ROMANCE

BY JOSEPH CONRAD

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CHAPTER IV.

I REMAINED lying there, bound hand and foot, for a long time; for quite long enough to allow me to collect my senses and see that I had been a fool to threaten O'Brien. I had been nobly indignant, and behold! I had a sack thrown over my head for my pains, and was put away safely somewhere or other. It seemed to be a cellar.

I was in search of romance, and here were all the elements; Spaniards, a conspirator, and a kidnaping; but I couldn't feel a fool and romantic as well. True romance, I suppose, needs a whirl of emotions to extinguish all the senses except that of sight, which it dims. Except for sight, which I hadn't at all, I had the use of them all, and all reported unpleasant things.

I waited, and my fury grew in a dead silence. How would it end—with what outrage? I would show my contempt and preserve my dignity by submitting without a struggle—I despised this odious plot. At last there were voices, footsteps; I found it very hard to carry out my resolution and refrain from stifled cries and kicks. I was lifted up and carried, like a corpse, with many stumbles, by men who sometimes growled as they hastened along. From time to time somebody murmured "Take care." Then I was deposited into a boat. The world semed to be swaying, splashing, jarring—and it became obvious to me that I was being taken to some ship. The Spanish ship, of course. Suddenly I broke into cold perspiration at the thought that, after all, their purpose might be to drop me quickly overboard. "Carlos!" I cried. I felt the point of a knife on my breast. "Silence, senor!" said a gruff voice.

This fear vanished when we came alongside a ship evidently already under way; but I was handled so roughly and clumsily that I was thoroughly exhausted and out of breath, by the time I was got on board. All was still around me; I was left alone on a settee in the main cabin, as I imagined. For a long time I made no movement; then a door opened and shut. There was a murmured conversation between two voices. This went on in animated whispers for a time. At last I felt as if someone were trying, rather ineffectually, to remove the sack itself. Finally, that actually did rub its way over my head, and something soft and silken began to wipe my eyes with a surprising care, and even tenderness. "This was stupidly done," came a discontented remark; "you do not handle a caballero like this."

"And how else was it to be done, to that kind of caballero?" was the curt report.

By that time I had blinked my eyes into a condition for remaining open for minute stretches. Two men were bending over me—Carlos and O'Brien himself. The latter said:

"Believe me, your mistake made this necessary. This young gentleman was about to become sigularly inconvenient, and he is in no way harmed."

He spoke in a velvety voice, and walked away gently through the darkness. Carlos followed with the lantern dangling at arm's length; strangely enough he had not even looked at me. I suppose he was ashamed, and I was too proud to speak to him, with my hands and feet tied fast. The door closed, and I remained sitting in the darkness.

I turned my head to a click. I saw a door open a little way, and the small blue flame of a taper floated into the room. The light shone redly through protecting fingers and upward on to a small face. It came to a halt, and I made out the figure of a girl leaning across a table looking upward. There was a click of glass, and a great blaze of light created a host of shining things. A large silver lamp she had lighted kept on swinging to the gentle motion of the ship.

She stood just in front of me; the girl that I had seen through the door; the girl that I had seen play with the melon seeds. She was breathing fast—it agitated me to be alone with her—and she had a little shining dagger in her hand.

She cut the rope round my ankles, and motioned me imperiously to turn round.

"Your hands—your hands!"

I turned my back awkardly to her, and felt the grip of small, cool, very firm fingers upon my wrists. My arms fell apart, numb and perfectly useless; I was half aware of pain in them, but it passed unnoticed among a cloud of other emotions. I didn't feel my finger-tips because I had the agitation, the flutter, the tantalization of looking at her.

"Ask nothing," she said, hurriedly. "The land is not far yet. You can escape. Carlos thought. . . . But no! You would only perish for nothing Go with God." She pointed imperiously towards the square sternposts of the cabin.

"Go—go—go with God," the girl whispered urgently. "There is a boat——"

I made a motion to rise; I wanted to go. But I could not stand, though the blood was returning, warm and tingling, in my legs and hands. She looked at me with a sharp frown puckering her brows a little; beat a hasty tattoo with one of her feet, and cast a startled glance towards the forward doors that led on deck.

"Your life hangs on a thread," she murmured.

