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THE JEWELER'S WIFE.

Passage in the Career of el Empecinado

When the Empecinado, after escaping from Burgo de Osma, rejoined his band, and repaired to the favorite skirmish ground the banks of the Duero, he found the state affairs in Old Castile becoming daily less favorable for his operations. The French overran greater part of the province, and visited with severe punishment any disobedience of orders; so that the peasantry no longer dared to assist the guerillas as they had previously done. Many of the villages on the Duero had become *afrancesados*, not, it is true, through love, but through dread of the invader and in hope of preserving themselves from pillage and oppression. However much the people in their hearts might wish with success attend like the Empecinado, the guerillas were too few and too feeble to afford protection to those who, by giving them assistance or information, would incur the displeasure of the French. The clergy were the only class that, as a body without exception, remained staunch to the cause of Spanish independence, and their houses and refectories were ever open to those who took up arms in its defence.

Always deterred by this unfavorable aspect of affairs, the Empecinado resolved to carry on the war in Old Castile, even though unaided by his band. He established his bivouac in the woods of Coca, and sent out spies towards the Sierra and Burgos, to get information of any convoy of which the capture might yield honor and profit.

It was on the second morning after the departure of the spies, and a few minutes before daybreak, that a little camp was aroused by a shot from a sentry placed on the skirt of the wood. In an instant every man was on his feet. It was the Empecinado's custom when staying in this manner to keep one-half of his band asleep fully armed and equipped, with their horses saddled and bridled beside them; and a precaution it was in this instance.—Scarcely had the men time to untether and spring upon their horses, when the sentry galloped into the camp.

"*Los Francesos! Los Francesos!*" exclaimed breathless with speed.

One of the Empecinado's first qualities was presence of mind, which never deserted him in the most critical conditions. Instantly forming the moiety of his men which was already in the saddle, he left a detachment in charge of those who were hastily saddling and mounting, and with the remainder retired a little way left of the open ground on which the bivouac was established. Almost before he had executed this arrangement, the jingling of bits and clattering of horses' feet were heard, and a squadron of French cavalry gallopped into the glade. The Empecinado gave the order to charge, and as Fuentes at the head of a party advanced to meet them, he himself attacked them in flank. The French, not having anticipated much opposition from a foe whom they had expected to find sleeping, were somewhat surprised at the fierce resistance they met. A hard fight took place, rendered confused by the darkness, or rather by a dim gray light, that was just beginning to appear, and gave a shadowy distinctness to surrounding objects. The Spaniards were inferior in number to their opponents, and it was beginning to go hard with them, when the rest of the guerillas, now armed and mounted, came to their assistance. On perceiving the accession to their adversaries' forces, the French thought they had been led into an ambuscade, and retreating in tolerable order to the edge of the wood, at last fairly turned tail and ran for it, leaving several killed and wounded on the ground, and were pursued for some space by the guerillas, who, however, only succeeded in making one prisoner. This was a French man in the dress of a peasant, who, being badly wounded was easily overtaken. On being brought before the Empecinado, the latter with no small surprise, recognized a native of Burgos, named Pedro Gutierrez, who was one of the emissaries he had sent out two days previously to get information concerning the enemy.

His pale cheek and faltering voice, the prisoner answered the Empecinado's interrogatories. It appears that he been detected as a spy by the French, who had given him his choice between a halter and the betrayal of his countrymen and employers. With the fear of death before his eyes he consented to turn a spy.

A deepest silence prevailed among the guerillas during his narrative, and remained unbroken for a full minute after he had concluded. The Empecinado's brow was as black as night, and his features assumed an expression at which the trembling wretch well knew how to tremble.

"*Que podia hacer, senores?*" said the culprit, casting an appealing, imploring glance around them. "The rope was round my neck; I have a sick father, and am his only support. Life is sweet. What could I do?"

"*Morir,*" replied the Empecinado, in a deep stern voice—"Die like a man then, instead of living like a dog now!"

He turned his back upon him, and ten minutes after the body of the unfortunate spy was swinging from the branches of a neighboring tree, and the guerillas marched off to seek another and safer bivouac.

Few days after this incident the other returned, and after receiving their report, and consulting with his lieutenant, Mariano Fuentes, the Empecinado broke up the little camp, and his band in the direction of the Duero.

