

the captain manfully staggered, Jeannette bringing up the rear.

Valiantly did Mr. Smith, though perspiring in every pore of his body, and dry as a cartouch-box—for madame had emptied the only flask he had—toil on under a burden which seemed to grind his shoulder-blades to powder. He declares he must have lost a stone of flesh at least before, after numerous restings, he arrived, at the end of about an hour, at the door of a small house, which Jeannette announced to be the private residence of the priest. The door was quickly opened by a smart lad, who seemed to have been expecting them; the chest was deposited on the floor, and Jeannette instantly vanished. The lad, with considerate intelligence, handed Mr. Smith a draught of wine. It was scarcely swallowed when the key turned in the lock, the eager lover, greatly revived by the wine, sprang forward with extended arms, and received in his enthusiastic embrace—whom do you think?

“Coralie, half-stifed for want of air, and nearly dead with fright,” suggested Mr. Tape.

“That rascally Sous-lieutenant Victor! half-drunk with brandy-and-water,” roared Captain Smith, who had by this time worked himself into a state of great excitement. “At the same moment in ran Jeannette, and, I could hardly believe my eyes, that Jezebel Coralie, followed by half-a-dozen French voltigeurs, screaming with laughter! I saw I was done,” continued Mr. Smith, “but not for the moment precisely how, and but for his comrades, I should have settled old and new scores with Master Victor very quickly. As it was, they had some difficulty in getting him out of my clutches, for I was, as you may suppose, awfully savage. An hour or so afterward, when philosophy, a pipe, and some very capital wine—they were not bad fellows those voltigeurs—had exorcised their soothing influence, I was informed of the exact motives and particulars of the trick which had been played me. Coralie was Victor Dufour’s wife. He had been wounded at the assault of Badajoz, and successfully concealed in that Andalusian woman’s house; and as the best, perhaps only mode of saving him from a Spanish prison, or worse, the scheme, of which I had been the victim, was concocted. Had not Dufour wounded me, they would, I was assured, have thrown themselves upon my honor and generosity—which honor and generosity, by-the-by, would never have got Coralie’s husband upon my back, I’ll be sworn!”

“You will forgive us, mon cher capitaine?” said that lady, with one of her sweetest smiles, as she handed me a cup of wine. “In love and war, you know, every thing is fair.”

“A soldier, gentlemen, is not made of adamant. I was, I confess, softened; and by the time the party broke up, we were all the best friends in the world.”

“And so that fat, jolly looking Madame Dufour we saw in Paris, is the beautiful Coralie

that bewitched Captain Smith?” said Mr. Tape thoughtfully—“Well!”

“She was younger forty years ago, Mr. Tape, than when you saw her. Beautiful Coralies are rare, I fancy, at her present age, and very fortunately, too, in my opinion,” continued Captain Smith; “for what, I should like to know, would become of the peace and comfort of society, if a woman of sixty could bewitch a man as easily as she does at sixteen?”

THE CHAMPION.

A ROMANTIC INCIDENT IN EARLY SPANISH HISTORY.

THE clang of arms and the inspiring sounds of martial music resounded through the courtyard of the palace of Navarre. The chivalry of Arragon, Castile, and Navarre had assembled at the summons of their sovereign, to fight under his banner against the infidels, and now waited impatiently for the moment when the monarch should mount his gallant steed, and lead them to battle and to victory.

Sancho the Fourth was at that moment bidding farewell to his queen, the gentle Dona Nuna, who clung to her lord in an agony of tears.

“Be comforted, my beloved,” he said to her; “I shall return to you with added laurels to my kingly wreath. Do not fear for me, nor let your sweet face grow pale by brooding over the dangers and chances of war. For my part, I never felt more exulting anticipations of success, and am persuaded that triumph and victory will crown our undertaking.”

“Alas! it is not so with me,” said Nuna, sadly. “A presentiment of approaching evil weighs heavily on my heart.”

“You shudder at the thought of our separation, Nuna, more like a timid young bride parting from her newly-wedded lord, than a matron who has shared her husband’s joys and sorrows for well-nigh twenty years.”

“You are now far dearer to me, Sancho, than when I gave you my hand: have I not to thank you for the love and tenderness which has made these long years of wedded life so blissful and happy?”

“In sooth, I believe, Nuna, it is even so: and you love me as warmly as ever. Receive my assurances in return, dear wife, that your face is as fair to me, and the gift of your true heart as fondly prized, as when I first led you to these halls, my youthful and beautiful bride. But suffer me to bid you farewell, or my nobles will wax impatient. I leave you to the society of our son, and the guardianship of my trusty Pedro Sésé, who will attend to your behests. One word more. I intrust to your safe keeping my beautiful steed, Ilderim. You know how I value the noble animal, my first capture from the Moor. See that he is carefully tended in my absence, I shall accept it as a proof of your regard for my wishes. And now, adieu, dearest wife. Think of me, and supplicate Heaven that I may be speedily and safely restored to your arms.”

