellow-prisoners, several of whom died in prison; and, he states, after some years' confinement, by means of bribes, they were able to obtain some communication with their friends from without. In the body of the work will be found many details from the MSS. I have spoken of.

Mr Smith does not inform his readers, when mentioning the outbreak at Oporto, in consequence of the formation of the obnoxious Wine Company, that not only the wine-sellers rose up in arms, but that the wine-growers, who, it was pretended, were to be benefited, marched into Oporto, and demanded its abolition; nor that, when the troops arrived from Lisbon to quell the revolt, the city was given up to their unbridled license, the chief magistrate and sixteen principal citizens having been executed, while the prisons were crowded with others.

Once established, with its blood-stained charter, a post in the Company was considered one of the most valuable rewards the Minister could bestow for services performed for him, his own immense fortune having been acquired, indirectly, through that very Company. Mr Smith affirms that the wealth to which the Minister's eldest son succeeded was left him by various members of his family; but, as his family were universally known to be poor, such it is difficult to believe was the case. Mr Beckford, in his Diary in Portugal, laughs at the young Count, for having endeavoured, during the whole course of a morning visit, to persuade him that his father had never attempted to amass a fortune. Pombal, on retiring from office, left the treasury rich; but that is no proof that he had not taken care to supply his own chests by any means which he considered justifiable. One can scarcely wonder at his acting as was so generally the custom.

The aim of these Memoirs of Pombal is to throw a halo of glory over his life and actions, of which he was undeserving. The Minister is compared in them, as he was fond of comparing himself, to Sully. I do not make these observations unjustly to depreciate this work; but that I may not be accused of unfairly portraying a man whose really great qualities I duly appreciate; nor have I described him as performing one action that is not well authenticated. I am not a greater friend to the system of the Jesuits than is Mr Smith; but do not wish to abuse them for the sake of exhibiting the Minister in brighter colours.

Pombal, like Napoleon, was never prevented from doing what he considered necessary to forward his own views either political or private, by any laws, human or divine. His motto was, *Quid volo quid jubeo*.

March, 1845.

Volume One – Chapter One

Joyous and sparkling waves were leaping up from the deep blue expanse of the vast Atlantic, as if to welcome a gallant vessel, which glided rapidly onward in all the pride of beauty. Her broad spread of white canvass, extended aloft and aloft, shining brightly in the sunbeams; she looked like a graceful swan, a being of life and instinct, floating on the waste of waters, her head turned towards the coast of fair Lusitania; her bourn, from which she was as yet far distant, being the majestic Tagus. A fresh summer breeze filled her swelling sails, now favouring her like friendship in prosperity, but which would, probably, when the sun sank beneath the ocean, fall away, as friends too often do from those whose sun has set in adversity. A broad white flag emblazoned with the arms of Portugal, floating from her peak, and the long pendants which fluttered from her mastheads, showed that she belonged to the royal navy of that country; and, by the number of guns she carried, she appeared to be a well-armed vessel of her class; but the abundance of gilding and bright paint with which she was in every part decorated, betokened her to be intended more for show or pleasure, than for the rough work of actual service. She was a ship very similar to what we now call a corvette, having a single battery of long heavy guns, and a high-raised deck at the aftermost part, on which was placed an armament of small brass pieces and swivel-guns, with a few pieces of the same calibre on her topgallant-forecastle; so that, although her purposes might in general have been peaceful, she was, if properly manoeuvred, fully able to make a stout resistance against any vessel under the class of a large frigate.

Several persons were walking the deck, one of whom, by the air of undisputed authority which sat well upon him, as he paced the starboard side, was evidently the commander; and near him appeared a young and handsome man in the costume of a civilian; while the rest of the party, who kept respectfully on the opposite side of the ship, were composed of the lieutenants and other officers belonging to her.

The young man had for some time been standing on the break of the poop, leaning over the rail, and eagerly looking out in the direction towards which the ship was bending her course; his thoughts, perhaps, far outstripping his own tardy progress, and rejoicing in the happiness of again meeting parents, kindred, or friends; or it may have been, that some feelings yet more tender occupied his bosom. He was aroused from his reveries, whatever might have been their tenour, by a no very gentle touch on the back; and, turning round, he beheld the captain of the ship. “What, my young friend!” said the latter, in a clear, cheerful tone of voice, “not yet tired of gazing on the dark blue line of the horizon, as if you expected to see the shores of Lusitania leap out of the water by magic, and would fain not miss the first view of our loved home? Well! well! Such is youth, always eager and enthusiastic, fancying itself near its object, though as yet far distant, and, like a young puppy, or a baby, unable to measure distances, till, by constant practice, and by many a fall, it has learned to discover the true situations of objects.”

The speaker was a man who had somewhat passed the meridian of life, his hair already turning grey, and his good-natured, well-formed features considerably furrowed and bronzed by exposure to hot climes and stormy weather.

“What, Senhor Pinto, shall we not see the land to-day?” inquired the youth, in a tone of disappointment. “I thought we were close to it, and have been looking out for it all the morning.”

“So I have observed,” answered the Captain, “but was unwilling to break down unnecessarily all those castles in the air which I saw you so busily occupied in building; however, I must now tell you that, from the thick weather and fogs which have for so many days attended us, we are rather out of our reckoning; and it was early this morning we discovered, by an observation, that we are yet considerably to the northward of our latitude.”

“How tantalising!” returned the youth. “I had hoped that by this hour to-morrow we should have been safely moored in the Tagus.”

“Hope! Ah, ’tis a feeling in which youth may sometimes indulge with advantage, as it oft carries him through difficulties and disappointments, on his first setting out on the voyage of life, which might otherwise have made him turn back into harbour; but it often, too, proves a sad *ignis fatuus*, and, like a false light to the mariner, leads him on to quicksands and rocks, where it leaves him in the lurch. Now, an old sailor like myself is not to be deceived; and it is long since I gave up hoping; consequently, I am never led astray by such false lights. I find the surest way of being contented is, never to expect anything, and I then can never be disappointed, but receive as a Godsend, and be thankful for, each piece of luck that falls in my way. That is what I call philosophy.”

“But, my dear sir!” returned the other, with animation, “you thus stifle one of the most noble, the most glorious principles of our nature, the very mainspring of our actions, without which we should weakly yield to the first blast of misfortune which assailed us; it supports the lover in his long absence from his mistress, the prisoner in his dungeon, the mother watching o’er her child, the sick man on his bed of suffering: ’twas hope which a kind Heaven bestowed on man when sin and death were introduced into the world, to prevent his sinking into abject dejection. Take all else from me, but teach me not to cease to hope.”

“Nay, nay, my dear Don Luis, you misunderstand me; I would not deprive you of that which you so warmly cherish on any account,” returned Captain Pinto; “I wish merely to warn you that the object of your hopes may be like one of those beautiful islands we used to hear of, covered with glittering temples and palaces of crystal, but with which no cruiser ever came up, though some have sailed half round the globe, thinking each day they must drop an anchor in one of their tempting harbours. I’ve seen such sights in my time, but I never altered my course for them, and never intend to do so.”

“Ah, you can never, then, have experienced the glowing, eager sensation of hope almost accomplished,” exclaimed Don Luis earnestly, “when a few more days or hours will place the longed-for object within your power.”

“Pardon me, but I have though,” interrupted Captain Pinto; “but that was years ago, and I then found that the picture I had conjured up always far surpassed the reality. You forget that I too was once young, and experienced all the sensations in which you now rejoice; but it is age which has taught me how fallacious they are, and I can no more be deceived by them. Now, I dare say you, in your heart, think me a sullen old fellow, who delights in conjuring up in the horizon dark clouds, to overcast the bright blue sky under which you bask; but you must remember I am an old seaman, who have spent the best half of a century on the troubled ocean in all seas and climes, and that, like a good master, I would teach you to be prepared for the tempests and rough seas you must encounter, and to avoid the hidden rocks and sandbanks which lie in your course.”

“Thanks, thanks, my good sir; I understand your motives,” answered Don Luis; “but I confess that I would rather you should not now darken my horizon with either false or real clouds: it is too temptingly bright and beautiful not to wish it so to remain.”

“Well, I will give you no more lessons to-day,” answered Captain Pinto; “you have had as much as you can bear at one time; for I fear that you are no very apt scholar. But to show you the advantage of not hoping and fretting yourself to death for what there is little chance of obtaining, here am I, upwards of fifty, a hale hearty fellow, though I have only just now got the command of this little toy of a nutshell, with which I am as contented as if I was captain of a line-of-battle ship, and think myself very fortunate to have her; for if that great man Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho had not become one of the King’s ministers, I should still have been an humble second lieutenant, and might have continued so to the end of my days. How, indeed, could I expect to rise in times of peace, with no friends at Court, no money to bribe, and though I am noble,” the old man drew himself up proudly as he spoke, – “for otherwise I should not presume to be on such intimate terms with you, Senhor Don Luis, – yet, I am not, I confess, of the Puritano families, who have hitherto monopolised everything, but Carvalho is biassed by no such considerations; he is no friend to the Puritanos; he selects men for

their merit alone, and some of that he may, I flatter myself, have discovered in me; at all events, I may boast he knew I would serve my country faithfully.”

“Of that I have no doubt, my friend,” answered Don Luis, who had been listening to the old officer’s long speech with some impatience, which, however, he endeavoured to conceal. “But can you tell me *how* soon we shall reach the Tagus?”

“Ah, there again, ever anxious for the morrow? Ha, ha! there is some greater magnetic attraction drawing your soul towards Lisbon, beyond the mere natural wish of embracing your parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, a whole host of cousins, and other relations and friends; for people don’t mind deferring that pleasure for a few days. Come, come, there is some fair lady in the case. I know it. Confess, confess I have hit it. Donna Theresa d’Alorna, for instance; the beauty of Portugal; the pride of the province; the toast of Lisbon; at whose feet kneel daily all the gay and gallant youths of the country to do homage to her charms? ’Tis said that even the king himself has become captive to her beauty, though that is only whispered; but the lady is scornful, it seems, and treats all alike with cruelty and disdain. There is no calculating the mischief she has committed: half-a-score of duels have been fought about her; one youth drowned himself in the Tagus, but was fished up before he was quite dead, the water having cooled his love; another was going to hang himself, but prudently informed a venerable aunt of his intention, who prevented him; and a third put a pistol to his head, but the weapon, like his skull, having no contents, he escaped destruction. I do not know what you will do when you have gazed on her charms; but I trust that if she treats you as she has other admirers, you will bring some of your hope into play, and seek a kinder mistress.”

While Captain Pinto was speaking, the countenance of the youth alternately betrayed anxiety, fear, and anger; but as no expression had been uttered at which he could possibly cavil, he was obliged to listen in silence to a discourse, every word of which was, to his sensitive feelings, like vinegar poured on a wound. His torturer kept his eye fixed on him all the time, watching each movement of his features as a skilful surgeon feels the pulse of his patient during a painful operation. “Yes, your unconquerable hope will stand you in good stead,” he proceeded to say. “And yet the love of Donna Theresa were, by all accounts, a proud thing to boast of – more valued from the difficulty of obtaining it.”

“How know you that I love her?” exclaimed Don Luis, suddenly: “I thought that secret hidden within my own bosom.”

“Think you that you could have sailed so many days with me, Jozé Pinto, and I not discover the inmost secrets of your soul? Why, every scrap of paper with which the cabin has been strewed, covered with rhymes, has had her name inscribed on it; in your dreams, as you swung in your cot, even during the fiercest gale, you spoke but of her. I have heard it whispered in the calm night breeze which brought back your sighs, and I’ll wager ’tis graven indelibly on every mast of my ship.”

“You treat me severely, Captain Pinto,” answered Don Luis. “Although I may in my sleep have uttered that name so dear to me, which I have always held sacred, for I will not deny my affection; and though I may have written it on some paper which has escaped from my portfolio, yet I have not converted your masts into shrines sacred to love: they are not honoured by being marked with that name.”

“Well, then, I will confess I was but trying you,” answered Captain Pinto; “I will acquit you of ever allowing even a scrap of paper with Donna Theresa’s name on it to escape from your portfolio, or of ever having uttered it, to my knowledge, in your dreams, for I am not addicted to remaining awake when once I turn into my cot; indeed I knew not the lady of your affections till this minute, when I, by hazard, mentioned her name, and you owned your secret, though I long ago discovered your heart was not as free as I could wish it; but, seriously speaking, my young friend, I would have you think earnestly of what I have said, though my words sounded jokingly, and it may prove a valuable lesson to you. I will not breathe a word against Donna Theresa in particular; but remember numbers surround her, offering up daily incense of sighs and flattery, so that it were madness to confide too much in

her constancy, or that of any woman so situated, and two years work great changes in the feelings of all. Come now, try to suppose her heartless and inconstant: 'tis better than being too sanguine; and I should grieve to see your heart breaking through disappointed love.”

“To believe her heartless is impossible,” exclaimed Don Luis. “Though, on my word, you seem anxious to shake my confidence in her sex in general.”

“O, no,” answered the Captain, laughing, or rather, it might be said, chuckling: “some are perfect angels – till you know them.”

Don Luis did not answer, though he could scarce avoid being angry with his friend for his preventive cauterisation, although the wound did not smart the less severely for its being well intended; and at that moment some necessary duty of the ship called Captain Pinto from his side, who, as he left him, muttered, “Poor youth, poor youth, if he persist in trusting to the love of such an one as Donna Theresa, he will be sadly disappointed!” Don Luis was left to pursue undisturbed the no very pleasant meditations to which his late conversation had given rise.

That our readers may no longer be in suspense as to whence the ship we have described came, we may inform them that she was a man-of-war, belonging to the crown of Portugal, though fitted up as a yacht; that she was now returning from the shores of England, whither she had conveyed an ambassador from His Most Faithful Majesty to the Court of London, and that the young Don Luis d’Almeida, who had, for some time past, been travelling in that country, after having made the tour of Europe, had taken advantage of the opportunity of returning in her to his native land.

The father of Don Luis, the Conde d’Almeida, was a noble of the purest blood, and one of the most ancient families of Portugal; but their fortune had been much reduced through the improvidence of some of the latter possessors of the title, their honour preventing them from employing any of those unjust, or at best doubtful means which others of their rank did not scruple to use to increase their wealth, and their pride forbidding them to engage in any mercantile speculations, a prejudice less general in the present day than at that time, and one above which even the Conde d’Almeida could not be expected to rise.

The Count had several brothers, who died childless; the youngest, and by far the most talented, having during the former reign been banished, for some political crime it was said, when the ship which conveyed the young and audacious advocate of civil and religious liberty was, with all her crew, overwhelmed by the waves, “a just punishment, doubtless, for his daring and impiety,” observed the pious King John’s confessor, when the news was brought home: there was also one sister, who had married the Marquis d’Alorna, and, dying young, left her only child without a mother’s fostering care and protection, the lovely Donna Theresa, who had, as we have seen, won the early affections of her cousin, Don Luis.

The Count, a man of an enlightened mind, had devoted himself to the education of his only son, who had imbibed from him all his sentiments of honour and virtue, with the same true pride of ancestry which made him incapable of committing any deed derogatory to the dignity of his lofty birth. Such was the young noble we have introduced to our readers, firm in principle, enthusiastic in temperament, eager in pursuit of his aims, with a candour and want of suspicion in his manner which appeared to arise from ignorance of the world, but was rather the result of the secluded and strict system of education he had undergone, which had kept him unacquainted with the vices of society till his principles had been formed to guard against them, nor had it prevented him from acquiring a clear insight into the characters of men, when once he began his career amongst them. The plan pursued in his education we deem, in most cases, to be a very dangerous one, when a young mind is plunged unprepared to combat with the follies and vices of the world; but he, fortunately, at once became disgusted with them, and learned to dread their glittering temptations, as the mariner does the light sparkling froth which, on the calm blue sea, plays over the hidden sandbank. In person he was of good height, and well-formed; of the most polished and graceful address; his bright dark eye

sparkling with animation, or flashing with anger; his voice of rich and clear melody, so that under no disguise could he have appeared otherwise than a gentleman.

Captain Pinto has already, in a few words, given as much of his own history as we are acquainted with, and though his personal appearance had not the stamp of nobility impressed on it, his features betokened a kind disposition, (for we are great physiognomists,) notwithstanding that he had lately given utterance to some observations which sounded rather sour and morose; but he had spoken with the best intentions, thinking that some advice was necessary to check the too ardent hopes of his young friend, and having his reasons perhaps for supposing he might be deceived. But it is high time that we should return to our narrative.

The sails were now trimmed to meet a slight variation in the wind, which blew less steadily than in the morning, and that duty being completed, the captain resumed his walk by the side of Don Luis, whose feelings of annoyance had by this time completely subsided; indeed, to his generous disposition, it was impossible to continue angry any length of time, with one who evidently took a warm interest in his welfare. "Now, my young friend," observed the worthy commander, after taking several turns in silence, "you will soon be convinced of the advantage of being prepared for disappointment," at the same time pointing to some small dark clouds rising right ahead from the horizon. "Look at those black heralds of strife and tumult, not of the puny strife of men, but of the majestic rage and fury of the elements. A few minutes ago you were felicitating yourself in the fond anticipations of meeting those dear to you before to-morrow has closed, or at the furthest on the following day, and with the fair fresh breeze and smooth sea we were enjoying, you had every reason for your hopes; and now behold how suddenly they may be blasted; for if an old seaman's prognostications are not false, we shall have before long a stiff gale directly in our teeth, and then, farewell to our friends in Lisbon for a week at the shortest calculation! That is no gentle summer gale brewing away to the south-east. See how quickly the clouds gather, and what a thick heavy bank they form, resting like a high land on the sea."

"I should be ungrateful if I were to grumble at the prospect of remaining a week or so longer under your kind care," returned Don Luis; "but I confess that I did hope to arrive in a much shorter period at Lisbon."

"I know you did, I know you did," said the Captain. "Very natural it was for you to do so; and I should think that, long ere this, you must have become heartily tired of the society of an old fellow like myself, – though I have seen something to talk about in my ramblings through the world."

Don Luis, with sincerity, protested that he had passed the time on board most agreeably.

"Well, I trust you have not found me wanting in hospitality, at all events," continued the old officer, "though you have full right to complain of our long voyage; but let me tell you, we have had, for this time of the year, most unusual weather; first, the heavy gales we experienced; then the thick heavy fogs, which hung like funereal palls over the face of the deep; next the smooth sea and sudden favourable breeze, which seems, however, inclined to play us a jade's trick, and leave us in the lurch; and now those threatening clouds away there to the south-east. That is not the quarter from whence gales generally spring up off this coast; but if those clouds don't hold a very large capful of wind, I am very much mistaken. During the whole course of my life I never met such unnatural weather, and I don't like the look of it. Depend on it there's something strange going to happen, though I would not say so to the crew, or to the women, if we had any on board, and thank Heaven we have not."

The officer who had charge of the navigation of the ship, who in the English service is called the master, more correctly denominated by the Portuguese the pilot, at that moment came up to the captain, taking off his hat respectfully, as he pointed out the dark clouds in the horizon. "We shall have a gale before long, Senhor Captain," said the veteran, who was a fine specimen of the sailor of times long, alas! passed by in the annals of Portugal, during her palmy days of naval supremacy. "Twill be a breeze which will make us look sharp after our sticks. Shall we begin to get in some of our light canvass; for I like not the look of the weather. There is a storm out there, muttering ugly threats, from which 'twere wiser to take warning."

“You are right, Senhor Nunez,” answered the Captain. “Those are signs of a gale, or we have been to sea for a century between us to very little purpose; but there is no immediate necessity to shorten sail, so we may as well not lose the advantage of the breeze, while it lasts, to make as much way good in our voyage as we can; for we shall probably, before long, be blown far enough from our course to weary us with beating up to our port once more.”

“As you think fit, Senhor, but it will be down on us without much further warning,” observed the pilot, as he kept his glance towards the south-east.

The officers continued walking the deck, but their conversation was short and disjointed; their eyes constantly glancing round the horizon in search of further signs of the coming storm; yet, notwithstanding the prognostications of the commander and the pilot, the breeze held tolerably steady, only shifting now and then half a point or so, which required a corresponding attention in trimming sails, so as not to deviate from their course.

“Ah, Captain Pinto,” exclaimed Don Luis, with a smile on his lips, “I trust that this once, at least, my hopes rather than your forebodings may be realised; see, the breeze is still our friend, nor does it seem inclined to desert us, and perhaps, after all our fears, yonder mass may prove but a fog bank, through which we may quickly cleave our way.”

“Still sanguine, and expecting better fortune than will probably fall to our lot? But, although your hopes are bright, I am not to be deceived by any treacherous appearances. Even while you have been speaking the breeze has fallen; look over the side, and observe the ship makes much less way through the water than she did a few minutes ago; and see her wake, for how short a distance does the foamy line extend ere the waves obliterate all signs of it! Mark me, the breeze, like hollow friends, will soon desert us. Ah! said I not true? The words have scarcely passed my lips ere my predictions are fulfilled.”

As he spoke, the sails gave one loud flap against the mast, though they again bulged out as the last effort of the dying breeze once more filled them. In a moment the commander was all life and animation. “In all studding sails, Senhor Alvez,” he shouted to his first lieutenant. “They are like officious friends, and do us more harm than benefit.”

“All hands, shorten sail,” was echoed through the ship, as the sailors sprung with alacrity on deck.

“Be quick, my men, be quick! There’s no time to lose! – Man your downhauls! – Let fly your gear!” shouted the Captain, through his speaking-trumpet; and in a minute the light, airy canvass, before extended like wings on each side of the larger sails, was taken into the tops, or hauled down on deck. “Hand the royals, Senhor Alvez,” cried the commander again. “Furl topgallant-sails, and down with the royal and topgallant-yards!” he quickly added. “We may as well relieve the craft of all top-hammer: she’ll dance all the lighter for it.”

These orders were quickly accomplished by a ready and active crew, who sprung aloft with all the activity, and somewhat of the chattering, of monkeys; for, in those times, the strict discipline and regularity of the present day were not observed in any service, and silence was not considered a necessary part of duty. Scarcely had the men returned on deck, when they were again ordered aloft, although it had now fallen a complete calm, the vessel rolling on the long smooth swell which seemed to rise without any impelling power, like the breathing of some vast giant in his sleep. The sun, now sinking rapidly in the ocean, still shone with dazzling brightness, from a dark blue sky yet unclouded in that part of the heavens in which his course lay. The sails flapped lazily against the masts, with a dull sound like a distant cannonade, the timbers creaked, and the water splashed, as she slowly rolled from side to side, the bubbles of foam sparkling brightly around the black and shining wales.

“Hand the courses – brail up the mizen!” suddenly shouted the Captain; for in those days the last-mentioned sail was carried, – a large unwieldy latteen-sail, with a long heavy yard, requiring a strong force of the crew to hand, instead of that which we now call a spanker. After much hauling and labour, the order was accomplished. “Close reef and furl the topsails!” he added; “we will show

naked sticks to yonder blast, and may then laugh at its efforts! There is no use running the chance of having our canvass blown out of the bolt-ropes.”

In a few minutes the towering pillar of canvass had disappeared; and the ship, under bare poles, rocked like a cradle on the ocean, without advancing an inch in her course; the helm, too, having lost all its guiding power, her head moved slowly about, as if uncertain of its way. The atmosphere, which in the morning had been so brisk and light, became loaded and oppressive to the feelings; but as yet no breath even of the adverse blast was felt. A thick haze was collecting round the disk of the sun, which had now assumed an angry, fiery hue, – its size many times increased from its ordinary appearance; and, as it sank into the ocean, the fierce glowing blaze of the western sky, tinged with its light the borders of the approaching mass of clouds.

“Seldom have I seen the sun set in so hot a passion,” observed the Captain to Don Luis. “He does it in kindness, however, to warn us that we shall be wishing for his light again before he can possibly appear to aid us.”

Onward came the frowning mass of clouds, with their light, fiery *avant couriers*; and, as the shades of night were fast throwing a dark mantle over the ocean, suddenly, without a moment’s warning, a fierce squall struck the ship, turning her head rapidly round, the water hissing and foaming about her bows. For a few moments again all was calm, – the angry breath, which had blown, seeming but some sudden ebullition of the spirit of the tempest, and to have passed in forgetfulness away. Yet treachery lurked beneath that tranquil air. Down came the blast with no second notice – strong and furious – driving onward before it the light and buoyant corvette. Away she flew over the milk-white ocean, like a sea-bird in search of its finny prey, now dipping her head into the trough of the fast-rising sea, then again ascending, and shaking it, to free herself from the sheets of spray which dashed around her.

“You see, my friend,” said Captain Pinto, touching Don Luis on the arm, “that my forebodings, as you called them, have turned out truer than your hopes. A few hours ago you were looking out ahead for land, and now how things have changed! There lies the land right over the taffrail, or a little on the larboard-quarter; for this gale has come from the south east, and here are we doomed to beat about, like the Flying Dutchman, before our port, without a chance of reaching it. But patience! it is a fine wind for outward-bound ships, and we must be content to be the sufferers.” He then beckoned the pilot to his side. “What say you, Senhor Nunez, shall we heave the ship to? There is no use running away from our course.”

“We may heave to the ship, if we like,” replied the old seaman; “but I much doubt if we have any canvass on board to keep her there: she would bear it if we made sail; though I suspect the wind would soon take it in for us. If I might advise, we will run on before it while it lasts; for I do not think, by the way it came on, it will hold long; and then there will be less risk of damaging the ship.”

“Let it be so, Senhor Nunez,” answered the Captain. “Such, also, is my opinion. A gale like this is not to be played with, if one would keep one’s gear in condition.”

The waves were not as yet running very high, but were short and broken, tossing up their thin foam-covered crests with sudden, quick, and angry jerks, seeming to excite each other to fury as they vied in their maddening leaps. The sky had become of one dark hue, the thick mist flying rapidly over it; and the sea, when perceived under the frothy sheet which covered it, had assumed a cold, leaden colour. It would have been a sad and dreary prospect to the seamen, with their long night-watch before them, had not custom reconciled them to their hard lot, and caused them to be insensible to the dangers they encountered. Everything was made snug on board; and, steady men being placed at the wheel, the captain, followed by Don Luis, retired unconcernedly to his cabin, desiring to be called, if any change took place. Such was the state of affairs, as the almost impenetrable shades of night fell over the face of the ocean, while onward dashed the ship into the dark unknown expanse, like a man plunging, by his own intent, into the unexplored future of another world.

Volume One – Chapter Two

It was yet some hours before dawn. The gale had rather increased than lessened in fury, the corvette, with all her canvass closely furled, was driving impetuously before it, the wind whistled and howled through the rigging; the waves, now rising in mountainous billows, dashed high in wild confusion, and, rolling towards her, seemed, with savage intent, about to overwhelm her; but, proudly holding her course, she rushed through them unharmed. At intervals, too, flashes of lightning darted from the overcharged clouds, lighting up the scene again to leave the mighty void in greater obscurity than before.

At a moment when the heavens had emitted a flash longer continued and brighter than usual, a loud cry from the look-out men ahead was heard. “A sail ahead! Starboard! hard-a-starboard! or we shall be into her!” was passed along the decks with startling rapidity, and there was scarce time for the vessel to answer the helm, before the lofty masts and spars of a ship were seen towering to the sky, so close on board them, that the corvette seemed to graze her yards, as they flew by her like lightning. The stranger seemed, by the glance they had of her, to be a large ship, hove to on the starboard tack, under a close reefed main-topsail.

The old pilot, who had just come on deck to relieve the second lieutenant from his watch, gazed earnestly towards the void in which she had disappeared, as if he would penetrate its thick curtain of darkness, and shook his head as he observed, “I like not thus to meet a bark such as that we have just passed. She is an omen of death and destruction to some who float on these seas; and if she was built in any known port, I am very much mistaken.”

“What, Senhor Nunez! do you not take her for a real ship?” asked the second lieutenant. “For my own part, by her appearance, I had no doubt of it, and I felt my heart beat all the lighter when we were clear of her; now, if she were a phantom, as you seem to say, we should have gone clean through without any damage.”

“That comes of trusting to your new-fangled philosophy, instead of putting faith in the signs Heaven sends us to warn us of danger,” answered the pilot. “Not that I mean to say there was anything holy in yonder bark; but Heaven often permits evil spirits to work out its own purposes, for which she may perhaps be allowed to wander on this stormy ocean. I have not doubled the Cape for the last fifty years without seeing such sights as would make your hair stand on end, and your heart sink within you.”

“Well, well, I will not now dispute the point with you,” responded the young officer, “you are an older man by many years than I am, and of course have seen many more wonderful things; but we will discuss the subject some day when I can manage to keep my eyes open, which I can now scarcely do; however, ought I not, before I turn in, to let the captain know what we have seen?”

“Do as you like; but it will be rousing him up to little purpose,” said the old man. “The chances are, that the next time we see her, she will be right ahead, with all her canvass set, coming down upon us.”