That part of the high road from Madrid to the Pyrenees which winds through the village of Gurubias, an escort of fifty dragoons was marching, about an hour before sunset, on the evening of early spring.—Two and three or four heavily laden carts, each drawn by half-a-dozen mules, composed the whole of the convoy; the value of which, however, might be deemed considerable, judging from the strength of the escort, and the precautions observed by the officer in command to avoid a surprise—precautions which were not of much avail; for, on reaching a spot where the road winded considerably, and was traversed by a broad ravine, the party was suddenly charged on either flank by double their number of guerillas. The dragoons made a gallant resistance, but it was a short one, for they had no room or time to form in any order, and were far overmatched in the hand-to-hand contest that ensued. With the very first who fled was a gentleman in a civilian's garb, who sprang out of one of the most elegant of the two carriages, and mounting a fine Andalusian horses led by a groom, was off like wind, disregarding the shrieks of his travelling companion, a female, two or three and twenty years old, of great beauty, and very richly attired. The cries and alarm of the lady thus deserted were redoubled when, in an instant later, a guerilla of fierce aspect presented himself at the carriage door.

"Have no fear, senora," said the Empecinado, "you are the hands of honorable men, and no harm shall be done you." And having by such like assurances succeeded in calming her terrors, he obtained from her some information as to the contents of the carts and carriages, as well as regarding herself and her late companion.

The man who had abandoned her, and consulted his own safety by flying with the escort, was her husband, Monsieur Barbot, jeweler and diamond merchant to the late King Charles the Fourth. Alarmed by the unsettled state of things in Spain, he was hastening to take refuge in France, with his handsome wife and his great wealth—of the latter of which no inconsiderable portion was contained in the carriage, in the shape of caskets of jewelry, diamonds and other valuables.

Repairing to the neighboring mountain, the guerillas proceeded to examine their booty, which the Empecinado permitted them to divide among themselves, with the exception of the carriage and the contents, including the lady, which he reserved for himself.

On the following day came letters from the French military governor of Arando del Duero, and from Monsieur Barbot, who had taken refuge in that town, and offered a large sum as ransom for his wife. To this application the Empecinado did not vouchsafe any answer, but marched off to his native village of Castrillo, taking with him his jewels, carriage and lady. The latter he established in the house of his brother Manuel, recommending her to the care of his sister-in-law, and commanded that she should be treated with all possible respect, and her wishes attended to on every point.

The Empecinado's exultation at the success of his enterprise was great, but he little foresaw all the danger and trouble that his rich capture was hereafter to occasion him. He had become evidently enamoured of his fair prisoner, and in order to have leisure to pay his court to her, he sent off his partida on a distant expedition under the command of Fuentes, and himself remained at Castrillo, doing his utmost to find favor in the eyes of the beautiful Madame Barbot. He was then in the prime of life, a remarkably handsome man, and notwithstanding that the French affected to treat him as a brigand, his courage and patriotism were admitted by the unprejudiced among all parties, and his bold and successful deeds had already procured him a degree of renown that was an additional recommendation of him to the fair sex. It may not, therefore, not deemed very surprising that, after the first few days of her captivity were passed, and she had become a little used to the novelty of her position, the lady began to consider the Empecinado with some degree of favor, and seemed not altogether disposed to be disconsolate in her widowhood. He, on his part, spared no pains to please her. His very nature seemed changed by the violence of his new passion; and so great was the metamorphosis that his best friends scarcely recognized him for the same man. He seemed totally to have forgotten the career to which he had devoted himself, and the hatred and war of extermination he had vowed against the French. The restless activity and spirit of enterprise which formed such distinguished traits in his character, were completely lulled to sleep by the charms of fair Barbot. Nor was the change in his external appearance less striking. Aware that the rude manners and attire of a guerilla were not likely to please the fastidious taste of a town-bred dame, he hastened to discard them. His rough, bushy beard and mustaches were carefully trimmed and adjusted by the most expert barber in the neighborhood; his sheep-skin jacket, heavy boots, and jingling double-rowelled spurs thrown aside, and in their place he assumed the national garb, so well adapted to show off a handsome person, and which, although now almost disused throughout Spain, far surpasses in elegance the prevailing costumes of the nineteenth century; a short light jacket of black velvet, a waistcoat of the richest silk, both profusely decorated with gold and filigree buttons; purple velvet breeches fastened at the knees with bunches of ribbons; silk stockings, and falling boots of chamois leather, by the most expert maker in Cordova; a crimson silk sash around his waist, and around his neck a silk handkerchief, of which the ends were drawn through a magnificent jeweled ring. A green velvet cap, ornamented with sables and silver, and an ample cloak trimmed with silver lace, the spoil of a commandant of French gendarmes, completed this picturesque costume.