I answered, "You have given it to me. Shall I never——" I was acutely conscious of the imperfection of my language.

She looked at me sharply; then lowered her lids. Afterwards she raised them again. "Think of yourself. Every moment is——"

"I will be as quick as I can," I said.

"That man thinks he can destroy you. I hate him—I detest him! You have seen how he treats my father!"

It struck me, like a blow, that she was merely avenging O'Brien's insolence to her father. I had been kidnaped against Don Balthasar Riego's will. It gave me very well the measure of the old man's powerlessness in the face of his intendant—who was obviously confident of afterwards soothing the resentment.

I was glad I had not thanked her for taking an interest in me. I was distressed, too, because once more I had missed Romance by an inch.

Someone kicked at the locked door. A voice cried—I could not help thinking—warningly, "Seraphina! Seraphina!" and another voice said with excessive softness, "Senorita! Voyous! quelle folie."

She sprang at me. Her hand hurt my wrist as she dragged me aft. I scrambled clumsily into the recess of the counter, and put my head out. The night air was very chilly and full of brine; a little boat towing by a long painter was sheering about in the phosphorescent wake of the ship. A little astern of us, on our port quarter, a vessel under a press of canvas seemed to stand still; looming up like an immense pale ghost. She might have been coming up with us, or else we had just passed her—I couldn't tell.

The sound of another kick at the door made me swing myself out, head first, without reflection. I got soused to the waist before I had reached the bows of the boat. With a frantic effort I clambered up and rolled in. When I got on my legs the jerky motion of tossing had ceased, the boat was floating still, and the light of the stern windows was far away already. The girl had cut the painter.

The other vessel was heading straight for me, rather high on the water, broad-beamed, squat, and making her way quietly, like a shadow. The land might have been four or five miles away—I had no means of knowing exactly. It looked like a high black cloud, and purply-gray mists here and there among the peaks hung like scarfs.

I got an oar over the stern to scull, but I was not fit for much exertion. I stared at the ship I had left. Her stern windows glimmered with a slight up-and-down motion; her sails seemed to fall into black confusion against the blaze of the moon; faint cries came to me out of her, and by the alteration of her shape I understood that she was being brought to, preparatory to lowering a boat.

The land breeze was dying away, and in the wake of the moon I perceived the boat of my pursuers coming over, black and distinct; but the other vessel was nearly upon me. I sheered under her starboard bow.

There was a lot of noise on board, and none semed to hear my shouts. Several voices yelled, "That Spanish ship ahead is heaving-to athwart our hawse." The ship forged ahead in the light air; I caught the main chain and scrambled up, while the boat floated away from under my feet. A yell came from forward, "Hard aport." Then the same voice addressed itself to abusing the Spanish ship very close to us now. "What do you mean by coming-to right across my bows like this?" it yelled in a fury.

I stood still in the shadows on the poop. We were drawing slowly past the stern of the Spaniard, and O'Brien's voice answered in English:

"We are picking up a boat of ours that's gone adrift with a man. Have you seen anything of her?"

"No—confound you and your boat."

The voice forward subsided and as the stern of the Spanish ship came abreast of the poop, I stepped out of the shadow of the sails, and going close to the rail I said not very loud—there was no need to shout—but very distinctly:

"I am out of your clutches, Mr. O'Brien, after all. I promise you that you shall hear of me yet."

Meanwhile, another man had come up from forward on the poop, growling like a bear, a short, rotund little man, the captain ofg the ship. The Spanish vessel was dropping astern, silent, with her sails all black, hiding the low moon. Suddenly a hurried hail came out of her:

"What ship is this?"

"What's that to you, blank your eyes? The Breeze, if you want to konw. What are you going to do about it?" the little skipper shouted fiercely. In the light wind the ships were separating slowly.

"Where are you bound to?" hailed O'Brien's voice again.

The little skipper laughed with exasperation. "Dash your blanked impudence To Havana, and be hanged to you. Anything more you want to know? And my name's Lumsden, and I am sixty years old, and if I had you here, I would put a head on you for getting in my way, you——"

He stopped, out of breath. Then, addressing himself to his mate:

"That's the Spanish chartered ship that brought these sanguinary pirates that were hanged this morning. She's taking the Spanish commissioner back. I suppose they had no man-of-war handy for the service in Cuba. Did you ever——"

He had caught sight of me for the first time, and positively jumped a foot high in astonishment.