The lieutenant was just descending to the main-deck, when at that instant a cry of surprise from one of the young midshipmen arrested him, and the stranger was perceived dashing after them, as she emerged from the obscurity, her white canvass gleaming brightly, as it reflected the flashes of lightning. He hastened down to call the captain, who, at the first summons, rushed on deck, where he was soon joined by his young passenger.

“I did not expect to see yonder stranger where he now is,” said the pilot, as, the captain joining him on the poop, he pointed out the phantom-looking ship; “and, for the life of me, I cannot make him out; but I think no good of him. He is more likely to be a foe than a friend to any mortal cruisers.”

“Whether he be friend or foe, he seems at all events in a great hurry to speak us,” exclaimed the Captain; “but methinks his speaking-trumpets will not be of much avail in a hurricane like this;

why, the spirit of the storm laughs all human efforts to naught; and I should have thought he could scarcely have distinguished our bare poles through this inky darkness.”

“Those on board her don’t require any night glasses to see their prey,” said the old Pilot, gloomily; “they scent it from afar, as the vulture does a carcass.”

“Whether he can see us or not, here he comes,” shouted the Captain. “Beat to quarters – we will be prepared for him. Topmen, ready aloft. We will make sail, if necessary,” he added, turning to Senhor Nunez; “but he is, probably, one of our fire-eating friends, an Englishman, who will never let a ship on the high seas escape their scrutiny, in the hopes of finding an enemy worth engaging.”

“I don’t think he belongs to any nation that carries a flag,” answered Senhor Nunez, piously crossing himself, “and I have been vowing two wax candles to our Lady of Belem, to be bought out of my arrears of pay, if she will shield us from all the powers of darkness.”

“Our blessed Lady protect us from such!” said the Captain; “but I think we shall have none but mortal enemies to contend with in yonder ship.”

The men, in the meantime, went steadily to their quarters; and now that there was considerable danger to be incurred, their tongues were kept in silence, their ears ready to catch any orders that might follow, though they fully shared in the old pilot’s ideas as to the supernatural character of the ship in sight.

“Let every alternate gun be run out on the starboard side, Senhor Alvez,” said the Captain; “we cannot fight our entire battery in a sea like this; and a few well-handled guns will do more work than a whole broadside ill served; but I do not surmise we shall be brought to that pass. She will scarcely wish to fight us, and I have no intention of attacking her till I know what she is.”

This disposition of the crew took some little time to make, as there was danger, as well as difficulty, in putting the guns in fighting order. “Keep her edging away to the south,” he added, to the quarter-master, who was conning the ship; “we will endeavour to keep our friend on the starboard side.”

The order was scarcely given, when the stranger, ranging up on the starboard quarter, a voice from her fore-castle hailed them; but the loud roaring of the blast, and dashing of the waves, drowned all distinctions of sounds, and before Captain Pinto, seizing his speaking-trumpet, had time to answer, a shot from her bow gun whistled over their heads, followed by six or eight others, as she ranged alongside; but, flying high, they did little damage.

“Ah! our friend has taken the tone of his temper to-night from the weather, and is rather inclined for strife; but we will show him, whoever he is, that he has caught a Tartar. Fire! my men, fire!” cried the Captain, “and aim low; he deserves some punishment for not making more polite inquiries respecting our health before he began the engagement, as a gentleman should do.” The order was obeyed with alacrity, two or three of the shot seeming to take effect on the hull of their adversary: for, by the bright flashes of the guns, some white spots were perceptible on her bulwarks, which might have convinced others less determinately superstitious, of her substantial nature.

“Topmen aloft, and make sail!” shouted the Captain, through his speaking-trumpet; “we will fight this daring stranger to every advantage; for it will not do to allow him to haul across our bows, as he seems to have some intention of doing, even at great risk to himself. At all events, he is not a person to be trifled with.”

The fore and main-topsails, closely-reefed, were now let fall, and, with great exertion, extended to their yard-arms; the two ships being thus on an equality of sailing, continued to run side by side, exchanging every now and then strong and noisy proofs of their vicinity, by an irregular discharge of their guns, as they could be brought to bear in the heavy sea that was running, and as they gained a momentary glance of each other. It was fearful thus fighting amid darkness on the raging ocean, which, of itself, afforded dangers sufficient to encounter; yet ’twas a scene which made the heart of Don Luis throb with wild excitement, such as he had never before experienced – the howling of the tempest, the muttered growls of the thunder, the roar of the guns, their bright flashes, and the forked

lightning, which played around the masts of the ships, as if to remind them that they were liable to destruction from a far greater Power than that of which their own mortal efforts were capable. As yet the guns of the enemy had done no more damage than cutting some of the running rigging; but it was impossible to say what mischief those of the corvette had inflicted in retaliation, though, from the pertinacity of her opponent, it was supposed to have been but slight.

“If yonder ship does not carry the devil and a whole host of his imps on board, she must be an Englishman,” said the old Pilot, coming up to the captain’s side; “for no other mortals would have dreamed of engaging in a night like this, and she must fancy that she has got alongside a Frenchman: there’s no doubt of it.”

“I know not of what nation he is, though I am pretty certain of his mortal qualities,” answered the Captain. “But if he is an Englishman, I wish we could find some way of letting him know we are friends, for he will not leave us till he has either sunk us or blown us out of the water, if we cannot manage to treat him in the same way.”

“Where is the enemy? Where is the skulking foe?” was echoed along the decks by some of the crew; for since the last discharge of her guns their opponent had disappeared in the impenetrable darkness which surrounded them, increased by a thick mist, which came driving past; while others exclaimed, “Holy Virgin, that was no mortal bark! Ah, she has vanished as suddenly as she appeared! May the saints protect us, and gain us forgiveness for our sins; for we have been fighting with the powers of darkness?”

“That fellow is no Englishman, or he would not for a moment have lost sight of us, if he thought us an enemy,” cried the Captain. “No, no, I know those haughty islanders too well. He is some Frenchman, perhaps, who, from the few guns we used, mistakes us for a smaller vessel of the foe, and will be down again upon us directly. We must fight our whole broadside, Senhor Alvez, at every risk, to undeceive him as to our size; and we will take care that he does not run away from us, whoever he may be.”

“If we were to sail on till doomsday we should never come up with him, were he to seek to avoid us,” muttered the old Pilot, as he gazed earnestly towards the spot where the ship was last seen.

The first lieutenant descended to the main-deck, to see the orders executed: the guns were then loaded and run out, a most perilous undertaking; for the sea rushed through the open ports each roll the ship made, flooding the decks, almost filling the guns, wetting the ammunition, and extinguishing the matches. The seamen, frequently up to their knees in water, were exposed to the danger of the guns breaking loose, an accident which did indeed occur more than once; but, encouraged by their officers, they perseveringly retained their stations. Once, indeed, the dangers and horrors of the terrific scene overcame the courage of some, and they showed symptoms of abandoning themselves to despair, calling on the Virgin and all the saints to aid them; but the gallant Captain Pinto, followed by Don Luis and some of the other officers, rushed among them, so earnestly encouraging them to do their duty, both by words and gestures, that they promised to fight to the last gasp, and sink with their colours flying.

Don Luis returned with the captain to the poop, offering to take charge of some of the small brass guns and swivels, should they come to closer quarters.

During this state of doubt and uncertainty, every instant seemed an hour; for no one could tell when they might again be engaged, or what might be the issue of the combat with an adversary which was equal to, if not larger than their own vessel. As the thick mist we have spoken of flew past them, the dim outline of the foe was again distinguished by some of the keenest eyes on board, still in the same relative position in which they had last seen her, and by her movements she evidently had them in sight, but seemed disinclined to renew the engagement.

“Give him a shot for the honour of Portugal,” shouted the Captain. “We will convince him that we, at all events, are perfectly ready to fight.”

The order was immediately obeyed; but the stranger took not the slightest notice of the challenge.

“We will near him, to discover, if possible, who he is. Port your helm a little. That will do, we shall soon edge down to him.”

A few minutes, however, convinced him that the enemy had no intention of meeting at nearer quarters; for, no sooner did she perceive the aim of the Portuguese, than she altered her course in the same degree that they had done; and it may easily be understood that, in so high a sea and strong a wind, it was very difficult, except by the consent of both parties, to approach each other without imminent danger to her who should most deviate from her course.

Hours passed on, the mysterious and phantom-looking bark still hovering in the same direction; and thus, like two wild horses scouring along the plains of Tartary, did the two ships continue, now dashing with fierce impetuosity into the boiling cauldron, then rising again, and springing forward, in their mad career, over the very summits of the froth-crested billows. Had not the crew of the corvette had clear proofs that the stranger was, like their own craft, composed of substantial timber, and her guns served by mortal hands, they would have been more convinced than ever that she was one of those phantom barks which were believed to scour the ocean in heavy gales, as a warning to the mariner of approaching destruction; and even the less superstitious might have fancied her, by some optical delusion, the reflection of their own ship upon the dark mist which surrounded them, so regularly did she imitate all their movements. Thus the night wore on, the men almost sinking with fatigue at their guns; for they were obliged to be every moment on the watch to prevent their being overturned; nor could they venture to secure them, lest the enemy should bear down upon them, and find them unprepared to meet her.

“I see the aim of him who commands yonder ship,” exclaimed Captain Pinto, after examining the stranger attentively through his glass. “He hopes to weary us out, and then to run us on board; but we will be even with him: or perhaps he is wisely waiting to discover whether we are friends or foes before he expends any more powder and shot. Secure the guns and close the ports, Senhor Alvez, and let the men take some rest. He is not likely to wish to attack us again before daylight, and we must take care to be up before him; or, if he tries to near us before then, we must pay him the same compliment that he just now did us, and get out of his way.”

The men were glad enough to secure the guns; but it was a time of too much anxiety and excitement for any to quit the deck, where they remained, filling each other’s ears with marvellous legends of mysterious barks which their friends, in like situations, had beheld, and which had melted away like thin mist when the first grey tints of morn appeared. At length the wished-for dawn began gradually to dissipate the terrific obscurity of the night, and all doubts as to the reality of the stranger bark were removed by perceiving her still broad on their beam under her two closely-reefed topsails. The wild confusion which reigned supreme on the waste of waters was rather magnified by the dim uncertain light of morning: the waves, with foaming crests, leaping madly around, the thick misty clouds flying rapidly along, one lawyer, as it were, above the other, through which not a ray of the sun’s beams could escape to cheer the voyagers – all was cold, dreary, and threatening. The gale, too, which had given promise of falling during the latter hours of the night, now again, as if recovering strength with the returning day, increased with such sudden fury, that, before any warning was given, the main-topsail was blown clear off the bolt-ropes, rent into a thousand shreds, with a loud report like a near clap of thunder, and, flying over the fore-topsail-yard, was carried far out of sight ahead.

“Get a new main-topsail on deck,” shouted the Commander, in momentary expectation of seeing the fore-topsail share the same fate; “we must not be without our wings with yonder stranger in our neighbourhood,” he added, turning to Don Luis. “These are the variations of a sea-life, my young friend, – a day of sunshine and calm, and two of clouds and tempest.”

“Away aloft, and bend the new sail,” cried the Captain, after a minute’s silence. “The enemy keeps steadily on her course, as if there were no such beings as ourselves in existence.”

By the time that the fresh topsail was got aloft, and bent to the yard by the willing seamen, broad daylight was on the world of waters.

“Hoist our colours, and let him know who we are,” exclaimed the Captain; but when the flag of Portugal blew wildly from the peak, no answering signal was made by the stranger, though, being not a mile distant, he must clearly have perceived it.

“He suspects those are not our true colours,” observed the first Lieutenant.

“Whether he does or does not, see he is edging down towards us again, to make us out more clearly,” said Captain Pinto. “Beat to quarters; should he prove no friend, which I much doubt, we will be prepared for him.” As he spoke, a small ball was seen to ascend to the peak of the stranger, and the blue banner of Morocco, with its crescent emblem, flew out in a broad sheet to the blast. “Ah, I know the rascal now,” continued the Captain, “he is a Salee rover, the greatest miscreant that ever sailed the ocean – with a crew that will not fight except they fancy themselves secure of conquering, and then show very little of a victor’s mercy. Slavery or death is the only fate those they capture must expect at their hands.”

While Captain Pinto was speaking, the two ships were drawing near each other. The Salee rovers of those days were strongly armed ships, fitted out by the piratical states of Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis, and the town of Salee, and other places on the north coast of Africa, their crews composed of robbers, murderers, and malefactors of every description, chiefly the refuse of the Levant, and of every nation under the sun, though calling themselves Turks. Their hands were against every man, and every man’s hand was against them; they revelled in blood and slaughter, and mercy or any tender feelings of our nature was a stranger to their hearts. As they seldom fought, except in the hopes of booty, they were feared by all the mercantile navies in the world (for their depredations extended far beyond the straits of Gibraltar); and all the European governments succumbed, in the most extraordinary way, to their tyrannical power, actually paying tribute to be free from their impositions.

All hands on board regarded anxiously the approaching pirate, though with less apprehension now that they knew with whom they had to contend.

“I knew all along that the devil had something to do with that vessel,” cried the old Pilot, in rather an exulting tone. “If ever demons inhabit human forms, they dwell in those wretches who compose her crew; and let us thank the saints that we have a good ship and plenty of guns to defend ourselves, or we should not see another day.”

“He thinks that we are no Portuguese, but one of the cruisers of Naples, or perhaps of his holiness the Pope,” said the first Lieutenant, “or he would not show so daring a front to us.”

“No, no!” answered Captain Pinto, with some bitterness in his tone; “he knows well enough that this is a Portuguese ship; but he does not know that old Jozé Pinto commands her, or perhaps he would moderate that flaunting air. Once on a time no nation dared insult the flag of Portugal on the high seas; but that time has long passed away, and now all think they may venture to do so with impunity: however, my friends, let us show that we still retain the spirit of our fathers. Give them a shot, to convince the picarooning villains that we are awake from our morning nap. Do you, Senhor Albuquerque,” he said, turning to a young officer who was standing near him, “exercise your skill in gunnery on yonder pirate: a young eye and eager hand may throw a shot when a more practised man may miss his aim.” The young officer flew eagerly to obey his chief, and scarcely had the match been applied to the touch-hole before the effect of the shot was seen, as some white splinters were observed to glance from the bulwarks of their adversary.

“Viva!” was shouted by all the crew in chorus.

“A few more shots like that would curb the vile infidel’s pride,” cried the old Pilot; but he had scarce finished his sentence, when a bright flame issued from the side of the stranger, and a crashing shower of shot passed over them, slightly wounding some of the smaller spars; one, however, swept the deck, killing one and severely injuring another of the crew.

“Chance more than skill directed those shots,” cried the Captain, to encourage the crew, whose rage was immediately excited by the death of their comrade. “Ah! see they show their true character, and are sheering off to avoid the punishment they know is their due. Let them feel we are not to be insulted with impunity. Fire!”

At the word, the guns of the corvette were discharged with considerable effect on the very hull of the rover, who was evidently, for the time, satisfied with fighting, as he immediately put his helm to port, and at great risk, the seas breaking over his sides, sheered off from his determined opponent. We have already explained the various dangers incurred while fighting the guns in that heavy sea, it being much to the credit of the crew that they could do so at all; and it was thus some time before they could again discharge them, when the enemy had gained a considerable distance, the shot falling harmlessly into the water. In truth, at such a time, it was the object of neither ship to engage, as victory could have been of no advantage to either; for it was utterly impossible to have boarded the prize by means of boats; and if the two ships had run alongside of each other, it was probable, if not certain, that both would have sunk in the deadly embrace: a prolonged combat would also have proved the destruction of both. They therefore, by mutual consent, again kept on their course, eyeing each other with hatred and suspicion.

The crew of the corvette were again ordered to secure their guns, when they set about performing the ordinary duties of the ship; the look-out men in the tops keeping a watchful eye on every movement of the corsair, whose very disregard of them seemed to betoken treachery; the only signal her crew made that they were conscious of the presence of a hostile bark being that their pirate banner yet blew out to the blast as a defiance. Thus for the whole day did the Portuguese ship and her foe drive before the furious and unrelaxing gale, the officers and crew in watches throwing themselves beneath the shelter of the poop-deck to snatch a few minutes’ repose, no one being willing to go below even for an instant.

The Moor appeared to carry as many guns, if not more than the corvette, being perhaps also of greater tonnage; and the probabilities were, that she had by far the strongest crew, as it was the custom of the Salee rovers to crowd their decks with men, their usual mode of fighting being to run their enemy on board, when, rushing like a host of furies on the devoted ship, their numbers generally carried the day; however, under the present circumstances, that mode could be of no avail, and he therefore very wisely avoided coming to closer quarters.

Sleep visited not the eyes of Don Luis, and scarcely would he allow himself time to snatch a mouthful of food, so excited had he become by the late skirmish, and the wild scene of confusion round him, no one more earnestly eyeing the enemy, as he prayed for the abatement of the gale, to have some chance of punishing the daring pirate for his presumption in thus insulting the flag of his country. “Though the proud days of chivalry have passed away,” he exclaimed to himself, “I will prove that I am no carpet knight, but worthy of the gallant warriors from whom I am descended, whose lances were ever foremost in fight and tourney. Here is an unlooked-for opportunity of distinguishing myself, which will not, I trust, be torn from me; and I will seize some trophy from yonder lawless stranger to lay at the feet of my beloved Theresa, when how proudly will she welcome me, as I return among a band of warriors, after a hard won victory, instead of from a voyage without danger, and from a land of peace and security, as she expects!”

Such thoughts very naturally passed through a young and enthusiastic mind, but which, uttered aloud, would, to the generality of people, have appeared to arise from Quixotic folly; and it must be confessed, that his servant Pedro did not in the least participate in his master’s romantic feelings, though ever ready to share his fortunes. He, all the time, most earnestly prayed that the devil would run away with the stranger, or that he would go to the bottom before he had time to send any more cannon balls on board the corvette. As for bearing a trophy to his lady loves – for Pedro owned to two, one in his native village, and another in Lisbon – it never entered his head; for he well knew they would much prefer a piece of gay coloured calico to a bit of bunting, which they could not convert into

a petticoat. Pedro was certainly not a romantic lover. It was curious, yet so it was, that the warnings of his friend, Captain Pinto, never once occurred to Don Luis; nor did the recollection for a moment cross his mind, that, instead of victory and a speedy return to his native land, a long painful slavery, or a sudden death, might be his lot.

Not a gleam of sunshine broke through the thick mass of clouds during the whole course of the day, which passed on without any variation till the fast increasing gloom announced the return of night with all its horrors; for, in the southern latitudes, in which they were, the sun scarcely sinks, before darkness overspreads the world; and thus in a short time they again lost sight of the enemy in a dense curtain of mist, which added to the obscurity. The captain, therefore, called a council of war to consider the best plan to pursue, being unwilling to miss the foe, and anxious at the same time not to run farther out of their course than they could help, should the gale subside, as it had lately given some promise of doing.

The officers were collected round their commander, the old pilot strenuously giving it as his opinion, that, as soon as the gale moderated, they should haul their wind, and leave their phantom opponent to pursue, uninterrupted, her demon-directed course; persisting that she would lead them through stormy seas and tempests half round the world before she disappeared. The greater number, also, were of opinion that they ought to haul their wind, or lay the ship to, when their deliberations on the subject were quickly settled by a warning cry from the men in the tops; and, at the moment when most considered the enemy yet at some distance, he was perceived on their starboard quarter, looming through the obscurity. The crew needed no order to fly to their guns, or the officers to their respective posts; and scarcely had her lofty masts appeared ranging up alongside, before a broad sheet of flame issued from her ports, and a shower of shot passed over them.

“Fire, my men! fire low!” shouted the gallant Commander; and the shot seemed to tell well upon the hull of the stranger. The guns were again hauled in, loaded and fired with great rapidity, before their adversary had time to give them a second broadside; the seeing which much animated the men.

“Well done, my gallant fellows!” cried the Captain; “remember that you are Portuguese and good Catholics, and that yonder ship contains a crew of vile infidels. Our colours are still flying at our peak, and there they shall fly till I am knocked overboard; so all you have to do is to fire away as hard as you can, and by the blessing of the Holy Virgin we shall be the conquerors.” This short, pithy speech much animated the crew; who, putting firm confidence in the courage and sagacity of their leader, renewed their efforts with redoubled vigour. “See, Don Luis,” added the Captain, “the infidel is near enough to feel our swivels and light guns, and if you will undertake to command them, they may do some service.” Don Luis sprang gladly to obey the captain’s order, followed by Pedro; who, now that he could not avoid fighting, exerted himself as well as the bravest, working the guns with considerable effect.

The firing on both sides had now become warm; the enemy being in earnest, and evidently eager, on some account or other, to bring the contest to a speedy close. Their guns were discharged as rapidly as they could be loaded, doing much execution on board the corvette, striking down several men on the main-deck, and one on the poop, close to Don Luis, though each shot was returned with equal vigour. The flashes of the guns clearly showed the enemies to each other, for they were now running along not a quarter of a cable’s length apart; the Portuguese aiming always at the hull of their opponent, with the determination of sinking her, if possible; while she fired in the hopes of cutting away their spars and rigging, and crippling their masts; that, unable to escape, she might be able to take possession of them at leisure: the only objects the rovers sought in victory being booty and prisoners.

A truly awful scene was that night-engagement, as the two small barks, on that vast wild waste, surrounded with all the majestic horrors of ocean strife, filled with human beings regardless of Heaven’s wrath, strove, with all the animosity of demons, to hurl each other to destruction, nor thinking of their own fate.

The infidel had wrongly calculated on an easy victory, when he attacked a ship commanded by so hardy and brave a seaman as Jozé Pinto; for his crew, confiding in his courage and seamanship, fought as well as any seamen in the world – as the Portuguese always will do when well led – and, after an hour's engagement, the effect of their efforts became perceptible, in the slackened fire of the enemy. Both the wind and sea had now much fallen; and, as the storm broke, flashes of lightning darted from the clouds – for a moment casting a lurid glare on the hostile ships and the foaming cauldron between them – again leaving a more fearful gloom on the scene. “Where is the infidel, where is the infidel?” was again shouted by the crew, after a bright flash had dazzled their eyes, and she had for the last minute ceased firing. “She's gone, she's gone!” The officers looked eagerly out – no one could see the pirate ship – but they dreaded some treachery: the guns, therefore, were loaded and run out; the crew waiting in breathless expectation to catch sight of her, when she was again perceived coming up close on their quarter, with the intent, it seemed, to range up alongside; yet nothing but madness or desperation could have instigated them to the act, for certain destruction threatened both, if she should attempt to board; for, once joined, the sea must overwhelm them both.

“Boarders, come aft,” shouted the Captain: “starboard the helm.” The manoeuvre caused the rover to miss his aim, and as he threw his grapnels, they fell into the water. “Steady, again,” the Captain cried; but the rover was not to be deceived a second time; for, with determined daring, putting his helm also to starboard, he ranged alongside, and locked his yard-arms in a deadly embrace with those of the Portuguese. A loud shriek of horror arose from many, even of the brave, on board. “Silence, men, silence!” cried Captain Pinto: “aloft, and cut away: be prepared to repel boarders.” The men sprang to the rigging as ordered: all knew that their lives depended on their activity. A loud crashing noise was heard as the stout spars tore and wrenched each other from the ropes which held them, falling in splinters from aloft; but as yet the hulls of the ships had not touched, the sea in foaming torrents dashing up between them, and inundating the decks of both. What we have been describing took place in a few seconds.

“Fire!” shouted the Captain; and the balls were seen to tear up the sides of the rover, who appeared to be incapable of answering the discharge.

Still onward dashed the ships, their spars and rigging yet locked together, the wild sea threatening each moment to claim them as its prize; when, as for an instant their hulls ground together, a form was seen to spring from the shrouds of the pirate ship on to the deck of the Christian. “Faithless tyrants, I am no longer your slave!” he exclaimed, as he hurled his gleaming sabre among the people he had just quitted: “I may now die among my countrymen.” The words were scarce heard amid the tumult, or the action seen; and, as he fell, the cutlass of a seaman brought him bleeding to the deck, where he lay, trampled on and disregarded, amid some of the Portuguese who had been struck down. At the same moment, the glare of the forked lightning exhibited a hundred swarthy turbaned figures on the nettings and lower rigging of the Rover, and, like a rush of fierce vultures on their prey, with loud yells, the foremost threw themselves on the deck of the corvette, when the upper works of the two ships again separated.

“Onward, my men, onward!” shouted Captain Pinto, rushing forward to repel them at the head of a party of his best seamen, with Don Luis by his side, who, at the first fierce onset, warded off a blow which might have proved fatal to the gallant chief. But the pirates fought with all the ferocity of despair and fanaticism, for they neither expected nor asked for mercy; their only hope was in victory. Yet, notwithstanding the desperate resistance they made, they could not withstand the superior numbers of the Portuguese: loudly rung their fierce war cries; their sharp sabres flashed brightly as they strove for life, every moment expecting to be reinforced by their friends, who waited but the returning roll, when the upper works of the ships should again meet, to rush on board; the flashes from the muskets of the marines, and the pistols of the seamen, between the gleams of lightning, alone exhibiting the combatants to each other, all the lights on board having been extinguished to prevent the enemy from taking aim. Again they rallied, the Portuguese giving way. A

gigantic Moor, who had fallen as they first leapt on board, now extricating himself, attacked Don Luis with such desperate fury, that, although he defended himself with courage and coolness, he would have been overthrown, had not Pedro contrived to get a cut at the Moor's arm, which brought him bleeding to the deck. The brave captain once more calling upon his men, pressed the Moors hard: inch by inch they were cut down, or forced back, till they were driven over the nettings into the dark yawning gulf below, or ground by the sides of the ships. But this short success had cost the Portuguese dear, and even their chief felt that they could with difficulty contend against the swarm of desperate miscreants, who were ready at the moment to throw themselves headlong among them, nor had the people aloft yet succeeded, in spite of all their efforts, in clearing the rigging.

Again the nettings of the two ships touched, and, uttering loud yells, crowds of the foemen hurled themselves from their posts in the rigging with their gleaming sabres in hand; but it was to destruction; for at that instant a tremendous sea rushed up between the two ships, tearing away all the fastenings which held them aloft.

The Rover made one roll to starboard; a vivid flash of lightning threw a momentary lurid glare over her, as her crew were seen to spring the larboard rigging, every lineament of their dark features distorted with the wildest rage and despair: those livid, demoniacal countenances were long fixed in the memory of all who saw them. The wild frothy sea leaped high between the two barks, but the pirate rose not again: a piercing shriek of agony was the last sound heard ascending in the night air, high above the loud roaring of the tempest. For one instant only were the masts and spars of the Salee rover seen ere the dark waves rolled triumphantly over the spot where she had been.

The Portuguese gazed with horror, for from such a fate, too, had they narrowly escaped through Heaven's mercy. Continuous flashes of lightning darted from the clouds, exhibiting, far astern, the outstretched arms and despairing features of the sinking wretches; but they were pirates, accursed by Heaven and man, and deserved no aid, could any have been afforded them, and the victors bounded on proudly in their course.

Volume One – Chapter Three

Scarcely had the lawless career of the Salee rover thus awfully terminated, as we have narrated at the end of our last chapter, than the spirit of the storm, as if satisfied with the sacrifice offered to him, began to relax his fury. The heavy clouds cleared gradually away, and the bright stars (those cheering beacons to the mariner) were seen glimmering from the clear dark blue sky: the wind, too, shifted to the southward of east, and the sea fell considerably, so that the repairs of the corvette could be carried on with much less danger and difficulty than at first. The damages she had sustained in her long encounter with the corsair, were of less consequence than might have been expected, considering the size and power of the enemy; and the seamen attributed their victory to their fervent prayers to the Virgin, and all the saints, and to the vows of offerings at their shrines.

This was, however, no time for thought – activity and energy of action were now demanded; every officer and man was employed; the captain urging them to their work; for till the standing rigging could be secured, their masts, which had fortunately escaped injury, might any moment have gone overboard. A few only of the shrouds were found to have been cut away, which being put to rights in the best way they could effect, and a fresh running rigging rove, a reef was shaken out of each of the three topsails, and the ship brought to the wind, with her head towards the shore. Boldly did she buffet the billows, like a gallant hunter straining every nerve to clear the heavy ground of a fresh ploughed field.

During the greater part of the time, Don Luis remained on the poop, giving such assistance as he was able; but, on an occasion like the present, a landsman can be but of little use, and on the first moment of cessation from toil, the Captain joined him, exclaiming, “Ah, my young friend, Heaven be praised that you have escaped uninjured; for, had you suffered in the engagement, I should have blamed myself for treating you with sad want of hospitality on the ocean. But you have now added to the wonders of your travels a sea adventure worth talking about; and do not forget to mention a brave youth who saved his captain’s life; at all events, Jozé Pinto will not be ungrateful, if he ever has the opportunity of showing his gratitude.”