Thus attired, and mounted on a splendid horse, the Empecinado escorted the object of his new flame to all the *fetes* and merry-makings of the surrounding country. Not a *romeria* in the neighboring villages, a fair, or a bull-fight in the valley of the Duero, but were graced by the presence of Martin Diez and his Dulcinea, whose fine horse and gallant equipment, but more especially the beauty of the rider, inspired universal admiration. As might be expected, many of those who had known the Empecinado a poor vine-dresser, became envious of his good fortune, and others who envied him not were indignant at seeing him waste his time in such degrading effeminacy, instead of following up the career which he had so nobly begun. There was much murmuring, therefore, to which, however, he gave little heed; and several weeks had passed in the manner above described, when an incident occurred to rouse him from the sort of lethargy in which he was sunk.

A despatch reached him from the Captain-General, Don Gregorio Rodrigo, requiring his immediate presence at Cuidad Rodrigo, there to receive directions concerning the execution of a service of the greatest importance, and which was to be intrusted to him.

This order had its origin in circumstances of which the Empecinado was totally ignorant.—The jeweler Barbot, finding that neither large offers nor threats of punishment had any effect upon the Empecinado, who persisted in keeping his wife prisoner, made interest with the Duke of Infantado, then general of one of the Spanish armies, and besought him to exert his influence in favor of the captive lady, and have her restored to her friends. The Duke, who was a very important personage at the Court of Charles the Fourth, and a favorite of Ferdinand the Seventh, at the beginning of his reign, entertained a particular friendship for Barbot; and, if the *thronique scandaleuse* of Madrid might be believed, a still more particular for his wife. He immediately wrote to General Cuesta, desiring that the lady might be sent back to her husband without delay, as well as all the jewels and other spoil that had been seized by the Empecinado.

With much difficulty did the guerilla make up his mind to abandon the inglorious position, and to go to where duty called him. Strongly recommending his captive to his brother and sister-in-law, he set out for Cuidad Rodrigo, escorted by a sergeant and two men of his partida. They had not proceeded half a mile from Castrillio, when, from a hedge bordering the road, a shot was fired, and the bullet slightly wounded the Empecinado's charger. Two of the escort pushed their horses through the hedge, and immediately returning, dragging between a gray haired old man, seventy years of age, who clutched in his wrinkled fingers a rusty carbine that had just been discharged.

"He is surely mad?" exclaimed the Empecinado, gazing in astonishment at the venerable assassin.

"*Dime vigo*; do you know me? And why do you seek my life?"

"*Si si te conozes.* You are the Empecinado—the bloody Empecinado. Give me back my Pedro, whom you murdered. *Ay di me! Pedrillo te hunmatado!*"

And the old man's frame quivered with rage, as he glared on the Empecinado with an expression of unutterable hate.

One of the gurillas stepped forward—

"The old Gutierrez, the father of Pedro, who was hung in the Pinares de Coca, for betraying us to the French."

"Throw his carbine into yonder pool, and leave the poor wretch," said Empecinado; "his son deserved the death he met."

"He missed his aim to-day, but he may point truer another time," said one of the men, half drawing a pistol from his hoister.

"Harm him not!" said the Empecinado, sternly, and the party rode on.

"*Maldito seas!*" screamed the old man, casting himself in the dust of the road, in a paroxysm of impotent fury. "*Maldito! Maldito! Ay de me! mi Pedrillo!*"

And his cruses and lamentations continued till the guerillas were out of hearing.

On arriving at Ciudad Rodrigo, the Empecinado went immediately to General Cuesta who although he did not receive him unkindly, could not but blame him greatly for the enormous crime he had committed in carrying off a lady who was distinguished by so mighty a personage as the Duke of Infantado. He told him it was absolutely necessary to devise some plan by which the Duke's anger might be appeased.