So saying, Sancho the Great, tenderly embraced his wife; and mounting his war charger, placed himself at the head of his gallant army. The clatter of horses' hoofs soon died away in the distance, leaving the court-yard of the castle in silence and gloom.

Three days after the king's departure, the young Don Garcia entered the court-yard of the palace at Navarre.

"Pedro Sésé, Pedro Sésé!" he cried; "my noble Arab El Toro lies dead in a cleft of the rocks: I have returned to seek another steed for the chase: such a boar hunt has not been among the forests of Navarre since the Pyrenees echoed to the horn of Roland: give me forth black Ilderim, Pedro, my friend; saddle me my father's charger, for there is no other steed in the king's stables worthy of the hunt of to-day!"

"Don Garcia," replied the master of the horse, "black Ilderim is only for the king's mounting: I dare not saddle him for any other."

"But the Infante commands it—the king that is to be."

"Chafe not with a faithful servant, Don Garcia: it is but yesterday I refused the same request of the bastard of Arragon."

"What! darrest thou compare me with the base-barn Ramiro? Insolent! I shall bear my complaint to the queen."

To the queen Don Garcia bore his complaint and his petition: "Oh, my mother, wouldst thou see me dishonored by a menial? Am I not thine only son, the rightful heir of Arragon, Castile, and Navarre? who may command here, if I may not? Assert my authority, then, and order the false Pedro Sésé that he give me forth black Ilderim."

"Pedro Sésé has faithfully discharged his duty to my lord the king, who enjoined on him and on me the safe keeping of his favorite horse," said Dona Nuna. "The royal stables are open; take, my son, any other steed, but leave black Ilderim till thy father's return."

"Nay, by Heaven and by the saints, I will have Ilderim to ride this day, or I will have vengeance!"

The headstrong youth returned to the court-yard, and again demanded the steed: again the master of the horse refused. Don Garcia, pale with concentrated rage, sprang on another of the king's chargers, and galloped from the palace. Instead, however, of returning to the hunt, he urged his horse into the *despoblado*, or open plain, lying to the south of the castle, and disappeared on the road to Burgos.

Time passed heavily, in her lord's absence, with the gentle Nuna. At first, she received frequent and joyful tidings of the successes which crowned his arms, and the brilliant victories gained by his forces over the Moslem army. Of late, and since the departure of Garcia from the castle, Sancho's affectionate dispatches had altogether ceased; and Nuna, now thoroughly wretched, from the wayward perversity of her son, and from uncertainty as

to her husband's fate, had prepared to rejoice him at any risk, and share the perils to which he might be exposed.

Her resolution was no sooner formed than it was promptly carried into effect: she summoned to her aid the trusty Pedro Sésé; and, protected by a small escort under his command, bade adieu to Navarre, and commenced her long and perilous journey toward the theatre of war.

The little cavalcade had reached Najarra, when, to their surprise and joy, they beheld a gallant band of horsemen rapidly approaching: the united banner of Arragon, Castile, and Navarre, floating proudly before them, announced to all beholders that Sancho the Fourth led his knights in person.

Nuna's heart beat fast and tumultuously; in a few moments, and the long absent one would clasp her closely to his breast. She looked up to the master of the horse who rode by her side, and urged him to increased speed. They moved briskly forward; and the advancing knights who formed the king's body-guard became more distinctly visible. Sancho, as we have said, headed them; but as soon as they had arrived within a short distance of the queen's followers, the monarch advanced a few paces, and in tones of thunder called on them to halt. His brow was darkened with evil passions, his countenance flushed with anger.

"On the peril of your allegiance!" he shouted, rather than spoke, "seize the traitress, I command ye! My heart refused to hearken to the tale of her guilt, even when spoken by the lips of her son; but mine eyes have seen it. I have lived—wretched that I am—to witness her infamy. But the adulteress, and the companion of her crime, shall not escape my righteous vengeance. See to it, that the queen and Pedro Sésé remain your prisoners."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at the feet of the miserable Nuna, she could not have been more horror-struck, or more confounded. Her life-long dream of happiness was dissipated; the husband of her youth had recoiled from her as from the veriest reptile that crawls on the face of God's earth; and the worker of her woe and ruin was her own child—her own flesh and blood—her son Garcia! Who would believe her to be pure and innocent when such lips pronounced the tale of her guilt? Unhappy wife; still more unhappy mother! In the deepest dungeon of the castle of Najarra she was left to mourn over her unparalleled misery. Alone, unfriended, and solitary, Nuna—who so lately had seen herself a beloved and cherished wife, a fond mother, and a mighty sovereign—struggled with her bitter and mournful reflections. She could not reproach her husband, for she felt that his ear had been poisoned against her by an accuser he could scarcely mistrust, even by the insinuations of her son, confirmed—as he deemed them to be—by the evidence of his senses, when he met her so unexpectedly traveling under the escort of Pedro Sésé.

