

I followed leisurely in the rear. It was late in the afternoon when I left Havana, and now night was not far off, I knew. And sure enough, half an hour later night had fallen, and I could scarcely make out the forms ahead of me. Then I knew I should need to be cautious. I had come by this time to a fork in the road. Down to the right were the Spaniards and their prisoner; to the left the road ran straight away across the plain until it lost itself in the darkness. Between the two rose a rocky hill. As I noticed this my decision was made, and without an instant's hesitation I turned to the left. Once out of sight of the Spaniards I struck into a gallop, Gringo loping along the road at an alarming rate for so small an animal. I proceeded for perhaps half a mile, then dismounted, led Gringo into a thicket at the roadside and tied him. Then I began to climb the hill which divided the two roads. My plan was to put the soldiers under the impression that I was going on to Managua, and I could then follow them with less risk of discovery. With all the speed I could muster I ran up the rocky slope. But when I had reached the top I could not see a single bit of the road, much less the Spaniards, and was censuring myself for ever allowing them to get out of sight, when I heard voices approaching. So I stepped quickly into a clump of bushes and awaited developments. The voices grew louder, and at length I could make out a small body of armed men, who, if they kept straight on, would pass right by me. As they approached I saw with a thrill of joy that they were Calvario's captors, and I could see Calvario himself in their midst. When they came nearer I could hear their conversation, and it was evidently a joke, for now and then they would break into loud guffaws. As they passed I heard one sentence which gave me the key to the whole situation.

"Ha, ha," cried one of the soldiers, "how nicely we will throw the American off the scent by taking the right fork and crossing over the ridge to the left," and he laughed loudly, the others joining.

"Silence," commanded the lieutenant, and they obeyed.

"So, ho," thought I, "it's a pretty game two can't play at." And slowly and cautiously I followed them along the top of the ridge. We must have gone a mile before the Spaniards left the top of the hill. Then they moved to the left and down the valley, but they had not gone far before they halted. Coming up close, I saw that they had stopped in front of a low, two-story building,