“It is I who have to thank you for preserving my life, and the lives of all on board, by your bravery and conduct, Captain Pinto,” returned Don Luis, “and proud I am to have fought by your side.”

“Talk not of it, my friend; for this is no time to stand bandying compliments,” answered the Captain. “Ah, Senhor Nunez,” he added, turning to the pilot, who was just then passing them. “Were you at last convinced that we had mortal foes to contend with?”

“I know not, senhor,” answered the old man; “they fought like devils, at all events, and till I see some of them make the sign of the cross, I shall still believe them evil spirits.”

“They are all long ere this in the world of spirits,” said Captain Pinto; “for none, I think, can have escaped among all the wild crew.”

While he was speaking, a party of seamen were seen ascending the poop, dragging up between them a man, who by the dim light of a lantern held before him, appeared to be severely wounded in the shoulder. His dress consisted of the Moorish jacket and trousers; his head was bound by a white turban, now torn, disordered, and wet with blood; his features were swarthy and haggard, and his figure tall and well knit. He looked round with a wild confused stare, as if scarce recovered from the effects of some stunning blow, evidently endeavouring to collect his scattered thoughts, in order to speak.

“Whom have you brought hither?” asked the Captain of the seamen; “I thought not a pirate had escaped.”

“This, by the blessing of the Virgin, is the only one on board,” answered one of the men, “and he would not have been here now, had not Senhor Alvez ordered us to bring him to you, instead of

throwing him overboard, with the rest of the cursed wretches, as we were about to do. We found him scarcely breathing under two of our slain comrades, and some say he must be the man they saw leap on board the moment the ships ran foul of each other, who they thought had long ago gone with his brother infidels to the bottomless pit.”

The first lieutenant at the same time came up to corroborate the statement, and to give in an account of the loss they had sustained, six men having been killed, and a considerable number wounded by sabre cuts while repelling the boarders.

“Let some one bind the wounds of that man, Senhor Alvez. Carry him below, but secure his feet, that in the frenzy to which these people are liable, he commit no mischief,” said the Captain. “I will examine him to-morrow at leisure, when he is fully certain to prove worthy of hanging;” but, as he was speaking, consciousness returned to the mind of the stranger; for at that moment, uttering a few words, he made a gesture of supplication. The captain looked at him earnestly, as the light of the lantern fell upon his features; again the same gesture was repeated, when he once more sunk into a state of insensibility. Whatever it was, it seemed to have a magic effect on Captain Pinto, as scrutinising him closely, he said, as if to himself, “’Tis strange, and yet it must be so;” then exclaimed aloud, “bear him carefully to my cabin, for, though an infidel, he is a human being like ourselves, and now hapless, and in our power, he is no longer an enemy; let the surgeon attend to him, the moment he has seen to the more serious wounds of our own people. Gentlemen, I take this stranger under my protection; for I have reason to suspect that he is not what he seems. Don Luis, I request your company in my cabin,” saying which, the captain, accompanied by Don Luis, followed the seamen, who, surprised at the change of orders, bore the wounded stranger to the cabin, where he was carefully placed on a couch, and his host, with his own hands, commenced, in the most tender way, to examine his wounds till the surgeon made his appearance, when that officer pronounced them not dangerous, if immediately attended to. Restoratives being applied, he at length gave signs of returning animation, and sitting up, gazed wildly at the people who stood around him; but the captain would allow none to question him till he had been supplied with dry clothes, and every comfort that could be thought of. All were then desired to quit the cabin, the Captain requesting Don Luis to retire to his own berth till he summoned him, then approached the captive, and taking his hand, “My brother,” he said, “can I do ought else to relieve you? Speak, I need but to know your wishes, to follow them to the utmost of my power; I ask not now your name, or whence you come, for speaking will fatigue you.”

“Thanks, my brother, thanks,” returned the stranger, “you follow the greatest of all precepts, charity to the distressed. More I ask not; but I would give you some account of myself, that you may report it to those whose curiosity may be excited. You see before you a Christian gentleman and a Portuguese, though ’tis long, long since I saw my beloved country. Know me by the name of Senhor Mendez, no willing companion, believe me, of the vile pirates you sent to destruction.”

“My suspicions were not wrong then,” said the Captain, drawing still nearer, and gazing earnestly at him; “and, if I mistake not, I have seen those features before, though when or where I cannot recall to mind.”

The wounded man smiled faintly, “You have seen them before, Captain Pinto,” he said; “but years have passed since then, and time, in the thousand changes it has been making, has not spared them, nor do I think that my nearest friends could recognise him who is before you: we have grown from youth to age since we last met.”

“I am at fault then,” answered the Captain; “nor can I guess when I knew you.”

“It is as well that you should remain in ignorance for the present, my friend,” answered the stranger. “I know that I can fully trust you; but remember that there are some secrets which are dangerous to the possessor, and I would not make you incur peril on my account if possible.”

“I will ask no further, my brother,” said the Captain; “rest and sleep are absolutely necessary for you, therefore I must insist on your speaking no more,” saying which he placed his guest back on

the couch, and summoned Don Luis to join him in a repast which he ordered to be brought in, the first food they had found time to taste for hours, so that both were ready to do full justice to it.

While they were at table, the light of the lamp falling strongly on the countenance of Don Luis, drew the attention of the stranger towards him. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "whom have you near you, Captain Pinto? If fever does not disturb my brain, I think that he whom I see before me is an Almeida. Speak, youth! Do not you belong to that family?"

Don Luis started on hearing himself addressed. "I am an Almeida," he answered. "The only son of the Count of Almeida."

"I knew that I could not be mistaken," said the prisoner, half to himself. "By what an extraordinary fate do I meet you! – but I am wandering. Stir not from where you are; I would gaze upon those features I once knew so well. Yet no! 'tis a spirit I see before me, – a form long since sunk to the grave! Ah, it stirs not! vain illusion! I see the flag of Portugal, of my own loved country. Never more shall I fight beneath that banner. The ship fills; the raging ocean is around me, and I must die amid these vile pirates. Blood flows fast – red, red blood – 'tis that of my country's foes; Heaven protect me!" For some minutes the stranger was silent, and appeared to have sunk into slumber.

The captain made a sign to Don Luis not to answer, when he perceived that the wounded man was already beginning to ramble in his speech, when the surgeon, having made the rounds of his other patients, returned; and feeling his pulse, advised that he should be left alone and in quiet.

Having finished their repast, the captain beckoned Don Luis to accompany him on deck, where they found that, during the short time they had been absent, a great improvement in the weather had taken place. The clouds had entirely disappeared, leaving the sky pure and deeply blue, sparkling with myriads of stars: the sea, though still running, was regular, shining, as far as the eye could reach, with bright flashes of phosphorescent light, which rose and fell with the yet foaming waves, the ship seeming to float amid hillocks running with molten gold like lava down the sides of a volcano; a steady breeze also was blowing, which enabled them to steer a direct course for Lisbon.

The dead were collected together, and placed beneath the poop-deck, covered by the flag for which they had so bravely fought, there to await till the following morning the last religious duties which could be paid them, ere they were committed to the sailors' grave – the boundless deep. Several had fallen; some killed by the cannon-shot of the Rover, and others in the desperate struggle when the pirates rushed on board, among whom one officer only was numbered, the brave young Albuquerque, who the surgeon came to announce had just then breathed his last, from several desperate sabre wounds he had received in the conflict. He was the officer who fired the first successful shot at the rover's ship; and, elated with the praise he received from his commander, he was among the first to oppose the enemies, cutlass in hand, when they boarded. He was now brought on deck, wrapped in his bloodstained sheets, his once bright eye closed for ever; his features, lately playful with animation, now ghastly and fixed, as the pale light of the seamen's lanterns fell on them. He had always been a favourite with his commander, who bent mournfully over him, as he was placed beside his more humble shipmates. "Alas! poor youth," said Captain Pinto; "do thus end all thy bright hopes and aspirations? Yet why should I grieve? – Thy days, though few, have been joyous; and thou hast been removed ere sorrows and disappointments had crowded round thee (as too surely they would have done, except thy lot far differed from that of other mortals). Farewell, brave youth! Many a tear will be shed for thy fate in the home of thy fathers; and gladly would I have died instead of thee: for there are few to mourn for old Jozé Pinto." Having given vent to his feelings, he covered the pallid features of the dead youth with a flag, and joined Don Luis, who stood near, watching this gentle trait in the character of the seemingly rough and hardy seaman.

The most important repairs in the ship had been now accomplished; the decks required no washing, for the heavy seas which had broken over them during the terrific engagement, had performed that office; and the watch being set, she had assumed somewhat of her ordinary appearance. Gladly did every one who could be spared from duty throw themselves into their

hammocks to seek repose, Don Luis dreaming that he still beheld the agonised features of the drowning pirates; and Pedro, that he was hewing away at the head of the Moor who had attacked his master, but which, notwithstanding all his efforts, kept grinning at him with horrid grimaces.

The first pale streaks of morn called everybody into activity; for there was still much to be done before the ship could be restored to order.

The melancholy duty of committing the slain to the deep was performed just as the sun rose bright and warm above the waves; and many an honest tear was shed by the comrades of those who were never more to bask beneath his genial rays; while many a vow was made to have masses offered up for the repose of their souls.

The weather, as if to make amends to the voyagers for the ill-treatment they had experienced, continued serene and favourable, and the corvette bounded lightly over the now bright and laughing waters. The horrors and dangers they had undergone fading gradually from their memories, as events scarcely appertaining to themselves; for so are we constituted: the most acute pains, the greatest trials of nerve, which in anticipation we have dreaded, when past, are thought of with indifference; and the recollection of pleasure is, alas! still more evanescent. It is crime alone, a stinging conscience, which is the only lasting torment, and the remembrance of good deeds the only true durable happiness, for of that none can rob us.

For many hours during the day after the engagement with the Salee rover, Senhor Mendez continued in a state of unconsciousness; nor towards the evening, when he appeared to revive, would Captain Pinto, by the surgeon's advice, allow him to enter into conversation, – the extraordinary manner of his preservation, and the interest the captain took in him, causing many surmises on board. Don Luis was also anxious to learn somewhat of the stranger; but as his friend was not communicative, he did not think right to question him on the subject.

Two days had thus passed by, when, as the captain and his young friend were seated in the cabin, the stranger awoke from a sound slumber, and, raising himself on his couch, looked around. "I have deeply to thank you, Captain Pinto, for your care of a wounded prisoner," he said, "who has caused you, I fear, much trouble, and who may cause you much more; but perhaps you already know more than I would have revealed; for, tell me, did I not ramble wildly in my speech the other night, when overcome by fever?"

Captain Pinto assured him that he had in no way committed himself by anything he had said.

"I rejoice to hear it, for your sake, and for that of the youth I see by your side; for though I would not deceive you, and feel assured that I might confide in both, I would not willingly entrust you with a secret which might prove dangerous to the possessor."

"In what you say follow your own counsel," answered the Captain; "for I would not wish to influence you, though you may put as full confidence in the discretion of Don Luis d'Almeida, as in mine; and be assured that we shall be ever ready to aid you to the utmost of our power."

"His name is, I trust, a guarantee for his honour," returned Senhor Mendez; "and though I have weighty reasons for concealing the early part of my history, I will narrate, in as brief a way as possible, some of the latter events of my life, which will account for my being on board the Salee rover which your gallantry sent to destruction; though far rather would I have sunk unknown amid those drowning wretches, whose dying shrieks yet ring in my ear, than risk the safety of one to whom I am so deeply indebted. You see before you a man who has, throughout life, been constantly on the point of attaining, as he supposed, wealth and happiness; when, ere the cup reached his lips, it has been rudely torn from his grasp, and he has been hurled back to poverty and wretchedness; yet ever, when least expected, fortune has again shed her deceitful smile upon him. I was yet young, when, after passing through many vicissitudes of fortune, I arrived, poor and unknown, on the shores of India; but I yet retained more than wealth can purchase, the great ingredient, the first principle of success, an unbroken spirit, full of hope and confidence. I had learned, I thought, that wealth was the only certain road to power, and that with power alone could I attain my ends; for I had deep and bitter wrongs

to avenge, and wealth, therefore, I determined to obtain by every means consistent with my honour. Though many of the rank in which I was born, would have looked upon mercantile pursuits as wholly derogatory to their dignity, nameless and unknown, I laughed at such prejudices; and soon finding means to bring my talents into notice, I obtained an employment in which I was eminently successful; when one high in power, who had always borne me a deadly enmity, arrived in Goa, and would, I felt confident, recognise me through all the disguises I might assume. I well knew that, were I discovered, the civil and ecclesiastical power would be brought into play against me, and the Inquisition, with all its diabolical tortures, stared me in the face. I fled to China, from which country I was obliged once more to migrate to the newly-acquired possessions of the British in India, where my intimate knowledge of the customs and language of the natives, aiding my own perseverance, enabled me to acquire, at length, the fortune I sought. I transmitted it by degrees to England, and having wound up my affairs, I set sail for that country, intending from thence to make any further arrangements I might deem advisable; but I was not destined to reach it. The ship which bore me was wrecked on the coast of Africa, and I, with the few who escaped death, was made prisoner by a tribe of savages, who retaliated on us a few of the cruelties their countrymen have experienced from those of our colour. For upwards of a year I remained in captivity, when I contrived to get on board a vessel, trading on the coast for gold-dust and ivory, and bound for Cadiz. We had a prosperous run, and expected in two or three days to have reached our destination, when a large vessel bore down upon us, crowded with men. Resistance was hopeless, and flight impossible; and as she ran alongside, to our horror, we recognised the costume of the implacable enemies of Spain, the Algerines. The cargo being taken out of the vessel, she was sunk, the lives of the crew being spared for the sake of their value as slaves, for which purpose they were carried to Algiers, and there sold. Any fate appearing to me preferable to that which they were doomed to suffer, I embraced the offer the captain of the rover made me of joining his ship, and assuming the turban, in the secret hope of being ultimately able, by these means, to make my escape. Whether he suspected me, I know not; but he was certainly very unwilling to lose the services I was able to afford him through my knowledge of various languages, and a strict watch was kept on my movements, so that upwards of another long year passed away without my being able to effect my purpose. The scenes of horror and outrage I was doomed to witness, seemed to me as a punishment for my sins; but, fortunately, we never fell in with a Portuguese vessel, so that I was guiltless of spilling the blood of any of my countrymen, till the chief of the pirate crew, mistaking your ship, in the night of the gale, for a merchantman, determined to give chase, in hopes of finding you an easy conquest.

“Great, indeed, was my grief, when, on the following morning, we discovered that you were a man-of-war and a Portuguese; for, notwithstanding all my persuasions to the contrary, he insisted on attacking you, declaring, that as you were probably short of hands, you would fall an easy prey, and that he required a new ship as a consort to his own. Having once made up his mind, nothing would deter him from his purpose; and my expostulations causing my faith to be suspected, the other officers insisted that I should be placed in the most exposed situation when we boarded, which proved, however, the salvation of my life. Once or twice my spirits were revived by the hope that we had missed you; but at length the rovers resolved to cripple you, if possible, to prevent your escaping, though they found that they had encountered a far more determined antagonist than they expected. When, however, some proposed drawing off, or waiting till the sea went down, to run you on board, it was discovered that two shots had entered between wind and water, and that the ship was filling fast. Their only hope of preservation was now to run you on board, although at imminent risk of destruction to both; but as there was no other alternative, the purpose was immediately put into execution, and had not the ships separated so providentially for you at the moment they did, it is probable either the pirates would have become the masters, or both would have sunk together.”

“No, no, Senhor Mendez, the vile infidels should never have become masters of this ship while I lived,” suddenly exclaimed Captain Pinto: “say, rather, we should all have been food for fish, had not the rover, by the favour of the saints, sunk when she did: but I beg your pardon for interrupting you.”

“I have little more to add,” returned Senhor Mendez, “except to express my joy at finding, on my recovery, that you were the victors. I must beg, too, that even what I have now mentioned regarding myself may not pass your lips; for surmises, with the slightest clue, may lead to inquiries, and my secret be discovered.”

Both his auditors assured him that what he had said should be inviolable. “Thanks, sirs, thanks,” he answered. “I have exerted myself to give this sketch of my adventures, to remove any suspicions you might have entertained regarding me, the thought of which I could not endure, and now weariness overpowers me;” saying which, he sunk back, and appeared to slumber.

It was not until the sixth day after the engagement, that the lofty ridges of the rock of Lisbon, tinged with the ruddy beams of the rising sun, greeted the anxious eyes of the voyagers, rising like a welcome beacon out of the blue and shining ocean. The morning was pure and lovely, such as the fair clime of Portugal can often boast; the very air sparkling with animation. The gentle breeze came in irregular breaths off the land, laden with the odour of aromatic herbs and flowers, so grateful to the senses of those who have inhaled nought but saline particles during a protracted voyage. They had made the land rather to the north of the rock, which was looked upon as a very good land-fall by the old pilot; for it must be recollected that we are writing of nearly a hundred years ago, since which time navigation has made great strides in improvement; and, as they coasted along, Don Luis eagerly watched each village and point they passed, while Pedro greeted, no less delighted, and with much more violent gesticulation, each spot of his beloved Portugal, as the seamen pointed it out to him.

“Ah! at length your hopes may, perhaps, be realised,” said the Captain, as he came on deck, smilingly addressing Don Luis; “but you see how fallacious they before proved, and while you expected to have landed a week ago, we have only just passed the spot where we then were; and, in the meantime, have narrowly escaped destruction by the two great dangers of the sea – the tempest and the fight. Thus you will find it through life, and remember the history of Senhor Mendez: he seemed to have given it to strengthen my advice; but observe, I do not thus bid you despair: on the contrary, I wish to prevent your falling into despondency, by teaching you to be prepared for the difficulties I know you must encounter, and by showing you that you may surmount them. Here were we hurried away from our haven as rapidly as a man may be from the high path of rectitude into the dark gulf of crime, and it has cost us almost as much exertion to return; but yet, at length, our haven is nigh, and we have every prospect of attaining it.”

“Believe me, captain, I am grateful for the interest you take in my welfare,” answered Don Luis, “and will endeavour to profit by your warning and counsels, which are of double value, as I feel that I required them.”

“Be assured that I am not fond of giving advice to those who I know will disregard it,” answered the Captain; and, seeing that his friend was about to speak, he added, “remember, I will not exchange with you the current coin given for advice, when both are empty and valueless; so we will say no more on the subject.”

“As you wish, my friend,” answered Don Luis. “Then what think you of your prisoner, or rather guest, Senhor Mendez?”

“That he is rapidly recovering from his wounds,” said the Captain.

“Yes, he daily gains strength,” said Don Luis: “but I mean as to who he is.”

“That he is one who seeks to remain unknown,” responded Captain Pinto. “Do not ask me further respecting him; for I cannot satisfy you, though he has made me acquainted with his history. He will pass for a Portuguese born in the colonies, and I shall thus be able to afford him assistance while he remains in Lisbon; and as few even on board have seen his countenance, and as I shall land him as a wounded man, there is no danger of his being recognised.”

While this conversation was going forward, the ship was slowly running down the coast; and as we have ourselves sailed over the same ground, we are able accurately to describe it. On the low flat ground which stretches away to the north of the rock of Lisbon, they could clearly perceive with their glasses the domes and towers of the Escorial of Portugal, the immense palace and convent of Mafra, built by that pious debauchee, John the Fifth. This vast edifice is of a quadrangular form, showing a front towards the sea some seven hundred feet in length, with a lofty portico in the centre, which leads to the church. It seems, by its extent, rather calculated for a fortress, in which to quarter all the troops in the kingdom, than a refuge for humble monks, or a calm retirement for royalty. A suburb, as it were, of houses and cottages has sprung up around it.

They next passed under the serrated ridges of the rock of Lisbon towering towards the heavens, embosomed among which lies the beautiful and romantic vale of Cintra, rising, like an oasis in the wilderness, from the arid and scorched plains surrounding Lisbon. From the sea few of its beauties can be perceived, the only conspicuous object being the cork convent of Nossa Senhora da Penha, perched like an eyrie amid the most lofty cliffs, the first name being given to it from its being lined with cork to shield the monks from damp, as great part of it is hewn out of the solid rock. One small gap in the mountain alone allows the voyager a glimpse of the paradise within, filled with cork, orange, citron, olive, and numerous other trees and sweet-scented shrubs. Having doubled the cape, from beneath whose caverned rock the deep murmur of the sea was heard, they passed across the bay of Cascaes, with its low sterile cliffs, and a fresh sea breeze setting in, they entered the majestic Tagus by the northern passage, with a small island to the right entirely covered by a circular castle of white stone, built to protect the mouth of the river, called the Bugio fort. The scene was highly animating to those who had spent day after day without meeting, on the dreary expanse of waters, a friendly bark to cheer their sight, as they beheld numberless vessels, of all classes, sailing up the river with the fresh sea breeze, and boats of every description darting here and there over the sparkling waves. There was the lofty Indiaman, or richly-laden Brazilian ship, (for at that time Portugal monopolised the entire carrying trade to her colonies,) surrounded by a hundred boats which had come out to welcome relations and friends from their long voyage, or to inquire for those who remained behind, or might perhaps never return. Then there was the heavy-sailing English merchant brig, characteristic of her nation, possessing more bottom than speed, and proving to the world that the first maritime people could build the ugliest vessels, not surpassed in that respect by the tub-like, yellow-sided Dutchman, laden with cheeses in the shape of cannon balls. Among them were seen, in strong contrast, the graceful, high-pointed lateen sails of the Portuguese Rasca, used chiefly in the coasting trade; and the native schooner, or Hiate, with hulls not destitute of beauty, but rigged with masts raking at different angles, and their gaffs peaked at unequal heights; and also the curious Lisbon fishing-boat, shaped like a bean-pod, curving up at stem and stern, with a short rounded deck at each end, and a single high lateen sail. Then there were sloops, schooners, etc, etc, but all made way for the royal cruiser, as she proudly sailed up the stream, lowering their flags as she passed them in mark of respect. Passing close to the white tower of Belem and its gothic church at the westernmost part of Lisbon, they at length dropped their anchor opposite to that picturesquely-beautiful city, which rises on many hills from the shores of the wide-flowing Tagus, the white buildings glittering in the sun, crowned by the dark frowning castle, surrounded by suburbs intermixed with gardens filled with the richly-tinted orange-trees; but it was in those days very inferior in point of size and beauty to what it is now, and, alas! on entering it, its outward promise was found to be sadly deceptive; the streets were narrow, ill ventilated, and badly constructed, with a degree of dirt far surpassing that of any other European city; the extraordinary healthiness of the climate, and the heavy rains, aided by the canine scavengers which swarmed in it, and contributed to carry off the impurities, alone preventing it from being yearly visited by the plague, which the inhabitants took no other means to avoid. Amid this collection of dirt were, however, to be found numerous fine palaces, rich convents for both sexes, highly adorned churches of elegant architecture, and various other public buildings surpassed by few cities of the

time. The river is here several miles in breadth; and on the opposite shore, which is composed of rugged cliffs, once stood old Lisbon,¹ the ancient capital of Lusitania; while, looking up the stream, it has, from its wide extent, the appearance of a magnificent lake, which diminishes considerably the apparent height of its banks.

As it is not our intention to give a topographical description of Lisbon, we will return to the more interesting subject, we doubt not, of our narrative. No sooner were the sails furled, and the anchor had touched the ground, than, as the gallant bark rode securely on the smooth surface of the Tagus, she was surrounded by hundreds of boats, filled with eager and questioning passengers, and such shouts, cries, and vociferations, filled the air, that it was difficult to hear an order given or a reply made.

While Don Luis was waiting till the captain was prepared to accompany him on shore, and gazed admiringly on the beautiful panorama around him, his heart beat quick with the joyful anticipation of at length meeting her on whom, during his absence, all his thoughts had centred. He pictured to himself her delighted surprise at his unexpected return, and the rich blush which would suffuse her lovely cheeks, as, overcoming the natural bashfulness of love, forgetful of the formal etiquette of society, of everything, in her joy of seeing him, she would throw herself into his arms. Then he thought of the thousand questions she would ask of his adventures, and the answers he should make; of the animated glances of her bright eyes, as he described the storm and night-engagement with the rover, with the share he had taken in the strife; how she would tremble with agitation, as he recounted the dangers he had undergone, and how doubly dear he should be to her heart after all his escapes. Not once did his good friend Pinto's warnings and forebodings occur to him; not once did he think of the history of Senhor Mendez. How, indeed, could any dark or dismal thoughts intrude, surrounded by a scene of such loveliness, with that pure blue sky, and that clear sparkling atmosphere! All appeared to him of rosy hue, nor did he remember how false and treacherous was the outward appearance of the very city at which he gazed – a fit emblem of the fair promises of the world, full of foulness and deceit.

His thoughts were quickly broken in upon by the captain summoning him to the boat, which conveyed them on shore; and once more with joy did he press his native soil, as, attended by Pedro, he hastened to his father's house, while Captain Pinto repaired to the Admiralty, to report the arrival of his ship.

¹ Ourique, opposite Lisbon, the birth-place of Portuguese monarchy.

Volume One – Chapter Four

We must now quit the free, boundless, ever-varying ocean, on which we delight to dwell, with its exciting incidents of the chase, the tempest, and the fight, for the confined space of a crowded city.

The palace of the Marquis d'Alorna was situated near the centre of Lisbon, on the rise of a hill, at a short distance from the river; and although the approach to it was through what we should now consider narrow, dirty streets, it was an edifice of some consideration, constructed of fine hewn stone, with a handsome entrance, through which a carriage might drive to the foot of a broad flight of steps, leading to that part of the mansion inhabited by the family, the lower part being appropriated for stables, and for the use of the inferior order of domestics, and where also the family coaches stood in conspicuous array. But it is to the upper story of the building, where, in Portugal, are frequently situated the most agreeable rooms of the house, that we would introduce our readers. It was a large apartment, a broad balcony in front, with a heavy, highly-carved balustrade of stone-work, from which was seen a fine view of the Tagus, blue and sparkling in the bright sunshine, and covered with white dancing sails, wending their course in every direction. The interior decorations of the room were rich, but not according to the most approved taste of the present day. Over the windows hung curtains of yellow damask, which cast a glare anything but becoming to the complexions of the inmates, and the ceiling was decorated with a fresco painting of some allegorical subject, most difficult to determine. The walls were covered with tapestry, representing a scene in Arcadia, it might be presumed, from a number of fair ladies figuring in the landscape in the fanciful costume of shepherdesses, with crooks in their hands adorned with flowers and ribbons, who ought to have been tending several flocks of sheep scattered far and wide; but their attention was diverted from these pastoral duties by listening to the passionate addresses of sundry youths, in bag wigs and swords, who were kneeling at their feet in all the most approved attitudes of devotion. A surprising number of waterfalls, temples, bridges, and romantic cottages, fit abodes for love, peace, contentment, and little children, filled up the interesting picture. In a small alcove on one side was an altar, on which stood an image of the Virgin and Child; the mother dressed in robes of blue and gold stripes, trimmed with pink, and a crown of silver and precious stones on her head, the whole figure surrounded by bright wreaths of artificial flowers; but it appeared a pity, since so much expense had been lavished on her decoration, that the same pious hand had not afforded even the slightest garment to shelter from the inclemency of the weather the little smiling cherub in her arms. The floor was of highly polished chestnut, not covered by any carpet, except a narrow strip below a row of high-backed chairs, of dark carved mahogany, placed against the walls. Several doors opened from the room, affording a long vista beyond, of other apartments, to the opposite windows of the palace, through which might pass the refreshing breeze from the river.

But it is time that we should describe the occupants of the chamber; for there were several of the gentler sex seated in a circle near the open window, some on low chairs or stools, the others having placed themselves on the ground in the eastern fashion, with their work before them.

The lady who seemed of most consequence in the party was reclining with her back to the side of the window, so as to command a view of the world without, and, at the same time, to see and hear what was going forward in the room. She was young – very young; by her appearance scarcely counting eighteen summers of life, and beautiful as the pure sky of her native clime; but already on that high and pure brow had thought, care, or passion, cast a faint, scarce perceptible sign, which came and passed away like a thin fleeting cloud. The bright hue of health and spirits was on her oval cheeks, and there was a sparkling lustre in her full dark eye, which, at times, however, wanted, alas! that soft gentle expression so much more requisite to the eye of ebon hue than to any other: but who could quarrel with the faultless features of her exquisitely chiselled countenance? Her figure was scarcely of the average middle height, but it was beautifully formed, every limb rounded to perfection; indeed it was rather full than otherwise, relieved by her swan-like throat, and the fine fall of her shoulders.