But short space was left to Nuna for these

agonizing thoughts. Death, a shameful death, was the punishment of the adulteress; but Sancho, more merciful than she had dared to hope, had granted her one loop-hole for escape—one slender chance of proving her innocence. The lists were to be open to any champion believing in the lady's guiltlessness, who should adventure his life in her defense. If any such should proffer his services, he might do battle in single combat with her accuser. God—according to the belief of those days—would give victory to him who maintained the truth!

The fatal day approached, arrived, and had well-nigh passed. Garcia, unopposed, bestrode his war-steed, the redoubtable black Ilderim, whose possession he had so eagerly coveted, and purchased at so fearful a price. The dis-crowned queen, in conformity with custom, was placed within sight of the arena, tied to a stake, surmounting what would prove her funeral pile if no champion appeared on her behalf, or if her defender should suffer defeat.

Who can paint the agitation of Dona Nuna, thus placed within view of the lists, when the precious hours passed, one by one, and no champion stood forth in defense of her purity and truth? She was about to resign herself hopelessly to her inexorable fate, when the sound of a horse's tramp was heard, approaching at a rapid pace; and a knight, in complete armor, mounted on a charger, whose foaming mouth and reeking sides told that he had been ridden at a fearful pace, dashed into the lists, flung down his gauntlet of defiance, and announced that he was come to do battle in behalf of the falsely-accused, but stainless and guiltless queen.

There was an involuntary movement among the assembled multitude when Garcia prepared for the inevitable encounter. None knew, or could guess, who the knight might be. No device nor emblem, by which his identity would be discovered, could be traced on his helmet or on his shield! but the ease with which he surmounted his steed, and his graceful and gallant bearing, evinced that he was an accomplished warrior.

In a few seconds, the preliminary arrangements were complete; and, with lances in rest, the opponents approached. In the first encounter, to the amazement of all, Garcia was unhorsed, and fell heavily to the ground.

"She is innocent! She is innocent!" shouted the multitude.

"God be praised! though I have lost a son," was the subdued ejaculation of the king.

"I am prepared, in defense of the much-injured lady, to do combat to the death," said the stranger knight. "Base and dastardly villain! confess thy unnatural crime, or prepare to meet me once more, when I swear I will not let thee escape so lightly."

Garcia hesitated; he was evidently torn by conflicting emotions. Conscious guilt—fear of the just retribution of Heaven, executed by the stranger's avenging sword—urged him to confess his villainy. On the other hand, ap-

prehension of the execrations of the multitude, and the indignation of his injured parents, restrained him from making a frank avowal of his crime.

"Remount, miscreant! and make ready for another encounter, or confess that you have lied in your throat," exclaimed the stranger, sternly.

Before Garcia could reply, an aged and venerable ecclesiastic threw himself between the opponents.

"In the name of Heaven! I command ye to withhold from this unnatural strife," he exclaimed, addressing them; "brothers are ye; the blood of a common father flows in your veins. Ramiro—forebear, Garcia—the combat this day has testified to your guilt; make the only atonement in your power, by a full confession."

Ejaculations of astonishment and pity burst from all the spectators. "Long live the noble bastard! The base-born has made base the well-born! The step-son has proved the true son! Praise be to the Virgin, the mother of the people has not been left without a godson to fight for her!" And all the matrons, and many even of the hardened warriors among the multitude, wept with tenderness and joy.

In a few moments the agitated queen found herself in her husband's arms. He implored her forgiveness for the sorrow she had endured; nor could she withhold it, even for a moment, when she listened to the avowals of the degraded Garcia, who confessed how, step by step, he had poisoned his father's mind by tales of infidelity, in revenge for her refusal, and that of Pedro Sésé, to intrust him with Sancho's favorite charger, black Ilderim.

Nuna turned from her abject son, and motioned her young champion to approach. He knelt at her feet.

"Ramiro," she softly said, as she unclasped the helmet and visor which concealed the handsome features of Sancho's illegitimate son, "child of my affections, for whom I have ever felt a mother's love, though I have not borne for thee a mother's pains; how shall I thank thee? Thou hast this day more than repaid the tenderness I lavished on thy infant years. Thou hast made clear my fair fame to all men; even at the risk of thy own young life."

