

CHAPTER II. A STRANGE PROCEEDING.

When Rurie came down in the at noon the pistols were finished. morning, he found the monk already there and breakfast nearly ready. Eut little was said during the mealtime, for the monk seemed busy with thoughts of his own, and were young men, dressed in co-thy Ruric was too much engaged in studying the strange man's features doubts and surmises that had entered his mind. After the meal was over the monk accompanied the gunmaker to his shop, and there he quaint articles of machinery that ward, were used in the manufacture of arms.

fluric was engaged in finishing a pair of pistols, and for some minates the monk had stood silently by arms. his side watching his movements At length the youth stopped in his work and laid the pistol down. "Excuse me, good father." he

said rather nervously, at the same time gazing his visitor in the face. "but I must ask you a question. Where have I seen you before ?"

"How should I know ?" the monk returned, with a smile.

"Why," resumed Rurie, with some hesitancy, "I knew not but that you might enlighten me. I have surely seen you somewhere.'

"And are there not hundreds whom you have seen in this great city, aye, thousands. whom 'you might recognize as you recognize me?

"Ah, it may be so, but not like this. There may be a thousand faces I would recollect to have seen, but not one of them would excite even a passing emotion in my soul. But your face calls up some powerful emotion, some startling memory of the past, which bothers me. Who are you, good father? What are you? Where have we met before?

Was it in Spain?" "No," said Vladimir, with a shake of the head. And then, with a more serious shade upon his face, he added: "Let this pass now. I will not deny to you that there may be some grounds for your strange fancies, but I assure you most sacredly that until last night I never came in direct companionship with you before-at any rate, not to my knowledge. You have acted the good Samaritan toward me, and I hope I may at some time return the

only done for you what every man tremulousness in his tone, for the should do to his neighbor, and so far from needing thanks for my services I would rather give them for the occasion, for I know of no source of joy so pure and pleasur-

nicated in due season. So he dir plied himself anew to his work, and make with you and that she now

Toward the middle of the afternoon, just as Rurie had thushed and from you. tempering some parts of a gun lock. Urzen

"I think I speak with Rurie Ne-

than before, and his nether lip trem- power in the matter." bled. But Ruric thought that might be the result of coming from the count hotly. "I seek not power cold into a warm place. However, he was soon undeceived, for the from one who may have some influcount's next remark was significant:

dy Rosalind Valdai?" he said. 'I am," returned Ruric, now be-

ginning to wonder. with much haughtiness, "perhaps my business can be quickly and sat-

to make the Lady Rosalind my well enough to know that he never wife." Rurie Nevel started at these

hide their tremulousness. But he could not understand the matter was not long debating upon an an- at all. It looked dark and comswer.

"You should know that already. Do you not love the lady?"

right have you to question me upon him. such a theme?"

pave the way for his own rithts. replied Damonad sharply. "But i you choose not to an wer let it pass. paper." I know you do love the lady, and now 1 ask you to renounce all passion. "Do you refuse?"

"By St. Paul, sir count, your tongue runs into strange moods of speech! I renounce all claims to Rosalind Valdai's hand! Was't so you meant?"

"No, no!" quickly responded the youth. "If you return it, then it will be a favor no more. I have only done favor no more. I have very subject was one that moved him deeply.

is my door, sir."

"Once more-no!"

"Then, by heavens, you shall

As these words passed from the

count's lips in a low, having whis-

ing the blow lightly upon the side

such a renunciation of mer "Stephen," spoke the count, turning to his companion, "you heard monoff seemed unable to speak from the instructions the dalle gave me very anger. He had surely some this morning?"

"I may be as much surpri ed as his title. yourself," resumed the count naught tily, "at this strange taste of the duke. Why he should seek this sig-nal from you I can only imagine bis desire to call up no re-bis desire to call up no re-Seek a quarrel with me?" "Sock? I seek what I will have. He knows that she was once inti- Will you sign ?" feels a warm friendship for you. For her sake he would have this sig-nal from you." know what it is to thwart such as me! How's that?"

"But how for her sake?" asked Rurie.

"Why." returned Demonoff, "do per he aimed a blow with his fist you not see? Rosalind in the sim- at Rurie's head. "The gunmaker were young men, dressed in costly you not see? Rosalind in the sim-furs and both of them stout and plicity of her heart may think that had not dreamed of such a dastard and pondering upon the various good looking. The gunmaker ree-doubts and surmises that he enter, gonized them as the Count Courad love and out of pure principle grant it, yet he dodged it sufficiently to esyou-a-that you might claim her act, and he was not prepared for Damonoff and his friend Stephen it to you simply because you were cape the mark upon his face, receivthe first claimant."

"But I never claimed her love," of his head. But he stopped not to spent some time in examining the vel?" said the count, moving for- said Rurie warmly. "If she loves consider now. As the count drew ard. "You do," returned Ruric, not at all surprised by the visit, since peo- but once, and then he came here like a dead ox. ple of all classes were in the habit of calling at his place to order would marry with the lady, do so, whispered to the count's companion and if you seek help in the work as that individual made a movement The count turned a shade paler seek it from those who have some

"You mistake, sir," uttered the safest where you are. now. I only seek a simple word the gunmaker a few moments, and ence, even as a beggar, having saved "You are acquainted with the La-v Rosalind Valdai?" he said. the life of a king, may, through royal gratitude, wield an influence. for his fists relaxed and he moved to the side of his fallen friend and