She was sumptuously dressed in richly flowered silks; her hair, of raven hue, drawn from off her forehead, and slightly powdered, was arranged in many curls, and fastened at the summit with pins of gold. She had been occupied, or rather pretended to be occupied, in working with silk on canvass, the fashionable employment of ladies in those days; but the work appeared to be proceeding but slowly, as the small part only of a design was seen, and it was now thrown, with various bright coloured balls, at her feet. The rest of the party were rather more industriously employed in the like sort of occupation, though the gay peals of light laughter which rose from the circle, showed that they were not very earnest about it; their incentive to merriment appearing to proceed from a personage not the least remarkable of the group, seated opposite to the lovely being we have described. Her features were of jetty black, of that intense ugliness rarely seen in youth, at all events but in the negro race; and although she was scarcely more than three feet high, her head was as large as that of a full-grown person, with round shining eyes, a good-natured, contented smile ever playing round her full ruddy lips, which disclosed a full proportion of immense pearly teeth, the grotesqueness of her features increased, evidently by design, by a costly costume of every hue: her hair, too, according to the fashion, being dressed in a high peak, was decorated also with ribbons of the most glaring colours. The little lady did not, however, appear at all conscious of the absurdity of her appearance; but, on the contrary, seemed to consider herself habited in a most becoming costume, receiving all the compliments which were jokingly paid her, as her due. When she spoke, the tones of her voice were as deep as those of a full-grown person, and when she became excited in conversation, there was a degree of harshness about them far from agreeable.

“Well, my sweet mistress,” said this curious-looking being, rising as if about to take her leave, “I must tear myself away from your enchanting presence, to return to the high personages who sent me, with the joyful news of the prospect of your quick return to health; but, ere I go, I must acquit me of my mission, and deliver this holy relic, with which I was charged, as a sovereign remedy against all human ills.” Saying which, she produced a small silver casket, from a large bag which she carried in the shape of a reticule, adding, “Know that it contains part of the precious remains of the most holy Saint Anthony, being his true and veritable little finger, presented to her majesty by the pious father Malagrida, who certified the many miracles it had worked in the various parts of the world to which he had borne it. You will find therein that which will cure you of your malady in the space of a few hours, if you keep it in your own possession,” she whispered, with a significant expression, as she delivered the case into the hands of the young beauty.

“Express my gratitude to her majesty for her bounteous kindness in remembering me,” answered the young lady, “and say I have a firm and pious trust in the efficacy of her holy remedy. In truth, it is well able to cure me of all the malady with which I am afflicted,” she added, laughing. “But, remember, Donna Florinda, that is not to be a part of the message you are to deliver.”

“Oh no,” answered the jet-coloured little lady; “trust to my discretion – I thought as much when I brought the casket, which, however, I will leave, as you may require it; though those sparkling eyes, and the rich colour on those lovely cheeks, betoken little sign of disease.”

“My illness was one imposed on me by my honoured father, at the instigation of his lady wife, to prevent my attendance at Court,” answered the young lady; her eye flashing angrily as she spoke. “Thank Heaven! I shall soon be my own mistress, nor will I yield again to their unjust commands.”

“Spoken like a girl of spirit,” said the Dwarf. “I like those who will never submit to tyranny; and be assured that his majesty will much applaud your determination, for all the Court mourn the absence of its brightest ornament. But I must not stay chattering here, or it will be supposed I am lost, and then there will be a hue and cry all over Lisbon in search of me; for I am much too valuable a person not to be a prize to any who could carry me off.”

“You would indeed be a treasure, Donna Florinda, to the happy person who possessed you, but their majesties esteem you far too much to part with you willingly,” returned the lovely girl, laughing.

“Methinks they do, and I have no intention of quitting them. I know when I am well off. – Now, again, my sweetest friend, adieu.” Saying which, Donna Florinda sprang up, imprinting a kiss on each cheek of the beautiful girl, who received the salute, as a thing of course, and then curtsying with an air intended to be very dignified, she turned to quit the apartment.

“Run, maidens, run,” exclaimed the young lady. “Run and attend Donna Florinda to her chair. Haste all of you, and pay her proper respect.” The maids, accustomed to the imperious orders of their young mistress, threw down their work, and followed Donna Florinda, for so their majesties of Portugal had been pleased to call their black favourite; and no sooner was the room cleared, than with eager hands the young lady opened the casket which had been sent her. It contained, doubtless, the little finger of Saint Anthony, but it contained also a small fold of paper, which she hurriedly abstracted, placing the casket aside, as a thing she valued not.

Agitation was visible on her countenance, as with trembling fingers she tore open the note. “Enchanting, beautiful girl,” it ran, “too often have I gazed enraptured on those matchless charms to resist longer their enslaving power. Though the barriers of custom and bigotry intervene to keep us asunder, yet would I break through all obstacles to win one smile of acquiescence to my ardent wishes from those bright eyes! and ah! believe that this heart, which has never felt till now one pang of love, though surrounded by the fairest, the most lovely in the land, has at length been punished for its obduracy; nor can I experience one moment of peace till I know that this has been accepted by her for whom it is intended, and that she will deign to send some answer favourable to my hopes. From one who would, were it possible, lay a crown at the feet of the most captivating of her sex.” No signature was attached to the epistle; but, as the lady’s eyes glanced hurriedly over it, her breathing grew quick, a blush mantled on her neck and cheek, though remaining but a moment ere a pallor succeeded, as she placed it in her bosom, on hearing the return of her attendants along the corridor leading to her apartment. Her principal attendant gazed at her earnestly, with an expression of concern.

“Surely, Senhora, you are now really ill indeed; and I fear St. Anthony’s finger has been of slight benefit. Let me run and procure you some of the restorative medicine I am ordered to take.”

“No, no, there is no necessity for it,” answered the young lady; “I merely slightly pricked my finger as Donna Florinda left the room, and the pain was acute, and made me feel faint; but it has passed away and left no mark. I shall be well again directly.”

As she spoke her former colour returned to her cheeks, but the smile which had sat on her lips was not so easily recovered; and though she attempted to talk with animation, her gaiety was forced and unnatural. Before many minutes had passed, another visitor was announced as the Marchioness of Tavora, at which name the attendants stood up respectfully, the young lady advancing herself to the door of the apartment to receive her guest. The lady who now entered was of majestic deportment, with firmness and dignity in every movement, at the same time that there was much feminine beauty in her features; for, although they had much passed their prime, they yet retained a large portion of those charms for which she had once been celebrated, without any of the disfiguring marks of old age. She gazed with a look of affection, as she addressed the young lady, who conducted her respectfully to a chair, and placed herself on a lower seat at her feet.

“I have come, my sweet daughter, as an ambassadress from my son, the heir of his father’s wealth and titles, earnestly to press his suit,” began the Marchioness; “you know how fondly he loves you, and all the necessary preliminaries having been arranged between the Marquis of Tavora and your father, your consent is alone wanting to fix the day on which he may be made happy. Say, then, that you will not defer the day, and let me be the bearer of the joyful tidings to my boy.”

“I am highly flattered by the honour you do me, Senhora Marqueza,” answered the young lady, “and by the preference your son shows me; but I do not feel myself worthy of his love without giving mine in return, and I would rather not wed yet.”

“Do I hear aright?” exclaimed the Marqueza, with surprise, and a degree of anger in her tone. “Can you, whom I already look upon in the light of a daughter, dream of disobedience to your

father's commands, and refuse my son's proffered alliance? Such a thing is impossible. Have you not constantly given me reason to suppose that you would throw no difficulty in the way, – then why this sudden and unaccountable change of opinion? But I know that these words do not express your feelings: they were uttered more from a freak of maiden bashfulness, than from any confirmed determination. To such folly, however, you must not yield. Think well again before you give your final answer; for of such as that you before uttered I cannot be the bearer.”

The young lady remained silent for some minutes; a pallid hue again overspread her features, and she gasped for breath, as if some intense feelings were passing through her bosom; but the Marchioness, occupied with her own thoughts, did not, apparently, observe her. At length, by a strenuous effort recovering her composure, she looked up. “If such is the will of my father, that I should wed, I will follow it,” she said; “my hand, when he shall claim it, is at your son's command; and I must crave your pardon that I at first refused the proffered honour.”

“My sweet daughter, you have made me most happy,” exclaimed the Marchioness, folding her in an affectionate embrace. “My beloved son, on whom you know every sentiment of my heart is placed, will hasten to throw himself at your feet; but say, my fair child, when you will crown his joy, by bestowing that hand he prizes so much?”

“I would petition for a short delay,” returned the lovely girl; “let the day be in November next: he will not have long to wait; and it is but short time to prepare to quit a home where I have spent the few happy days of my life, and for the future, alas! oh, may Heaven protect me!” The last part of the sentence was uttered rather to herself than aloud, nor did the Marchioness attend to the words.

“I will not, at present, urge you to fix an earlier time, though I would have wished it sooner; but perhaps my son may have more influence,” said the Marqueza, smiling. “I must now go to relieve his mind of the anxiety which oppresses it, and before long, expect your loving bridegroom here.” Saying which, the Marchioness of Tavora arose, and, embracing the young lady, she quitted the apartment with the same stately dignity with which she had entered, attended, with the utmost respect, by the retinue of maidens who waited on their young mistress.

We scarce dare describe the thoughts of the bride elect, of that young and lovely creature who seemed formed for virtue and happiness alone. She hastened to the open window to seek fresher air, for that in the room oppressed her, she thought, and stood gazing, with dilated eye, on the pure blue, calm sky, so contrasted with the agitation of her bosom. “Alas! for what am I prepared?” she exclaimed; “what a dark gulf do I see yawning beneath my feet, which no human power can aid me to overleap. Could I summon courage, I might yet escape; but then how blank and desolate would my heart become! No! I could part with happiness, rank, wealth, all the world esteems; but I cannot yield up love. Ah, why should I tremble or hesitate? Have not others done the same? and without risk, how can power and greatness be obtained? And yet, oh, heavens! I wish it had been otherwise.”

Thus giving utterance to broken and disjointed sentences, in a tone often of despair and grief, her small delicate hands clasped together, she continued at the window for some minutes. Again she was silent, when what sounded more like an hysterical laugh than one of joy broke from her lips. “It were destruction to turn back now,” she cried; “and, my young lord marquis, I am your most humble bride. Begone, from henceforth, all vain foolish fears and regrets, which gaiety will easily dissipate.” She turned quickly round with a smiling countenance, for she heard a footstep approaching, thinking it was one of her female attendants; but she started suddenly at seeing, instead, the tall figure of a young and handsome cavalier, advancing rapidly towards her with the intention, it appeared by his gestures, of saluting her on the cheek without waiting for permission, had she not drawn back with an expression of anger in her countenance, and, throwing herself into a chair, coldly held out her hand. The movement had the effect, as by magic, of arresting the young man in his headlong career. He gazed at her for some time, without uttering a syllable, with a steady, mournful, and surprised look. “Can it be possible that I am so changed, during an absence but of two years, that you know

me not?" he at length exclaimed. "I cannot, dare not, believe that Donna Theresa would thus cruelly have behaved, had she known me."

"Oh, I know you perfectly, my good cousin," answered the young lady; "nor do I perceive that you are in the slightest degree changed from the boisterous, forward youth you were when you set out on your travels, if I may judge by the unceremonious way in which you forced yourself into my private apartments."

The young cavalier gazed at her with amazement, while a look of pain, or we may say rather of agony, crossed his handsome features. "Do I hear aright," he exclaimed passionately, "or am I in some horrid dream? Yet methought all was reality till I entered here; but now I cannot, dare not believe my senses."

"You appear to me to be perfectly awake, Don Luis; nor do I wish you on any account to believe otherwise. Look round this room; the tapestry, the hangings, the furniture are the same; nor am I very much altered in appearance since the time you quitted Portugal. Your own extravagant expectations are alone not realised." She spoke in a tone half of banter and half serious, – "Come, come, my good cousin, lay aside, for Heaven's sake, that tragic air, more suited to the stage than to private society, and tell me to what cause I am indebted for this sudden visit from one I thought was basking in the sunny smiles of the fair beauties of England."

"Can you, Theresa, can you ask such a question?" exclaimed the young Cavalier, (in whom our readers may recognise Don Luis d'Almeida,) with grief and tenderness in his tone. "Does not your heart tell you that you were the first person I should fly to see on my return to my native land – that you were the magnet which has drawn me hither?"

"You do me too much honour," answered Donna Theresa, coldly; "but I should have supposed your filial affections would have prompted you first to throw yourself at your father's feet before you took the trouble of paying your respects to your numerous cousins, however intimate you may have been with them in your boyish days."

"Your words are but cold, heartless mockery to my feelings," answered Don Luis, vehemently. "Have you so soon forgotten our mutual vows of love and constancy, which Heaven recorded to stand as indelible witnesses against either who should be guilty of perfidy? Have you forgotten our troth, plighted in the sight of God, which none but ourselves can annul, with his just curse on the one who causes it to be broken? Were all my vows and protestations of love and attachment looked upon as mere empty words, which the passing breath of summer might blow away? Have a few months of absence served to wither what was once so fair and lovely? No, no, it is impossible! Say, did you never love me? Was I deceived from the first? Was my love considered but as a plaything to amuse, till some more glittering toy presented itself to attract your attention?"

"You overwhelm me with the rapidity and multiplicity of your questions, Senhor," answered Donna Theresa; "I can scarcely comprehend your long speech about love and constancy, and your violence frightens me. However, I will make due allowance for the uncouth manners you have acquired among the islanders, in whose territories you have been travelling, and will try to answer you to the best of my abilities. I certainly do recollect that, in our childish days, we were foolish enough to make some absurd promise to each other, which I no more hold as binding than any other act made by infants; besides, I have received absolution for any such deeds on my part, though I do remember you made a great many strange oaths and protestations, which I now consider highly improper; therefore, pray let me ask you, Senhor, by what authority you put these questions, not very complimentary, in truth, to me?"

"Great Heavens! can you expect me to remain calmly before you, while I listen to such words? You ask me by what authority I thus speak. By your own expressions when we parted; by your last fond embrace; by my own ardent, devoted love, which has not for one moment, by thought or deed, proved disloyal; your vows, protestations, tears, and sighs, – they, they give me authority to speak."

“Holy Mary, you frighten me with your vehemence!” exclaimed the young lady, raising her hands to hide her countenance; “I thought you had more wisdom than thus to make yourself appear ridiculous. Have I not before said, that people, when they grow up, are not to be answerable for all the folly and nonsense they may have committed in their childish days; then why insist on what no girl of sense can allow?”

“Say no more, Donna Theresa, say no more,” cried Don Luis; “I were dull indeed not to comprehend your meaning. You have drawn aside the veil which shrouded my eyes; for I had thought that an inconstant and treacherous heart could not dwell within a form so lovely, so graceful as yours; but now, alas! what a hideous spectacle is laid bare to my sight! Donna Theresa, you have much to answer for to your sex. You have been the first to shake my faith in the innate purity and virtue of woman; for I supposed all who were so beautiful in form, must possess natures equally fair and adorable; but from henceforth, for your sake, can I place confidence in no one.”

“Senhor, you are growing insolent,” exclaimed the lady, rising from her seat, with an angry spot on her lovely brow; “you presume too much on our relationship and childish friendship, when you dare utter expressions like these, which no cavalier should venture to make use of before a lady.”

Don Luis drew a step nearer, as if not understanding her last observation. “It is impossible that I am really awake!” he exclaimed, with deep passion. “A few fleeting months could not so alter Donna Theresa’s tender, loving nature, as to make her, with cold, callous indifference, inflict so cruel, so bitter a wound on a heart which has thus faithfully adored her. No no, I wrong her, I foully wrong her! I wrong her gentle sex itself to suppose it possible. I see how it has been – I have, during my absence, been maligned; my character has been traduced, she has been taught to consider me false and faithless; a wretch unworthy of a thought; but I will discover the slanderer, and though I follow him through the world, I will punish him for his baseness. Speak, Theresa, speak! say it is so, and relieve my heart from the overpowering weight which is sinking it to despair; for then may I quickly clear my fame, and regain the priceless jewel I have lost!”

What woman’s heart could withstand such an appeal? not Donna Theresa’s, surely. Indeed, it would have been more fortunate for herself and her family had it been of a less tender nature. She appeared moved, as, with a slight falter in her voice, scarcely perceptible to any but a lover’s ears, she exclaimed, “On no one, but on my own head, rests the blame; and on me let your anger fall. I have wronged you, Luis; I would have spared you this, but the time is passed for reparation, and my actions are not in my own power; yet we are no longer children, that I should mourn for the past, or that you should do aught unbecoming a man. Pardon me, Luis, for my heartless treatment; but I will no longer tamper with your generous feelings: my hand is pledged to another!”

Don Luis started as if an electric shock had struck him. “All is finished, then,” he exclaimed, “and my fondly-cherished hopes are blasted! I will not reproach you, lady – I will not question you further. May he who has gained your hand not find that he also is betrayed.” He stopped, and gazed a moment at her countenance. “Oh! pardon, pardon me for such words,” he cried: “no, I will not, even in my thoughts, condemn you. For your sake I would have died; and, with my life, I will still protect you against all who may wrong you. Theresa, you know not what agony you have caused.”

“Spare me, Luis, spare me,” exclaimed his cousin. “I have told you that I have no longer power over my own destinies, and therefore words are thrown away. It were better for both that this interview should end; and, when we next meet, let us forget the past. Farewell.”

Don Luis started at that word, casting one long earnest gaze at her, full of reproach and grief, which he could not repress. “Farewell, Theresa; may the happiness I do not expect to find be your lot!” he cried, in a voice broken with agitation, and rushed from the apartment.

Donna Theresa stood for a minute motionless, gazing in the direction her young cousin had gone, while bitterly did her conscience condemn her; but she was too proud, too firm in her resolve, to allow it to conquer. For good or for evil her course was taken, and she had determined nought should deter her from following it; yet the intensity of her feelings almost overcame her, and it was some

time before she could recover herself, as she stood at the open window eagerly inhaling the fresh air, till the return of her attendants. They had judiciously kept away; for, it must be known, that in no part of the civilised world are Abigails more discreet than in Portugal; and, when they saw a handsome young cavalier rushing up stairs, whom most of them remembered as the playmate, and latterly the ardent admirer of their mistress, judging from their own feelings on such an occasion, they naturally concluded the cousins would wish for a short time, to enjoy, uninterrupted, each other's society. With most commendable consideration, therefore, they lingered on their return; or, at all events, did not approach nearer than the keyhole of some of the doors leading into the apartment, where they became highly-interested spectators of the drama enacting within; so that Don Luis gained, unawares, several warm advocates in his cause; for all joined in deprecating their mistress's cruel treatment of so handsome a cavalier, each one feeling that she could not have found it in her heart to be so obdurate.

Volume One – Chapter Five

It has just occurred to us, that our readers will begin to suppose we design to make Don Luis d'Almeida our hero; but we must disclaim intending to introduce any such character; though, were we writing a romance, instead of compiling a history of the times of the great Marquis, he might, very properly, be considered in that light; indeed, we take great interest in his fate, for we cannot help sympathising with the sorrows of one, whom the blind archer has treated so cruelly; and we therefore omit many incidents mentioned in the voluminous manuscripts before us, in order to describe his proceedings, which, retrograding a little, we will now relate, from the time he landed with Captain Pinto from the corvette. His first impulse was to hasten to the palace of his father, the Conde d'Almeida; both longing to throw himself at the feet of a parent he revered, and knowing that he should there learn where Donna Theresa was residing. In his first hope he was disappointed; for, on entering his father's hall, a solemn silence reigned around, and everything wore a deserted and melancholy air. Instead of the grey-headed porter, and the group of liveried menials, water-carriers, idlers, and beggars, the maimed, and the blind, who usually throng the entrance of every noble's house in Lisbon, his feet aroused three or four hideous specimens of the canine race, who had thought fit to make it their abode during the heat of the day, till they should sally forth at night to join their brethren, and enact the part of scavengers to the city.

Pedro's loud vociferations, after sundry interrogations from some one above to inquire their business at the palace, at length brought down an old domestic, who no sooner caught sight of the person he thought was a stranger, than, in his agitation, letting his keys drop on the stone pavement, he rushed forward, with outstretched arms, to fold his young master in an embrace which lasted some minutes, now tapping him on one side, now on the other; but Don Luis took it as a matter of course, returning it with equal cordiality, till Pedro came in for a slighter share of the old man's welcomes. He was next obliged to go through the same ceremony with an old lady, whom the chirruping voice of the old major domo called down. Her grey locks were partly concealed by a neat white handkerchief, fastened over her head, while another covered her shoulders, below which appeared a gown of a staid, sombre colour, a large black rosary and crucifix hanging down to her waist. To his eager inquiries for the Count, his father, he could for some time elicit no other answer than various broken exclamations.

"Oh, holy Virgin! oh, Jesu Maria! these are bad times, dangerous times," and they looked round cautiously to see that no one was within hearing. "There is now one in Portugal who is each day becoming a greater favourite of our lord the king, and who can do anything in the country, who rules the holy Church, who rules the people, and who seeks to rule the fidalgos also. Oh, he's a great man, doubtless, but he's much to be feared. Well, senhor, it was only the other day that your father's friend, Senhor Alfonzo Botelho, was arrested, we know not on what account, and thrown into prison, and when the Senhor Conde, your father, was exerting himself to the utmost for his liberation, and applied to Senhor Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho, the privy counsellor to the king, it was hinted to him that he might share the same fate if he interfered."

"What say you?" exclaimed Don Luis. "Have any dared to throw my honoured father into prison?"

"Heaven deliver us from a like calamity," answered the old couple. "Oh no, senhor, it is not so bad as that; but when the Senhor Conde came home, he ordered his carriage and his horses, and the escudeiro, and the other servants to be prepared, and set off the next day for the Quinta."

"This is indeed bad news you give me," answered Don Luis. "And I must hasten away tomorrow to join my father: I have therefore no time to lose in Lisbon. First, can you tell me if my fair cousin, Donna Theresa d'Alorna, is residing in the city, or is she in the country?"

"Oh, senhor, the Senhora Donna Theresa is at present at the house of the marquis, her father; but, alas! she is much changed from what she was; for she never comes here now to spend the day;

though, to be sure, she has more to occupy her than formerly, for it is said she has become a great favourite of the queen, and is constantly at Court; and that is not a good place for young ladies, who are much better-employed staying at home, and learning to work and to embroider.”

“The dissipations of a Court will have no power to alter Donna Theresa’s heart,” exclaimed the lover. “But now, my good Lucas and Senhora Anna, I must hasten away, though I will soon return; for I have much to learn and much to tell you.”

“But you cannot think, senhor, of leaving the house without taking something to eat,” exclaimed the old lady: “you would die of hunger, and you always used to have a very good appetite.”

“All, senhor, do stay,” added old Lucas, “and we will soon cook you up something to please you.”

“I am not hungry, I assure you, my good friends,” answered Don Luis; “and I cannot remain, but I will leave Pedro to recount all the wonders he has seen, and the dangers he has escaped;” saying which, he hurried off in the fond hope of finding his mistress fair and loving as ever. How grievously he was disappointed we have seen; and he then remembered Captain Pinto’s warning and advice.

On rushing from the apartment of his false and fickle mistress, Don Luis scarcely knew whither he was wandering. All his bright hopes and aspirations were crushed and blighted at the moment he expected to find them realised. A weight was on his heart, from which he felt none could relieve him, and he believed that from henceforth the world for him could have no happiness in store; but yet he recollected that he was a man, and he resolved not to sink tamely under his cruel fate.

Now we opine that romance writers would have made their heroes act very differently; they would either have thrown themselves, in despair, into the Tagus, or flown to weary the live-long hours in deploring their hapless lot, with groans and sighs, beneath the mournful shade of some solitary grove; but Don Luis was of a very different character. In the first place, he was too brave, and too much in his senses, to quit the world; and he had been taught, and believed, that he had no right to give up existence till summoned by a higher Power than his own will. Nor is suicide a crime at all common with his countrymen: they live under too bright a sky, and breathe too pure and elastic an atmosphere, to wish to change them for the gloomy, narrow tomb. Had he been of that disposition which delights to brood over grief in solitude, there were no shady groves in the neighbourhood of Lisbon whither he could repair to indulge his propensity, if we except a few orange and olive plantations, where he would most certainly have been accompanied by a rabble of little boys, to wonder what he could be about, probably mistaking him for some actor rehearsing his part in a tragedy. To return home was almost as bad; for he knew that he should be assailed by the importunate, though kind, questions of his old domestics; and though he had many relations and friends in the city who would be glad to see him, he could not bring himself to call upon them.

Inaction, in the present state of his feelings, was dreadful to him, yet, as he mechanically bent his steps towards his home, he found himself there before he had made up his mind what course to pursue. He was encountered on the steps by Lucas, who observing his young master’s agitated countenance, comprehended at once that all was not as he wished. “These are sad times, senhor, sad times,” said the old man, “and I fear you found Donna Theresa changed with them; but don’t fret, senhor; come up stairs, and tell Anna all about it, and she will be able to give you the best comfort; for she nursed you when you were a little baby, and knows how to treat you.”

The major domo’s garrulous tongue reminded Don Luis that such was the very thing he wished to avoid, and he was about to rush out of the house, when another sentence of the old man’s made him remain, “Oh! senhor, I forgot to tell you, that Ignacio d’Ozorio is here; he came with a message from your most reverend cousin, the holy Father Jacinto da Costa, to the Senhor Conde, to say that he wished to see him on urgent business, not being aware that he had quitted Lisbon; and when he heard that you had arrived, he said he would remain to see you, and that, perhaps, you would visit Father Jacinto instead of the Count.”

“I will speak to Father Ignacio,” said Don Luis; “where is he?”

“He awaits you in the drawing-room, senhor.”

“Welcome back to Portugal, my son,” said the Jesuit, in that calm, bland voice, so universal among the members of his order. “I came here, expecting to find your respected parent, but, as he is absent, I feel confident my superior will be glad to see you.”

“I trust that my reverend cousin, Father Jacinto, is not unwell?” said Don Luis.

“His health does not fail him, nor his mind, though the latter is sorely vexed by the attacks which are daily made against our order, and which require all his energy and talents to combat; but on that subject he will speak to you.”

“I will gladly accompany you, and am ready this instant to set out,” returned Don Luis.

“You know not, my son, the changes which have taken place during your absence; for it is now dangerous to be seen holding conversation with one of our order, so hated are we by the secretary of state, Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho. I will precede you, and announce your coming.”

After the Jesuit had departed, Anna and Lucas did their utmost to detain Don Luis till he had eaten of the repast they had prepared; but declaring that he had no appetite, to pacify them, he begged them to reserve it till his return, and with hurried steps set out towards the convent of which his cousin was the principal.

He had a considerable distance to traverse, through many narrow dirty streets, up and down hill, till he reached the convent, situated in the upper part of the city. It was a plain and solid building of stone, suited to the unostentatious tastes and habits of its founders, whose great care is, to avoid show or pretensions of any sort. He was received at the entrance by one of the lay members of the order, who informed him that the principal was at that moment engaged with a stranger, and requesting him to wait for a short time, till he should be at liberty to receive him, and conducting him, through several passages and corridors, to a small apartment appropriated to the guest who might visit any of the fathers, he there left him. If primitive simplicity, and want of all outward decoration, were marks of peculiar sanctity, this room might vie with any in holiness; for, except a few high-backed chairs, of some dark wood, and a table of the same colour, with writing materials, furniture there was none, the walls being simply whitewashed, and the ceiling of chestnut, a wood much used in Portugal, particularly in monastic buildings.

Don Luis, being left alone, paced the room with hurried steps, half repenting that he had thus exposed himself – he knew not for how long a time – to the company of his own bitter and agitated thoughts. There was not an object within to draw off his attention; neither, at that moment, would a picture of Titian’s, nor a statue from the hands of Praxiteles, have had sufficient charms to attract his observation. But at length he reached an open window, which looked into a garden filled with orange-trees loaded with their delicate-tinted flowers and rich fruit, round the roots of which the gardener had just allowed to flow a rill of water; and the grateful trees were exhaling their delicious odours, in return, as it were, for the benefit bestowed, scenting the air far and wide. So balmy was the air, so soothing the scent, that even his sad thoughts yielded to the soft influence of kind Nature’s gifts, – a calmness stealing imperceptibly over his soul, and changing the whole current of his thoughts. “How delightful would it be,” he fancied, “to rest, in a quiet seclusion like this, from all the cares and troubles of the world, free from the anxieties and disappointments of love, the fever of ambition, the intrigues of the Court, the scenes of strife which rage beyond its walls! Yet! – No, no,” he exclaimed, after his thoughts had been quiescent for some time, “man was not formed for such a life. How could I endure the seclusion and monotony of the cloister, the fasts and penances, the routine of worship, the separation from the gentler part of creation, false and fickle though they be?” he added bitterly. “No, I am not formed for a life of seclusion and indolence.”