Murat had also sent a message to the central junta, saying that if satisfaction were not given, he would send troops to lay waste the whole district of Penafiel, in which Castrillo was situated; and it was probable that if he had not done so already, it was because a large portion of the inhabitants of that district were believed to be well-affected to the French.—Without exactly telling him what he must do, the old general gave him a despatch for the *corregidor* of Penafiel, and desired him to present himself before that functionary, and concert with him the measures to be taken.

The Empecinado took his leave and was quitting the governor's palace, when he overtook at the door an *avogado*, who was a countryman of his, and whom he had left at Castrillo when he set out from that place. The sight of this man was a ray of light to the Empecinado who immediately suspected that his enemies were intriguing against him. He proposed to the lawyer that they should walk to the inn, to which the latter consented. They had to traverse a lonely place known by the name of San Francisco's Meadow, and arriving there behind the shelter of some walls, the Empecinado seized the advocate by the collar, and swore he would strangle him if he did not instantly confess what business had brought him to Ciudad Rodrigo, as well as all the plans or plots against the Empecinado to which he might be privy.

The lawyer, who had known Diez from his childhood, and was fully aware of his desperate character and of his own peril, trembled for his life, and besought him earnestly to use no violence, for that he was willing to tell all he knew. Thereupon he nigh throttled the poor avocado, and cocking a pistol, as a sort of warning to the other to tell the truth, bade him sit down beside him and proceed with his narrative.

The lawyer informed him that the *ayuntamiento* or corporation of Castrillo and those of all the towns and villages of the district, found themselves in great trouble on account of the convoy he had intercepted, and more particularly of the lady whom he kept prisoner, and whose friends, it appeared, were persons of much influence with both contending parties, for that the junta and the French had alike demanded her liberty, and while the latter were about to send troops to put the whole country to fire and sword, the former, as well as the Spanish generals, had refused to afford them any protection against the consequences of her detention, and accused the ayunamiento and the priests of encouraging the Empecinado to hold her in captivity. He himself had been sent to Ciudad Rodrigo to beg General Cuesta's advice, and the general had declared himself unable to assist them to restore the lady and treasure, if they did not wish the French to lay waste to the country, and take by force the bone of contention.

The Empecinado, suspecting that General Cuesta had not used all due frankness with him in this matter, handed to the lawyer the letter that had been given him for the corregidor of Penafiel, and compelled him, much against his will, to open and read it. Its contents coincided with what the avogado had told him: the general advising the corregidor to use every means to compromise the matter rather than wait till the French should do themselves justice by the strong hand.

Perceiving that, from various motives, everybody was against him in this matter, the Empecinado bethought himself how he should get out of the scrape.

"As an old friend and countryman, and more especially as a lawyer," said he to the avogado, "you are the most fitting man to give me advice in this difficulty. Tell me, then, what I ought to do, in order that our native town, which is innocent in the matter, should suffer no prejudice."

"You speak now like a sensible man," replied the other, "and as a friend will I advise you. Let us immediately set off to Penafiel, deliver the general's letter to the corregidor, and take him with us to Castrillo. There, for form's sake, an examination of your conduct in the affair can take place. You shall give up the jewels, the carriage, and the lady, and set off immediately to join your partida."

"To the greater part of that I willingly agree," said the Empecinado. The jewels are buried in the cellar, and the carriage is in the stable. Take both when you list. But as to the lady, before I give her up, I will give up my own soul. She is my property; I took her in fair fight, and at the risk of my life."

"You will think better of it before we get to Castrillo," replied the lawyer.

The Empecinado shook his head, but led the way to the inn, where they took horse, and the next day reached Penafiel, whence they set out the following morning for Castrillo, which is a couple of leagues further, accompanied by the corregidor, his secretary and two alguazils. The Empecinado was induced to leave his escort at Penafiel, in order that the sort of *pro forma* investigation which was to be gone through might not appear to have taken place under circumstances of intimidation. The avogado started a couple of hours earlier than the rest of the party, to have things in readiness, so that the proceedings might be got through as rapidly as possible.

