

gourd of rum and a horn powder-flask hung at his sides, and at his back an ample game-bag. The young man approached the table by which Carmen was sitting, and laid on the table a pair of *chincaleros* (a kind of red partridge, very rare, and highly prized.)

"I would have liked," he said in a musical voice, "to bring my well-beloved something better than this, but it is the heart that gives, not the hand."

Carmen acknowledged the present by a slight and not over gracious movement of the head.

Quirino searched a moment in his bag, and drew out a small box made of scented wood ornamented with delicately carved foliage. This he placed in Carmen's lap.

"What is it?" she asked with that curiosity which since the days of Eve has been transmitted as an inalienable inheritance from mother to daughter, and will continue to be so transmitted until the end of the world.

"Look." Carmen opened the box. Nestling in a bed of cotton wool lay a couple of pearls of the finest water, quaintly mounted as earrings.

"Very gallant, indeed, faith, for a savage," said Morales to himself. "Two little trifles that are worth at least a hundred dollars. I have stolen enough of such things to know."

Carmen took the pearls and gazed at them with the interest that every true woman takes in jewelry.

"How does my well-beloved like them?" asked the young man.

"Charming," said the girl in a tone of indifference.

"They are not so pure as my well-beloved's eyes, not so white as her teeth, not so glossy as her brow" continued Quirino. "She should have stars for ear drops, but the stars are God's, and I cannot scale the heavens to fetch them. I have only these humble trinkets to offer—they are unworthy of her who should possess all the treasures of the Ocean. Will she, however, deign to accept them without despising them, for my poor sake?"

"My dear Quirino," replied Carmen coolly, "I should be sorry to hurt your feelings in any way. I accept with gratitude your game, but the pearls I cannot accept."

"Why not?" asked the young man with a troubled look.

"A present of game may be given and taken among friends, and Morales and I are your friends. But jewels like these—jewels of considerable value—in what relation do you offer them to me? In what relation do you wish me to accept them?"

"In what relation?" stammered Quirino. "I do not understand. I must have misunderstood you."

"Not the least in the world. I said 'In what relation?' and I repeat it."

"Is there then nothing between the daughter of Spain and the child of the forest?"

"There is between us, my dear Quirino, a feeling of which I spoke just now—a feeling of frank and sincere friendship, nothing more that I am aware of."

The Indian's bronzed countenance became frightfully pale. However, he succeeded in restraining the cry of anguish and astonishment that rose to his lips.

"If my well-beloved is trifling with the anguish of her slave, it is but cruel sport. Does she not see that her words cause me unutterable anguish?"

"I see that you appear to be in pain, but I am ignorant of the cause of your suffering."

"Carmen!" cried the hunter violently.

The young girl made no answer.

"Carmen!" he repeated in a lower and sad tone.

"Well, Quirino?"

"Is it possible that my well-beloved can speak to me thus? Has he already forgotten all?"

"What was there to remember?"

"If your heart is silent, at least your memory should call to mind your promise."

"My memory does not recall anything of the kind. I do not even understand what you are talking about."

"Your memory is treacherous. Shall I come to your assistance?"

"If it is any pleasure to you, Quirino, you may. But I warn you that you will be unsuccessful."

"Have I never told you that you are beautiful?"

"You were obliged, if not to say so, at least to think so."

"Did I never add that I love you?"

"You had a perfect right, if not to think so, at least to say so."

"Did you ever refuse to listen to me?"

"Did you ever happen to meet in your rambles in the woods a creature of my sex who refused to be told that she was beautiful?"

"Did you never tell me that you loved me in return?"

"Never!" cried Carmen vehemently. "No! never!"

"Have you never, at least, acted in a way to lead me to believe that you loved me?"

"How can I tell what fancies your vanity may put into your head?"

"I thought that you had given me your heart in return for mine—I thought that you were my affianced bride—that you would soon be my wife, and that my love would make you happy."

"Then, my poor Quirino, you were sadly mistaken."

Notwithstanding her courage, her audacity, we might almost say, Carmen was frightened at the expression of the Indian and the fierce

light that played in his eyes. She hurriedly continued:

"I beseech you, Quirino, not to be angry with me for being frank with you. If I were to speak otherwise than I have done I should be deceiving you, and would no longer be worthy of your respect. Since you do really love me, it is a misfortune, and I am sorry for it; I sympathize with you, but I am not aware of having in any way encouraged a love of the very existence of which I was ignorant."

