up with Ropes, who had collared his man and jammed him against a wall.

Not a sound had the wretch uttered. He knew that if he resisted he would be instantly denounced and torn to pieces by a crowd not likely to wait for clear proof of such an accusation. Since he had failed, it was better to trust to the mercy of his captor and of the police than to the thousands wild with enthusiasm for the King. Fortunately for him, as for us, the crowd had something better to do than stop to watch what they took for some trifling private quarrel.

"He tried to knife me," said Ropes; "but I stopped that. Knife's in my pocket. What next, sir?" It was characteristic that he did not ask what the man had done.

"Give the brute up to the police," I answered in English. "He was with another chap, whom I have lost, in a plot to throw a bomb at the royal box; and the bomb is in this water jar."

For the first time Ropes's face lost its imperturbable expression. "What, sir!" he exclaimed. "After your troubles—excuse my mentioning them—you concern yourself in an affair like this?"

"I have no choice. We can't let this beast escape. If they have him, the police may get his mate."

"Beg pardon, sir, you have a choice. I've got the man. Give me the jar with the bomb, and I'll take the whole thing on my shoulders with the police, though it's a shame you should lose the credit. I have a clean bill; chauffeur to Mr. R. Waring, American newspaper correspondent. No need to bring you into it."

"If you should be blown up by the bomb—"

"Would get blown up just the same sticking to you, for I would stick to you like a bur, sir. (Now, no good wriggling, you beast, or gabbling about a mistake! There's no mistake, and you won't get away!) Better tell him what's in that jar, sir—my Spanish doesn't run so far—and that'll quiet him."

"You can't manage the man and the jar."

"Could manage two of each. There's a couple of civil guards. Now if you have any kindness for me, sir, let go that jar; and don't be seen with me!"

I gave Ropes his way. But I lingered near enough to watch the scene which followed, and had that innocent looking jar been broken, or had the contents of the soaked bouquet exploded of its own accord, I should have been near enough to share my chauffeur's fate. He explained in broken Spanish, eked out with gesture, and the fact that he was English, with the most honest of English faces to vouch for his sincerity, helped him. The man in his grasp was Catalan, which was not in his favor at Seville. The civil guards looked at the jar with respectful interest, but did not offer to take it; and after a moment of lively conversation Ropes and his captive marched rapidly away with the men in red, black, and white.

At least, whatever happened now, the King was safe, and Monica was safe.

It was not until eight o'clock, when I went to the quiet hotel where we had appointed to meet and dine, that I found out anything more. Then they told me that the King returned to his box after walking in the procession, and that soon after Dick had been surprised by a visit from a member of the police in plain clothes. The man had come to the O'Donnels' box, inquired if the American gentleman was Mr. Waring, asked if he had a chauffeur named Peter Ropes, and being answered in the affirmative had told the story of the bomb. Dick had then gone with the policeman to see Ropes, had made a statement concerning himself, his business, his car, his chauffeur, his occupation in life, and the friends with whom he was staying. All had proved satisfactory. Ropes had been thanked by the police for his promptness and presence of mind, and threatened with active gratitude from higher quarters. Both had been asked to remain within reach for a few days.

But it was not until they heard my part of the story that Dick or the O'Donnels knew precisely where and how Ropes had come into the drama.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Behind an Iron Grating

"SAY," remarked Dick in a stage whisper, "there would be a big drop in the bee industry if all the world turned Protestant and bought no more great wax candles."

We were standing inside the Moorish arch of the Puerta del Pardon, in the Court of Oranges. Beyond, where the stuffed crocodile swung in a light breeze, was the entrance to the cathedral, black as the mouth of a cave. The wind which rocked that huge reptile—the gift of a disappointed Sultan—sent the petals of ten thousand orange blossoms drifting over our heads in a perfumed snow storm.

This it was which had drawn forth Dick's reflection; but I scarcely heard his words. I was watching for Monica; and my last chance must come soon if it was to come at all.

Pilar and her father were not with us. They had gone into the cathedral, where they had secured seats not far from the royal chapel and in the best position to hear the *Miserere*. Though it was early still, not quite nine o'clock, vast crowds were gathering, and it was possible, they thought, that Carmona and his guests were already in their places. If they were seen there, Colonel O'Donnel would send out a messenger, a man employed in the cathedral, with a word for me.

This person had come to the hotel earlier, where he had been told to look well at me, that he might not fail to recognize me again. And Dick and I had not stood on sentinel duty for fifteen minutes when he appeared, beating through the opposing tide of the multitude as it swept toward the cathedral.