Frequenting, as I had been doing, Ramon's store, which was a great gossiping center of the maritime world in Kingston, I knew the faces and the names of most of the merchant captains who used to gather there to drink and swap yarns. I was not myself quite unknown to little Lumsden. I told him all my story, and all the time he kept on scratching his bald head, full of incredulous perplexity. Old Senor Ramon! Such a respectable man. And I had been kidnaped? From his store!

"If I didn't see you here in my cuddy before my eyes, I wouldn't believe a word you say," he declared absurdly.

But he was ready enough to take me to Havana. However, he insisted upon calling down his mate, a gingery fellow, short, too, but wizened, and as stupid as himself.

"Here's that Kemp, you know. The young fellow that Macdonald, of the Horton Pen, had picked up somewhere two years ago. The Spaniards in that ship kidnaped him—so he says. He says they are pirates. But that's a government chartered ship, and all the pirates that have ever been in her were hanged this morning in Kingston. But here he is, anyhow. And he says that at home he had throttled a Bow street runner before he went off with the smugglers, he says. Did you ever hear the likes of it, Mercer? I shouldn't think he was telling us a parcel of lies; hey, Mercer?"

And the two grotesque little chaps stood nodding their heads at me sagaciously.

"He's a desperate character, then," said Mercer at last, cautiously. "This morning, the very last thing I heard ashore, as I went to fetch the fresh beef off, is that he had been assaulting a justice of the peace on the highroad, and had been trying to knock down the admiral, who was coming down to town in a chaise with Mr. Topnambo. There's a warrant out against him under the Black Act, sir."

Then he brightened up considerably. "So he must have been kidnaped or something after all, sir, or he would be in chokey now."

It was true, after all. Romance reserved me for another fate, for another sort of captivity, for more than one sort. And my imagination had been captured, enslaved already by the image of that young girl who had called me her English cousin, the girl with the lizard, the girl with the dagger! And with every word she uttered, romance itself, if I had only known it, the romance of persecuted lovers, spoke to me through her lips.

That night the Spanish ship had the advantage of us in a freshening wind, and overtook the Breeze. Before morning dawned she passed us, and before the close of the next day she was gone out of sight ahead, steering, apparently, the same course with ourselves.

CHAPTER V.

There wasn't any weirdness about the ship when I awoke in the sunlight. She was old and slow and rather small. I let the days slip by idly, only wondering how I could manage to remain in Havana and breathe the air of the same island with the girl who had delivered me. Perhaps some day we might meet—who knows? I was not afraid of O'Brien.

It never occurred to me to bother about the course we were taking, till one day we sighted the Cuban coast, and I heard Lumsden and Mercer pronounce the name of Rio Medio. The two ridiculous old chaps talked of Mexican privateers, which seemed to rendezvous off that place. They pointed out to me the headland near the bay. In the course of beating up to windward we closed in with the coast.

Then I noticed, a quarter of a mile astern and between the land and us, a little schooner, rather low in the water courtesying under a cloud of white canvas—a wonderful thing to look at. A snowy peak spattered away from her bows at each plunge. She came at a great speed, and a row of faces looking our way became plain, like a beady decoration above her bulwarks. She swerved a little out of her course, and a sort of mushroom of smoke grew out of her side; there was a little gleam of smoldering light hidden in its heart. A spitting bang followed, and something skipped along the wave tops beside us, raising little pillars of spray that drifted away on the wind. The schooner came back on her course, heading straight for us.

I could hear little Mercer shrieking out orders forwards. We were shortening sail. The schooner, luffing a little, ranged abreast. A hail like a metal blare came out of her.

"If you doun'd heef-to we seenk you! We seenk you! By God!"

A blue and white ensign fluttered up to the main gaff of the schooner; a boat dropped into the water. It all went breathlessly—I hadn't time to think.

A moment after, our decks were invaded by men, brown and ragged, leaping down from the bulwarks one after the other.

At the first ferocious hail the halyards had been let go by the run, and all our crew had bolted aloft. A few bronzed bandits posted abreast of each mast kept them there by the menace of bell-mouthed blunderbusses pointed upwards. Lumsden and Mercer had been each tied flat down to a spare spar. They presented an appearance too ridiculous to awaken genuine compassion.

