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THE GITANA.

Expressly translated for the FAVORITE from the French of Xavier de Montepin.

LVIII. (Continued.)

"Come," said Carmen in a low voice, "it's all over."

"I am afraid," said Morales.

"You have no cause to be so. Those you fear are dead."

The two, after untying the rope which would have been an unpleasant piece of evidence against them, returned to their lair, and there awaited the dawn. When the sun rose they looked over the side of the bridge. At the bottom of the ravine, among the mangled remains of the horses, and the shattered debris of the carriage, they saw the corpses of Tancred de Najac and of the driver. Quirino was nowhere to be seen, but it was impossible that he could have escaped.

"Come," said Carmen, "let us be off to St. Nazaire. I must have my revenge."

At St. Nazaire a surprise was awaiting Carmen. She there learnt that her old acquaintance and benefactor, Mlle. de Kerven, was married to her own husband, Oliver Le Vaillant. And she learnt it from Dinorah herself, during Oliver's absence from the town.

Carmen's plan was soon formed. She at once sought out the two police officers. One of them she ordered off to Savenay, with instructions to wait for her towards seven in the evening. To the other she confided the duty of obtaining a copy of the entry in the parish church books of the marriage of her husband and Madeleine de Kerven.

On the morning of the day when Carmen arrived at St. Nazaire Oliver had started on horseback for Paimbois, where in pursuance of his secret project of leaving France, he intended to get information respecting the departure of vessels for the New World.

On his return he found Dinorah eagerly awaiting him. His absence, short as it was, appeared to her almost interminable. Supper was ready, a cheerful fire was blazing in the wide fireplace, by the side of which his chair was drawn up ready for him, and the whole room was a very picture of comfort. Yet notwithstanding the welcome that awaited him and the affectionate caresses of his young wife, Oliver was sadly troubled in his mind.

LIX.

THUNDER CLAPS.

Dinorah noticed the emotion with which her husband contemplated the simple and charming scene, but she nevertheless did not betray her real sentiment.

She therefore questioned him.

"Are we not well here, my friend?" said she.

"Near you, all is well," did he answer with a kiss.

Dinorah answered with a smile.

"But here especially, is it not?"

Oliver kept silence.

"You are very tired, are you not?" said Dinorah.

"I was a little while ago, but now no more."

"Does my presence then repose you?"

"It does."

"By what means?"

"By your beauty and your love."

At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes, Carmen stopped before the rattle gate and murmured:

"We have arrived."

She opened the gate noiselessly and the whole body penetrated into the enclosure.

Guards were placed at all the issues.

Then an officer said to Carmen:

"How many doors has the house?"

"Only one."

"How many windows?"

"Sir, I have the painful duty of arresting you in the name of the king!"

Dinorah, with a loud scream, threw herself into Oliver's arms. He tried to console her, and to bear up himself while the officer read aloud the warrant.

At the word "assassination," Oliver broke out into a loud protestation. He unbuckled the belt which he wore about him, produced the document of the Marquis de Grancey and showed it to the officer.

That individual seemed to relent and indeed said as much to Oliver.

LX.

THE STROKE.

The officer was a venal soul, however, and wished to be paid for his leniency. He made an arrangement to meet Oliver a fortnight from that date and to receive a heavy ransom from him. He was about to retire, and Oliver was already expressing his delight at being saved, when the door opened again and Carmen appeared upon the threshold with two soldiers.

Oliver and Dinorah both recognized her.

"Annunziata!" exclaimed the latter.

"I am lost!" cried the former.

And he fell heavily on his chair.

Carmen said sharply: "I, Annunziata Rovero, legitimate wife of Oliver Le Vaillant, denounce him as guilty of the crime of bigamy and I summon you to arrest him."

Dinorah uttered a piercing cry. She threw herself upon the breast of Oliver, but he was completely annihilated.

"No—no," she said "it is impossible—it would be too infamous—Oliver, Oliver—take pity on me, answer your wife—why do you not answer—O, I shall die—"

Carmen looked on with a dry eye.

"Sir," said she to the officer, "you have heard me—do your duty."

He touched Oliver on the shoulder.

"In the King's name I arrest you."

"Pardon, pardon," cried Dinorah. "You kill

me by acting thus."

"I do not kill you: I avenge you."

A sublime inspiration struck Dinorah.

"Are you inflexible?" she said.

"As the law."

"Well, madame, your charge is false—I am not Oliver's wife—I am his mistress—Do you understand me?"

Carmen remained cool. She drew forth from her corsega a paper which she presented to Dinorah.

"Here is your marriage contract?"

Dinorah fell back in a swoon, as if dead.

On hearing her fall, Oliver turned towards her. He precipitated himself upon her body, in an ecstasy of despair, and with a long knife stabbed himself twice in the chest.

Carmen looked on triumphantly.



"TAKE HIM OFF, HE IS NOT DEAD. I DEMAND JUSTICE."

After such pleasant converse, for a considerable time, the two sat down to dinner.

Dinorah asked of Oliver a narrative of his journey.

Oliver hesitated a moment, but at length resolved to make a clean breast of it. So he told Dinorah.

He was about to begin when a rap was heard at the door.

Let us return to Carmen.

When Oliver had entered the village, near the spot where she and her party were lying in wait, the dancing girl gave her instructions to the officers.

The horsemen dismounted and the party followed the hollow road, under the guidance of the Gitana.

"Two, below; two above, and one behind."

The house was then surrounded.

Carmen approached a window and looked upon the scene of Oliver making love to Dinorah and about to relate his adventures.

The officer knocked at the door.

No answer.

A second rap.

Oliver half rose from his seat.

Jocelyn then opened the door and two men entered.

One was wholly clothed in black.

The other wore the costume of a Breton peasant.

At sight of these, Dinorah recoiled. Oliver understood the fullness of the danger.

"What do you want, gentlemen?" said he.

"Mr. Le Vaillant," was the reply.

"That is my name."