The Indian made a rough gesture, as though he would have stopped her, but she continued without taking heed:

"Oh, I know what you are going to reply. You were about to say that I was not ignorant of the existence of your love, which you yourself had declared to me. Well, in that you are mistaken. I come from a country where gallantry is a totally different thing to passion. In Spain people continually make love without being in love. When a girl is young and beautiful, or even pretty, no one thinks anything of saying that he loves her. It is merely a polite attention. Well, Quirino, I swear to you I thought it was the same thing between us. If I have unwittingly encouraged your attentions, forgive me. I cannot be your wife, but I will be your sister. Forget your dreams, my friend. Content yourself with a large measure of my sincere friendship. Here is my hand in token of good faith. Do you refuse to take it?"

"Yes," said the Indian brusquely.

"Why? Do you wish to be my enemy?"

The Indian hesitated a few moments before answering. Unmistakable symptoms of violent agitation appeared in his face, which now wore a fierce and threatening expression. The girl was seriously alarmed. As for Morales, he had prudently taken refuge in the inner room, and had opened the window in case the turn of affairs should render flight advisable.

At last Quirino's countenance once more assumed its natural expression.

"So, it is true," he said, in his usual musical voice, "that you did not know that I loved you?"

"I swear to you that I was not aware of it," said Carmen.

"But now you know it. There is nothing to prevent your giving me your heart, since I have given you mine."

The young girl shook her head.

"Oh, do not answer just yet," continued Quirino. "Let me first tell you one or two things that you ought to know. Perhaps you are unwilling to become my wife because you are afraid you may have to work hard. If that is so you are mistaken, Carmen. My dwelling is poor enough, but not so poor as this. In my house you will be queen. If you want a woman to wait on you I will buy you a slave. I am richer than you think. In giving me the eye of an eagle God has bestowed upon me a real treasure. I am making a fortune by hunting. I have already a thousand dollars. That belongs to you. With it you can buy the kind of ornaments women like, and when that is spent, I swear to you you shall have more, that you shall never want for anything. Carmen, with me I am sure you will be happy. Carmen, do not give the death-blow to your happiness and mine. Be my wife."

These last words he uttered with profound and touching emotion.

In the next room where he was hiding Morales was so much affected that he wiped his eyes. It is extremely doubtful, however, if the operation was necessary.

"My friend," replied Carmen, "in order to be your wife and to make you happy I ought to love you, and I do not love you."

"But you will get to love me when you know me better."

"It is useless to indulge in such illusions. Alas, my poor Quirino, I feel that I shall never love you in any other way than as a sister."

"Then you reject my request?" hissed out the Indian.

"I must, for the sake of your own happiness."

"So," he continued slowly, fixing his eyes on Carmen, "by your innocent coquetry, as you call it, you kindled an unquenchable flame in my bosom, you turned the blood in my veins into liquid fire, and now you come and tell me that you do not love me and that you never will love me! I do not belong to your country, Carmen, that country where gallantry is a very different thing to passion. I am no Spaniard; I am almost a savage, but my tongue has never lied and my ears are not accustomed to distinguish between truth and falsehood. I thought that you loved me, for you gave me the right to think so. My life was so entirely yours that without you it is nothing. Listen to me, Carmen, and believe me, for I swear to you that what I am about to tell you will happen. I do not know if you will be mine one day, but this I do know, you shall never belong to another. The heart that was pledged to me shall never beat on a rival's breast. If you will not love me, at least you shall never love another. Carmen, I forbid you to love. I will watch you, watch you continually and closely. Wherever you go, I shall be there. You will not see me, but I shall see you. The Indian has the cunning of the serpent, he has also the poisoned sting. Take care, Carmen, the day that your hand touches the hand of a man, I will crush you both, him and yourself, as I crush the pearls I was so happy to offer you and which you disdainfully refused."

As he uttered these words, with a calmness that was frightful to see, he took the pearls from the table, dashed them on the floor and crushed them beneath his heel.

"*Au revoir*, Carmen," he said.