The rest of the infamous crew, without losing a moment, rushed into the cuddy to loot the cabins for wearing apparel, jewelry and money. They squabbled amongst themselves, throwing the things on deck into a great heap of booty.

The schooner flying the Mexican flag remained hove to abeam. And in the man in command of the boarding party I recognized Thomas Castro!

He was a pirate. My surmises were correct. He looked the part to the life, in a plumed hat, cloaked to the chin, and standing apart in a saturnine dignity.

"Are you going to have us all murdered, Castro?" I asked, with indignation. To my surprise he did not seem to recognize me; indeed, he pretended not to see me at all. I might have been thin air for any sign he gave of being aware of my presence; but turning his back on me, he addressed himself to the ignobly captive Lumsden, telling him that he, Castro, was the commander of that Mexican schooner.

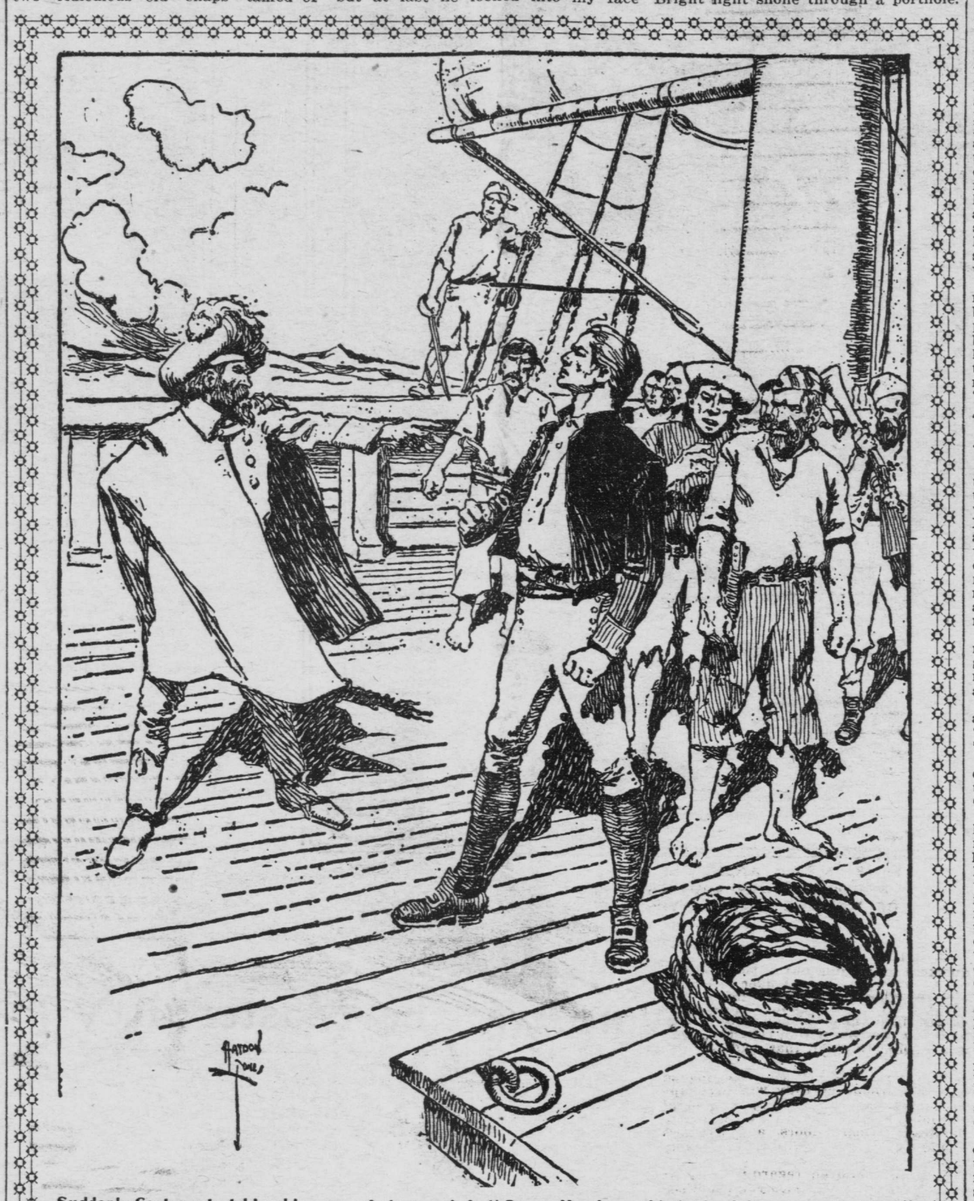
"You shall have to give up all the money on board," he yelled at the wretched man lying there like a sheep ready for slaughter. The other could only gasp and blink. Castro's ferocity was so remarkable that for a moment it struck me as put on. There was no necessity for it. We were meek and silent enough.