It was about eight o'clock on a summer's morning that the Empecinado and his companions reached Castrillo. As they entered the town, an old mendicant, who was lying curled up like a dog in the sunshine under the porch of a house, lifted his head at the noise of the horses. As his eyes rested upon Diez, he made a bound forward with an agility extraordinary in one of his years, and fell almost under the feet of the Empecinado's horse, making the startled animal spring aside with a violence and suddenness sufficient to unhorse many a less practised rider than the one who bestrode him. The Empecinado lifted his whip in anger but the old man who had risen to his feet, showed no sign of fear, and as he stood in the middle of the road, and immediately in the path of the Empecinado, the latter recognized the wild features and long grey hair of old Gutierrez.

"*Maldito seas!*" cried the old man, extending his arms towards the guerilla. "Murderer! the hour of vengeance is nigh. I saw it in my dreams. My Pedrillo showed me his assassin trampled under the feet of horses. *Assina! Veuga la hora de tu muerte!*"

And the old man half crazed by his misfortunes, relapsed into an incoherent strain of lamentations for his son, and curses upon him whom he called his murderer.

The Empecinado, who, on recognizing old Gutierrez, had lowered his riding-whip, and listened unmoved to his curses and predictions, rode forward, explaining as he went, to the astonished corregidor, the scene that had just occurred. A little further on he separated from his companions, giving them rendezvous at ten o'clock at the house of the ayuntamiento. Proceeding to his brother's dwelling, he paid a visit to Madame Barbot, breakfasted with her and then prepared to keep his appointment.—He placed a brace of pistols and a poniard in his belt, and taking a loaded *trabuco* or blunderbuss in his hand, wrapped himself in his cloak so as to conceal his weapons repaired to the town hall.

He found the tribunal already installed, and everything in readiness. Saluting the corregidor, he began pacing up and down without taking off his cloak. The corregidor urged him repeatedly to be seated, but he refused, and continued his walk, replying to the questions that were put to him, his answers to which were duly written down. About a quarter of an hour passed in this manner, when a noise of feet and walking was heard in the street, and the Empecinado, as he passed one of the windows that looked out upon the plaza, saw, with no very comfortable feelings, that a number of armed peasants were entering the town-hall. He perceived that he was betrayed, but his presence of mind stood his friend, and with his usual promptitude, he in a moment decided how he should act. Without allowing it to appear that he had any suspicion of what was going on, he walked to the door of the audience chamber, and before any one could interfere, shut and locked it. Then stepping up to the corregidor, he threw off his cloak, and presented his trabuco at the magistrate's head.

"Senor Corregidor," said he, "this is not our agreement, but a base act of treachery.—Commend yourself to God, for you are about to die."

"The corregidor was so dreadfully terrified at these words, and at the menacing action of the Empecinado, that he swooned away, and fell down under the table—the escribano fled into an adjoining chamber, and concealed himself under a bed—while the alguazils, trembling with fear, threw themselves upon their knees and petitioned for mercy. The Empecinado, finding himself, with so little trouble, master of the field of battle, took possession of the papers that were lying upon the table, and, unlocking the door, proceeded to the principal staircase, which he found occupied by the inhabitants of the town, armed with muskets and fowling-pieces. Placing his blunderbuss under his arm, with his hand upon the trigger, "Make way!" cried he; "the first who moves a finger may reckon on the contents of my trabuco." His menace and resolute character produced the desired effect: a passage was opened, and he left the house in triumph. On reaching the street, however, he found a great crowd of men, women and even children, assembled, who occupied the plaza and all the adjacent streets, and received him with loud cries of "Death to the Empecinado! *Muera el ladron y mal Christiano!*" The armed men whom he left in the town-house fired several shots at him from the windows, but nobody dared to lay hands upon him, as he marched slowly and steadily through the crowd, trabuco in hand, and casting glances on either side that made those on whom they fell shrink involuntarily backwards.

