

# THE FAVORITE

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## THE GITANA.

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

XXIX.—Continued.

The letter of Juan Mondego was written in Spanish, but Oliver understood that language perfectly.

He therefore translated it literally and rapidly:

"Lisbon, 5th March, 1771

"Sir and Honored Patron,

"I write to you under the weight of the most painful emotions. Having learned, several weeks ago, that some fishermen of the little town of Portomouro, in Galicia, had discovered on the beach, not far from Cape St. Adrian, numerous waifs, washed in by the tide, and that among these waifs was the headpiece of a large vessel, on which were written in letters of gold, these words:

THE MARSOUIN—  
HAVRE;

"Having learned this, I say, and knowing that this vessel belonged to you, I did not hesitate to go thither in person in order to put myself in full possession of the facts.

"My first information was unfortunately too true. The "Marsouin," driven by one of the most violent storms which have visited us in many years, was dashed on the rocks, near the Cape St. Adrian. Passengers and crew must have perished, as, after the most careful inquiry along the whole coast, I have heard of none being saved. Besides, the waves have cast some sixteen bodies on the beach, among which was that of a female. I had these corpses buried in consecrated ground."

After reading the letter, which Philip Le Vaillant had listened to standing and motionless, Oliver raised his eyes on his father and drew back in terror.

The face of the old man was purple; the veins of his neck and temples were swollen; a congestion of the brain appeared imminent.

"Father! father!" exclaimed the youth, raising to support the tottering shipowner.

Philip slipped down into the arm-chair, from which he had risen only a few moments before.

"Ah!" he feebly muttered, "my uneasiness was not vain. My worse presentiments have been realized! They are dead—they are dead—I will never see you again in this world, my sole friend, my brother. I will never know your dear and unhappy child, whom I also had hoped to call my daughter.

Kneeling beside his father, Oliver wept also, but his tears were less bitter. He mourned over the fate of Annunziata.

At length the shipowner said in a hoarse voice:

"My son, give me that letter. I want to read it again."

The letter of Juan Mondego lay on the velvet carpet alongside of one which Philip had opened, but had not read.

Oliver, whose eyes were dimmed with tears, took up the latter by mistake and presented it to his father.

The shipowner held it in his hands for several minutes, then made an attempt to read it, but



"BUT IT IS CHARMING. ONLY IT MAKES ME PRETTIER THAN I AM."

scarcely had he glanced at the first words than his face betrayed profound surprise and he hurriedly ran his eye to the signature.

He sent forth a loud cry, sprang from his chair and threw his arms around the neck of Oliver.

"See, my son, see," he exclaimed holding out the paper.

Oliver looked on the writing and was stupefied on beholding the name of Annunziata.

"Annunziata," he said; "Annunziata alive!"

"Yes, alive!" repeated Philip, "saved by a miracle, no doubt."

"Alive!" murmured Oliver interiorly.

"Well, it is the will of God. My fate is inflexible."

"Listen," continued the old man; "I will read you this blessed letter."

And standing upright before his son, who, in his turn, seemed overwhelmed and had sunk into the arm-chair, he read:

"Saint-Nazaire,"

Oliver trembled.

"Saint-Nazaire," he muttered in broken accents, "she is at Saint-Nazaire!"

"The letter is dated from that place. But why this surprise?"

"Continue, father, if you please."

The shipowner went on:

"He whom you cherished as a brother, who loved you in return from his whole heart and who confided me to you—my father is dead. He sends you his orphan daughter."

"Poor José, poor brother," murmured the old man, as he wiped the moisture from his eyes.

"your daughter is not an orphan. I shall be her father."

He then continued reading:

"Three days after closing the eyes of my poor father, I left Havana on the vessel which you had the generosity to send us. My sole heritage was the admirable letter written by you to my

dying father. A terrible storm broke up our ship. I alone survived among all on board. God saved me by a miracle."

"Ah!" exclaimed the old man. "I knew it. A miracle. May heaven be blessed."

He continued:

"After two dreadful nights, two nights of solitude and terror, a small French vessel picked me off a point of rock where the storm had cast me and where I awaited a certain death."

"This vessel was going to Nantes. It landed me in a Breton hamlet, called Saint-Nazaire, whence I write these lines. I should have written sooner, and still the delay is not my fault, as you will see. The day I landed, I fell ill, broken with fatigue, privation and suffering. God saved my life by another miracle and for the accomplishment of that miracle, he made use of an Angel's hand. That angel is a young girl. I send you her name that you may bless her with me. She is called Dinorah."

At these words, Oliver gave a start and became very pale.

The old man who had not noticed the movement, said:

"Dinorah, my son, be sure you never forget that name."

"No, father, I will never forget it," replied the youth with energy.

Philip continued reading the letter which concluded with the intelligence that Annunziata would soon set out from Saint-Nazaire to join the old friend of her father.

XXX.

FROM LISBON TO SAINT-NAZAIRE.—Continued.

"Sublime child!" exclaimed the old man.

"She has the heart and soul of her father. Oh! how happy you will be, Oliver!"

The youth kept silence and bowed his head. Was it through excess of happiness?

The bells of the churches and numerous convents of Havre pealed the evening angelus.

Philip Le Vaillant uncovered his brow.

"Oliver," said he,

"let us pray the Lord to grant joy and rest to the soul of Don José

Rovero, my old friend, and let us thank him for having saved Annunziata from the perils of the sea."

"Yes, father," said Oliver.

"And at the same time, let us ask his benediction on Dinorah."

"Yes, father," replied Oliver again, and in a low voice, he added:

"How I suffer! O, Dinorah!"

It has already been hinted that, when the "Marsouin" left Havre for Havana, Oliver Le Vaillant was not present. He was then visiting Brittany. It was during this tour that he came to the port of Saint-Nazaire. He there put up at a tavern called the Breton Arms. From this point he sallied forth every day to make sketches of the surrounding scenery. He there filled an album with delicious bits. Jetty, vil-

lage church, mouth of the Loire, and several wooded nooks were all included. One day a revelation presented itself to the young draughtsman. He came on a little house, beautifully embowered in trees. Something attracted him to the spot and he proceeded to sketch it. He had almost finished and was about to lay aside his paper, when casting his eye towards the cottage, he saw the adorable head of a young girl detaching itself from the clear-obscure of the casement, and a second form, also feminine, appeared between two trees in the orchard.

"Am I dreaming?" said Oliver, dropping his pencil to the ground.

XXXI.

NORAH.

He was not dreaming. The double apparition was real.

The young girl at the window was barely eighteen. Her oval face was exquisitely pale and encircled in a frame of heavily curled blond hair. The pupil of her large eyes beamed with azure. Her little mouth was incarnadine, like a ripe cherry.

The other female made a striking contrast to the first.

She was twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, tall and robust, very handsome and dressed in the bright costume of the peasant girls in those parts. In her left hand, she held a little basket of eggs, and in her right hand, a pail of foaming new milk.

She was surprised at first to see a stranger within the enclosure, but she soon gathered courage and advanced towards Oliver. She then stretched out her neck over his shoulder, inspected the drawing, turned towards the cottage, and placing her hands on her hips, exclaimed:

"Ah Miss Norah, do you know—a gentleman