The ragged, brown men were pouring on deck from below; their arms full of bundles. Half a dozen of them started to pull off the main hatch tarpaulin. Up aloft the crew looked down with scared eyes. I began to say excitedly, in my indignation, almost into his very ear:

"I know you, Thomas Castro—I know you, Thomas Castro."

Even then he seemed not to hear; but at last he looked into my face balefully, as if he wished to convey the plague to me.

"Hold your tongue," he said very quickly in Spanish. "This is folly!" His little hawk's beak of a nose nestled in his mustache. He waved his arm and declared forcibly, "I don't know you. I am Nikola el Demonio, the Mexican."



Suddenly Castro, stretching his arm out at me, cried, "Come, Hombres, this is the Caballero; seize him!"

CHAPTER VI.

Meantime, some of the rascals left on board the schooner had filled on her in a light wind, and, sailing round our stern, had brought their vessel alongside. Ropes were thrown on board and we lay close together, but the schooner, with her dirty decks, looked to me, now, very sinister and very sordid.

Now Castro's extraordinary words suggested infinite possibilities of a disastrous nature, I could not tell just what. The explanation seemed to be struggling to bring itself to light, like a name that one has had for hours on the tip of a tongue without being able to formulate it.

Suddenly Castro, stretching his arm out at me, cried, "Come, hombres. This is the cabellero; seize him." And to me in his broken English he shouted, "You may resist, if you like."

This was what I meant to do with all my might. The ragged crowd surrounded me; they chattered like monkeys. One man irritated me beyond conception. He looked like an innkeeper in knee breeches, had a broken nose that pointed to the left, and a double chin. More of them came running every minute. I made a sort of blind rush at the fellow with the broken nose; my elbow caught him on the soft fold of flesh and he skipped backwards; the rest scattered in all directions, and then stood at distance, chattering and waving their hands.

The man with the double chin drew a knife from his sleeve, crouched instantly, and sprang at me. I hadn't fought anybody since I had been at school; raising my fists was like trying a dubious experiment in an emergency. I caught him rather hard on the end of his broken nose; I felt the contact of my right, and a small pain in my left hand. His arms went up to the sky; his face, too. But I had started forward to meet him, and half a dozen of them flung their arms round me from behind.

I seemed to have an exaggerated clearness of vision; I saw each brown, dirty paw reach out to clutch some part of me. I was not angry any more; it wasn't any good being angry, but I made a fight for it. There were dozens of them; they clutched my wrists, my elbows, and in between my wrists and my elbows, and my shoulders. One pair of arms was round my neck, another round my waist, and they kept on trying to catch my legs with ropes. We seemed to stagger all over the deck; I expect they got in each others' way; they would have made a better job of it if they hadn't been such a multitude. I must then have got a crack on the head, for everything grew dark; the night seemed to fall on us, as we fought.

Afterward I found myself lying gasping on my back on the deck of the schooner; four or five men were holding me down. Castro was putting a pistol into his belt. He stamped his foot violently, and then went and shouted in Spanish.

"Come you all on board. You have done mischief enough, fools of Lugarenos. Now we go."

I saw, as in a dream of stress and violence, some men making ready to cast off the schooner, and then, in a supreme effort, an effort of lusty youth and strength, which I remember to this day, I scattered men like chaff, and stood free.

For the fraction of a second I stood, ready to fall myself, and looking at prostrate men. It was a flash of vision, and then I made a bolt for the rail. I clambered furiously; I saw the deck of the old bark; I had just one exulting sight of it, and then twenty men flung themselves upon my body. The end had come. I hadn't the strength to shake off a fly, my heart was bursting my ribs.