How often he might have changed his opinion during the course of the ensuing minutes, it is impossible to say, when the brother who conducted him into the apartment again appeared, to inform him that the principal was waiting to receive him. As he was passing through a long corridor, a person hastened by him, whose features a gleam of the evening sun lighted strongly up; but his conductor,

taking no notice of the stranger, hurried him on till they reached the door of a chamber at the further end of the passage, knocking at which, a voice desired them to enter; and the brother, making a low reverence, retired. No sooner did the occupant of the room, in which the young noble found himself, perceive him, than, with a bland and cordial manner, he rose from his seat, and advanced to welcome him.

He was a man every way worthy of observation: his figure was tall and erect, the height of his appearance increased by the close-fitting, dark robes of his order, although he had already passed the meridian of life, and age had sprinkled a few grey streaks amid his dark hair. His forehead was clear, pale, and lofty, his cheeks were sallow and sunk in, with scarcely any colour on his thin lips, which, when not speaking, he kept firmly closed. His nose was aquiline, delicate, and transparent; but his eyes were the most remarkable features of his countenance, though they were sunk far in his head, of a grey tint, and of no considerable size; but it was their expression, and the bright searching glances they threw around, full of intelligence, which made persons addressing him feel that he could read every thought passing in their minds; and few but acknowledged to themselves that they stood in the presence of a superior being. His voice, too, was melodious, though powerful and manly; his enunciation rapid and clear, with a perfect command of language. Such was the man whose unseen subtle influence was felt by all ranks and conditions of people. But there was another greater than he, though scarce his superior in mind or ambition, but with greater boldness of execution, to whom, for a time, the force of circumstances gave the predominance, – an opportunity which he failed not to use to hurl his antagonist to destruction.

“Welcome, my son,” he said, in a low, clear voice, as he led Don Luis to a chair opposite his own. “Welcome, my young relation, to the land of your nativity, though you come at a time of much anxiety and trouble. I had sent to your father to advise him of certain circumstances which have come to my knowledge, against which it is both his interest and mine to guard in our respective estates. When shall you see your father?”

“I propose to set out for the Quinta to-morrow,” answered Don Luis.

“What! before you have seen your fair cousin, Donna Theresa d’Alorna?” returned the Jesuit. “But why do I ask? – you have seen her already, and the blow has fallen which I feared awaited you. I was aware of your love for Donna Theresa, and that she at one time returned it, for your interests have ever been dear to me, Luis; but I have since discovered that she no longer regards you with affection; and I now know that her hand is irrevocably engaged to another. Had I known of your arrival, I would have saved you the bitter feelings of learning the truth from her own lips; for well do I know how ill in youth we can bear disappointment, which, in our more advanced age, when our passions are cooled and our judgment is matured, we consider but of little moment.”

“Nor age, nor philosophy could blunt the feelings of one who has loved as I have done,” answered Don Luis, vehemently. “I dreamed not that you divined my love for my cousin Theresa; but since you know it, (for otherwise I should not venture to speak to you on such a subject,) tell me, Father, have I no hopes? Has she not been forced to accept the hand of another? If so, at all hazards, I will rescue her from destruction. None shall dare to tear her unwillingly from me.”

“I can give you no hopes,” answered the Priest, gravely. “She is engaged of her own freewill: nor can she ever be yours; but I speak, I know, to one of too superior an understanding to mourn for what he will soon learn to consider at its true value, a glittering, a tempting, but an empty bauble. What matters the loss of the love of a sex ever false and uncertain?”

“Say not so!” exclaimed Don Luis, interrupting him; “say not she is false – say not her sex is false! I alone am to blame for my own wretchedness. I set my hopes of happiness on a cast, and have miserably failed; and now what more have I to expect or wish for, than a speedy end to my woes on the field of battle, or amid the ocean tempest?”

The Priest smiled, as he answered calmly, “Is love, then, the only object of man’s life? Are there not a hundred other occupations for the mind? Is not ambition alone sufficient to employ his thoughts?”

Will not power satisfy him? Does fame bring no satisfaction? Has wealth, and all that wealth can give, no allurements? Say not, then, because you have suffered this first check in the prosperous current of your existence, that life has nought else in store for you. The antidotes which I propose are sufficient to make you soon smile at your present feelings as the effect of a youthful folly.”

“You cannot convince my heart,” answered the young man. “But should I seek for consolation by the remedies you advise, at what can ambition in this country aim? How can power be obtained? or how can I, with honour, seek for wealth?”

The Priest, smiling, again said, “You speak as one who knows not the world. I mean not the outward, material world, the common machinery which moves the every-day actions of men: any coarse, ordinary being, with a little cunning and observation, may gain sufficient knowledge of that to accumulate wealth, and to guide his way free from danger amid the throngs of his fellows. But I speak of the minds and passions, the inward and intricate workings of the souls of men; of that accurate knowledge of the past, and keen observation of the present, by which we can foresee the future, thus to be able to determine exactly how mankind will act in masses or as individuals, and stoically to look upon the world as a vast chess-board, and its inhabitants as the chess-men, whom we move without any volition of their own, as a player free from any part or feeling with the senseless blocks; as well as to learn how to gain a command over ourselves, and thus to soar above the passions, the frailties, the vanities, and the folly of the common herd. Such is the true knowledge of the world to which a philosophical mind and dauntless soul may attain; and in such, my young friend, would I instruct you.”

Don Luis remained silent with astonishment, while the priest keenly marked the effect of his words. “Is this the man,” he thought, “whom I have regarded as the humble priest and confessor – the meekly-pious minister of our holy faith? But how and where can this knowledge be attained?” he said, looking up; “what means have I of learning the lore you speak of?”

“Have I not said that I would instruct you?” said the Priest. “Within the quiet precincts of these walls you may learn the first rudiments, and within the pale of our order you may become a master in the science.”

“What! can you advise me to give up my title, my name, and fortune, and to assume the gown of a priest?” exclaimed Don Luis, hurriedly. “I expected not such advice from you.”

“I advise you to do nothing rashly,” returned the Jesuit, calmly. “But yet, let me ask you, what are rank and name but empty sounds, though often encumbrances to their possessors? And for your fortune, I grieve to say, for your father’s sake, that has greatly diminished of late, so that, in truth, I ask you to give up but little, and offer you in return power and knowledge – the true science of the knowledge of mankind, for with us alone does it exist. Do I say exists? Alas! I ought rather to say existed; for, with some rare exceptions, how few are initiated into its mysteries! Their dull, sensual minds are incapable of comprehending them; and they have thus failed, miserably failed, in all the ends for which our order was instituted, by men as superior to those of the present day as light to darkness. What a comprehensive, what a noble and glorious conception was that of our great founder, and his immediate successors, who even yet more improved and systematised his plans; – but of that I will speak anon. I now speak openly to you, my young cousin, more so than I would to any other not in our order; but I know that I may trust to your honour not to divulge what I may say. I have liked you from your earliest youth. I have watched anxiously over you, and I have seen in you qualities which I would wish to cultivate, to conduct you to high destinies; and I frankly confess that I seek to join you to our company, as one fully able to elevate it again to its former standard of power.”

Few men can entirely withstand the influence of compliments addressed to their mental superiority, and Don Luis was thus insensibly attracted to listen to the conversation of the Father. “I fear that you would find I did not answer your expectations,” he at length said; “for I feel that I am but dull of comprehension, nor can I even understand to what the knowledge you speak of could lead.”

“Is not knowledge confessed by all philosophers to be power? and for what are all men striving through life but for power?” responded the Jesuit. “For what purpose do kings make war but to

increase their power? and yet their utmost aim is to rule over the sinews, the bones, the bodies of men, to extend their sway over the senseless earth which they call their own. But how far, how immeasurably superior is the power at which we aim! – we would rule over the minds of men – we would bend their insane passions to our own will, and would make them, by those means, the tools to work out our glorious projects. Hear me, then, and learn the sublime idea of our founder, which, had he and his immediate followers been succeeded by men equal to themselves, would long ere this have been realised. His aim – how superior to the ambition and vaunted glory of any conqueror who has spread desolation over the fair face of the globe! – was to join all the kingdoms of the earth under one sceptre, and that sceptre swayed by our hands; ay, by the humble friars of the order of the mystical Jesus; and yet, far different would it be from the power to which the Pontiff of Rome can ever hope to attain. Ah! you think such aims cannot be accomplished; yet, look around at every Court in Europe, and see how nearly we had once succeeded. Scarce a sovereign whose mind was not under our direction; and were it not for the dull, stultish understandings of those who have been admitted into our order, our success might have been complete. But they, alas! are beings so completely overwhelmed with the gross, sensual passions of our nature, as to be utterly unable to comprehend the pure, esoteric principles of our faith; and ignorantly interpreting, without a key to the mysteries, the words they find in that volume, never written to meet the eye of the vulgar, they fail in all the great aims of our existence as an order. In this country they have still more greatly erred, and, instead of securing friends, they have raised up enemies. The whole body of the priesthood is against us; but their united efforts we might despise, had we not a deadly foe in the person of Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho, the minister of the king, whose dauntless courage, boundless ambition, and the unscrupulous means he employs, make him more to be feared than any who have ever yet appeared in arms against us. So dull are those who are sent to work with me, that I cannot make them comprehend the means by which alone they can stem the torrent, or rather, turn it aside; nor is it in the power of one man to do so; yet have I done much, and even alone, will I boldly strive for the glorious principle of our constitution.” – His eye dilated, and he unconsciously rose from his chair, as with increased energy, he continued – “and if I fail, and am hurled, as I most assuredly shall be, to destruction, I shall have the consolation of knowing that I have played for a glorious stake.”

“Your words overpower me with astonishment,” exclaimed Don Luis. “I did not suppose such ideas could have been conceived by the heart of man, much less by the members of an order whose quiet and unobtrusive manners are their marked distinction.”

“Trust not ever to such deceitful appearances as the outward manners of a man,” answered the Father; “a general, who would succeed against the foe, must not show his position and strength. Luis, I have thus spoken openly to you, far more so than to any who have not passed the threshold of our order; for I would win you to enter; and I know that I may trust to your judgment and honour; and were it not strictly forbidden, I should not fear to confide to you all the mysteries of our admirable institution. Ah!” he exclaimed, as his eye brightened, and a proud smile lighted up his majestic features, “an institution based on such firm, such true principles of philosophy, must live, though, for a time, it may sink beneath persecution – though, for a time, through the ignorance and obtuseness of members incapable of comprehending its tenets alone, its aims may be perverted, and its power diminished, yet the true word, the principle of its existence, will never be lost; and when the world least expects it, when people are unprepared to oppose it, will it spring up with power and lustre far surpassing what it ever before attained. In countries the most liberal and enlightened will it possess the greatest influence, by means of that very education of which they boast – ay, even in that country from which you have just returned, whose Church, through the absurd folly and neglect of its own ministers, has become a mere cipher in the state, without a shadow of authority over the people; yet does the true principle exist among a few sagacious men, who will cherish it as the lapidary does a precious jewel, whose value, when yet uncut, is unestimated by the common eye. The day will arrive when all those who acknowledge the symbol of the cross will again be joined under one

ruling power, – the glorious aim of our order. You deem me enthusiastic and visionary in my hopes, because you know not the secret means by which we work. You know not how we become acquainted with the intricate operations of the minds of all with whom we come in contact, of all classes and religions. We learn the passions, the frailties, the foibles of every one; and thus many, unknown even to themselves, are our tools, and while they fancy that they are obeying the rules of their own sect, are but working out our ends. The end with us sanctifies the means, and thus, to attain our objects, we consider every disguise, every fraud, allowable. Know, also, that though our open and avowed members are numerous, yet they fall far short of the real strength of our body; for we have among the priests of each of the various sects of the religion of the cross our secret brethren, who are strenuously working for the great cause. Ah, you start! but the idea is not new; and such was practised before that religion became known to the world; and in that very country which boasts of possessing what is called the blessing of religious liberty do we most strenuously work the whole force of that intricate machinery, which was for years forming, before it was brought to perfection; and thus shall we be able to laugh to scorn the puny efforts of those who dare to oppose us; for even now, in the seats of learning, in every university of the kingdom I speak of, are the seeds sown which will, sooner or later, bring their fruit to perfection. And it is among the young and pliant minds, while they fancy themselves most secure, that we most easily work our way. But the great assistants to our cause are the softer sex; for, by their gentle influence are others won over to aid us, and we therefore spare no means to gain them. We work upon their vanity; the tendency of their natures to adoration; the feeling that they must lean for support on others, to make them place their trust in us; and when such means fail, we win their love: their passions make them subservient to us, and they become our slaves for ever. But such license has been much abused by the baser members of our order, who cannot comprehend that it is over the minds alone of their flock that authority is given them, to gain which any means may be pardoned.”

There is no bait which has more alluring attractions than the idea of possessing illimitable power over the minds of our fellow men; yet Don Luis was not caught by it. And, although the Father was enthusiastic in his hopes, he did not exaggerate the influence which his sect possessed throughout the world; as for his predictions with respect to Britain, at this day their great stronghold, we must examine well the principles professed openly by a large body of the members of the Established Church, encouraged by many of the highest rank in it, and admired by the greater number of the young aspirants for the clerical profession, and then let us judge whether they were well founded or not. But we wish not here to discuss the subject, and have given merely the opinion of one high in his order, as we have found it written, whose mind was raised far above the vulgar aims of his associates.

Don Luis heard with unmitigated astonishment the doctrines which the Father so boldly advanced; although, from the various societies in which he mixed during his travels, particularly in Paris, where those principles of false philosophy were generally discussed, which led to the atrocities of the revolution, he was not quite so much startled as most men of his rank in Portugal would have been; yet he was of too generous, too unambitious a disposition to be thus tempted to grasp the mysterious and potent sceptre presented to him.

“Father,” he answered, gravely, after some minutes’ silence, “my ambition aims not at such power as you describe; and, methinks, few but those who have from their youth been educated in your order, could be brought to train their minds to forward a system which has, to the uninitiated, too much the appearance of treachery towards their fellow men; for as such I feel it, though, to you I speak with no disrespect, and am grateful for the confidence you repose in me, which, be assured, I will not betray; but I must endeavour to seek some other field for my exertions than the one you offer.”

The Jesuit looked at him sternly; it seemed, that an almost imperceptible smile – it might have been a sneer – played round his mouth. “I did not anticipate such an answer from you, Luis,” he said, “but thought you would take a more comprehensive and philosophical view of the principles I have explained to you; yet, my wish being alone to convince your understanding, I will not further press

the subject, though I feel assured you will, before long, learn to change your opinion. However, for the present, my good cousin, I trust your mind will be sufficiently employed on the reflections to which our conversation has given rise, to make you forget the treachery and deceit of Donna Theresa – qualities which, you seem to insinuate, belong exclusively to our order. Now, let me tell you, that, in communication with the world, all men use deceit; that it is impossible to succeed without it; and that truth, as society is constituted, is utterly incompatible with its customs. Indeed, the latter quality exists but in one science, and that is in geometry: all else is false or unsatisfactory. Talk, therefore, no more of deceit and treachery, for the world, our very existence, is full of it, and you cannot avoid the common lot.” The Priest smiled, perhaps at his own reasoning, and continued – “Now, my dear cousin, think of what I have said, and when you return to Lisbon, we will speak further on these matters. In the meantime, you must be the bearer of important information to your father, which I have gained from an indubitable source. Learn, then, that Carvalho is using every effort to crush our order, – so strong a barrier to his ambition, – and, knowing that the nobles are our firm upholders, he intends to weaken their influence in the state, by bringing accusations of all sorts against them; when he will imprison, banish, or execute all whom he fears. I have reason to think that he, at present, suspects there is a plot hatching against him; but he allows it to proceed, anxious to get as many as possible drawn into it, and, amongst them, your father. Advise him, therefore, to remain quietly at his Quinta; neither answering, nor, if possible, receiving, any communications made to him, till he hears further from me; and when you return to Lisbon, avoid intimacy with any one, for you cannot discern friends from foes in these times. And now, my son, farewell: I expect another visitor, and must not detain you.”

“Farewell, most reverend Father,” answered Don Luis, rising at the hint, and respectfully kissing the hand held out to him. “I shall not easily forget your conversation; and your advice I will bear to my father.”

The tinkle of a bell summoned a lay brother, who escorted Don Luis from the apartment, the Superior following the young man’s retiring form with his piercing glance. “He will yet be mine,” he uttered, half aloud. “He is wary and timid, and will not take the bait at the first sight; but it is too bright and dazzling not to attract him at last, and he will play round it till he is caught.”

The door again opened, and another visitor entered, the Superior rising and embracing him with every mark of respect; and, having led him to the seat he had himself occupied, took one of humbler dimensions, while he seemed prepared to listen attentively to the words which might fall from the lips of his friend. He was a man far advanced in life, of a tall and gaunt figure; his gown, of the fashion of the Jesuits, fitting ill around him. His hair, only partially grizzled, though shorn at the top, he wore (unusually for a priest) in long straggling locks, probably in affectation, to increase the wildness of his extraordinary countenance, which was furrowed and bronzed by exposure to the weather and burning climes. His features were coarse, and thoroughly unintellectual; but his eyes gave expression to the whole physiognomy: they were large, round, dark, and lustrous, with a certain turn in them which caused those who beheld him to suppose that they were glancing in different directions. Every lineament proclaimed the fanatical enthusiast, which the style and substance of his oratory fully confirmed.

Such was the appearance of the holy Father Malagrida, for he whom we have described was that celebrated personage. “Pax vobiscum, holy Father,” he began, in a low, deep voice, though with rather a nasal sound. “The spirit of the Blessed Virgin ordered me, in a dream, to come to you, to consult you regarding the best means of preserving the honour and glory of our order inviolate at this critical juncture; yet think not that it was a common dream which prompted me, but a beatific vision of the fair daughter of Saint Anne, in the form she wore before she knew that she was to be the joyful mother of the King of men.”

“You are favoured with partiality by Heaven, Father Malagrida,” answered the Superior; “and happy are you to rejoice in so great a blessing, while I am left to grope my way in darkness, without any such signs of Heaven’s approbation.”

“My prayers to Heaven, my fastings and castigations, my long and arduous voyages, with all the perils of the sea and land, have not been thrown away; and as a reward for my pious exertions, it has been given me to see visions, and to prophesy events, even before the saints above know them; ay, to speak in strange tongues the words of truth, even in such strange tongues that none can understand them.”

“You are doubtlessly highly favoured,” answered his wary companion; “but methinks a little less outward demonstration of zeal, at the present moment, would have been more advisable, and you would yet have retained your post as confessor to the queen, and enjoyed the lofty satisfaction of leading her gentle soul to eternal salvation.”

“Ah! that is the subject about which I would speak,” answered Malagrida: “most foully have I been thrust out of my office, and I would revenge myself, or I would say it is the duty of our order to punish that heretical, iron-hearted man, Sebastião Carvalho, who has been the cause of all the injuries inflicted on us.”

“You speak words of wisdom, my brother,” returned the crafty Jesuit; “but how would you accomplish the noble end you have in view, so greatly to the advantage of our holy religion, and the safety of our order?”

“I would stir up the people against him, as one hateful in the sight of Heaven; I would call down the thunder of Rome upon his head; and I would work upon the fears and piety of the king to recall those who have for so long possessed the precious care of his soul, ere he delivers it into the power of the prince of darkness in the person of his minister.”

“But should the king refuse to hear you, and still follow the evil suggestions of Carvalho?” asked the other.

“Then will I make him tremble on his throne!” exclaimed Malagrida. “The nobles and the people shall rise against his unholy power, and his death shall teach monarchs that our order is not to be trampled on with impunity.”

“Truly, my brother, the spirit of inspiration is on you,” said the Superior, casting a keen glance towards him. “And nowhere can our order find a more zealous advocate.”

“For that was I born; for that have I fought; and for that will I die!” exclaimed Malagrida with enthusiasm. “Such is the spirit which should animate all our order, and we should triumph, in the name of our Lord, against all opposition which frail man can offer.”

We need not detail the whole of the conversation, which proceeded for a considerable time in the above style: the cool, calculating policy of Father da Costa strongly contrasted with the wild enthusiasm of Malagrida, upon which he worked, while the latter, at the same time, through the ravings of madness, showed a shrewdness and sagacity in worldly matters, where the interests of his order were concerned, which did credit to the school in which he had been educated. When Malagrida had retired – “Stubborn madman that you are,” muttered the Superior, “you are yet a necessary and useful tool in the hands of those who know how to wield you, though alone you are like a scythed war-chariot, dragged on by wild horses without a guiding hand, carrying havoc and destruction wherever it appears.”

Volume One – Chapter Six

At the time of which we write, the streets of Lisbon were, perhaps, the most rugged, the most ill-lighted, the worst paved, and the most filthy, of any city in Christendom. It is true lanterns were placed before the shrines of the saints, at nearly every corner of the streets; but the glasses of some had been sacrilegiously broken, and the pale lights which glimmered from the rest served but to make more palpable the obscurity of the other part of the way; indeed, it was considered often a service of danger, by the wealthy citizen, to venture out without a torch-bearer and several armed men to protect him from the bands of marauders, who were constantly prowling about, and hesitated at no kind of atrocity. Assassination and robbery were of nightly occurrence; seldom, indeed, was the latter committed without murder; the system of the ruffians being first to plunge their daggers into the bosoms of their intended victims, and then to rifle them. Thus, although private revenge often prompted the deed, as the murdered man was always found stripped of his valuables, he was supposed to have fallen as a chance offering to Siva, and no further notice was taken of the affair; the faint cry of *Acad el rey!*² as the cold steel entered his unguarded bosom, was heard ringing through the night air, and the trembling citizens, fearful of being subpoenaed as witnesses, or accused of the deed, would keep close their doors, and leave the unfortunate wretch to perish unaided, when timely succour might have saved him, should the dagger, by chance, have ineffectually accomplished its work.

But few years ago, we remember returning at early dawn from a party, when we encountered several persons, and two guards, standing round a man on the ground weltering in blood yet flowing warm from a deep wound in his side. A convulsive shudder passed through his frame, yet no one attempted to aid him, the guards keeping every one off with their bayonets, saying it was their duty to allow none to touch him till the officers of justice had arrived to inquire into the case. The man was then past recovery; but had aid been afforded him when first discovered, he might probably have been saved; yet, surrounded by his fellow creatures, he was allowed to bleed to death without a saving hand held forth. If we recollect rightly, he had been an officer in the Miguelite army, and had committed several atrocious acts; but had he been a friend, the same would have occurred. But to return to earlier times. It was then also the practice of the dissolute and idle young fidalgos to range the city with bacchanalian songs, injuring and insulting all they met; often on the slightest resistance, spilling blood, and committing, indeed, every sort of excess, besides amusing themselves, in their milder moods, with those practical jokes at one time fashionable in England, and probably imitated from them. In his youth, it was said that Sebastião Carvalho had been a leader in one of the most daring of these bands, when, to make his gigantic height more conspicuous, he dressed himself with a white hat and shoes, driving all rival parties before him. Being thus perfectly acquainted with all the mysteries of the system, he had determined, now that he had succeeded to power, to put down all disorders of the sort. Such was the state of Lisbon in 1755, and, as far as cleanliness was concerned, it was not much improved in 1830; but since then, under the beneficial influence of a liberal and more enlightened government, vast improvements have taken place; drains have been formed; it is paved and well lighted, and as well patrolled as any city in Europe, though not more so than the second city of the kingdom, Oporto, through any part of which a person may walk at night without the slightest fear of robbery, owing to a highly efficient municipal guard.

Though there were doubtless many more important personages who figured at that period, we must not lose sight of our friend Don Luis. It was nearly dark when he issued from the portals of the Jesuits' College, and, the distance to his own residence being considerable, night had completely set in by the time he reached the lower part of the city, when it occurred to him that it would have been more prudent to have ordered Pedro to attend him. But his mind was too much engrossed by the

² Hear the king! – a cry for help.

conversation he had held with Father da Costa, to think much of the danger he ran; and as one strong poison will often prove an antidote to another, so had the new ideas opened to his view banished for a time the recollection of his own griefs and disappointments. He hurried on as fast as the badness of the way would permit, through streets extremely narrow; the houses being lofty, with many stories, their fronts adorned with various figures carved in stone, and the upper floors projecting beyond the lower, little light was afforded to the passenger, from the sky, even when clear and spangled with stars, as it was at the present time. He had already reached the street leading to that in which his father's house was situated, without meeting any interruption, when, having just passed a shrine dedicated to Saint Anthony placed at a corner house, a small lamp burning in front of it, shedding forth its pale light, like a sad epitome of the glorious illumination that pious man spread among his much loved Lusitanians, his eyes, now directed on the ground, to pick his way clear of the immundities which strewed the way, and now in front, in a vain endeavour to pierce the gloom, he fancied that he saw on the white stone wall of a house close to him, which the rays of the lamp reached, the shadow of a man, with arm uplifted, in the attitude of one about to strike. His nerves were fortunately well strung, his courage undaunted, and his frame well knit and active to obey his will; but not a moment was there for thought, and as the threatening apparition caught his eye, quick as lightning he sprang round, ere a dagger, gleaming brightly, had time to descend, and, seizing the hand which grasped it, wrenched the weapon from the power of the cloaked assassin, who stood behind, and dealing him a heavy blow on the face with the handle, laid him prostrate on the ground. The ruffian was, however, not without support; for, at the same moment, a man sprang across the street with dagger in hand, ready to avenge his comrade. But Don Luis was not to be taken thus at advantage; for, retreating a step, his own sword was prepared to receive the wretch on its point. The latter, however, throwing himself back in time, fled a few paces, and gave a shrill whistle, which was answered at several points, and three men rushed forward with threatening attitudes and unsheathed weapons. Don Luis was fortunate in his ground, having a wall with a projecting buttress behind him, and an uneven pavement in front, the lamp of Saint Anthony affording sufficient light to see objects around with tolerable distinctness. He was, notwithstanding, obliged to exert his utmost activity and skill to keep his assailants at bay, being happily a good swordsman, an accomplishment even then considered a necessary part of a gentleman's education. The clash of steel rang loudly through the silence of night, but none put their heads out of their windows to inquire the cause; and, Luis disdainful to give the usual cry for assistance, was well nigh exhausted with his exertions, when, most opportunely, a person, passing a neighbouring street, was attracted by the noise, and appeared so suddenly on the scene of action, that the bravoes had scarce time to turn and defend themselves.

"Fight on, gallant sir, for the honour of gentlemen!" shouted a clear, manly voice. "Help here! *Acad el rey!* help, ye lazy citizens, to drive away a set of cowardly rascals, who dare not face us man to man! No matter, we might call till doomsday, and no one could come; so here is at you, sir villains;" saying which, Captain Pinto, for he was the speaker, redoubled his efforts to repel the marauders.

"Thanks for your aid, thanks, Captain Pinto," cried Don Luis, recognising his voice; "I have but short breathing time to speak."

"Ah, my young friend, Don Luis, is it you?" answered the Captain. "Back, ye villains, back!"

"Don Luis!" exclaimed one of the men, with an oath. "We have made a mistake."

"No, no," shouted another, – "cut them both down – they must not escape."

At that instant, a broad glare of red light burst on the scene of action, proceeding from several torches borne by a party who were turning the corner of the street.

"Fly," cried the ruffians, "fly! or we shall be captured."

"You shall not get off so easily," cried the Captain. "We will teach you not to attack gentlemen in this way in future." The men attempted to escape; but Don Luis and his friend held them in check on one side; while, on the other, the party with the torches, led on by a person who seemed of distinction, rapidly approached. Making, however, a desperate effort, they rushed past them, and were lost in

the obscurity, except one, through whose arm, Captain Pinto's sword entered, and brought him to the ground.

The chief of the new comers, taking a torch from the hand of one of his attendants, ordered them, in an authoritative tone, to seize the disturbers of the public peace, and advanced towards the Captain and Don Luis, on whom they were on the point of laying hold.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "my good friend, Captain Pinto! – not yet tired of fighting? I trust you are not injured, – and your companion?" he added, holding the torch nearer Don Luis's countenance.

"Don Luis d'Almeida, my fellow voyager," answered the Captain.

"Ah, the son of an excellent father," observed the stranger; "I hope he, too, is safe?"

"Many thanks to your Excellency, we are both uninjured," returned Captain Pinto. "And my young friend, who was the first attacked, fought as bravely as he did before the enemy."

"I am glad to hear it," said the stranger. "Brave men are more scarce than cowards. Carry those men off to prison," he added, turning to his followers, who secured the two ruffians who had been unable to escape. "The affair must be looked into to-morrow. You, gentlemen, I will accompany to your houses, for these streets are unfortunately not fit to be walked by honest men, without guards and lights; but such things shall be amended before long."