"His worship the Colonel O'Donnel wished their worships the two señoritos to know that those they wished to find were not visible in the cathedral."

"Could they be there and invisible?" I asked.

"The cathedral is very dimly lighted; and they might not be seen if they were in some chapel. There are several with many people in them, and the doors are locked."

"Is that allowed?"

"The people have given something to a verger not to let others in. I have power of the same kind, if any señor wished me to use it."

"Here they come!" whispered Dick. "Carmona, Lady Vale Avon, and Lady Monica!"

We stepped farther back into shadow, though such precaution was hardly needed. It was so dim in the Court of Oranges that the crowd groped its way over the cracked, uneven pavement. Only because they were close upon us, and he was watching, had Dick been able to make out the faces we knew.

"Stop with us," I said to Colonel O'Donnel's messenger. "You shall have a hundred pesetas if you will open the door of an empty chapel for me, and lock it again when I give the word."

"But I fear there are no empty ones—" he began.

"Then make one empty. Can you do that—for a hundred pesetas?"

"Yes, señor, I think I can."

By this time Monica, still in her black mantilla, had flitted past us between her mother and the Duke; but we were following. Dim as it was in the court, the moon looked out from behind the Giralda tower, and it was not dark enough for my project. Inside the cathedral, however (save where blazed the Holy Week monument, an illuminated temple of white and gold), was a mysterious darkness. Not the hundreds of great wax candles sufficed to light the aisles in that vast forest of stone. Stumbling, groping, to pass through a hanging veil of shadow, thousands of men and women drifted aimlessly to and fro, themselves black as the shadows they fought; save here and there some soldier whose uniform waked a brief flame of red and gold, or a hooded brother who glowed purple under a lighted pillar.

Purposely we pushed against the people before us, so that in a space black as a lake of ink the trio we followed was separated. The rush of people from behind was so sudden, so well managed by us, that it took the Duke unawares. The three were caught in the eddy, divided, and before they could come together again I had my arm through Monica's, and was dragging her away, the messenger clinging to me closely.

"Don't be frightened," I said. "It's I—Ramón. I have to speak with you."

She looked up at me, her pale face dim as a spirit's in the dark. "Shame!" she stammered brokenly. "To force me like this—you, who have—"

"Done nothing except love you too well; and you must give me the chance to win you back. You owe it to me!" I said almost fiercely; and she was silenced.

"Monica! Where are you?" I heard Lady Vale Avon's voice call, and could have thanked her for giving me the direction to avoid.

"Take us to that empty chapel quick!" I said to the man.

Then he, who would have known how to find his way in that stone forest blindfold, steered us through the sea of people and into a haven beyond the waves. Not a chapel was lighted; but as my eyes grew used to the gloom I could see faces on the other side of the tall, shut gates of openwork iron which we passed.

"I have the key of this one. I will promise the people a better place if they will come out," whispered the messenger, stopping before a pair of these closed doors, and unlocking it with a great key. I heard him speciously informing a group of shadows that they would be too far from the music to hear it well. He had a friend who would open another chapel nearer. Eagerly ten or twenty persons snapped at the bait, flocked out, and the instant their backs were turned I half dragged, half carried, Monica in. Then before she could escape, if she had wished to try, the great iron gates were shut and locked upon us.

"They will be looking everywhere for you," I said. "Come with me to the back where it is so dark that no one can see us. This chapel must seem to be empty."

"I want to be found!" the girl answered cruelly. "I am going to marry the Duke!"

"If you love him and not me, I shall not lift my hand to keep you," I said. "The other night I believed it was so, and made up my mind to trouble you no more. But Miss O'Donnel said—"

"Miss O'Donnel!" exclaimed Monica. "I wonder you can speak of her to me!"

Her voice quivered with angry scorn, yet my heart leaped with joy at the words, which confirmed Pilar's suspicions and my hopes.

"She is as loyally your friend as I am loyally your lover," I assured her. "Now listen! There are things which you must hear; and if when you have heard them you ask me to take you to your mother and Carmona, I will obey instantly." Then, without giving her time to cut me short, I began to talk of the letter I had written at Manzanares, and how I sent it, and what it had said. "Did you get it?" I asked.

"No such letter as that. It was a very different one—a horrible letter. Oh, Ramón, if it were true, if you had been true! If you could have gone on loving me!" she broke into sobbing, and hid her face between her hands.

"Don't dare to doubt that I did, and always will. Tell me what the letter said!" I pulled her hands down, too roughly perhaps, and held them fast in mine.

She tried to check her sobs. "I could show you the letter if there was a light. Since that day I have

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"Do You Think My Mother Would Do Such a Thing as That?" She Said.