I was pinned down to the deck, and before the ships had separated, I was carried below in the cabin of the schooner.

There were the grease marks from the backs of heads all along a bulkhead above a wooden bench; the rough table, on which my arms rested, was covered with layers of tallow spots. Bright light shone through a porthole. Two or three ill-assorted muskets slanted about round the foot of the mast—a long old piece, of the time of Pizarro, all red velvet and silver chasing, on a swiveled stand, three English fowling pieces and a coachman's blunderbuss. A man was rising from a mattress stretched on the floor; he placed a mandolin, decorated with red favors, on the greasy table. He was shockingly thin, and so tall that his head disturbed the candle-soot on the ceiling. He said: "Ah, I was waiting for the cavalier to awake."

He stalked round the end of the table, slid between it and the side, and grasped my arm with wrapt earnestness as he settled himself slowly beside me. He wore a red shirt that had become rather black where his long brown ringlets fell on his shoulders; it had tarnished gilt buttons ciphered "G. R.," stolen, I suppose, from some English ship.

"I beg the Senor Caballero to listen to what I have to record," he said, with intense gravity. "I cannot bear this much longer—no, I cannot bear my sufferings much longer."

His face was of a large, classical type; a close-featured, rather long face, with an immense nose that from the front resembled the section of a bell; eyebrows like horseshoes, and very large-pupiled eyes that had the purplish-brown luster of a horse's. His air was mournful in the extreme, and he began to speak resonantly as if his chest were a sounding board. He used immensely long sentences, of which I only understood one-half.

"What, then, is the difference between me, Manuel-del-Popolo Isturiz, and this Tomas Castro? The Senor Caballero can tell at once. Look at me. I am the finer man. I would have you ask the ladies of Rio Medio, and leave the verdict to them. This Castro is an Andalou—a foreigner. And we, the braves of Rio Medio, will suffer no foreigner to make headway with our ladies. Yet this Andalusion is preferred because he is a humble friend of the great Don, and because he is for a few days given the command. I ask you, senor, what is the radical difference between me, the sailing captain of this vessel, and him, the fighting captain for a few days. Is it not I that am, as it were, the brains of it, and he only its knife? I ask the Senor Caballero."

I didn't in the least know what to answer. His great eyes wistfully explored my face. I expect I looked bewildered.

"I lay my case at your feet," he continued, "You are to be our chief leader, and, on account of your illustrious birth and renowned intelligence, will occupy a superior position in the council of the notables. Is it not so? Has not the Senor Juez O'Brien so ordained? You will give ear to me, you will alleviate my indignant sufferings?" He implored me with his eyes for a long time.

Manuel-del-Popolo pushed the hair back from his forehead. I had noticed that the love-locks were plaited with black braid, and that he wore large, dirty silk ruffles.

"The caballero," he continued, marking his words with a long, white finger atap on the table, "will represent my views to the notables. My position at present, as I have had the honor to observe, is becoming unbearable. Consider, too, how your worship and I would look together. What lightness for you and me. You will find this Castro unbearably gross. But I—I assure you I am a man of taste—an improvisador—an artist. My songs are celebrated. And yet!——"

He folded his arms again, and waited; then he said, employing his most impressive voice:

"I have influence with the men of Rio. I could raise a riot. We Cubans are a jealous people; we do not love that foreigners should take our best from us. We do not love it; we will not suffer it. Let this Castro bethink himself and go in peace, leaving us and our ladies. As the proverb says, 'It is well to build a bridge for a departing enemy.'"

He began to peer at me more wistfully, and his eyes grew more luminous than ever. This man, in spite of his grotesqueness, was quite in earnest, there was no doubting that.

"I have a gentle spirit," he began again, "a gentle spirit. I am submissive to the legitimate authorities. What the Senor Juez O'Brien asks me to do, I do. I would put a knife into anyone who inconvenienced the Senor Juez O'Brien; we would all do that, as is right and fitting. But this Castro—this Andalou, who is nearly as bad as a heretic! When my day comes I will have his arms flayed and the soles of his feet, and I will rub red pepper into them; and all the men of Rio who do not love foreigners will applaud. And I will stick little thorns under his tongue, and I will cut off his eyelids with little scissors, and set him facing the sun. Caballero, you would love me; I have a gentle spirit. I am a pleasant companion." He rose and squeezed round the table. "Listen"—his eyes lit up with rapture—"you shall hear me. It is divine—ah, it is very pleasant, you will say."

