

THE GIBANA

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THE GITANA.

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

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

(Continued.)

She fell back on the cushions of the divan, putting one hand to her eyes, the other to her heart and uttering a feeble sigh.

Oliver, who understood all, asked her: "What ails you, my dear friend? Are you suffering?"

"Horribly."

"But a moment ago, you were perfectly well."

"It is a sudden attack."

"Where do you suffer?"

"In the head and the heart."

"What can I do for you?"

"I should have my salts bottle which I left in my room. Give me your arm, my friend, and lead me.—If I get my salts, I will be better."

"Ah!" exclaimed Oliver, "what good fortune. I have my salts bottle with me and here it is."

He drew from his pocket and presented to Carmen an elegant bottle of rock-crystal set in gold.

Carmen snatched it from the hands of her husband, approached it to her nostrils, and breathed the contents violently that a faintness ensued.

"Take care my dear," said Oliver.

"No—No—I am better—much better—and I feel that a little fresh air will restore me completely. Let us walk around the garden."

"What? In spite of the heat of which you just now complained?"

"It is just the heat that will do me good. I am chilled."

"But you will expose your fair complexion to the sun?"

"I will open my parasol."

Carmen rose and advanced toward the door.

"If you want positively to go, so be it," said Oliver. "I cannot refuse you anything."

And he rounded his arm to present it to his wife.

A gleam of triumph flashed in Carmen's eye. But this triumph was short-lived.

Precisely at the moment when the young woman was about to leave the kloak, footfalls were heard on the sanded walk below.

Oliver felt the hand of Carmen tingle on his wrist.

At the same time, the Marquis de Grancey appeared in the frame of the door, with a smile on his lips and his hat under his arm.

If Oliver had looked at his wife then, he would have noticed that she was as pale as death.

M. de Grancey was surprised also, but he kept his countenance, being used to scenes of the kind.

"Dear Mr. LeVaillant," said he, bowing respectfully to Carmen and taking Oliver's hand.

"I am the more delighted to meet you, as I did not expect it, having been told by your domestics that you had gone out of the house."

"My people deceived you without knowing it," replied Oliver. "In the calmest and most courteous manner. They thought I had gone out as usual. But I am glad that I remained, since I have the pleasure of receiving you."

As Carmen's uneasiness was dissipated, she

cast upon George a look full of admiration and on Oliver a glance charged with disdain;

She said of the first: "What presence of mind! What admirable self-control."

She said of the second: "What credulity! He sees nothing! He suspects nothing!"

Meantime the Marquis was explaining to Oliver in the most natural way possible, how it was that he found himself unannounced in his garden at that early hour.

The three then entered the pavilion. Then Mr. de Grancey took his leave, being accompanied a part of the way by Oliver. When Carmen was alone, she exclaimed: "What after all

which Oliver had imposed upon her. She understood that she was being watched. She divined the suspicions of her husband, she resented his conduct and felt her love for the marquis increasing.

She next resolved to see George.

How was this to be done?

On several occasions, M. de Grancey presented himself and the answer he invariably received was:

"Mr. and Mme. Le Vaillant have gone out."

He therefore ceased calling.

"He is vexed no doubt," said Carmen.

"He thinks I am an accomplice of my husband. He will soon cease to love me. Perhaps he will hate me."

But Carmen interrupted him. "We are alone," she said: shut the door and come and sit down. I want to talk to you."

"Well, my little sister," returned Morales, "I am at your orders, as I am at the orders of Madame LeVaillant. Is not a brother, and especially such an excellent brother as I, a servant by nature?" So saying, Morales, took a chair. "Now, little sister," he continued, "what is it?"

"Look at me, brother," said Carmen. "How do I look?"

"Charming as ever."

"I do not want any compliments. I want the truth."

"It is the truth that I am telling you. You are charming, and you know it perfectly well."

"I tell you," said Carmen, with an impatient gesture, "to look me well in the face and to tell me if you see any change in my expression."

Morales looked at his sister, as a man would who resignedly submits to a woman's caprice.

"Well?" she asked, when he had concluded his examination.

"Well, you may be a little paler than usual; your cheeks are the least bit thinner; but beyond this I don't notice any change—though I may be mistaken."

"Yes, I am thinner and paler. Feel my hand, I am feverish. I am suffering, Morales, I am unhappy."

"Jealous," said Morales sententiously.

Carmen shrugged her shoulders. "Jealous! No! In love, infatuated, yes!"

"In love!" returned the Gitano in astonishment.

"Yes, in love."

"With your husband?"

Carmen burst out laughing. "Decidedly, my dear Morales," she exclaimed, "you are crazy! Your ideas are absurd!"

"But if it is not your husband, who is it?"

"The Marquis de Grancey."

Morales started in his chair. "Caramba!" he murmured, "what do you tell me? You are joking, I trust."

"Do I look as if I were joking?"

"Well, this is a bad business."

"Why?"

"Because this love-affair can do no good and may perhaps end badly. I tremble at the mere thought of what it may lead to."

"What do I care for the consequences? I love and am loved, that is enough for me."

"Then the Marquis de Grancey returns your love?"

"Do you think any one could know me without falling in love with me?" asked Carmen proudly.

"That is true," returned Morales reflectively.

"That brigand Quirino and the Chevalier de Najac proved that. I hope, however," he added, "that Oliver does not suspect anything."

"I think that he does."

"Caramba! that's bad. Tell me what has happened and what makes you think that your husband has his suspicions."

Thereupon Carmen told the whole story with



"SHE FELL BACK ON THE CUSHIONS OF THE DIVAN."

is one day of uneasiness? I will make up for it to-morrow."

XXXIX.

MORALES RETURNS.

Carmen was mistaken.

"You do not go out enough," said Oliver to her the next day: "You need distraction. You have neglected your health. I must help you to repair it."

And, notwithstanding the objections of his wife, he took her out for a long ride every evening.

Thus the interviews of Carmen and the marquis were interrupted.

Oliver certainly meant well, but he did not know the female heart. By putting obstacles in the way of his wife's passion, he was only increasing its violence. He should have been more frank and far firmer. As it was, he was only precipitating a crisis.

This soon took place.

At the end of a week, the former dancing girl broke out in open revolt against the slavery

This thought almost crazed her.

Meantime, Morales was very happy. Well lodged, well dressed, well fed, well supplied with money, he prayed Heaven thankfully, morning and evening, and desired nothing better than that such an existence might be indefinitely prolonged.

One day, this conscientious fellow seated before a large desk in his bed chamber, was counting his money.

Some one knocked at the door.

"Come in," he said.

A valet entered, lowering profoundly. The Gitano raised his head and said:

"What do you want?"

"Madame desires that Don Guzman shall call on her in her apartment."

"Return and tell madam that I shall have the honor to obey her orders."

The valet departed.

Morales put on a coat of red velvet, and other articles of elegant toilet and went on his errand. Carmen was alone and awaited him with impatience.

"You did me the honor of asking for me, madame. Here I am at your orders."

Morales started in his chair. "Caramba!" he murmured, "what do you tell me? You are joking, I trust."

"Do I look as if I were joking?"

"Well, this is a bad business."

"Why?"

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