On the low roof of one of the houses of the plaza, that formed the angle of the Calle de la Cruz, or street of the Cross old Gutierrez had taken his station. With the fire of insanity in his bloodshot eyes, and a grin of exultation upon his wasted features, he witnessed the persecution of the Empecinado, and while his ears drank in the yells and hootings of the multitude, he added his shrill cracked voice to the uproar. When the shots were fired from the town-hall, he bounded and capered upon the platform, clapped his meagre fingers together in ecstasy; but as the Empecinado got further from the house, and the firing discontinued, an expression of anxiety replaced the look of triumph that had lighted up the old maniac's face. Diez still moved on unhurt, and was now within a few paces of the house on which Gutierrez had perched himself. The old man's uneasiness increased. "Va a escapar!" mutterred he to himself; "they will let him escape. Oh, if I had a gun, my Pedrillo would soon be avenged!"

The Empecinado was passing under the house. A sudden thought struck Gutierrez. Stamping with his feet, he broke two or three of the tiles on which he was standing, and snatching up a large heavy fragment, he leaned over the edge of the roof to get a full view of the Empecinado, who was at that moment leaving the plaza, and entering the Calle de la Cruz. In five seconds more he would be out of sight. As it was, it was only by leaning very far forward that Gutierrez could see him, walking calmly along, and keeping at bay the angry but cowardly mob that yelped at his heels, like a parcel of village curs pursuing a blood-hound, whose look alone prevented their too near approach.

Throwing his left arm around a chimney, the old man swung himself forward, and with all the force that he possessed, hurled the tile at the object of his hate. The missile struck the Empecinado upon the temple, and he fell, stunned and bleeding to the ground.

"*Viva!*" screamed Gutierrez; but a cry of agony followed the shout of exultation. The chimney by which the old man supported himself was loose and crumbling, and totally unfit to bear his weight as he hung on by it, and leaned forward to gloat over his vengeance. It tottered for a moment, and then fell with a crash into the street. The height was not great, but the pavement was sharp and uneven; the old man pitched upon his head, and when lifted up was already a corpse.

When the mob saw the Empecinado fall, they threw themselves upon him with as much ferocity as they had previously shown cowardice, and beat and ill-treated him in every possible manner. Not satisfied with that, they bound him hand and foot, and pushed him through a cellar window, throwing after him stones, and everything they could find lying about the street. At last, wearied by their own brutality, they left him for dead, and he remained in that state till night-fall, when the corregidor and the ayunamiento proceeded to inspect his body, in order to certify his death, and have him buried. When he was brought out of the cellar, however, they perceived he still breathed, and sent for a surgeon, and also for a priest to administer the last sacraments. They then carried him upon a ladder to the *posito*, or public granary, a strong building, where they considered he would be in safety, and put him to bed, bathed in blood, and covered with wounds and bruises.

The corregidor, fearing that the news of the riot and death of the Empecinado would reach Penafiel, and that the escort which had been left there and the many partizans that Diez had in that town would come over to Castrillo to avenge his death, persuaded one of the cures or parish priests of the latter place to go over to Penafiel in all haste, and, counterfeiting great alarm, to spread the report that the French had entered Castrillo, seized the Empecinado, and carried him off to Aranda. This was accordingly done; and the Empecinado's escort being made aware of the vicinity of the French and the risk they ran, immediately mounted their horses and marched to join Mariano Fuentes, accompanied by upwards of fifty young men, all partizans of the Empecinado, and eager to revenge him. This matter being arranged, the corregidor had the jewels that were buried in the cellar of Manuel Diez dug up, and having taken possession of them, and installed Madame Barbot with all due attention in one of the principal houses of the town, he forwarded a report to General Cuesta of all that had occurred. The General immediately sent an escort to conduct the lady and treasure to Cuidad Rodrigo, and ordered that as soon as the Empecinado was in a state to be moved he should also be sent under a strong guard to that city.

Meanwhile, the Empecinado's vigorous constitution triumphed over the injuries he had received, and he was getting so rapidly better, that for his safer custody the corregidor thought it necessary to have him heavily ironed. Deeming it impossible he should escape, and there being no troops in the village, no sentry was placed over him, so that at night his friends were able to hold discourse with him through the grating of one of the windows of the posito. In this manner he contrived to send a message to his brother Manuel, who, having also got into trouble on account of Madame Barbot's detention, had been compelled to take refuge in the mountains of Bilbuena, three leagues from Castrillo. Manuel took advantage of a dark night to steal into town in disguise, and to speak with the Empecinado. He informed him that the superior of the Bernadine Monastery, in the Sierra de Balbuena, had been advised that it was the intention of the Empecinado's enemies to deliver him over to the French, in order that they might shoot him. The Empecinado replied that he strongly suspected there was some such plot in agitation, and desired his brother to seek out Mariano Fuentes, and order him to march his band into the neighborhood of Castrillo, and that on their arrival he would send them word what to do.