He seized his mandolin, slung it round his neck, and leaned against the bulkhead. The bright light from the porthole gilded the outlines of his body, as he swayed about and moved his long fingers across the strings; they tinkled metallically. He sang a nasal voice:—

"'Listen!' the young girls say as they hasten to the barred window.
'Listen! Ah, surely that is the guitar of Man-u-el-del Popolo,
As he glides along the wall in the twilight.'"

It was a very long song. He gesticulated freely with his hand in between the scratching of the strings, which seemed to be a matter of luck. His eyes gazed distantly at the wall above my head. The performance bewildered and impressed me; I wondered if this was what they had carried me off for. It was like being mad. He made a decresendo tinkling, and his lofty features lapsed into their normal mournfulness.

At that moment Castro put his face round the door, then entered altogether. He sighed in a satisfied manner, and had an air of having finished a laborious undertaking.

"We have arranged the confusion up above," he said to Manuel-del-Popolo; "you may go and see to the sailing. * * * Hurry, it is growing late."

Manuel blazed silently, and stalked out of the door as if he had an electric cloud round his head. Tomas Castro turned towards me.

"You are better?" he asked benevolently. "You exerted yourself too much. * * * But still, if you liked——" He picked up the mandolin, and began negligently scratching the strings. I noticed an alteration in him; he had grown softer in the flesh in the past years; there were little threads of gray in the knotted curls of his beard. It was as if he had lived well, on the whole. He bent his head over the strings, plucked one, tightened a peg, plucked it again, then set the instrument on the table, and dropped onto the mattress. "Will you have some rum?" he said. "You have grown broad and strong, like a bull. * * * You made those men fly, sacre nom d'une pipe. * * * One would have thought you were in earnest. * * * Ah, well!" He stretched himself at length on the mattress, and closed his eyes.

I looked at him to discover traces of irony. There weren't any. He was talking quietly; he even reproved me for having carried the pretense of resistance beyond a joke.

"You fought too much; you struck many men—and hard. You will have made enemies. The picaros of this dirty little town are as conceited as pigs. You must take care, or you will have a knife in your back."

He lay with his hands across on his stomach, which was round like a pudding. After a time he opened his eyes, and looked at the dancing white reflection of the water on the grimy ceiling.

"To think of seeing you again, after all these years," he said. "I did not believe my ears when Don Carlos asked me to fetch you like this. Who would have believed it? But, as they say," he added philosophically, "The water flows to the sea, and the little stones find their places." He paused to listen to the sounds that came from above. "That Manuel is a fool," he said without rancor; "he is mad with jealousy because for this day I have command here. But, all the same, they are dangerous pigs, these slaves of the Senor O'Brien. I wish the town were rid of them. One day there will be a riot—a function—with their jealousies and madness."

I sat and said nothing, and things fitted themselves together, little patches of information going in here and there like the pieces of a puzzle map. O'Brien had gone to Havana in the ship from which I had escaped to render an account of the pirates that had been hung at Kingston; the Riegos had been landed in boats at Rio Medio, of course.

"That poor Don Carlos!" Castro moaned lamentably. "They had the barbarity to take him out in the night, in that raw fog. He coughed and coughed; it made me faint to hear him. He could not even speak to me—his Tomas; it was pitiful. He could not speak when we got to the Casa."

I could not really understand why I had been a second time kidnaped. Castro said that O'Brien had not been unwilling that I should reach Havana. It was Carlos that had ordered Tomas to take me out of the Breeze. He had come down in the raw morning, before the schooner had put out from behind the point, to impress very elaborate directions upon Tomas Castro; indeed, it was whilst talking to Tomas that he had burst a blood vessel.

"He said to me: 'Have a care now. Listen. He is my dear friend, that Senor Juan. I love him as if he were my only brother. Be very careful, Tomas Castro. Make it appear that he comes to us much against his will. Let him be dragged on board by many men. You are to understand, Tomas, that he is a youth of noble family, and that you are to be as careful of compromising him as you are of the honor of Our Lady.'"