The stranger was a man of almost gigantic stature, and, as he strode rapidly to the scene of conflict, his movements exhibited strength and activity; the suit of dark cloth in which he was dressed, such as is now worn exclusively at Court, setting off to advantage his muscular and well knit figure. There was also a confident air of authority in his words and actions, which betokened one who felt that he had a right to command. "Come now, gentlemen, we will proceed," he said; and ordering the torch-bearers to advance, the party moved forward, the guards bringing up the rear with the prisoners, who no sooner saw into whose power they had fallen than they quietly submitted to their fate. Don Luis was at a loss to conceive who the tall stranger could be, and as he found himself walking on the opposite side of him to his friend, he had no opportunity of asking.

"All, Senhor Don Luis," he said, "you have lately been travelling, I understand from Captain Pinto, in a country where such disorders as these do not occur, and where a man may walk the streets at night, or journey from one end of the kingdom to the other, without fear of losing either his purse or his life."

"Scarcely so, senhor," answered Don Luis, "robberies are constantly occurring even in the public streets; but the English have, in general, an abhorrence of shedding blood, except that of their enemies."

"Ah, that arises from their not being able to purchase absolution at as cheap a rate as do our countrymen," interrupted the stranger, with a sarcastic laugh; "aided, perhaps, by a wholesome fear of detection, the best preventive of crime. However, continue: it gives me pleasure to hear accounts of England, a country I much admired, during my short residence there; although, not having time to acquire the harsh language of its inhabitants, I had some difficulty in becoming acquainted with its internal arrangements. At all events, a person may travel on the public roads without arms, or without fear of being robbed as here."

"Pardon me, senhor, such is not the case," answered Don Luis. "The roads are constantly infested by men on horseback, who levy contributions, even in the very neighbourhood of the capital, on the unarmed traveller."

"Ah! I am glad to hear we are not so very much less civilised than our old friends and allies, who are apt to boast themselves so much our superiors," returned the stranger. "We have now arrived at your house, senhor, and I will not detain you; but as I have many questions to ask respecting England, I should wish to see you to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, and till then, adios."

"I regret that I cannot do myself that honour, senhor," answered Don Luis; "for I intend to set forward at daybreak to visit my father, who is in the country."

“I should advise you to defer your journey to a later hour,” said the stranger, in rather an angry tone. “I shall esteem your doing so a favour,” he added, more mildly, as if correcting himself. “You also forget that you will be obliged to appear at the examinations of the ruffians who attacked you. For the present, I will leave Captain Pinto with you, who will perhaps accompany you in the morning. Adeos, Senhor Pinto, till the morning, when I shall see you with your young friend.” Saying which, the stranger moved on, without waiting for an answer, leaving the Captain respectfully bowing, and Don Luis much amazed, at the door of the palace, at which one of the guards had loudly knocked.

After sundry careful interrogations from within, the door was unbarred and opened. “Who is that man, who seems of so much authority here?” eagerly demanded Don Luis of his friend, as they were admitted into the hall by old Lucas.

“No other than Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho,” answered the Captain; one of the ministers of the king, “who does more work in a day than the other two in a month, and has more brains in his head and courage in his heart than all the fidalgos in Portugal put together. You will do well to follow his request; for he is not fond of having his wishes neglected.”

“In one respect I will, in requesting you to take up your abode here,” said Don Luis, as they mounted the steps, preceded by the old steward. “Of the rest we will consider; but I like not his authoritative tone.”

“Well, I will set you the example of obedience, by accepting your hospitality instead of returning on board my ship; and I trust you will follow my advice for the rest.”

Old Lucas now ushered them into a large apartment hung round with paintings, and adorned with crimson hangings, much faded and moth-eaten, it must be confessed; indeed, all the furniture wore an air rather of past than present splendour, except on a table in the centre, where was laid out a repast, which, considering it was intended for a single person, exhibited a profusion of eatables, affording considerable satisfaction to the worthy captain, though, as may be supposed, poor Don Luis felt but little inclination for the good things set before him. Much to the chagrin of the old domestic, who stood near, pressing him to taste of the various dishes, and praising their qualities, he could scarcely touch them. The old man, looking with a melancholy glance at his young master, shook his head, thinking that some serious illness must have attacked him. “Ah! this comes of going to sea, and wandering in strange countries among heretics,” he thought; “but his native air and proper food will soon restore him to health. Come, senhor, a little of this marmalade will do you good; it is of your old nurse’s making, and you used to be very fond of it once upon a time.”

“Thank you, my good Lucas, I have already finished supper; but I hope another day to do more justice to Senhora Anna’s cookery. For the present, leave us; for I have much to say to Captain Pinto.”

The old man unwillingly quitted the room, with many a lingering glance behind. “Ah! he is sadly changed from what he once was, poor young gentleman! Oh dear, oh dear!” he ejaculated, as he slowly retired.

The hardy sailor, however, made ample amends to the viands for his host’s want of appetite. “Come, Luis,” he said, “tell me how fared you with Donna Theresa? Ah! I had better not ask; your countenance tells your tale.”

“Your warnings were but too just, and I have been miserably deceived,” answered the young man.

“Do not make yourself unhappy; you will recover sooner than you expect,” said the Captain. “Remember our voyage: dark clouds and storms for the greater part of the time; and yet the sun burst out brightly, and we arrived safe in port at last. Take my word for it, everything happens for the best, and you may some day rejoice that you have undergone what you now consider so great a misfortune.”

“You have already prophesied too truly for me now to contradict you,” said Don Luis; “but it is difficult to persuade a man that a bitter draught is pleasant to the taste.”

“I do not say that it is pleasant, but, with returning health, he will be glad he took it,” said the Captain, laughing. “Come, come, this is our first evening on shore after a long voyage, and we must

not be sad – so here’s a health to the fair ladies of Portugal, and I am sure there are plenty of them, so that, if one is not kind, there are others who will be so. That is a sailor’s maxim, and I should advise you to adopt it; ’twill save many a heart-ache.”

“Oh! do not talk on the subject,” exclaimed Don Luis, not relishing his friend’s principles; “I am not of so callous a nature.”

“Well, we’ll change the subject; and, while I am giving advice, let me strongly urge you to call to-morrow on the minister. He is a man not to be trifled with; and though he is a firm friend to those who please him, he is a relentless enemy to any who venture to oppose his objects.”

“But why should I fear him, I have no favours to ask, and he has no means of injuring me?” said Don Luis.

“Do not confide in that,” answered the Captain. “If you displease him, he will find means of avenging himself when you least expect it. He never yet forgave an offence. Though he is my patron and friend, and a man with many qualities I admire, I know his faults, and they are terrible ones. Pity is an utter stranger to his bosom, and the life of man he looks upon as a thing of nought, to be disposed of at his pleasure. While other men tremble with fear, his nerves are only the better strung. I remember him when he married Donna Theresa Noronha, the niece of the Conde dos Arcos, and a relation of the proud Duke of Aveiro. Her relations all protested against the match, stigmatising him as a low-born profligate, unworthy of their alliance; but he laughed, and bore her off in spite of them, though they have vowed vengeance on him ever since. But we shall see which will ultimately conquer; and, mark me, every step he takes to power is one nearer to their destruction.”

“You describe a person whose friendship I would rather shun than seek,” said Don Luis.

“There you think wrong,” said the Captain, laughing. “He is just the person you ought to make your friend; for he can be of more Service to you than any one else; while, if you fail to win his regard, and make him your enemy, you will find him a most dangerous one. At all events, call on him with me to-morrow.”

“Though fear of his enmity does not influence me, I will follow your advice, my good friend, and accompany you, which I am also bound to do after the service he rendered me to-night.”

“It matters but little what your motives are, so that you follow his wishes,” returned the Captain.

We need not follow further the conversation of the two friends, which lasted till a late hour, when at length, having arranged to call, early the following morning, on the minister, they separated to their respective rooms, Don Luis with his heart yet heavy, and his head in a whirl of confusion, from the various and important occurrences he had met with since his landing in the morning; indeed, it was with difficulty he could persuade himself that he had passed only a few short hours on the shores of Portugal, so great a change had taken place in all his thoughts and feelings. At the present period of his career, Carvalho made no attempt to vie in outward show with the rich and luxurious fidalgos of Lisbon, his mansion being small, and his domestic arrangements unostentatious; the guard at the door, who presented arms as Captain Pinto and his young friend entered the hall, being the only sign that a person of consequence resided there.

On giving their names, a servant, without delay, ushered the two gentlemen up stairs into a small ante-room, where he left them for a moment, and immediately returned, saying that his master would receive them, when, throwing open a side door, he made a sign to them to enter, and Don Luis found himself in the presence of his acquaintance of the previous evening.

Carvalho, habited in his morning gown, was pacing the chamber, which he evidently used as his dressing-room, while a secretary, at a desk near the window, was busily occupied in writing according to his dictation; the last few sentences he spoke being heard by his guests before he appeared to remember their presence. He then suddenly turned, having assured himself that his instructions were fully understood, and received them with that frank and courteous politeness for which the Portuguese are so justly esteemed, and in which he particularly excelled; placing them on seats opposite to the

one into which he threw himself, in such a position that he might every now and then turn and give directions to his secretary.

“I am glad to find that your foreign travel has given you habits of punctuality and early rising,” he observed; “customs I wish the young men of your rank would more generally follow.”

“I was anxious to thank your Excellency for the aid you afforded me last night,” returned Don Luis; “and I therefore seized the earliest moment to pay my respects.”

“Ah! that reminds me that you need not be detained in Lisbon to appear as a witness against the ruffians. They did not intend to take your life, it appears, but mistook you for another person; however, a few weeks’ imprisonment will benefit them; and I conclude that you do not intend to remain long away from Court. The king looks with a jealous eye on those who absent themselves, wishing to see himself, as he ought to be, surrounded by his nobles, who seem often to forget that they but hold their rank from him, and that, at his pleasure, they may again become mere commoners.”

“My movements will depend entirely on my father’s will,” answered Don Luis; “and, after my long absence, he will probably desire me to remain with him.”

“Your father is a man I much esteem,” said the Minister; “and regret that some slight he conceives himself to have received should have driven him from Court; for I cannot suppose that he is tainted with disloyalty to our sovereign, which is more than I can say for some of the haughty fidalgos of the land, whose pride, by heavens! soars so high, that they seem to consider themselves his superiors; let them beware, or it shall be brought low enough.”

The manner of the speaker for a moment became excited; but he quickly resumed his usual calm demeanour, as he continued – “Offer my compliments to your father, and say I must request he will not detain you long away, for I feel confident that his majesty will wish to give you some employment suitable to your rank, and the high talents I know you to possess.”

Don Luis, surprised at the compliment, for he could not conceive how the minister knew anything about him, could only bow in return; nor was he particularly pleased with its authoritative tone, as coming from a man whom he had been taught to consider, on account of his birth, but of little consequence; particularly when he heard threats uttered against the class to which he belonged. The Minister, eyeing the young man narrowly, to observe the effect of his observations, then addressed a few sentences to Captain Pinto, during which time Don Luis, happening to look in the direction of the secretary, observed that his glance was fixed on him; but it was immediately withdrawn, the latter person applying himself studiously to his occupation; it was, however, sufficient to attract Don Luis’s attention more especially to his countenance, which he could not help fancying that he had seen somewhere before, and at no great distance of time. It was not probable that he had met him abroad, so that it could have been only on the previous day; – perhaps he had passed him in the street – for he possessed only an undefined, dreamy sort of recollection of the countenance; – when, on a sudden, it struck him that those expressive eyes and features were the same he had for a moment seen in the corridor of the Jesuits’ College. Yet it was extraordinary that a person employed by one who was a professed enemy of that order should have been found holding communication with them, and he felt confident that the secretary had either been playing false to his master, or deceiving in some way the holy fathers. However, he wisely, for the present, kept his counsel: determining, as in duty bound, to take the first opportunity of mentioning his suspicions to his cousin, Father da Costa, between whom and the Minister he knew there was no cordiality. He had just arrived at this conclusion, when Carvalho again turned to him, making many minute inquiries about his travels in England, which showed him, notwithstanding his declarations to the contrary, to be well acquainted with the laws and customs of that country. “Ambassadors,” he observed, “have less chance than any other strangers of learning the true state of a country; it is the interest of everybody round them to blind their eyes; and if they attempt to move about incognito, and alone, they are considered as spies, and every action is watched. In despotic countries, such as Austria, and I hear also in Russia, the matter is much worse; and I have heard of the whole country, by the borders of a road, being populated, and villages built,

on the occasion of the visit of some distinguished personage, which vanished when he had passed by; though he went away with the impression that it was one of the most fertile and populous countries in the world.”

The Minister smiled at his own story, as, in duty bound, did his guests, and Don Luis began to doubt that he could possibly possess the violent and sanguinary temper which was reported: he made many more inquiries, and seemed much pleased with the answers Don Luis gave; then, in the most bland, and courteous manner, informed him and Captain Pinto, that he would no longer detain them, begging the former to call upon him on his return to Lisbon. As they rose to depart, Don Luis caught the eye of the secretary again turned towards him, with a sort of inquiring glance, but he had no opportunity of observing further, as he was obliged to follow the captain from the room.

As they were crossing a corridor, and about to descend the stairs, a young girl passed them, with light ringlets falling over her shoulders, and laughing blue eyes. In no way abashed at sight of the strangers, she bowed gracefully, and bounded on. “Who can that fair creature be who passed us?” asked Don Luis.

“The eldest daughter of the Minister by his present wife, Donna Leonora, Countess Daùn, whom he married during the time he was envoy at the Court of Austria;” answered Captain Pinto; “she shows her mother’s Saxon blood.”

“Yes, and her high birth,” said Don Luis: “she is very beautiful.”

“Very,” was the Captain’s laconic reply.

“You appear to have pleased Senhor Carvalho,” observed Captain Pinto, as they walked homeward; “I should advise you to profit by the advantage.”

“Why so? he will probably soon forget me,” said Don Luis.

“Indeed he will not. He takes an interest in your welfare, from a youthful friendship for some member of your family, who is no more, and from whom he received some deep obligation, which he would repay to you; and now you understand why he desired to see you.”

Volume One – Chapter Seven

The Portuguese, with much *naïveté*, relate a story which is told against them, that Noah, a few years ago, paid a visit to this our planet, on which he once on a time played so conspicuous a part; but that, as he travelled from country to country, and kingdom to kingdom, his fond anticipations of reviving the early recollections of his living days were far from being gratified; for not a spot of earth which his rather numerous progeny now inhabit could he recognise, so many changes had all undergone, and nowhere did he find himself comfortably at home till he arrived on the shores of Lusitania. How did his heart beat with tender remembrances, as he travelled through the country! “Ah!” he exclaimed, enraptured, “this is indeed the land I love; the self-same as I left it: the same system of agriculture, the same style of architecture, the identical roads, not a stone removed, a few more ruts, to be sure, caused by passing time, like the wrinkles in a friend’s face; the same manners, and the same customs. Ah! beloved Portugal, constant and unchangeable; here will I take up my abode.” Saying which, the venerable patriarch pitched his tent, where he sojourned during his stay on earth; and the inhabitants, in hope of being honoured by another visit, still adhere to the same system.

Now, although there can be no doubt that the above is a very witty story, we can assure our readers that it is not perfectly correct in all respects, inasmuch as there are fine churches, though it is difficult to determine the order of their architecture; and there are palaces and castles, which we do not in history find there were when Noah dwelt upon earth; but we do very strongly suspect that the roads, if there were any, could not have been worse. Also, with respect to inns, or houses of public entertainment, they cannot be very much improved since his time; for anything more execrably bad than they generally are, in any country within a week’s sail of England, can scarcely be conceived; and we have good reason to suppose that they have not very much altered since the days of the Marquis of Pombal.

In describing, therefore, a Portuguese country inn of a hundred years ago, the picture of one of the present day will fully answer our purpose, even of that to which we are about to conduct our readers, which yet exists with few marks of change about it. It stands on the northern edge of a wild sandy common, broken into irregular hillocks, partially sprinkled with gum-cistus, gentian, the flowering heath, and other low shrubs and plants, while, in the far distance, is perceived the long dark line of a pine-forest. The ground on the other side of the inn is cultivated, though very imperfectly; and here and there a few mean cottages may be seen, with heaps of dirt in front, and pools of mud, in which the favoured pigs of the inhabitants delight to wallow. The inn is a long low building, the bush hung out on a pole in front being the sign that all are welcome to enter, as was once the custom in England. The walls are of rough stone, having a row of windows, with red shutters, rather battered, and destitute of glass, on the upper story; but the only opening on the ground floor is the large entrance door, which leads at once into a spacious stable, strewn with straw, and with no very great attention to cleanliness; a manger, running round it, without any divisions for stalls; so that the animals therein may, at will, amuse themselves by kicking at each other, free from those unsocial restraints which English civilisation has introduced; very like a certain class of liberals, who would do away with wholesome laws, much for the same sensible object. This is decidedly the best part of the building, as much attention being paid to the comfort of the animals as to that of their owners; though, by a partition of rough deal boards, an apartment is separated from it to the right, which serves the purpose of kitchen, parlour, and bedroom, to the greater part of the family and guests. On a low hearth, on one side of it, a wood fire blazes, the smoke escaping through the doors and windows, as it best can; and on the walls, near the fire-place, are hung a few large and very ordinary kitchen utensils, the other parts being adorned with horse furniture, rows of onions, dried fish, and other provisions of the coarsest sort. A rough deal table and benches run close to the wall the whole length of the apartment; and there is a shorter one on the opposite side, near the fire. The floor is of clay,

perfectly black, and beaten hard, but worn into irregular undulations and holes where most trodden on. We are now describing the past and the present, and probably the future, for many years to come, though we cannot pierce the gloom of the dark abyss of time; but as our business is rather with the past, we prefer adhering to that tense. The further end of the room opened into a sort of stable-yard, from which freely entered at all times several long-legged, thin white swine, with a youthful progeny of grunTERS, who were allowed to satisfy their inquisitive natures, if not their appetites, by poking their snouts into every pan or utensil they met with in their peregrinations, receiving now and then a gentle rebuke, administered with the bottom of a frying-pan, by the nimble-handed damsel who officiated as chief of the culinary department, accompanied by a no very complimentary epithet, at which they grunted forth their disapprobation, and continued the same proceedings. Besides the pigs, numerous fowls appeared to be welcome visitors, being allowed to establish their roost on the rafters of the roof, in one corner, and to hop about and pick up what escaped the vigilance of the yet more favoured animals. Nor must we forget, having begun with the dumb species, instead of the nobler part of creation, to mention two or three dogs, whose appearance was far from prepossessing, as they stalked about among the guests, in eager expectation of the morsels thrown to them, or of the crumbs which fell from the table. They were of a dirty yellow colour, their heads something like that of a fox, but with bodies lean and gaunt as a wolf, to which race they appeared to belong. Such is the large dog of the country; but there is every gradation of shape, size, and colour, down to the smallest turnspit, to give any specific name to which would be impossible. Having described the dogs, we must now mention the agile Grisenissa, the youthful queen of those regions. She was a laughing-mouthed damsel, her lips rather thick and full, disclosing the most pearly teeth, her nose *retroussé*, between a pair of large sparkling black eyes, and her figure rather more fully developed, particularly about the bust, than would accord with the Venus de Medicis. A rich bloom brightened the nut-brown tint of her not very delicate complexion, whose dark hue was increased by her occupations over the fire. Her hair was drawn back, fastened in a knot behind, and covered with a coloured handkerchief, a white one being thrown over her shoulders. The sleeves and skirt of her gown being tucked up, exhibited a pair of stout arms and legs of the same build, destitute of stockings or shoes. The noise of her tongue was, as Captain Rolando, in the "Honeymoon," describes most unjustly that of her sex in general, like the clatter of a mill; the more she moved about, the faster it went, the grist being the questions and jokes of her guests, to which she failed not to give some sharp repartee. She was aided in the actual work of cooking by an old crone, who, now bending over the fire, was engaged in stirring a mess of broth simmering in a large pot, while a little boy, clothed in the smallest quantity of raiment which could possibly cover his body, was employed in bringing wood to feed the flame. The master of the house generally walked about with his hands in his pockets, a cigarito in his mouth, and his cap set rakingly on one side, by far too fine a gentleman to attend to the wants of his guests, though occasionally, to those of higher degree, he would condescend to make a low bow as they departed, provided they paid well, and shared with him a bottle or so of his best wine.

The sun had some time set, the apartment being thrown into obscurity, except near the blaze of the fire, and at the further end of the long table, where, round a brass lamp of that elegant shape used by the Romans, and still to be seen in Italy, were seated the landlord and four or five of his guests, deeply immersed in some game of cards, their countenances exhibiting all the eager passions of men who had large sums at stake. Indeed, several gold and silver pieces were seen to change hands, to the evident rage of the losers; though, from the dress and appearance of the men, one would not have expected to find them possessed of so large an amount. Their costume was soiled, and patched with divers shades of cloth: it consisted of short braided jackets, and red waistcoats, loose trowsers and long gaiters, with a red sash round the waist, in which was stuck, without any attempt at concealment, a long knife, in a sheath, towards whose hilt the hand seemed to have a natural tendency to move. On their heads they wore round, low-crowned hats of black felt, with rather broad brims, which, pulled a little forward, effectually concealed the features.

At the smaller table, near the fire, were several other people, discussing in silence their suppers of cabbage broth, inattentive to what was going forward at the other end of the room. Two hours of the night had passed away, the card party yet eagerly proceeding in their game, with slight variations of fortune, when the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard, and the boy was loudly summoned to hold a lantern while the animals were stalled and fed; and, soon afterwards, two men, wrapped in large riding cloaks, entered, and glancing at the guests near the fire, advanced towards the end of the long table. The gamblers, looking up for a moment, received them as friends; but their interest in the game was far too intense to permit their attention to be withdrawn for a longer period; the others looking patiently on, till one of the former sprang from his seat, exclaiming, "By St. Anthony, I play no more: curses on the game; I've lost my last testoon, and owe more to boot. How to pay my debts I know not."

One of the new comers, fixing his eyes on him, smiled significantly. "What, Salvador," he said, "know you not how a man of spirit may best recruit his exhausted finances? Banish all fears, I will soon put you in the way of it."

"Thanks, senhor, I have trod it before," answered Salvador; "but I like not the sight of the gibbet in the distance."

"Fool!" muttered the other; "no man of courage is frightened at such a phantom."

What further might have been said was cut short by another of the party dashing the cards to the ground, and trampling on them almost with screams, in his fury at having become the loser of all his wealth, darting fierce scowls at those who were the gainers, particularly the landlord, who had managed to pay himself well for the time occupied in the game, and who, now calling to the boy, ordered him to pick up the scattered pack.

The game now terminated; and the party, having again resumed their seats, made many inquiries of their newly-arrived friends. "We little expected to see you here so soon," said the Landlord; "what made you leave Lisbon so suddenly?"

"A cursed mistake we committed last night, when two of our friends fell into the hands of justice. We had been engaged by the Conde de San Vincente, who gives us plenty of employment, to get rid of a rival of his in the affections of a certain lady; and, after following our man for some way, who we knew would make no resistance, and, feeling quite sure of him, just as Miguel was about to give him his quietus, out he whips his rapier, and uses it so manfully, after knocking down Miguel, that he kept us at bay till a friend came to his assistance; but we should have got the better of them both, when, who should pass by but the devil, in the shape of Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho himself, who forthwith seized on Miguel and Baltar, whom he has clapped into prison; and we, thinking Lisbon may be too hot for us, came off here; for he is not apt to let any escape whom he may wish to find."

"Ah! San Vincente is a man I like to serve," said another. "His very cowardice is a recommendation, as he first pays one well to commit a deed he dare not do himself, and then double to keep it concealed."

"Yes, if it were not for the hatred of the proud fidalgos for each other, we honest, humble men should not be able to exist."

"Ay, thank the saints, they give us work enough to keep our hands in practice, though scarce enough to let us live like gentlemen," cried another.

"Forsooth, the profession has fallen into much disrepute lately, since pretenders to it offer their services to commit a murder for a couple of crowns. Such shabby villains ought to be scouted from society," exclaimed a fourth. "When a man does undertake to do a piece of work, let it be for something, or he is acting dishonestly towards others, besides being guilty of a meanness of which any gentleman ought to be ashamed."

"Silence, Senhores, silence!" exclaimed the Landlord, looking round; "your conversation is becoming of a nature not fit for common ears: and see, some persons at the other table are opening theirs to listen."

“Never fear,” answered one of the last comers; “we are not ashamed of our profession, as long as it is exercised with credit.”

“That may be,” said the Landlord; “but you must remember the respectability of my house. I might lose my customers, if it were known I had the honour of your friendship. No offence to you at the same time.”

“Well, well, Senhor Bernardo; say no more on the subject,” said the other, laughing. “Ah! see, here comes your daughter with our supper; both dainty morsels, I doubt not.”

“Of the latter you may taste at will, but with my Rosa I should advise you not to attempt to make free; for she uses but scant ceremony towards those who offend her,” answered the Landlord.

“Not I! I never offended a pretty girl in my life. Hey, my bright Rosa?” said the guest, chucking her under the chin as she placed a dish of rice and stewed fowls on the table; but in return for the liberty, he received a sound box on the ear; and she tripped off, laughing, before he could catch her to renew the offence.

“Carramba! but your daughter does hit hard,” exclaimed the man; “though let us see if her cookery will make amends for her cruelty.”

As Rosa, having placed another dish on the table, was again hastening away, she encountered from a personage who just then entered the room a fresh attack of the same sort, but, it must be confessed, with scarce the same obduracy; for “Oh, Senhor Frade!” and a loud giggle, was the only answer she gave to the salute, which sounded through the apartment.

“Pax vobiscum!” exclaimed the person who had committed this atrocity, as he advanced out of the obscurity towards the group among whom he espied the landlord, well knowing that there would be the best cheer found. As the light fell on him, he exhibited a broad, sinewy figure; and throwing back his cowl, his shorn crown and coarse brown robes, with satchel by his side, proclaimed him to belong to the mendicant order of the Capuchins, his well-filled cheeks showing how assiduously he pursued his avocation. His bullet-shaped head was encircled by a rim of coarse red hair, to which colour his features assimilated; a broad snubby nose, and a pair of blear, though keen, roving eyes, made up the man. He was welcomed by all the party, with whom he appeared to be on the most intimate terms.

“Now, for the love of the saints, my pretty Rosa,” he exclaimed, as he took his seat at the post of honour near the master, “bring me something to eat, for I am almost dead with hunger and thirst; – anything will serve; a stewed pullet or so, or some broiled pork and lemon; you know that I am not particular as to the things of the appetite; – and hark you, my Rosa dear, if you can find the remains of a bottle or so of old wine, bring it, in the name of the Virgin; for I am thirsty and tired.”

The holy Father’s request was not disregarded, and he was soon busily employed in discussing the viands set before him, failing not to do ample justice to Rosa’s cookery, during which time he would not answer a word to the numerous questions put to him; but, having finished, and wiped his mouth on the sleeve of his gown, giving a last pull at his bottle of wine, his tongue was loosened, and all the party bent their heads forward to listen to what he had to communicate; the subject of the conversation being such as to oblige them to speak in tones not loud enough to be heard beyond their immediate circle.

“What news do you bring us, Senhor Padre?” asked one of those who had lost at cards. “Have we a chance of picking up a little booty? for we are very low in the world.”

“Ah, my son, always thinking of lucre and worldly gain,” answered the Friar, laughing, “but I am in an amiable humour, and will not tantalise you long.”

“Well, Padre, no delay; out with your news,” exclaimed several of the party, bending still closer round him, with eager expression of countenance.

“Know then, my sons, that there is a chance of some work to-morrow morning which may fill our empty pockets; but recollect, we all share alike; I am not to employ my wits, and to wear

myself into a phantom to gain all the information, and then to allow my convent to be deprived of the just profits.”

“Never fear, Senhor Padre, your convent shall not suffer in the division,” said the Innkeeper; “but come, let us hear your news.”

“Tis this, then. As I passed through the village of Santa Cruz, I learned that the noble Senhor Gonçalo Christovaõ and his family are staying at the Quinta of the Conde de Villarey, on their way to Lisbon, and their mules and litters are to be in readiness to start to-morrow morning at daybreak, they having the intention of breakfasting here. So there’s a double chance for you, Senhor Estalajadeiro. You first get well paid in an honest way for the stewed cats and tough old cocks you furnish them; and then our friends here will reap the harvest that remains, no slight one, if I mistake not; for there are, besides Senhor Christovaõ and his fair daughter, Donna Clara, so I learned, three maid-servants, all of whom, depend on it, will be decked out in their gold ornaments, though they will make some slight fuss in delivering them; and then there are the escudeiro and three other servants, who will run away on the first show of a blunderbuss, as will, probably, the whole troop of muleteers who accompany them.”

“Bravo, most holy friar! you deserve our warmest thanks for your services to us,” exclaimed one of the party; “and where would you advise us to wait till our friends pass?”

“Has not your own sense pointed that out to you?” answered the Friar. “At the edge of the moor where the pine grove commences, I should advise you to watch, and you can then have a clear view over the common on one side, while you must place a scout to see that no one approaches on the other.”

