

"Good night, old friend," said Oliver, according to his habit, "I need nothing. You may retire."

Zephyr remained immovable, like a sentinel on duty.

"Did you not hear me?" asked the young man.

"Beg pardon, sir."

"What are you waiting for?"

"Sir, excuse me, but I have something particular to tell you."

"Well, speak. I listen."

Zephyr looked perplexed.

The young man noticing his trouble, asked:

"Is there question of something grave?"

"It may be that the thing is not precisely grave, but at any rate, it bothers me."

"Tell me then, at once, what it is."

"It is about Madame."

"My wife?" exclaimed Oliver with a thrill and an expression of keenest surprise.

The old valet made an affirmative sign.

"Zephyr," resumed Oliver in a tone of severity, "what do you mean?"

"Master Oliver, it is now a good while that you frequently absent yourself from the house."

"That is true, but what of it?"

"There is this, sir; while you are away Madame does not remain alone."

"I never pretended to doom her to solitude."

"No certainly, Master Oliver, you are too kind-hearted for that, but do you know whom Madame receives?"

"How could I know, since I have never asked her? Besides, she may receive whom she pleases."

"Yes, Master Oliver, but if Madame receives a certain person too often, you should know it, shouldn't you?"

"Come, Zephyr, speak out, to whom do you refer?"

"To the Governor of the City."

"The Marquis de Grancey?"

"Yes, sir."

"I see no harm in that. The Marquis belongs to the best society and it is natural Madame Le Vaillant should receive him with pleasure."

"Then his visits suit you?"

"Certainly."

"And it is all the same to you that he comes here every day?"

"The Marquis comes every day," said Oliver with surprise.

"Without fail. As soon as you go, he comes. One would think that he awaits your departure to arrive."

Oliver knit his brows and kept silence a moment. But recovering, he said with calm:

"If Mr. de Grancey comes when I am out, nothing is more simple, as I absent myself every evening. But tell me, Zephyr, what puts it into your head to treat this matter as an event of importance?"

"Because, sir, it is talked about a little more than I like."

Oliver started for the second time.

"Ah, it is talked about?"

"Yes, sir."

"By whom?"

"By everybody."

"Not by my people?"

"By them more than by anybody else."

"What do they say?"

"They repeat in different ways that no doubt the Governor would come here more rarely if you remained oftener at home."

"But," said Oliver with animation, almost with anger, "do you know that this is a grave injury, an insult, a blighting suspicion thrown in the face of my wife?"

The old servant shook his head.

"No, no, master Oliver, nothing of the kind," said he. "No one dreams of insulting our young mistress. Only, the Governor is known as a man who does not respect women and....."

Oliver answered nothing.

"Sir," added Zephyr timidly, "you will not think ill of me for speaking thus to you?"

"By no means, my good Zephyr. On the contrary, I am obliged to you. My wife is above reproach. I answer for her, as for myself. But I will put a stop to all these rumors. Go, Zephyr, and sleep soundly, you have done your duty and I thank you again."

The old valet seized the hand of his master, kissed it and departed perfectly satisfied.

Oliver, left alone, dropped into an arm chair, with a feeling of prostration. He thus soliloquized:

"It is my fault. I have not fulfilled the duties imposed by the Almighty on a husband. Solitude is a bad counsellor and I am responsible for the harm it may lead my wife to commit. She does not love me, but I am none the less obliged to watch over her. As to the Marquis de Grancey, it is his trade to court Annuziata. I ought not to be surprised at it, but I must defend my right. Yes, my honor is in jeopardy. I shall fight."

After taking this resolution, he was calmer and slept better than he had done for many nights.

It was August. The sun poured down his fires upon the city and the plain. Carmen, leaving the house, directed her steps, across the garden, to a little Chinese kiosk situated at the extremity of a long avenue, and looking out over Havre and the sea. This kiosk was luxuriantly furnished and had become the young woman's paradise. It was there that she liked to lounge; it was there that the marquis visited her, breathing his tales of love. On the present occasion, she had thrown herself on a divan, near the open window, and was enjoying a sight of the blue summer waves. Suddenly, she heard footsteps on the sand of the alley below.