Tomas Castro looked across at me. "You will be able to report well of me," he said; "I did my best. If you are compromised, it was you who did it by talking to me as if you knew me."

I remembered, then, that Tomas certainly had resented my seeming to recognize him. He closed his eyes again. After a time he added:

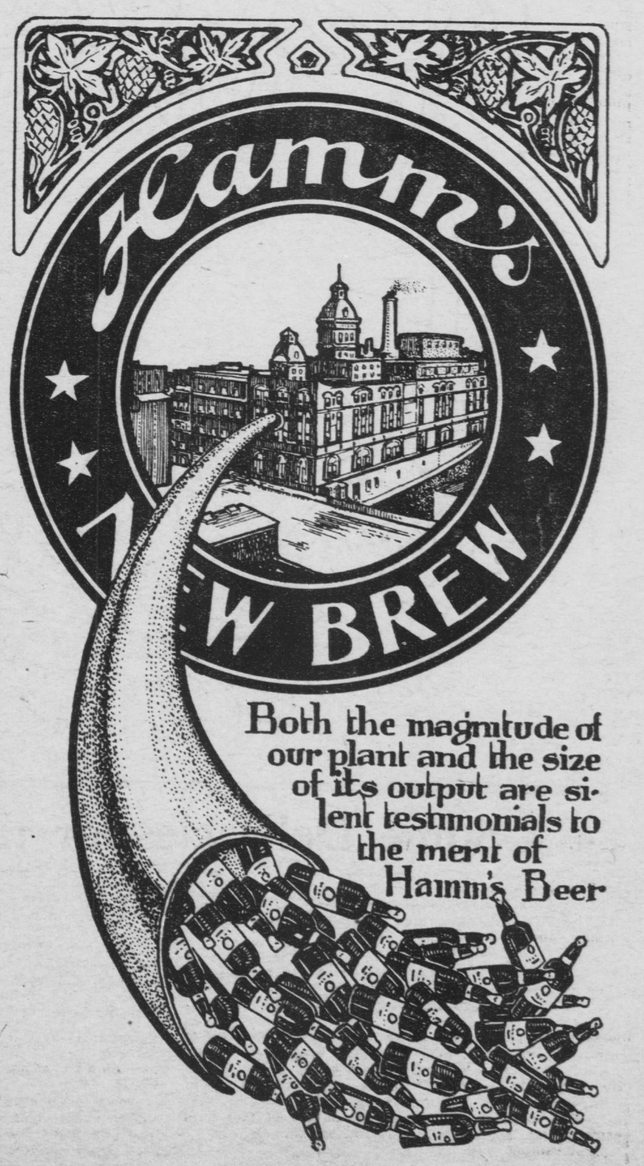
"Vaya! After all, it is foolishness to fear being compromised. You would never believe that his Excellency Don Balthasar had led a riotous life—to look at him with his silver head. It is said he had three friars killed once in Seville, a very, very long time ago. It was dangerous in those days to come against our Mother, the Church." He paused, and undid his shirt, laying bare an incredibly hairy chest; then slowly kicked off his shoes. "One stifles here," he said. "Ah! in the old days——"

Suddenly he turned to me and said, with an air of indescribable interest, as if he were gloating over an obscene idea:

"So they would hang a gentleman like you, if they caught you? What savages you English people are!—what savages! Like cannibals! You did well to make that comedy of resisting. Quel pays! * * * What a people * * * I dream of them still. * * * The eyes; the teeth! Ah, well! in an hour we shall be in Rio. I must sleep. * * *"

(To be Continued.)

All on the Map.

'Tis said the valiant Japs will use
The old town of Ping Yang
As an operating base from which
The Russians they will whang!
Ping Yang-
Wing Wang!
From Ping Yang, Nippon's braves will march
To Whim Wham by the sea,
And from the earthworks of Ding Dong
They'll make the Russians flee!
At Jing Bang, where the Cossack horse
Are drawn up in array,
With the left wing resting on Ting Tang,
There'll be a savage fray!
Good day!
Ping Yang!
Blong blang!

—Chicago Journal.