“Admirable generalship!” exclaimed he who had before spoken. “Were it not for your shaven crown, you would make us a capital leader, if you had courage enough to face the danger.”

“Courage!” cried the Friar, casting an angry look at the speaker. “Because I do not bluster and bully, you think I have not courage. I have done, and would do, many a deed you dare not!”

“Ah, friar, you boast already, do you? Remember, what are you, but the jackal to our prey? I’ll venture you would turn pale at the sight of a few drops of blood.”

“Fool, ’tis you will turn pale at sight of your own blood!” exclaimed the Friar, springing up, and drawing from a sheath under his gown, a long sharp stiletto, which he plunged with a steady hand into the fleshy part of the shoulder of the man who had spoken. “Now remember not to taunt me again; and recollect your life was in my power; an inch more of the steel would have silenced your tongue for ever.”

“Peace, Senhores, peace!” exclaimed the Landlord, seizing the arm of the friar, who without effort shook him off. “Remember the credit of my house; and if you wish to shed blood, let it be outside my doors.”

“Do not fear, my friend,” answered the Friar coolly; “Tis but a slight lesson I gave to Senhor José here, to speak more respectfully to one of my cloth in future. Come, man, I can cure as well as kill;” saying which, he bound up the arm of the wounded man, who, like a cowed hound, submitted without another word.

“Bravo, Frade, bravo! you are a fine fellow, and shall have all you wish,” cried the rest of the respectable assemblage.

“Well then, my friends,” said the Friar, “to convince you that if I am a jackal, I am a lion also, I will lead you in person to this adventure; but then remember I must have the lion’s share also.”

“Agreed! agreed!” exclaimed the party. “With so holy a guide we must be successful.”

“The plan is then arranged, senhores,” said the Landlord; “and now to bed. Remember you must rise betimes to be in readiness for the work, as it will not do to be observed quitting my respectable house on such an errand after the sun is up.”

The party now broke up, some stealing off to make their couches in the stable, others in different corners of the room; while the landlord, dismissing his daughter and the rest of his household to their

places of repose, drew a seat near the fire, where he and the friar remained for some time in earnest conversation. The latter then rolling himself up in his gown, and pulling his cowl over his head, fell fast asleep on the bench, the host retiring to an upper room which he inhabited.

We have, as yet, described only the lower part of the house; but it possessed also an upper story intended for the accommodation of any guests of higher rank who might honour it with their presence. The greater part was occupied by one large chamber, surrounded by small recesses, in which were placed beds of most execrable hardness, invented, one might suppose, to counteract any tendency to effeminacy which the climate might have caused. As if in mockery, over the beds were thrown gaily worked cover lids, beneath which, alas! by the uninitiated traveller, neither peace nor quiet was to be found, as swarms of fierce inhabitants of two rival races were ever ready, like the Lilliputians on that renowned voyager Captain Lemuel Gulliver, to avenge on the body of the intruder any inroad made on their territory. Curtains were hung across some of the recesses intended for the guests of most consideration, and a rough table and benches were placed down the room, the windows, as we have before said, being destitute of glass, and the walls of aught but the rough mortar. Such were the only accommodations afforded even to the highest ranks; but the inns received little patronage from any, for, in the first place, no one moved about more than was absolutely necessary, and, when they were obliged to make a journey, the house of any gentleman on the road was always hospitably open to them, as is the case at the present day.

The cold grey light of the early morn had just broken upon the world, when a party of horsemen sallied out of the inn, mounted on most sorry-looking animals, the small horses, or rather ponies of the country, but whose nimble and surefooted paces belied the estimation one formed of their qualities at the first glance. The men wore their large broad cloaks, one side of which being thrown over the shoulder, and almost over the head, completely concealed their features, while the rest hung down, covering their own bodies, and a great part of those of their horses.

The robes of the friar were not perceived among them; but there was a most suspicious-looking figure who took the lead, with a broad slouched hat on his head, fastened tightly down with a handkerchief under his chin, and from beneath it appeared a rim of closely-cut red hair, and a ruddy face with a pair of twinkling eyes, the rest of the form, which was evidently of no slender mould, being enveloped, like the others, in a broad cloak. Their ponies carried them at a pace between a canter and a quick shamble over the heath we have described, in the direction of Lisbon, towards the long line of dark forest which was seen in the far distance from the higher ground on which the inn stood.

The master of the inn remained at the door, watching them till they could be no longer distinguished from the shrubs and clumps of heath which sprinkled the ground. "May the devil prosper them!" he exclaimed, "for were it not for such gentry, my very good friends, I might e'en shut up my house and go begging or robbing like them." Having thus given vent to his thoughts, he retired within to say his prayers, and to calculate the probable amount of his share in the profits of the expedition.

Volume One – Chapter Eight

The glowing sun of that lovely clime was already high in the heavens, in which not a cloud or vapour was to be seen; the air came soft and pure over the heath, laden with balsamic odours; and a blue, sparkling, transparent haze played over the ground, giving the promise of a scorching day. The notable daughter of the landlord stood at the door of the inn, her fingers busily employed in spinning from the distaff stuck in her waist, while she sang, at the top of her voice, an air, which, at the end of each verse, fell into a low cadence, and amused herself, by looking along the road in each direction, for the approach of travellers. At length, a cloud of dust rising in the north, greeted her eyes; and as it gradually drew nearer, she heard the jingling of bells sound faintly through the air, the most pleasing music to the ears of a Portuguese innkeeper, when she perceived that it was caused by several litters, sumpter mules, and a party of horsemen. She hastened in to give the joyful intelligence to the rest of the family, who, with her father, quickly assembled at the door to welcome the travellers, whoever they might be; for, as there was no other inn for several leagues on either side of them, there could be no doubt that they would there stop to bait their animals, and refresh themselves.

The Landlord muttered to himself, with an oath – “They are very numerous, and, if they choose to fight, my friends will have the worst of it. – Patience! I shall make my profits, at all events. Ah, honesty and a regular business is the best policy;” with this consoling reflection, he waited the arrival of the party.

An arriero, or muleteer, came running on in front, to announce that the illustrious fidalgo, Gonçalo Christovaö, was approaching; and soon afterwards, a dignified and venerable gentleman, on a stout horse, rode up, accompanied by a grave-looking personage, in the dress of a Benedictine monk, and followed by two servants, who, throwing themselves from their mules, respectfully assisted him and his companion to dismount, when they stood ready to receive the first litter which arrived.

We have often, on entering a church or palace in Italy, been directed to some picture, kept closely veiled from the vulgar eye; and, as the curtain was drawn aside, have been delighted, by viewing the lovely portrait of a Madonna or Venus from the pencil of Rafaele or Titian; and far more, as the dignified cavalier drew aside the curtains of the litter, would the eyes of our readers have been enraptured, by the vision of bright and rare beauty which was disclosed; for surely, not even those great masters of the sublime art could, in their most blissful moments, have conceived or executed aught more perfect.

“Oh, Jesus Maria, how lovely!” exclaimed the laughing Rosa, paying an unaffected tribute of admiration to nature’s choicest work; and clapping her hands with delight, as the Portuguese peasantry invariably do, when they behold anything that causes admiration or surprise, she ran forward to offer her services.

The lovely vision we have mentioned was, as the acute reader may have supposed, a young lady; and, as she descended from the litter, leaning on the gentleman’s arm, her figure was perceived to be rather above the ordinary height of her countrywomen, but slender, and most gracefully formed; her face, as we have said, was beautiful, and very fair, with light brown ringlets escaping from under the blue hood of her travelling dress. In those days, the fashion of wearing bonnets had not been introduced even among the highest ranks; the hood or veil, thrown over the head, being considered sufficient protection; and certainly, a more elegant covering than the head-dresses worn in France or England at the same period. Indeed, an out-of-doors dress was scarcely required, as ladies seldom appeared abroad, except in their carriages or chairs: even in the present day, were they to take more exercise than they are in the habit of doing, their youthful promise of beauty would not be so sadly unrealised, as it too frequently is. As soon as the young lady had alighted, and had been ushered into the inn, the other litters drew up, from the first of which descended a respectable-looking old dame, with spectacles on nose, a parrot on a stand, two bird-cages, and a sleek, long-haired Angora cat. From

the appearance of the old lady, she was the *Ama*, the nurse, or governess to the fair girl. A damsel followed her out of the litter, with sundry packages and baskets of eatables. Two other waiting women got out of the third litter, short, dark, and black-eyed girls; while the fourth was empty, probably, for the accommodation of the master. Five or six baggage-mules, and two mounted men-servants, brought up the rear, besides a number of drivers belonging to the litters and mules, who kept up with the cavalcade on foot.

As his distinguished guests retired into the house, the landlord, bowing most obsequiously, ushered them (alas! through the stable and kitchen), up a sadly narrow and dirty flight of steps, to the room we have described before, where the servants spread a repast they had brought with them, the landlord being perfectly content with supplying the muleteers and their animals with food.

Rosa could scarcely keep her eyes from the young lady, as she bustled round her, offering to perform any service in her power; and when, at length, she had contrived to separate her from the rest of her party, looking down on the ground as she spoke, she whispered “Do not be afraid, senhora, whatever sort of people you may meet on the road, for I am sure they would not harm any one so lovely.”

“What do you mean, my good girl?” asked the lady, in a sweet tone. “We are not likely to meet any one to harm us, for they say the roads are perfectly free from robbers.”

“Oh no, senhora, Heaven deliver us from robbers; I do not speak of them,” answered Rosa, in a hesitating manner, “but there are all sorts of odd people about, and I thought I would put you on your guard, that is all. I am sure they will not harm her,” she uttered, as she turned away with a tear in her eye.

The young lady was not at all alarmed by the hints the good-natured girl threw out; indeed, she so little attended to them, that she forgot all about them a minute afterwards.

The travellers, after remaining nearly two hours at the inn, their horses and mules being refreshed, again proceeded on their way, the host redoubling the obsequiousness of his bows as they departed, and wishing them, with much apparent earnestness, a successful journey. The track, for it did not deserve the name of a road, lay over the uncultivated moor we have before spoken of; the hollows and hillocks they were obliged to cross or to circumvent, much prolonging the distance, the utmost pace the litters could advance being scarce a league an hour; a great contrast to the present railroad speed of other countries. This slow progress was very fatiguing, increased by the fine dust, dried by the summer heats, which rose in thick clouds at every step the animals took; there was also scarce a breath of air, the fervent rays of the sun shining with uninterrupted force on their heads.

Senhor Christovaõ and the grave friar rode on in front, out of hearing of the rest of the party; the latter evidently endeavouring to press some matter of importance on the consideration of the gentleman. “Depend on it, senhor, the peaceful serenity of a monastic life is the most happy lot a female can enjoy in this vale of tears; there, free from the cares and disappointments which her sisters in adversity are doomed to suffer, she spends her days in prayers and thanksgivings, in anxious expectation of the arrival of her heavenly Bridegroom.”

“Your arguments are very powerful, Senhor Padre,” returned his companion; “but yet I feel some compunction in depriving my daughter, against her will, of the innocent pleasures which accord with her age and sex.”

“Such ideas are but the instigations of the evil one, jealous that an immortal soul should be lost to him for ever,” answered the Priest. “Trust not to any feelings which war against the spirit on the side of the flesh. No human mind can conceive the dark machinations which the father of sin employs to drag forth a chosen child from the bosom of our holy Church, except we, who in our avocations study his works, and are prepared to repel him with the arms of our faith.”

“You doubtless speak words of truth and wisdom,” said the gentleman; “nor would I hesitate to allow my daughter to follow the bent of her inclinations, did she feel any calling for the life of the

cloister; but she knows not what is to be her fate, or the reason of our going to Lisbon, for I have never yet ventured to inform her of my intentions.”

“Let that be my care,” returned the Priest, frowning darkly. “I will prepare her gentle soul for the happy change. But have you never, then, informed her of her mother’s dying wish, delivered to me after she had received extreme unction at my hands, that her daughter should be dedicated to the service of the Church?”

“I confess, Father, that I have hesitated to speak to her on the subject, fearful of throwing a gloom over the bright and elastic spirits of her youth,” returned Senhor Christovaõ.

“Know you not, that the sooner the wings of a young bird are clipped, the less will it wish to fly; and therein have you done wrong; but clearly do I perceive the work of Satan again, in this seeking to ruin your soul, and that of your daughter. Ah! he is even now riding near you, plotting deeds of darkness. Get thee gone, thou spirit of evil!” he exclaimed with vehemence, making the sign of the cross. “Avaunt thee, Sathanas! Fear him no longer, my son; he has flown off to the regions of iniquity, from whence he came.”

“With you by my side, I fear not the evil spirit,” answered the Fidalgo, though the expression of his countenance belied his words; “and I will take the earliest opportunity of putting your directions into execution, though I knew not that my wife had expressed a wish that her daughter should enter a convent. During her last illness, you informed me she often prayed that I would permit her child to assume the veil, rather than I should compel her to wed against her inclination. This I consented to do, trusting she would nor wish to rebel against my will in the choice of a husband: as yet, her heart is free, and I have arranged that she shall marry, though yet she knows not of it, the young Conde de San Vincente, one of the oldest Puritano families, and one of the most wealthy; so that he is in every way unexceptionable. He is also a great friend of my son, who is very anxious for the match; and he tells me that the count is longing to see his intended bride. I therefore trust I shall have no difficulty on the subject, and that Clara, who has always been a dutiful child, will make no objections.”

“With all these arrangements I was perfectly acquainted,” said the Priest, in a calm tone; “but suppose she objects to marry the young count, will you not then follow her mother’s wishes? or, I may say more – for, know that your wife devoted her daughter to the Church, and the quiet of her soul depends on the fulfilment of her vows.”

“Father, you press me hard,” exclaimed the Fidalgo, in a tone of voice which showed that his feelings were galled; and his ghostly confessor saw that he might be going too far. “I seek to do what is best for the honour of my family, for my daughter’s happiness, and for the repose of the soul of my departed wife; what more would you have me do?”

“It is enough,” returned the Priest; “you promise, then, that if your daughter, Donna Clara, refuses to obey your wish that she should marry the Conde de San Vincente, she shall assume the veil, with the portion that you would bestow on her if she wedded; for, remember, if you do not, it is at the peril of your own soul, of her’s, and of that of your departed wife.”

“I promise so to do, holy Father, if thus her sainted mother vowed her to the Church,” exclaimed the Fidalgo; “but I know that my sweet child will not for a moment dream of disobeying my wishes.”

“I seek alone the good of her precious soul,” returned the Priest; and for some time they rode on in silence.

During this discussion, the fair subject of it, little suspecting that her fate was being thus summarily settled, was thinking alone of the amusements she was to meet with in the capital, to which this was her first visit, her life having been spent in the quiet seclusion of her father’s quinta, at a short distance from the city of Oporto, whose pointed walls could be seen from the windows of the mansion. All before her was unknown, and she had painted it bright and beautiful; for her soul was pure, and her mind contented and happy; nor had all the specious reasonings of the intriguing monk, who acted as her father confessor, been able to sully the one, or cast a gloom over the other; for God has benignantly afforded a sacred shield to some of the fair beings of his creation, whose

own weakness and loveliness would expose them to the attacks of the darkly designing and wicked, who, though they see not, yet feel its power, and wonder at their own defeat.

Senhor Gonçalo Christovaõ was the head of one of the oldest and purest noble families of Portugal, their motto being, "Kings descend from us;" not one of his ancestors having intermarried with any other family, unless they could show an equally pure escutcheon. Though of the highest class of fidalgos, he disdained to accept any title, which he saw often bestowed on men whom he looked down upon on account of their birth, priding himself far more on the antiquity of his own descent. This system was, at that time, strictly adhered to by a certain number of families, claiming the high distinction of being called Puritanos, or those of pure race, they being the highest class of fidalgos. The Fidalguia rank above the Nobres, and are entirely independent of all titles: they are divided into a great number of classes, according to the quarterings on their shields, each considering it a disgrace to marry out of their own pale.

The Nobres rank with the English esquire, being simply gentlemen who carry arms, though they often rise to rank and influence, from which, indeed, no class of the present day are debarred; but, until the time of Pombal, the Fidalguia had exclusively retained among themselves every post of power and authority, wreaking their vengeance on any who ventured to interfere with what they considered their privileges.

This short digression is necessary to explain the position in society held by Gonçalo Christovaõ, for so he delighted to be spoken of. After riding for some time in silence by the side of the priest, he guided his horse close to his daughter's litter, remorse and sorrow combating in his heart with the superstition and bigotry the friar had endeavoured to instil into it; but when he was about to speak on the subject he intended, his courage again failed him, and he smiled as he gazed on his lovely child, and inquired how she bore the fatigues of the journey.

Two weary hours passed away in crossing the moor, before the party reached the borders of one of those large pine-forests, with which the face of Portugal is so thickly sprinkled. The trees grew so closely together that it was impossible to see far amongst them; and a high bank rose on one side of the pathway, which led through a deep dell, with a sparkling rivulet running at the bottom of it. It was a shady and cool spot; but after having just quitted the bright sunshine, a certain gloomy air appeared to hang over it, and for the first time the warning of the maid at the inn occurred to the mind of the fair Clara. "Oh! my father, what a dark forest this seems!" she exclaimed; "are not robbers sometimes met with in these places? I know not why, but I do not feel so happy as I did before, and cannot help wishing you had more people to guard you."

"Fear not, my sweet child," answered the Fidalgo; "we must be too strong to dread an attack from any band of robbers we are likely to encounter; and if any should dare to molest us, they shall pay dearly for it."

The words were scarcely uttered, when several musket-shots were heard, as if discharged from among the trees; and one of the servants fell from his mule, – the blood streaming from a wound in his side; and the animal of one of the other men reared, and rolled over, with his rider, to the ground. Donna Clara trembling with agitation, gazed anxiously at her father, who, drawing his sword, looked around, fearful lest any other shots from the unseen assassins might injure his child.

Confusion and dismay took possession of all the individuals of the cavalcade; the women in the litters screamed loudly and long, and the men stood aghast, not knowing which way to turn to meet their treacherous foe.

"Lift your fellow from the ground, and push on in close order," cried Gonçalo Christovaõ; "we must not remain here to be murdered. Look well to your arms, and miss not your aim, if any of the villains show themselves."

But, alas! the order was useless; for, before the party could advance many paces, another volley was discharged among them, bringing down one of the hindmost litters, containing the maid-servants, whose shrieks and cries of terror utterly confounded the men, who stood paralysed, without

attempting to offer assistance; and, at the same instant, eight horsemen, with pistols in their hands, dashed from among the trees towards the fidalgo and the litter of Donna Clara.

“Do not attempt to fire!” exclaimed one who appeared to be the leader of the band, “or you will repent it. You are in our power, and we might, if we had chosen, have killed every one of you; but, provided you make no resistance, we do not wish to shed blood, and are sorry for having hurt the servant. Deliver your money and jewels quietly, and you shall pass on: if you refuse, we shall possess ourselves of them without ceremony.”

“Wretches! how dare you thus speak to me?” demanded the Fidalgo, indignantly. “Retire instantly, and allow my people to pass without molestation, or I will order them to fire.”

“Hark! to the fidalgo – he is vapouring!” cried one of the band.

“If you dare to resist, you shall be the first victim, Senhor Fidalgo!” exclaimed he who had first spoken. “And remember your daughter – her fate be on your own head!”

The priest rode fiercely towards them, exclaiming, “Begone, wretches! or dread the anathema of the Church on your souls!”

“Hark to the priest – he’s preaching!” cried one with a broad-brimmed hat drawn over his eyes, laughing. “Pooh, pooh, Senhor Padre, we are not afraid of mother Church; so do not waste your breath: we can get a priest to curse you in return, you know.”

The brow of Gonçalo Christovaö grew dark with anger. “Vile miscreants!” he exclaimed, “you shall not intimidate us. Forward, my men!”

The servants who were near their master prepared to obey; but the muleteers seemed no way inclined to fight.

“Ah! is it so?” exclaimed the captain of the banditti. “Fire on the fools!”

Several shots were discharged; but, fortunately, none of the party were injured; and the robbers, drawing their swords, rushed on with loud oaths, but were met with steady courage by the fidalgo and his two attendants – he parrying, with great skill, every blow aimed at him, till his servants were both disarmed, but his arm growing weary, at length, of wielding his blade, a sudden blow wrenched it from his grasp, and he was thrown with violence to the ground. The priest, in the meantime, remained by Donna Clara’s litter, though he looked fully willing, had he possessed a sword, to have joined in the fray; while the muleteers stood trembling by, without attempting to interfere.

“You would have acted more wisely to have saved us this trouble,” exclaimed the leader of the robbers, as they prepared to bind the hands of the servants, – several of them dragging the priest from his mule, and treating him in the same way; the muleteers falling down on their knees, and crying for mercy, expecting every moment to have their throats cut. The fidalgo remained stunned on the ground; and, when the robber approached the first litter, to see whom it contained, Donna Clara, overcome with terror at seeing her father, as she supposed, dead, had fainted. The ruffian gazed with astonishment not unmixed with admiration, at the fair girl, now with her eyes closed, as pale as death itself; and for a moment he fancied that some shot must have struck her, – awe preventing him from even daring to touch her, till her gentle breathing convinced him that she lived; but his courage soon returned. “Quick, now, my men!” he cried. “Look into the pockets of these gentlemen, and put gags into the mouths of those senhoras, who are screaming loud enough to be heard across the forest, if they do not choose to be silent, and to deliver up their trinkets quietly. The baggage-mules must accompany us, till we can examine their burdens at our leisure.”

The banditti lost not a moment in obeying these orders, though they found considerable difficulty in executing some of them; particularly in gagging the maid-servants, who fought most desperately, before they would deliver up each separate article of their ornaments. The more booty the robbers acquired, the more their avarice increased.

Donna Clara had now partially recovered; and, looking wildly around, – “Oh! my father, my father!” she exclaimed, “where are you?”

At the sound of her voice, a new idea seemed to strike the robber leader. "Ah! methinks this fair lady would fetch a high ransom," he exclaimed. "Come, senhora, you must condescend to make use of a less easy conveyance. Do not be alarmed, your father is not seriously hurt," he added, in rather a softer tone; "and if you will quietly accompany us, no harm shall befall him."

"Go with you! oh, whither?" cried the young lady, in a tone of horror. "Oh, allow us to pursue our journey, and my father will reward you."

"We trust not to the promises of a fidalgo, but take care ourselves to secure the rewards we require," answered the robber. "Come, lady, no more delay. You must leave your litter, for it cannot pass between the trees where our path lies." Saying which, he rudely seized the arm of the lovely girl, who had not attempted to move till he touched her, when she instinctively drew back; but she was as a dove in the talons of a vulture; and, dragging her forward, he compelled her to descend to the ground.

Trembling with terror, she gazed around, when she beheld the form of her parent, and, breaking from the bandit, threw herself, with a shriek, by his side, raising his head, and endeavouring to recall him to life. As, regarding none around her, she hung over the inanimate form of her parent, chafing his temples, kissing his pale cheek, and using every effort to recover him which her affection dictated, even the hardened ruffians paused ere they attempted to drag her from his side; but the love of gain triumphed over all the better feelings latent in their bosoms, which her beauty had for the moment elicited, and he who appeared to be the captain was again approaching her, when the fidalgo gave signs of returning animation, and, opening his eyes, gazed anxiously at his daughter. She uttered a cry of joy, on discovering that life yet remained, giving expression to her feelings by tender endearments; but the ruffian was not to be deterred from his purpose a second time, and, seizing her arm, attempted to tear her away. With slender efforts she endeavoured to resist the outrage, clinging still closer to her father. "If you have the feelings of men, you cannot be so cruel as to compel me to leave my father thus," she exclaimed. "Oh, wait, at least, till I see him in safety."

"Come, come, this is absurd folly, and waste of much precious time," cried several of the band in impatient tones.

"Give the old gentleman a shake, which will soon bring him to himself; and let him understand, that if he does not ransom his daughter in the course of three days, he will not see her again," said he with the slouched hat.

In vain the fair girl pleaded for pity, as two of the robbers held her in their grasp, while the others raised her father, who was now sufficiently recovered to comprehend his situation. He of the slouched hat again made his proposal, with threats of vengeance if it was not acceded to.

"Hear me!" cried the Fidalgo, in a tone of rage and agony. "You dare not commit the base outrage you propose, or the vengeance of every honest man in Portugal will follow and destroy you; but yet, if without further delay you set my daughter at liberty, I most solemnly promise you any sum you may venture to demand. Do you consent?"

"No, no, senhor," answered the leader: "we have risked our necks, and must be paid with good security; nor do we consider the empty word even of a fidalgo sufficient. You must send us the money, or you know the alternative, while we retain your daughter in our power."

"Wretches, no! 'tis impossible I should consent!" exclaimed Gonçalo Christovão. "I would rather stab my daughter to the heart, and then plunge the dagger into my own breast, than trust you."

"As you like, senhor; but we do not intend to give you the choice. Here, tie this noble fidalgo to a tree, with his servants round him, and the priest to offer him consolation, and perhaps by the time some traveller comes by, he may have thought better on the subject," said the leader.

"You dare not do it, villains!" exclaimed the Fidalgo, his agony increased to the highest pitch. "Release my child, or the vengeance of Heaven will fall on your heads."

"Gag him, gag him!" cried several of the band, as they dragged him towards a tree to bind him to it.

“If you are less than demons, hear me!” he again exclaimed, as he put aside indignantly the rough hands near his face. “Let my daughter and her attendants go free, and she shall forward the ransom, while I remain with you.”

“Oh no, senhor!” answered the Captain; “you are doubtless a very valuable and important person; but that would not at all answer our purpose. You would cause us much more trouble to keep; and if, by any chance, the ransom did not arrive, we could, after all, only kill you in revenge, while your fair daughter would make a charming wife to some of us. You understand, senhor! ’Twill lower your pride a little, when you see one of us kennel dogs, as you call us, your son-in-law. Think of that. These are our terms; and we do not alter them. Again, I say, we must have done with this folly. Collect all the party, and curses on them, while I hold the lady.”

The banditti, according to their leader’s order, now set to work in earnest, binding the fidalgo, the priest, and the servants to trees at some little distance from each other. They then treated the muleteers in the same way, who deplored, with tears, the loss of their animals; but when it came to the females’ turn, one of them contriving to get the gag out of her mouth, set up a scream loud enough to be heard at the distance of a mile, to which she continued to give reiterated utterance, struggling so bravely, that it was some time before that implement to which it is said women have so great an aversion, could be replaced.

“Do not attempt to escape, Senhor Fidalgo,” said one of the robbers, as approaching Gonçalo Christovaö, and drawing his long knife, he flourished it in the air. “Remember we could just as easily have cut your throat as let you live, and thank the saints that it is not our interest to do so. Some one will doubtless set you free before night approaches, otherwise you may find the wolves rather troublesome – adeos.”

Donna Clara, too much overwhelmed with terror and agitation even to utter a faint scream, remained a passive spectator of the scene, scarcely comprehending the extent of her danger; nor was it till the captain of the banditti lifted her on his horse, that she seemed to return to consciousness, and even then she appeared less alarmed for her own safety than for that of her father.

The robbers, having effectually rifled every one of the travellers, even making the muleteers deliver up the few coins they possessed, collected their booty, and driving the baggage-mules together, took a pathway which appeared leading out of the main track across the forest. The captain remained the last, to see that nothing was left behind; when, bearing Donna Clara before him on his saddle, deaf to her prayers and entreaties, and regardless of her father’s agonised glances, he turned his horse’s head to follow his companions.

Volume One – Chapter Nine

There are some feelings of the heart so intense that language possesses no words of sufficient force to describe them; and such was the passion which wrung the bosom of the proud fidalgo, when he saw his daughter, a being he loved, a part of himself, carried off by wretches so base and low that he looked upon them as formed of different materials from himself. It was far worse suffering than the martyr at the stake is doomed to bear; and rather would he have beheld his child torn by the wild beasts of the forest, than thus exposed to the lawless violence of such men. The agony of his fury deprived him almost of sensation, and of life itself; but the robber chief heeded him not, further than giving utterance to a scoffing laugh, and bestowing a glance of triumph and derision, over his shoulder, as he was disappearing among the trees; when, at the same moment, one of the band, who had been kept as a scout at some distance along the road, was seen galloping to the spot at a furious rate; and, as he perceived the captain, “Fly!” he cried, “fly! danger is near. A party of horsemen are close upon my heels.” At these words the robber, plunging his long spurs into his horse’s flanks, urged him between the thick-growing trees, followed by the scout, into the depths of the forest, where they were completely concealed from view.