Eight days elapsed, and the Empecinado was now completely cured of his wounds, so that he was in much apprehension lest he should be sent off to Cuidad Rodrigo before the arrival of Fuentes. On the eighth night however, his brother came to the window and informed him that the partida was in the neighborhood, and only waited his orders to march upon Castrillo, rescue him, and revenge the treatment he had received. This the Empecinado strongly enjoined them not to do, but desired his brother to come to his prison door at two o'clock the next morning with a led horse, and that he had the means to set himself at liberty. Manuel Diez did as he was ordered, wondering, however, in what manner the Empecinado intended to get out of the posito, which was a solidly constructed edifice with a massive door and grated windows. But the next night, when the guerrilla heard the horses approaching his prison, he seized the door by an iron bar that traversed it on the inner side, and, exerting his prodigious strength tore it off the hinges as though it had been of pasteboard. His feet being fastened together by a chain, he was compelled to sit sideways upon the saddle; but so elated was he to find himself once more at liberty, that he pushed his horse into a gallop, and with his fetters clanking as he went, dashed through the streets of Castrillo, to the astonishment and consternation of the inhabitants, who knew not what devil's dance was going on in their usually quiet town.

At Olmos, a village a quarter of a league from Castrillo, the fugitives halted, and roused a smith, who knocked off the Empecinado's irons. After a short rest at the house of an approved friend, they remounted their horses, and a little after daybreak reached the place where Fuentes had taken up his bivouac. The Empecinado was received with great rejoicing, and immediately resumed the command. He passed a review of his band, and found it consisted of two hundred and twenty men, all well mounted and armed.

Great was the alarm of the inhabitants of Castrillo when they found the prison broken open and the prisoner gone, and their terror was increased a hundred fold, when a few hours later news was brought that the Empecinado was marching towards town at head of a large body of cavalry. Some concealed themselves in cellars and such like hiding places, others left the town and fled to the neighboring woods; but the majority, despairing of escape by human means from the terrible anger of the Empecinado, shut themselves up in their houses, closed the doors and windows and prayed to the Virgin for deliverance from the impending evil. Never had there been seen in Castrillo such a counting of rosaries and beating of breasts, such genuflexions and mumbling of aves and paters, as upon that morning.

At noon the Empecinado entered the town at the head of his band, trumpets sounding, and the men firing their pistols and carbines into the air, in sign of joy at having recovered their leader. Forming up the partida in the market place, the Empecinado sent for the corregidor and other authorities, who presented themselves before him pale and trembling, and fully believing they had not five minutes to live.

"Fear nothing!" said the Empecinado observing their terror. "It is certain that I have met foul treatment at your hands; and was it not harder to bear coming from my own countrymen and townsfolk. But you have been misled, and will one day repent your conduct? I have forgotten your ill usage, and only remember the poverty of my native town, and the misery in which this war has plunged many of its inhabitants."

So saying he delivered to the alcalde and the parish priests a hundred ounces of gold for the relief of the poor and support of the hospital and ten more to be spent in a *novillada*, or bull-bait and festival for the whole town. Cutting short their thanks and excuses, he left Castrillo and marched to the village of Sacramenia, where he quartered his men, and accompanied by Mariano Fuentes, went to pay a visit to a neighboring monastery. The monks received him with open arms and a hearty welcome, hailing him as the main prop of the cause of independence in Old Castile. They sat down to dinner in the refectory, and the conversation turning upon the state of the country, the Empecinado expressed his unwillingness to carry on the war in that province on account of the little confidence he could place in the inhabitants, so many of them had become *afrancesados*; and as a proof of this he related all that had occurred to him at Castrillo. Upon hearing this the abbot, who was a man distinguished for his talents and patriotism, recommended Diez to bind his band to New Castile, where he would not have to encounter the persecutions of those who, having known him poor and insignificant, envied him his good fortune, and sought to throw obstacles in his path. He offered to get him leaves from the