"It is he!" she murmured.

The door opened. Carmen expected the marquis; it was Oliver she saw before her.

She had not sufficient empire over herself to check a movement of surprise.

"Do I disturb you, dear friend?" asked Oliver, with a smile.

"No, indeed, my friend, but I so little expected to see you; you come here so rarely."

"Is it a reproach?"

"By no means. I should not wish you to change your habits of life. Do you not go out to-day?"

"No. I mean this to be a holiday for me."

"A holiday?"

"Yes."

"Which?"

"That of spending my time with you, if you will allow."

Carmen felt a thrill.

"Need I tell you," she said, "that your presence always makes me happy?"

"Then you consent."

"With all my heart."

"How can I sufficiently thank you?"

Under the exterior of calm and courtesy, Carmen was really on thorns.

She trembled lest M. de Grancey should suddenly make his appearance.

"Yes, my dear, it is long since you have favored me with your company. Come.

And she went toward the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Oliver.

"To the house, of course."

"Why not remain here?"

"The heat is stifling."

"O, I hardly think so. The breeze blows through the windows. Surely, you do not mean to go thus."

"Let us stay, then, if you wish it," murmured Carmen, falling back on the divan.

Several moments of silence followed.

The little clouds of anxiety that passed over Carmen's features did not escape Oliver.

He was debating with himself how far these clouds denoted the presence of evil in her heart.

She was searching some means of inducing her husband to leave the kiosk. The matter was one of vital moment.

If she could draw Oliver toward the house, the marquis's visit would seem natural and intended for her husband as much as for herself.

If, on the other hand, the marquis came to the pavilion as usual, without being announced, what should Oliver think?

How was she to act?

At length, he decided to use one of these expedients.

(To be continued.)

#### KNOWING DOG.

"Upon returning," writes an American abroad, "from a residence in Italy, we took a steamer from Leghorn to Liverpool to avoid the fatigue of the land journey. On coming into port at Marseilles we were detained several days, the ship's boat plying between the steamer and the shore, the harbor being, as usual, crowded with ships of every nation and description. On the second day after port a most miserable, half-starved dog (terrier), one side of whose body was a mass of pitch, was observed to crawl upon the companion-ladder, giving a terrified look around him. Much surprised at the sight of the wretched animal, the captain exclaimed, 'Whose dog can this be?' and the inquiry went around among the several passengers and crew. No one owned him, and the steward, following him on deck, explained that he had found the poor creature hidden away in an empty berth. Captain M—, a kind and humane man, proposed to adopt him as one of the ship's company, and, setting him up on his legs, made a pretence of giving him a dozen as punishment for coming on board as a stowaway, greatly to the amusement of the children, and then named him Jack. A sailor greased his coat and set him free from the pitch, making him look more respectable; and, with good living and kind treatment, Jack soon recovered his spirits and seemed, out of gratitude, to attach himself specially to the captain. If spoken to in any other language than English, he would remain quite unconcerned, but 'good dog,' 'good old fellow,' would make him wag his tail and look happy. Before coming into the Mersey River we took in our pilot. Then a sudden change came over Jack, who had been a most quiet and peaceable traveler; he grew quite excited, running up and down on the bridge and jumping up to get a look over the side; so great was his evident excitement, the nearer we came to Liverpool, that he attracted the attention of every one on board. On reaching our destination, and while as yet the steamer had scarcely stopped, the ropes for mooring being only thrown ashore, Jack was observed to mount a case of oranges placed at the side of the steamer and at one bound leap on shore in a moment. 'Follow that dog,' cried the captain to a man standing on the wharf, 'and see where he goes.' Off set the man, and after some time returned quite out of breath, saying he had been obliged to give over the chase, Jack having set off at a quick run up one street and down another, evidently taking the nearest road home. The curious fact was how the dog's instinct enabled him to choose out of the many ships lying round one whose destination was Liverpool. How he came on board none of the sailors could tell; but that he was doing wrong he evidently knew by hiding himself away until discovered by the steward."