"Not so, Quirino," said the young girl eyeing him keenly; "not *au revoir*, but 'farewell.'"

The Indian walked slowly to the door and turned on his heel.

"*Au revoir*," he said in a threatening tone, and vanished.

Morales immediately left the inner room and joined Carmen.

The girl was standing erect, in a defiant attitude, her head thrown back, her arms crossed, her eyes fixed on the door that had closed behind Quirino, and her bosom heaving tumultuously.

"Ah, I knew it," murmured the Gitano. "I knew it only too well. This cursed savage, this infernal Quirino hates you now as much as he loved you before. He threatened you, and an Indian's threat is never in vain. These people, you see, have all the cunning of the serpent, he said so himself. He will follow you everywhere, he will be your shadow, and, consequently mine. Ah! caramba! caramba! sister, in what a dreadful position you have placed us. Unless Our Lady of the Pillar and St. James of Compostella have pity on us, how are we to get out of this mess." And Morales gave a succession of deep-drawn sighs.

The girl remained silent. She did not seem to have heard her brother's lamentation.

"Carmen!" cried he impatiently.

"What is it?" she asked looking at him absently.

"Answer me. What do you think of all this?"

"I think that we are going to play a dangerous game, in which my life is at stake, and, consequently I have got to win."

"So you insist on it?"

"More than ever."

"Are you not afraid of Quirino?"

"Perhaps Quirino will kill me, but I am not afraid of him. Besides you are perfectly aware, you who know me, that I am not a girl who pales in the presence of danger, or flinches before a threat."

"Well, the die is cast. Since you insist, we must do it."

As he said this in a resigned voice Morales stooped and picked up the remains of the crushed pearls and their gold setting, and put them hastily in his pocket, murmuring regretfully:

"Ferocious Indian! savage! brute! here is a hundred dollars thrown away. Would it not have been a thousand times better to have given them to me since Carmen would not have them?"

(To be continued.)

UNDER THE BED.

BY HELOISE HARDINGE.

Tiptoeing through the parlor and peering through the blinds, I beheld the elegant Mrs. Primm, the very last person that I desired just then to see. True, we had met at a sociable a few evenings previous, and I had extended to her a pressing invitation to visit us; but I was not prepared to see her so soon. It was unusually warm weather, and baby Minnie and I remained *en déshabillé* all day.

I hastened back into the sitting-room to Mrs. Myers, a pleasant lady to whom we had let our chambers for the summer season, that I might not be lonely during the long days when husband was absent.

"Mrs. Myers," I hurriedly whispered, "for pity's sake do me the favor of answering the door-bell, please, for that very pink of neatness and propriety, Mary Primm, has called, and say, please, that I am not in, and I'll run up into your room, that you may be able to speak truthfully!" So, hastily taking up Minnie, I tripped up into Mrs. Meyers' apartments.

Presently she appeared with, "Why did you not wish to see her?" "Why, what a plight I am in to see company," I exclaimed, "and to have Mrs. Primm see me thus would cause me to blush with shame. I have neglected everything that will be neglected, yet regret that I did not see her, for I have but recently made her acquaintance, and have asked her to call on me. She is a most charming little lady, and on the evening of the party I congratulated myself for having made her acquaintance. But really, I could not possibly see her to-day. What did she say?"

"She said she would step in to see her friend over the way, Mrs. Hunter, and that in the meantime you might return, as I informed her you probably would."

"But I cannot dress for her now; it is quite late and Minnie is so troublesome," complained I.

After a pause, Mrs. Myers quietly but playfully remarked, "What would you do now if she should come back, and come up here into my room. Would it not be a good joke?"

"I should say it would," said I. "But why do you think she would do so; she does not know you, or that any one but us live here."

She said, "Oh, I was only supposing a case." "Very well," returned I, laughing, "supposing she should: I should run and hide under the bed, sofa, anywhere, for I am determined not to see her to-day."

Just then there was a gentle tap at the door, and just for the fun of it only, I pretended that I thought it was her coming, and, quick as I could, sat Minnie down on the floor and disappeared—under the bed.

What a situation! Soon as the door opened my repentance came, for in walked the veritable lady!

"What shall I do?" thought I as Mrs. Primm remarked very pleasantly, "Excuse me, but I thought as Mrs. H. might soon return, and as I was anxious to see her, I would come and sit with you awhile and await her coming, if you have no objections."