The faint cries which, in her terror and despair, Donna Clara uttered, were yet heard, when a horseman approached, urging on his steed at the utmost speed, and the heart of the father beat again with the anxious hope of succour for his child; for, even as he flew along, his appearance bespoke him a cavalier of rank, being also followed by four servants at a short distance in the rear. He reined in his steed when he came near the spot where Gonçalo Christovaõ was bound, and was about to dismount.

“Think not of me, senhor,” exclaimed the Fidalgo. “But hasten through that path to the right, and rescue my daughter from the hands of ruffians who have borne her off.”

At that moment a faint cry was heard through the forest, nor needed the cavalier other inducement to dash forward in the direction from which it proceeded, pointing with his hand, as he rode towards the trees, to the party who remained bound, to indicate them to his servants, one of whom, as he came up, leaped from his horse, and busied himself in releasing them, while the rest galloped after their master into the forest. No sooner did the fidalgo find himself at liberty, than seizing a sword which had been left on the ground, he rushed off in the direction his daughter had been carried, followed by his faithful escudeiro, who was the next person released from his bonds. The rest of the servants and the priest were soon set at liberty, as were some of the muleteers, the former hurrying off to join their master, entirely forgetting, in their haste, to release the women; but, fortunately for them, the muleteers had either more gallantry, or were less anxious to enter into danger. The priest also stalked off in the same direction, muttering dark curses on the heads of the robbers. When released by the muleteers, the old nurse was in an almost insensible state, from terror at the danger of her young charge; but the youthful females, even before their arms were set at liberty, made most significant gestures to have their mouths cleared of the handkerchiefs so unceremoniously thrust into them, which operation was no sooner performed, than, as the renowned Baron Munchausen’s horn, when brought near the fire, gave forth the tones frozen up during the winter, so did they give vent, as if to make amends for their compulsory silence, to the most piercing shrieks, one trying to outvie the other in their loudness and number, so that it might have been supposed they were undergoing some fresh attack from the robbers, instead of being released by their friends. The old nurse threw herself on the ground, giving way to her terror in tears. “Oh my child! my dear child!” she cried; “they have torn her away, and I shall never see her more.”

We must now follow the course of the young cavalier, who had arrived so opportunely on the scene of action; indeed, were we not writing a true history instead of a romance, we might be supposed to have brought him in merely for dramatic effect; but we can assure our readers, that in this, as in every other instance, we are adhering closely to the very voluminous, though rather illegible

manuscripts, from which, with infinite labour, we are culling the present volumes. Perhaps, also, more interest may be taken in his adventures, when it is learnt that he was no other than Don Luis d'Almeida, on his way from Lisbon to his father's quinta, near Coimbra, accompanied by Pedro and some other attendants. As, with considerable risk, he galloped between the trees, he did not even turn his head to see if his servants were following, so eager was he to rescue the daughter of the venerable-looking person he had observed bound. As may be supposed, from the intricacy of the thickets and the closeness of the trees, very slow progress could be made by people encumbered in any way as the robbers were, and thus scarce three minutes had passed before Don Luis perceived them a short distance in advance, they being unconscious, from not hearing his horse's hoofs on the soft grass, that they were pursued. He was thus enabled to approach close to them before he was discovered, when, seeing only one man, the whole band reined in their horses, the hindermost wheeling with the intention of cutting him down, their leader ordering them not to fire, lest the report of their arms should show where they were: but the first who attempted to attack him paid dearly for his temerity; for, drawing a pistol from his holster, he discharged it, and the ruffian fell from his horse. This success somewhat checked the ardour of the rest in closing with him, and at the same time drew the attention of his servants to the spot. Fortunately for him, too, the robbers, having fired their guns, had forgotten to reload them, and before they could do so, his attendants were seen urging on their horses through the trees. The banditti, upon this, drew back together to reload their pieces; but Don Luis, seeing the advantage this would give them, drew his sword, and rushed on the foremost, his valour excited by catching sight of the light robes of the lady among them, the trees growing thickly around preventing more than one attacking him at a time. The captain of the band now approached, still holding the fainting form of Donna Clara in his grasp. "Fire, you fools!" he cried. "Never mind if you hit Damiaö. It cannot be helped; for we shall be cut down in detail, if we get not rid of yon daring madman. Fire!"

Two of his party obeyed; but their aim was uncertain, and the balls struck the trees near them.

"Fire again!" shouted the Captain; and another of his men having loaded his piece, discharged it; but it was for the destruction of a friend; for the ball striking Damiaö's horse, the animal fell, and Don Luis, dealing a blow on the ruffian's head before he could recover himself, rode furiously at the captor of the lady. His three followers at the same time coming up, gave full occupation to the remainder of the band, who were, however, still superior in numbers; and though their courage was somewhat lessened by the loss of their companions, yet the hopes of keeping possession of their booty induced them, led on by him with the slouched hat, to continue the combat. The bandit chief, encumbered as he was by his fair prize, would have been completely unable to defend himself from Don Luis's furious attack, had he not interposed her as his shield; but the young cavalier was not thus to be baffled; for, changing suddenly his sword to his bridle hand, and leaning forward, he so dexterously clasped the lovely girl round the waist, that the robber, completely taken by surprise, relinquished his hold, and beheld her securely seated in front of her rescuer before he had time to draw a weapon for his defence; when Don Luis, again changing his sword to his right hand, dealt him a blow on the shoulder, that completely disabled him from further resistance. A shot from the pistol of Pedro had likewise severely wounded him with the slouched hat; and the shouts of Gonçalo Christovaö, and his attendants, being now heard, the banditti lost courage, and, turning their horses, galloped after their wounded leader, leaving Don Luis master of the field, with all the booty, except the jewels and money they carried about them. With the fair charge he held in his arms, it was impossible for him to attempt to follow; nor did he think fit to risk the lives of his attendants in a pursuit, which, considering that the robbers were probably well acquainted with the country, would no doubt prove fruitless.

As, his faithful Pedro holding his horse, he gently lifted Donna Clara to the ground, he now, for the first time, observed her extreme beauty; and, though he had fancied his heart seared to all female attractions, he could not help acknowledging that he had never seen one so lovely as the fair girl to whom he had just afforded such essential service. "Fear not, lady," he said, in a tone modulated by

his feelings; “you are free from all danger, and your father, also, is unharmed. See, here he comes to assure you of his safety.”

As he spoke, the fidalgo arrived on the spot, and Don Luis’s heart beat quick with new, undefined sensations, as Donna Clara, forgetting all her terrors and danger on seeing her father in safety, sprang forward, and fell weeping on his neck, while he folded her in a tender embrace. For some minutes neither could find words to give utterance to their feelings of joy, which were too deep, too tender, indeed, for mere words; the father standing gazing on the lovely countenance of his daughter, as she reclined in his arms, while she looked up with an inquiring glance to assure herself that she was not deceived. At length, the Fidalgo addressed Don Luis with that dignified air which marks the man of true nobility.

“Senhor, you have bestowed an inestimable benefit on me,” he said: “let me not longer remain in ignorance of the name of one to whom I would endeavour to offer that earnest gratitude which, however, no words can express.”

“Oh! do not speak of gratitude, senhor,” answered Don Luis: “it is I who have to rejoice in my happiness at having been of service to one so fair and lovely as your daughter. My name is Don Luis d’Almeida.”

“Ah! the son of one whose reputation I well know,” answered the Fidalgo. “And truly delighted I am to hear by whom so great a weight of gratitude has been imposed. My name, also, you may probably have heard; it is Gonçalo Christovaõ.”

“A name so illustrious I could not fail to have heard, senhor,” answered Don Luis; “and my satisfaction is doubled at knowing to whom I have been of service.” The fidalgo bowed in return for the compliment, at which he was well pleased; nor did it fail to increase his estimation for the person who paid it.

“But pardon me, Don Luis,” he said; “we ought no longer to remain here; for those wretches are capable of any treachery, and may return to fire on us at a distance.”

“You observe rightly, senhor; we will no longer delay here,” answered Don Luis; and, offering his support to Donna Clara on one side, while her father aided her on the other, – she, expressing her thanks to her gallant deliverer much more by looks than words, – they conducted her towards the spot where the litters had been left; the patient mules having stood quiet during the whole time of the affray.

The muleteers, with shouts of pleasure, collected their scattered beasts, whom they had never expected to see again, and busily employed themselves in putting the litters and baggage to rights. Leaving the body of the slain robber as food for the wolves, the servants dragged forward his companion who had been wounded, one of them, more humane than the rest, attempting to stop the blood flowing from a deep wound in his shoulder, but in vain; yet the man, though he felt himself to be dying, would give no information respecting the rest of the banditti. They were close to the road, when they encountered the priest; and the wounded robber, seeing a person in the clerical dress, earnestly entreated that the consolations of religion might be administered to him. At a sign from the priest, he was therefore placed on the bank, facing the road, and the servants retiring, the holy man knelt down by his side, to hear the confession of his sins, before which he could offer none of the satisfactory comforts of absolution; but the detail occupied a considerable time; for his peccadillos were, alas! of no slight magnitude, nor of little interest, it would seem, by the look of earnest attention which overspread the countenance of his listener. The robber threw many a dark imputation on the characters of some of high rank and influence in the realm, by whose instigation he had committed various atrocities, yet unconfessed and unabsolved. “Now, Father,” said the dying man, “absolve me from these sins which press most heavily on me, and I will afterwards make confession of the remainder.”

“Not so, my son,” answered the Priest; “you must make a clear discharge of your conscience; for I may not afford absolution to a heart yet loaded with iniquity.”

“Oh! Father, I am dying, and feel that I am a miserable sinner!” ejaculated the man, with a feeble voice; “but there is a deed I swore not to reveal to any one, and I may not break my oath. Oh! grant me, then, absolution, ere I die.”

“That may not be,” answered the Priest; “oaths made to sinners like ourselves, for a wicked purpose, can be annulled by a minister of religion, as the only way of making retribution for the crime.”

“It was a deed of blood, Father, but I sought not to do it of my own accord; another instigated me to it by bribes which my poverty could not resist, and I swore never to reveal it.”

“I have said such oaths are valueless!” exclaimed the Priest eagerly. “Come, haste, for your last moments are approaching, when you will be consigned to the terrible flames of purgatory, for thousands and thousands of years, without a mass said for the repose of your soul, if you do not go at once to the ever-burning and bottomless pit, among infidels and heretics.”

The hair of the man stood on end with horror, at the picture of torment offered to his imagination; his eyeballs rolled wildly, as with clenched hands he for an instant sat upright on the ground, and seemed as if about to rise altogether.

“I will confess, I will confess!” he cried, “though I break my oath. ’Twas the young Conde de San Vincente who hired me by a large bribe to do the deed. There was a lady whose affections he sought to gain, but her husband was – Oh, Father, where are you? I am cold – very cold!” cried the man.

“Who was the husband? – you slew him?” asked the Priest, stooping down over the dying wretch.

“He was the – ” but ere he could pronounce the name which hung quivering on his lips, he uttered a loud shriek, and, with a convulsive shudder, fell back a lifeless corpse. The priest, however, had heard enough for his purpose; and uttering, or pretending to utter, a prayer over the body, he rose from the ground, and some of the servants coming up, one of them threw a cloak over the distorted features of the dead man.

While the scene of horror we have described was enacting, Don Luis had been actively employed in restoring order to the scattered cavalcade; his first care being to place Donna Clara in her litter, in which her old *gouvernante* accompanied her. The *fidalgo* was too much injured and fatigued to remount his horse, and therefore took his seat in his litter; the two wounded men-servants being placed in the third, while the females mounted the mules of the former; one of the mules of the fourth litter having been wounded, they were unable to support a burden.

These various arrangements having been made; the *fidalgo*, with many expressions of gratitude, would have bid farewell to his deliverer; but Don Luis, fearful that the brigands might again return, insisted on escorting him and his daughter to Leiria, the nearest town on the road to Lisbon, where, if thought advisable, a guard might be procured. “I should be performing but half my *devoir* as a knight, if I were to quit you in the middle of the forest,” said Don Luis; “a few hours’ delay can be of slight consequence to me, and I may happily be of some further service to you.”

“I cannot refuse your courteous offer, *senhor*,” answered the *Fidalgo*, pointing to his daughter. “For my daughter’s sake, it is most acceptable, as I yet tremble for her safety.”

Further delay being unnecessary, the party was again put in motion, Don Luis now riding by the side of the *fidalgo*’s litter, and ever and anon, notwithstanding his previous intentions to the contrary, approaching that of Donna Clara, to inquire if she had recovered from her alarm, and to assure her that she had no further cause for fear; an assurance in which, proceeding from the lips of so handsome a cavalier, and uttered in a tone of respectful courtesy, she could not fail to put implicit confidence. Notwithstanding his words, however, he kept a constant and watchful glance on every side, having also given private instructions to his own people, and to those of Gonçalo Christovão to have their arms in readiness for any sudden attack. By insensible degrees he was led to enter more into conversation with his fair companion, and, as he spoke, his words became animated with a new spirit; all thoughts of

the past being banished from his mind, while the roses again returned to her cheeks before blanched by fear, her soft eyes beaming with a strange and undefined happiness.

While Don Luis rode on to address the fidalgo, the old Nurse began to comment on his appearance. “What a handsome young cavalier is that,” she said; “so brave too, – why, the servants say he killed ten of the brigands with his own hand! What a noble countenance he has! with such sparkling black eyes! and how many polite inquiries he made after our health! Oh! mine is sore shaken by the fright. – Is he not handsome?”

“Do you think so, good nurse?” answered Donna Clara unconsciously. “I did not look. – He is very brave and very good, I am sure.”

“That he is; and so gallant, too,” said the Nurse. “How few young gentlemen would take the trouble to turn back to protect us. What a pity he is married!”

“Married!” exclaimed Donna Clara; and there was a sinking at her heart, and she felt her cheek again grow pale, she knew not why.

“If he is not married, he soon is to be, to his cousin Donna Theresa d’Alorna. The moment I heard his name I remembered that I had learned all about it from Senhora Anna, his father’s housekeeper, whose birth-place is near Oporto, and who came back to see her kindred some time ago.”

While the old lady was thus running on, the subject of her conversation again rode to the side of the litter; for it was extraordinary how incumbent on him he considered it to make frequent inquiries respecting the young lady’s health. Now, many people will ask if Don Luis had thus suddenly forgotten Donna Theresa and all his griefs; and though we cannot, with perfect certainty, answer that question, yet we have strong reasons to suspect that, for the time, he thought very little about either one or the other; nor had he, indeed, from the moment when he dashed his spurs into his horse’s flanks, as he rode forward to rescue Donna Clara from the power of the brigands, and, as now he rode by her side, gazing on her lovely countenance, and regarding her as one who confided in him for protection, he knew not how it was that all nature seemed suddenly to have assumed a brighter garb, and the weight to have been lifted from his heart. We must, however, beg no one to suppose we mean to insinuate, either that he had fallen in love with the lady, or that she had fallen in love with him, at first sight; because all people of mature judgment agree that, if such is possible, it can occur alone to very silly young people; and that the descriptions of such folly are to be found only in the most absurd and extravagant romances. Of course, therefore, in a grave history, like the present work, we should not venture even to hint at such a thing; and, with regard to his affection for his cousin, it must be remembered that she had treated him with great cruelty and deceit; and that young hearts, however their possessors may fancy them seared and blighted, are of a very elastic and reviving nature, requiring but the warm sun and genial showers of spring to restore their freshness and bloom.

However that may be, when Don Luis again rode up to the side of the litter, his thoughts dwelt on no other subject than its fair occupant, and he felt a slight sensation of disappointment, as, instead of leaning forward to hear what he had to communicate, she reclined back in her seat. “I fear Donna Clara is fatigued with all she has undergone,” he observed.

“Yes, senhor,” she answered, with a half averted eye, “I have, indeed, yet scarcely recovered from terror, though I know it is foolish to be further alarmed; but – ” and she hesitated to proceed.

“Do you know, Senhor Don Luis,” exclaimed the old Nurse, eager to speak, and at the same time to relieve the embarrassment of her charge, “that I have heard a great deal of you, and seem to know you perfectly well, though I never saw you before. Ah! senhor, I have heard, too, of your fair cousin, Donna Theresa, and am surprised she is not with you; for I thought you were to have been married before this.”

At Donna Theresa’s name a cloud passed across the cavalier’s brow.

“You must have been misinformed, senhora,” he answered gravely. “My cousin is engaged to the Marquis of Tavora.”

“Oh! I beg your pardon, senhor,” said the old Nurse; “I hope I have not offended by the question; but I hear that she is a very lovely young lady.”

“Oh no, no, you have not offended,” said Don Luis, as he rode from the side of the litter, to avoid showing the blush which burned on his cheek at hearing an affair so lightly alluded to, which he had fancied unknown to the world. Very different was the effect of his words on Donna Clara; for though she felt that, whether he was single, engaged, or married, ought to be a matter of complete indifference to her, yet a certain uneasy sensation seemed removed from her breast, and she again leaned forward to speak, when she found he was no longer by her side.

More than an hour elapsed before Don Luis again approached the litter, during which period the young lady unconsciously allowed a number of new sensations, which had never before been known to her, to take possession of her heart; and she welcomed his return with a smile whose sweetness might have softened the bosom of a stoic, – and certainly her gallant deliverer was not one. For the remainder of the journey he did not leave the side of her litter for more than a few minutes at a time, always gladly again returning to it; and, although they had emerged some time before from the dark forest of pines, and were traversing a comparatively thickly-peopled country, so that all fear of the brigands was banished, yet he insisted on accompanying the party to the end of their day’s journey. As the travellers wound round the base of a hill, the bright rays of the evening sun were throwing a ruddy hue on the topmost turrets of the once proud castle of Leiria; which, standing on the summit of an eminence, situated to the north of that most ancient town, now burst on their view, enclosed in an amphitheatre of hills, surrounding a smiling, well-cultivated valley. A road winding round the foot of the hill conducted them, through the narrow streets of the town, to the house of a fidalgo, who, though absent, had requested Gonçalo Christovaö to take up his abode there.

Don Luis spent the evening in the society of the fidalgo and his daughter; nor did he lose the ground he had gained in the estimation of either; though the priest regarded him with frowning looks, keeping a lynx-eyed watch on every expression of his countenance, and on each word he uttered: the whole party, however, overcome with fatigue, were glad to retire at an early hour to rest.

The sun had already risen above the walls of the town on the following morning, before Don Luis thought of ordering his horses, and he then considered it but an act of common courtesy to wait till he had seen one of Donna Clara’s attendants, to inquire how their lady had borne the fatigues of the journey, and at last, when a black-eyed soubrette tripped down stairs, she kept the handsome stranger in conversation with abundance of questions in return, hoping that he neither had suffered in any way, and finishing by assuring him that her young mistress would be quite offended, she felt sure, if he departed without allowing her again to thank him in person for his gallantry. These observations, we must remark, were entirely the damsel’s own ideas; for, of course, Donna Clara would not have dreamed of delaying Don Luis in his journey on her account; but so thought not the soubrette, and she was merely acting towards her mistress as she would have wished others to do towards herself; for it is remarkable what quick perceptions her class possess on such matters. He therefore could not be so ungallant as to refuse her request, and then he bethought him also that he ought to pay his respects to Gonçalo Christovaö, who had not yet issued from his sleeping apartment. He had for some time been pacing the drawing-room with rather impatient steps, when, on facing the door, it opened, and Donna Clara appeared, enveloped in the full and graceful drapery of her travelling dress, a slight pallor on her delicate cheeks, her eyes soft and liquid, and with a slight degree of bashfulness in her manner as she advanced into the room. There seems to be always a brighter halo of freshness and purity, circling round a young and innocent girl when she first greets the early morn with her smile of gladness, before the glowing sun of noon-day has cast his scorching beams upon her head to dim the seraph-like lustre of her beauty. So lovely, indeed, did Donna Clara appear to the eyes of Don Luis, that for a moment, as the blood rushed quickly from his heart, he stopped, unconsciously, to gaze with admiration involuntary; but, recovering his usual manner, he approached her with graceful courtesy, to inquire if she had suffered from the terror and fatigue of the previous day. She answered, in tones

of silvery softness, a sweet smile beaming on her lips, and, as she spoke, his eyes wandered over her features, imprinting every lineament indelibly on the tablets of his memory. Though he knew it not, neither age, grief, nor madness itself, could efface that image of beauty he had drawn. Years might pass away, his own eyes might grow dim, that lovely form might fade, but there it would remain, unchangeable, cherished, and adored!

Though old age has stolen on us, it has made us neither sullen nor morose, and we can yet find pleasure in recurring to the fresh days of our youth, when a lovely face had power to make an impression on our hearts; and we can thus vividly picture to ourselves many of those, seen perhaps but once, suddenly bursting on our view, like a picture of Titian's, never to be forgotten; and it is from those we describe the fair creatures we would introduce to our readers. Now and again we have met the same, we have fancied, in the person of a younger sister, or a daughter, or perhaps of no kindred except that of sentiments and disposition, which always give a similar expression to the countenance. Sometimes, too, we have met the self-same being, changed, alas! from the creature of angelic loveliness we once knew; – the roses have fled her cheeks, the sylph-like form is no longer there; we hear no more her soft silvery voice; but soon some old familiar expression, some reference to past days, conjures up the former image in all its glowing tints of loveliness, and we deem our youth again returned, and once more do her joyous laughter and the sweet notes of her voice ring, like fairy music, in our ears. 'Tis for this reason that we esteem painting the first, the most divine of the arts; for, with regard to music, the hand or the voice may fail; with poetry, the language may alter or be lost, and the words bring no meaning to the senses; but painting has survived the destruction of kingdoms, the dispersion of nations, a people whose language and very name would have passed away, but that the productions of this art remain to tell their history. Who has not gazed with rapture on some lovely, almost speaking, portrait of one absent, or perhaps lost to us for ever? As we have stood before it, we have seemed to hold converse with it; the eyes have appeared to burn with the mysterious light of intellect, and the lips to move; and we have answered to the words we in fancy heard! Can poetry or music work this magic effect? No; they have their own charms – and oh! how powerful our soul confesses! but we have seen paintings which combine all, which have poetry in every line, and music in every tint.

We are fond, we confess, of making digressions, either when travelling through beautiful scenery, or in conversation, to sketch the views, and to cull the flowers to be found on each side of our path, which, however pleasant to ourselves, who know what is before us, is a bad system to pursue, we own, when our readers are anxious to proceed with our history, and we must therefore apologise to them for our wanderings, and promise in future to keep as much as possible in the direct path.

We must again request our readers to understand, that we do not affirm that Don Luis was in love with Donna Clara; but that we merely wish to explain clearly that he was not at all likely to forget her, which circumstance may be of consequence to remember for the elucidation of the subsequent part of this narrative; to hasten on with which, we need not give the conversation which took place between them, because, also, though highly interesting to themselves, it may not be so to our readers.

At length, however, Donna Clara appeared to be seized with a fit of timidity, wherefore we do not know; for Don Luis was most respectful, and he intended to appear as reserved and cold as he was fully convinced he felt; and we can only guess, therefore, that it was at the time he was employed in making that mental portrait we have described, in which process his eyes were necessarily fixed on her fair features. Now his eyes had a melancholy, tender glance, owing to his late unhappiness; and we have observed that, from the pitying nature of the female heart, such always make the strongest impression on it; and it is a fact for which we will vouch, that, precisely at the same time, she was making the same use of her eyes, in drawing on her mind, though in a slightly different way; for, while his were fixed while he spoke, with a steady gaze, her glances were but for a moment, ever and anon, lifted to his countenance, and again quickly thrown on the ground, as a miniature painter does in the practice of his art. Now, the young people were taking each other's miniatures in the most artistical

way, though they were not aware of it; nor was the operation quite finished (for they found much pleasure in prolonging it) when Gonçalo Christovaö entered the room to relieve his daughter from the slight embarrassment she was beginning to feel. The morning meal was then placed on the table; and, during the time necessarily employed in discussing it, they threw in a few finishing touches, before omitted, which certainly made the portraits very perfect – fully equal to those from the pencil of Rochard, who so frequently, while preserving an exact likeness, improves on the beauty of the originals; though it was impossible such should be the case with the miniature Don Luis carried away of Donna Clara, however much she might have flattered him.

Breakfast in those days was composed of different materials from what it is at present in England, tea being used by very few in the morning except as a medicine, light wine and water being drunk instead, with a little bread, the noon-day meal and the supper being the only substantial repasts.

During the course of conversation, Donna Clara mentioned a serious loss which had occurred to her of a small case of jewels. “I prized them highly, not for their intrinsic value, but that they were my beloved mother’s; nor have I even ever lifted them from the box since she last placed them there.”

Don Luis, of course, as a man of gallantry, vowed that he would use every exertion to recover them, though he could scarcely tell how he should set about the task. Donna Clara, we need not say, thanked him, with many blushes, for his kind intentions; at the same time more minutely describing her lost treasure, for she could not resist a sort of presentiment that he would recover it.

The morning meal having been discussed in the way we have described, and a very pleasant way Don Luis thought it, though it had not a fattening effect on him certainly, for he quite forgot to eat anything, the litters were ordered to the door, and he had the honour of leading the young lady to her seat, in doing which he was quite surprised to discover a slight trembling of her hand, as unavoidably he gently pressed it, though nothing of the sort occurred with Senhora Gertrudes, the old nurse, as most gallantly he placed her opposite to her mistress, by which slight attention he completely won that most respectable old lady’s heart. He then offered his arm to the fidalgo, who gave him a warm embrace at parting, making him promise to visit him soon at Lisbon. He then observed that the curtain of Donna Clara’s litter was loose, so he flew to secure it, for which service he received a rich reward in a sweet smile and a few words of thanks; they, of course, required a suitable answer, and thus he lingered by her side until the whole cavalcade were waiting his last bow, to be put in motion. He delayed them some time before he discovered such to be the case, and was aroused only by hearing the fidalgo’s voice inquiring of the muleteers why they did not proceed, and their answering that they were ready. Donna Clara then bent her head, and waved her hand, Gonçalo Christovaö bowed, and all his attendants took off their hats, which salutation being returned by Don Luis, the whole party moved forward; but he did not quit his position till the last faint tinkle of the mules’ bells had died away. He might have stood there longer, as Pedro, who had been making his private comments on what he observed, thought very probable; but knowing that it was high time his master should be in the saddle, he brought his horse close to him, making the animal rear a little, while he held the stirrup, a very significant gesture for him to mount. Looking round, and seeing all his party prepared, he threw himself on his horse, courteously returning the bows made by the bystanders, and set forward to retrace his steps of the previous day. Having now introduced two very interesting young people to each other, we will leave them to pursue their journeys in different directions, while we turn to other scenes and fresh characters, for none of which, however, have we so much regard as for those we have just quitted.

Volume One – Chapter Ten

In looking over the many various and bulky documents before us, from which we are compiling this history, we see an account of a personage who played a conspicuous part in the scenes we are about to describe. Dom Joseph Mascarenhas and Lancastre, Duke of Aveiro, was descended from Dom George, a natural son of John the Second, King of Portugal, called the Perfect. He was hereditary grand master of the house of the King of Portugal, president of the court of the palace, and one of the high lords of the kingdom. He was not born to this high rank, owing it more to a caprice of fortune than to any good qualities he possessed. His elder brother, the Marquis of Gouvea, having fallen in love with the wife of a fidalgo of the first order, and won her affection in return, which was discovered by the husband; as the only way of enjoying their criminal passion, he fled with her to a foreign country. Such, according to the laws of Portugal, is considered a capital crime, and punished by perpetual banishment, which sentence being carried into effect against the marquis, his younger brother succeeded to his title and estates. An uncle of the Gouveas, Father Gaspar de Incarnaçaõ, one of the many priests by whom the old king, John the Fifth, was surrounded, being soon after nominated Prime Minister, through his interest, the dukedom of Aveiro, which had previously become extinct, was bestowed on Dom Joseph. During the reign of that imbecile and fanatical sovereign, he had enjoyed considerable influence at Court, when he had made a deadly and personal enemy of Sebastião Jozé de Carvalho, then a young and daring adventurer, without power or influence, who had presumed to lift his eyes towards a lady of his family, whose affections his handsome figure and gallant manners had won. The duke, highly indignant at the daring presumption of one whom he designated as a low-born plebeian, strenuously opposed the match, threatening vengeance on the head of the lover if he presumed to persevere, at the same time insulting him with every term of opprobrium. But the man who was destined to curb and break the haughty spirits of the whole body of a potent nobility, was not likely to be deterred from his purpose by the threats of a single family; and, in spite of all their care, he bore the lady off from the seclusion in which they had immured her to keep her out of his way. In consequence of this insult to the honour of his family, the duke had sworn the most deadly vengeance against Carvalho, taking every means to thwart his aspiring aims; and thus did the blackest hatred rankle in the breasts of both, each seeking the first opportunity to destroy the other. His duchess, by whom he had one son, the Marquis of Gouvea, yet a child, was sister to the Marchioness of Tavora, but devoid of her pride and ambition, and devoted entirely to her domestic duties.

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