#### WAITING.

Thou of the sunny head,  
With lilies garlanded,  
And bosom fairer than the blown sea-foam;  
O Spring, in what waste desert dost thou stay  
Whilst leaves await thy presence to unfold?  
The branches of the lime with frost are gray,  
And all imprisoned is the crocus' gold.  
Come, sweet Enchantress, come!

Though, in the sombre west,  
The star hath lit his crest—  
Pale Phosphor, fronting full the withered moon—

Thy violets are sepulchred in snow,  
Thy daisies twinkle never in the sun,  
Rude winds throughout the ruined forests blow,  
And silent is the dove's melodious moan:  
Enchantress, hasten soon.

White are the country ways,  
And white the tangled maze,  
Loved of the oxlip and the creeping thyme;  
Bare shakes the poplar on the sullen ridge,  
Cold glooms the spectral mill above the flood;  
Hoarse torrents stream beneath the ivied bridge,  
And lightnings strike the darkness of the wood:  
Enchantress, bless our clime.

No bloom of dewy morn,  
No freshly blossomed thorn,  
Gladdens the importunings of sad eyes;  
The day wastes drearily, through cloud and sleet;

Over the watered meadows and stark vales  
The night comes down impetuous and fleet,  
And ships and cities shiver in the gales:  
O fair Enchantress, rise.

Arise, and bring with thee  
The rathe bud for the tree,  
The healing sunshine for the trampled grass;  
Loose tendrils for the boughs which bless the eaves,  
And shield the swallows in the rainy hours,  
The pendant flames which the laburnum heaves,  
And faint scents for the wind-stirred lilac flowers.  
Enchantress, breathe and pass.

Men knew, and kissed, of old,  
Thy garments' glittering fold—  
Thy radiant footprint on the mead or waste;  
Earth kindled at thine advent—altars burned,  
And ringing cymbals bade the heaths be gay;  
But now, in sunless solitudes inurned,

Thou leav'st the world unto reluctant day.  
O haste, Enchantress, haste!

The larks shall sing again,  
Between the sun and rain,  
The brown bee through the flowered pastures roam,

There shall be music in the frozen woods  
A gurgling carol in the rushing brook,  
An odour in the half-bosomed bud,  
And dancing fox-gloves in each forest nook:  
Then, come, Enchantress, come.

#### CHRISTMAS IN RUSSIA.

The level hand of civilization has in most countries in Europe set aside the joyous merry-making common at Christmas in earlier periods. In Russia, however, the good olden times still in a great measure prevail; for, though in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and other places where the influence of European fashions extend, the ancient manners and customs are wearing out, in the remoter provinces of the empire they maintain their way. There the Christian festival is still celebrated according to the forms which prevailed on the first introduction of Christianity into the land. The ancient ceremonies are considered of such importance by the majority of the Russian population, that early in the month of November all minds become busy with thoughts of them. About this period the fathers of families begin to reflect, and to calculate how many sausages, what quantity of salted meat, how many bottles of kirsch and other liquors they ought to provide for the coming festival; whilst the women ponder upon the chances of spending a right merry Christmas; they arrange among themselves whose house shall be selected for the entertainments, whom they shall invite to while away the long evenings with them, and what girls would be the most welcome guests to their own daughters, should it be their lot to celebrate the maiden festival. This last point in particular is matter for deep consideration; for the young ladies in Russia are the heroines of the Christmas festivities, which seem invented but for their amusement. Meetings of friends and relatives are held every day during the Phillippowki, or time of Advent, to discuss these important matters, when bitter contests often ensue, to appease which many a propitiatory gift, and many a sugared word from the lips of nurses and tire-women, who are the diplomatists of every Russian family, have to be given.