"None in the least," confusedly stammered Mrs. Myers, while she tremblingly placed a chair for her, and added, "Sit down, if you please."

Common topics, the weather, &c., were all that broke the awkward silence, while my own heart seemed to beat aloud. Ah, the agony of my situation can never be fully described.

"What can I do? How can I be released from such a predicament? I shall die here, I know I shall. I can scarcely breathe! How long will she stay? Oh, dear, I will crawl out and confess all! But what will she think of me? I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town!" These thoughts and more came crowding thick and fast into my poor brain, as I became more and more nervous every moment, and great drops of perspiration stood on my face, and I was almost exhausted for a breath of fresh air.

Said Mrs. Primm, "That child resembles Mrs. H.'s; is it hers?"

"No, it is one of the neighbor's children," replied Mrs. Myers.

"What a story," said I, to myself.

So on Mrs. Primm again asked, "It is a girl, is it not?"

"No, it is a boy," again fibbed Mrs. Myers, who was by this time so nearly distracted with anxiety that she did not realize what she was saying, and kept continually talking to baby and calling her Minnie—alarmed, fearing Minnie would get to crying, in which case she could do nothing with her; I fearful all the while lest Mrs. Primm should ask, "Why do you call the boy Minnie?" as I certainly would have asked, had I been in her place.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave When first we practise to deceive."

After some moments, Mrs. Primm began: "I have been here an hour, and there seems to be no signs of Mrs. H.'s coming soon, and I am desirous of copying the words to a beautiful song she sung and played the other evening. Do you think you could find her music? and would she care if you allowed me to copy it?"

"No," replied Mrs. Myers, "I will try to find it," and left the room.

While she was absent, Fido, her pet lap-dog entered, and came directly to me, snuffing and growling as he ran rapidly back and forth under the bed.

"Oh," thought I, "if I could only reach him!" I am sure I should have betrayed myself, for I was so angry that I came near forgetting all else save him. How I feared Mrs. Primm would come to the rescue. Fido showed fight, and was determined to drag me out, his eyes green and glaring, and barking so fiercely and wildly, keeping up a continual "yep! yep! yep!" All I could do was to keep motioning him in a threatening manner to keep him from biting me; the more I motioned the more savage he became, until I was almost giving up in despair, when Mrs. Myers came in just in time and put him out of the room.

The song was copied; but what an endless amount of time, it seemed to me, was consumed. Mrs. Primm had remained two whole hours, and I in duration vile all that time. After leaving many pleasant messages for me she took her leave, promising to call again.

I came out—if not a better, at least a wiser woman. I looked at Mrs. Myers; she at me, with not a smile from either of us, and it was difficult to tell which had suffered most. "Did you hear me lie?" said she, disheartened.

"What in the world did you do so for?" I asked.

"Dear me!" she replied, "I was so confused that I was not responsible for what I said."

"Oh, how I have suffered!" moaned I, still trembling like a leaf as I tried to tell her of the persistence of her naughty Fido. Then we laughed, loudly and long, until the house echoed with our merriment.

We solemnly pledged ourselves that never again would we be betrayed into any such folly, and would always speak the truth under whatever circumstances, and I vowed to see all who called, even the minister, if my head looked like a pitch-mop!

"I have since met Mrs. Primm many times, but I find it very difficult to look her into her eyes, especially when she inquires anxiously for Mrs. Myers, whom she regards as very much of a lady."

THE GAME OF "OMBRE."

Indications of a tendency to return to the fashions of our grandmothers meet us at every hand. The female costumes of the day are a conglomerate in which "the tea-cup times of hoop and patch" blend with the caprices of what may fairly be designated the Lower Empire. And the matter does not rest here. The dress of the past suggests the manners of the past, and an intention has been announced to revive the game of Ombre. It is played by two, three, or five persons, generally by three. It came from Spain, where *hombre* signifies "man." When three are playing nine cards are dealt to each; the whole Ombre pack consisting of forty cards only, and the eights, nines, and tens are laid aside. The object to be attained is to take five tricks—that is the winning number—or four suffices when the other five are so divided that one player has two and the other three tricks. After dealing, if none think his hand strong enough