"I would lay down life itself for such a friend as you have been, and esteem the sacrifice light," rejoined Ramiro, with deep emotion. "I remember my childish days—before you came to Navarre, a bright, happy, innocent bride—when I wandered through my father's palace an unloved and neglected boy; and I can recall vividly the moment when you first encountered me, and, struck by the resemblance I bore to the king, surmised the truth. Instead of hating me with the unjust aversion of an ungenerous nature, you took the despised child to your heart, and, for the love you bore your lord, you loved and cherished his base-born son. For the genial atmosphere you created around me, and in which my affections expanded, and for the care

you have bestowed on my education, I owe you a debt of gratitude far deeper than ever child bore his own mother. Nature dictates maternal love, in the one instance—but it is to the suggestions of a noble and generous heart that I have been indebted for the happiness of my life. You owe me no thanks—for, for such a friend no sacrifice can be too great.”

Nuna turned to the king; and, taking his hand in hers, placed it on the head of her young champion. “I have brought you kingdoms as my dower,” she said, “but I have not, alas! brought you a son so worthy as Ramiro of being their ruler. I freely forgive the Infante the suffering he has caused me, and hope that, with advancing years, he will cultivate the virtues in which he has shown himself to be deficient. But Ramiro has already given evidence of the possession of those exalted qualities which insure the happiness of a people when possessed by their rulers. Invest him then, at my entreaty, with the crown of Arragon; receive back to your confidence our faithful Pedro Sósé; and suffer me to forget my past griefs in the anticipation of a love which shall never again be interrupted.”

The king raised his hand in assent; and the assembled multitude confirmed the investiture with one mighty shout—“Ramiro! Ramiro! long live Ramiro! Infante of Arragon!”

THE FARM-LABORER.—THE SON.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

IT has been told that Susan Banks found herself well placed, after the death of her insane aunt obliged her to look for a home and a maintenance. As I am not telling her story, I will pass over the account of the efforts she made to be a schoolmistress, and the instruction she had as a dressmaker. She was in poor health (reduced by hunger) and in debt £3 to her uncle, and nervous and anxious, when she heard that a lady from the North, then visiting in the neighborhood, wanted just such a maid as Susan thought she could become with a little teaching. She obtained the place, took pains to learn to wait at table, &c., and within a year had paid her debt to her uncle, and spared £2 besides to her family; and all this, though her box had had but few clothes in it when she went to her new home.

At the end of a year, her employer, Miss Foote, began to think of cultivating the small portion of land about the house which had hitherto been let off for grazing, and which was deteriorating in quality from the mismanagement of the tenant. Not approving of the methods of tillage in the neighborhood, and knowing that there were no spare hands there, Miss Foote wrote to a parish officer in Susan's and her own native county, to ask if a laborer of good character and sound qualifications could be sent to her by the parish, on her engaging to pay him twelve shillings a week for a year and a half, while her experiment of cultivation was under trial; and longer, if it should be

found to answer. This was all she could undertake, as she could not afford to carry on the scheme at a loss. The answer was some time in coming. When it came, it told that pauper laborers could not be recommended; but a better sort of laborer might be sent, and his place in the parish would be filled, only too easily, by some of the young men from the workhouse. The proposal was to send the very best man of his class known to the parish officers. He and his wife had money enough in the savings' bank to pay their journey, and they were willing to make the venture. The man's name was Harry Banks. Miss Foote took the letter into the kitchen, and read it to Susan and her fellow-servant. When Susan heard the name, she started as if she had been shot, and screamed out, “Why, that's my brother!” Thus far, far away from home, she was to have a brother and his wife beside her, living in the pretty little cottage which was building behind the oak copse for the new laborer. Miss Foote inquired about the wife, but could learn little. Susan told nothing but that she was a respectable woman, but so old, and otherwise unsuitable, that it was a vexation to the family that Harry had made such a marriage. Harry never seemed to see a single fault in her; but his father and mother did not like Dinah at all.

When Miss Foote afterward came to know the whole, she thought this marriage the most terribly significant part of the whole family history of the Bankses. At thirty years of age Harry was a pattern of a farm-laborer; yet he had no prospect in life but of earning a precarious nine shillings a week, till he should be too old to earn so much. He worked for a rich, close-fisted Dissenting gentleman, who had always pious sayings on his lips and at the point of his pen, but never took off his eye for an instant from his money gains and savings. His wife was like him, and their servants grew like them—even the warm-hearted, impetuous Harry, and much more Dinah, their worn out maid-of-all-work. Dinah always said that the register of her birth was unfortunately lost, and she could not tell precisely how old she was; and she called herself “upwards o' forty.” Most people supposed her about sixty when she married. She used to tell Harry that she was the prettiest girl in the city when she was young, and Harry did not ask how long ago that was, nor look too much at the little wizened face, not more marked by small-pox than by signs of over-exhausting toil. Whatever might be her age, she was worn out by excessive work. When Harry's father heard that she and Harry were going before the registrar to be married, he kindly and seriously asked Harry if he had considered what he was about; and Harry's reply was enough to make any heart ache.

“Yes, father, I have. I'm not so very much set on it; but I think it will be most comfortable. You see, there's no use in people like us thinking of having children. Children would