The family whose house is selected for the Christmas festivities must be rich and hospita-

bly inclined. Long before the eve of St. Wassill, the mistress of the house thus selected begins a round of visits to all the friends and relations of the family, inviting young and old, mentioning each person by name, and repeating to each the complimentary speeches handed down from generation to generation. On the following day the same round is made by the nurse of the family (bakka posywatka), whose mission is to repeat the invitation to the young girls. The entry of the nurse in her ambassadorial character into every house is greeted with loud and joyful acclamations, and she is received with many marks of respect. While she is delivering her message she mentions each person severally invited, and adds the name of their place of residence; and now the mistress of the house gets in readiness for her a cup of wine, and prepares to wheedle out of her the names of the other guests invited, those of the persons who have been rejected, and lastly, but most important of all, the names of the young men and young women "elected" for each other. This last question refers to the most interesting of all the customs connected with the Christmas festivities. There is an ancient rule which determines that the mistress of the house where the festivities are celebrated shall choose for each young lady a male companion called the "elected." His privileges in his intercourse with the maiden are greater than those of other young men, for which he compensates by devoting himself exclusively to her entertainment. The couple thus joined are called *suzennyja*, and the lady of the house is expected to show much discretion in her selections, because whatever she decrees in these matters must be unconditionally submitted to by fathers and mothers as well as by the parties themselves.

Whilst the matrons are making arrangements among themselves, the father of the family whose house has been selected is by no means idle; he must send invitations in his own name, or the guests will consider themselves slighted. Early in the morning he calls in the swat—a person well acquainted with the duties of ambassador—and intrusts to him the greetings and messages to friends and relations. The swat departs upon his mission with his highly decorated baton of office in his hand. On entering a house he first pronounces a short prayer before the image of the tutelary saint, and then, bowing profoundly to the master and mistress says:

"Philimon Spiridonowitsch and Anna Karpowna salute you, father Artamon Triphonowitsch, and you, mother Agaphia Nelidowna."

Here he makes a low bow, which is returned with equal courtesy, and the persons he is addressing reply:

"We humbly thank Philimon Spiridonowitsch and Anna Karpowna."

The servant then resumes:

"They have enjoined me humbly to so solicit you, father Artamon Triphonowitsch, and you, mother Agaphia Nelidowna, to spend a few hours of Christmas evening with them, and to amuse yourselves as best may suit you, to witness the sports of the fair maidens, to break with them a bit of bread and taste a grain of salt, and partake with them of the roasted goose."

Then follow the formulas which obtain in Russia, such as the invited not accepting the invitation until politely pressed, and eventually agreeing to come without fail.

The first evening in the house of entertainment is devoted to the reception of the "fair maidens." When darkness sets in, crowds of peasants are seen assembled outside the houses in which the great entertainments are to take place, waiting for a sight of the invited guests, and pass their judgment on the various retinues and mark how each are received. Long trains of sledges conduct the maidens to the house of their hospitable host. In the first sledge sit the maiden, her mother, and at the feet of the former her favorite companion, generally a poor girl of inferior rank. In the second sledge are the tire-women, with the jewel caskets, the various sweetmeats and cakes with which the fair maidens are always provided, and presents for the domestics of the house which they are about to visit. After these follow friends and relatives and domestics—the more numerous the better, for according to the length of the train is the honor and glory that redound to the house at which it stops. Each procession, as it approaches, is headed by the bakka posywatka, an inviter-in-chief of the family.

On arriving, the guests do not immediately descend from their sledges, but await, amidst the cracking of whips, the jingling of the sledge bells, and the noise and clamor of hundreds of spectators gathered in the street, the host and hostess, who, on hearing the signal, descend to the gate of the courtyard to receive them. The first greeting consists in many ceremonies, bows and salutations performed in silence, which is not broken until the parties have entered the courtyard together. The guests are then introduced into the house, and having prayed before the images of the saints, exchange greetings with their neighbors and others who are present, and after other polite ceremonies have been gone through the new-comers are persuaded to take seats.

The young ladies thus brought together, though they may never have seen each other before, at once become intimate, and address each other by the name "pedruz enka" (dear playfellow); while by the mas er and mistress of the house and all the domestics they are called "krasyja diwenshchiki" (fair maidens). They spend the first evening in planning games for the morrow, and in citing and guessing the popular riddles which abound in Russia, and which form one of the favorite pastimes of the