Will you sign the paper?" Now, all this seemed strange to "Well, sir," returned Damono I. Ruric, and he knew that there was something behind the curtain which he was not permitted to know. He isfactorily settled. It is my desire knew the proud and stubborn duke would have sent such a message as this but for some design more than words, and he clasped his hands to had yet appeared. In short, he plex, and its face was in direct con-"And why have you come to me flict with the nature of the man with this information, sir?" he ask- from whom it now appeared to have emanated. Ruric pondered upon this a few moments, and he made up his mind that he would on no "Upon my scal, sir count, you account yield an atom to the ask me a strange question. What strange demand thus made upon

"Sir count," he said calmly and "The right that every man has to surely, "you have plainly stated we the way for his own rights." your preposition, and I will as plainly answer. 1 cannot sign the

"Ha!" gasped Damonoff in quick

For a few moments the count gazed into Ruric's face as though he doubted the evidence of his own senses

"It is the duke's command," he

"Beware! Once more, I say, sign

this paper!" "You but waste your breath, sir

"Ruric Nevel, you shall not say count, in speaking thus. You have

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"He didn't say much.

as though he would come forward. "I am not myself now, and you are The man thus addressed viewed he seemed to conclude that he had

better avoid a personal encounter. to the side of his fallen friend and assisted him to his feet.

Conrad Demonoff gazed into his antagonist's face a few moments in silence. His face was ashen pale. and his whole frame quivered. Up-on his forehead there was a livid spot where he had been struck, but the skin was not broken.

"Ruric Nevel," he said in a hissing, maddening tone, "you will hear from me! The mad spirit of a vengeance such as mine cannot be trifled with."

And with this he turned away. "Paul," said the gunmaker, turning to his boy after the men had gone away. "not a word of this to my mother. Be sure."

TO BE CONTINUED. Describing Cholly.

this morning?" "Aye," returned Urzer, directing his speech to Rarie; "I did hear, and you have stated the case plain-this force of charcter upon this force of charcter upon this force of charcter upon this force of charcter upon deep, anxious purpose in obtaining

source of joy so pure and pleasur-able as that feeling in the soul plain." The count spoke this as "By heavens, Rurie Nevel, you'll rign this!" the count cried madly. act."

took the youthful artisan's hand,

can give me joy it will be a deed that matters not. I love her and I'll have your life!" for you. We may meet again, and must have her for my wife. I have until then I can only say, God bless and prosper thee."

house. The youth wished to say his mind he could gather no conmeeted thoughts.

returned to his banch and resumed necessary. You understand me, I

him before?"

that my memory would serve you better than your own."

Rurie was not fully assured by lady in marriage." this answer. He gazed into Paul's resolved to ask no more questions at present. He had asked enough, he thought, upon such a subject, and he made up his mind to bother "Sir cour and he made up his mind to bother himself no more about it, fceling sure that if his boy knew anything which would be for his master's in-terrest to kngw it would be commu-

which tells us we have done a good speaks a man who feels that he is doing a very condescending thing; The dark monk reached forth and and in the same tone he proceeded: "The Lady Rosalind is of noble and, with more than ordinary emo- parentage and very wealthy. My Her guardian bids me get this pason, and if any deed of kindness to more property than I do; but

been to see the noble duke, her with you, sir count. I have given guardian, and he objects not to my you my answer. Be sure that only With these words the monk turn- suit, but he informed me that there one man on earth can prevail upon ed away, and ere Rurie could com- was one impediment, and that was mand presence of mind enough to her love for you. He knows full follow him he had gone from the well, as I know, and as all must know, that she could never become something, but amid the varied your wife; but yet he is anxious not emotions that went leaping through to interfere too much against her inclinations. So a simple denial from you to the effect that you can After the monk was gone Ruric never claim her hand is all that is

his work. He asked his boy if he trust. We seek this only for the fair had ever seen the strange man be- lady's own good. Of course you fore, but Paul only shook his head must be aware that the duke would never consent to her union with

"What do you mean?" the gun-maker asked, gazing the boy in the when he appropries his decision. I face. "Do you think you have seen when he announces his decision. I when he announces his decision. I able to you, sir," the youth return-have a paper here all drawn up, ed, with his teeth now set and the "I cannot tell, my master. I may and all that will be necessary is simhave seen him before and I may not. ply your signature. Here. It is But surely you would not suppose only a plain, simple avowal on your part that you have no hopes nor thoughts of seeking the hand of the have your answer, and for your own

some show of intelligence there which had not been spoken. But he resolved to ask no more questions at present. He had asked enough. back and gazed the mit the drew As the count spoke he drew a pa- leave me."

"Never, sir!" "But look ye, sirrah, here is my

whole future of life based upon my hopes of union with this fair girl. most fatal attack of whooping Her guardian bids me get this pawith more than ordinary ends tion, he said: "You touch the harp strings of the soul with a noble hand, my son, and if any deed of kindness

"Now your tongue runs away an advanced stage, also used this

"And who is he?"

"I mean the emperor." "But you will sign it !" hissed Da- teed by Hood Bros. Trial bot-

monoff, turning pale with rage. tles free. "Here it is-sign! If you would live -sign!"

"Perhaps he cannot write," suggested Urzen contemptuously. "Then he may make his mark,"

rejoined the count in the same contemptuous tone.

"It might not require much more urging to induce me to make my mark in a manner not at all agreedark veins upon his brow starting more plainly out. "You have come upon my premises, and you have sake, for my sake, I beg you to

you think me a fool?"

spoke volumes. "Ah, bound in calr, I suppose!"

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