

ties?—The question is purely one of form," added the curé, remarking Oliver's discomposure. "I am perfectly free."  
"As a widower you may be free. Have you ever been married before?"  
"Never," returned the young man, coloring to the roots of his hair. Fortunately his embarrassment passed unnoticed.  
"Then, my child," continued the priest, "go and get me your certificate of baptism, and that of Dinorah, and I will draw up a marriage certificate."  
Oliver took his leave, and in half an hour returned with the paper which he had brought with him from Havre, as a necessary and valuable document with which it was inadvisable to part.  
"It is perfectly correct," said the curé, glancing his eye over the paper. "I see that you were born in Havre. Are you the son of the rich shipowner of that city?"  
"No, I am not," said Oliver. "I belong to a younger and poorer branch of the family."  
"So much the better for you, my son. Riches are indeed a heavy burden."  
This closed the ordeal. A few words more were exchanged, and Oliver withdrew.

## L.

## THE SCIENCE OF INTERPRETING DREAMS.

Some weeks had elapsed since Oliver Le Vaillant and Dinorah de Kerven had taken the solemn vows which bound them together. Their life had been one of intense and unalloyed happiness. In his present bliss Oliver had forgotten his past misery.

One night, however, he had a dream which took him back as if in the body to the horrors of his last hours' stay at Ingouville. He dreamed that he was in the room where he had compelled Annunziata to drink the fatal draught that had been intended for him. She was lying where he had last seen her, but her face and neck were discolored, like the face and neck of one long dead. In vain he tried to get away, or even to turn his eyes from the horrible sight. Some invisible, incomprehensible power compelled him to look.

Suddenly a noise of many feet was heard, and the room was filled with people. Two men clad in black raised the corpse, and he heard the voices of those around muttering, "She has been poisoned." "Who did it?"

Then an unheard of thing happened—a thing so frightful, that he shivered from head to foot and his teeth chattered in the excess of his terror.

The corpse slowly raised its eyelids and stretched out its hand; the sunken eyes rested upon him; the shriveled finger pointed at him; the ghastly blue lips moved, and a voice which sounded as if it came from the tomb denounced him as the murderer:—"You want to know who killed me? There he stands. My husband! my murderer!"

"Annunziata! miserable woman!" he cried in the fury of despair, "you know that you lie! You know I did not do it! Tell them so, Annunziata!"

But the corpse had already resumed its immobility and he saw the eyes of the crowd fiercely fixed upon him. He felt rough hands seize him, and he heard an uproar of voices, from which he could from time to time distinguish the words:—"The murderer!"—"Poisoner!"—"Justice, justice!"

In vain he tried to escape from the angry crowd that surrounded him. He was but one against a hundred, and finally he ceased to struggle. The mob, mad with rage, were trampling him beneath their feet; he was on the point of being torn to pieces when—

He awoke, bathed in perspiration.  
"Thank God!" he murmured. "It was only a dream! But what a dream!"

During the rest of the night he strove to keep awake, for fear of a repetition of the terrible vision. So he lay awake and considered and gradually his thoughts took shape. What if this frightful dream were a warning? What had happened at Havre since his departure? His departure! Would not his very departure draw down suspicions upon him. He had left in haste and in secret, while his wife yet lay dead on the spot where she had dropped. Supposing he were accused of having poisoned her? The evidence was all against him. How was he to prove his innocence?

When Dinorah opened her eyes the first sight that met them was her husband, pale and distraught. She could not repress a cry of alarm.

"What is the matter?" she cried.

"Nothing, my child," said Oliver, reassured by his wife's tender tone.

"Then why are you so pale?"

"I do not know, I am sure!"

"Have you had a bad dream?"

"No, at least I don't remember having had any."

"And yet you talked in your sleep."

Oliver tried to force a smile. "What nonsense!" he said.

"And more than once."

"Ah! And what did I say?"

"Your talk was quite disconnected. I could not understand you."

"Are you quite sure, Dinorah, that you were not dreaming?"

"Oh! quite sure! I have a proof of it."

"What is that, pray?"

"Twice you mentioned a name; and I have not forgotten it."

"What name?" asked Oliver trembling.

"Annunziata."

"Annunziata!" he cried, "That's not a name."

"Yes, it is. It is a Spanish name. And I know some one with that name."

Oliver's heart almost ceased to beat.

"She was an orphan like myself," continued Dinorah; "a poor unfortunate girl from Havana who had been shipwrecked on the coast of Spain. She arrived at St. Nazaire in a small coasting vessel, and here she fell sick, but I was happy in being able to nurse her until she recovered. She was very beautiful, and was going to Havre, where, she told me, she was to marry the son of an old friend of her father. She promised to write to me, but has never done so, yet I have never ceased to remember her in my prayers. On hearing you pronounce her name, I thought that you might have known her."

"You are mistaken," murmured Oliver, half crazed with fright. "I never knew the person you speak of. I must have been talking nonsense, for I never heard the name before."

Here the matter ended, for Dinorah was too truthful herself to harbor any suspicion against her husband.

Nevertheless the dream had made such an impression upon him that he determined to learn the news from Havre. So profiting one day by the absence both of Dinorah and Jocelyn he wrote the following letter to Zephyr:—

"My old friend, I give you a great proof of my confidence in writing to you, but I know you are worthy of it and would die rather than betray it.

"It is a matter of vital importance to me, my dear Zephyr, that no one should even suspect where I reside.

"This is enough for you.

"I must know all that has taken place since my departure. Tell me about my unhappy wife. Speak calmly of her, for she is dead. Relate the impression produced in the city by that terrible catastrophe and my abrupt departure. Relate also what became of the Marquis de Grancey's body.

"On my side, I have but one piece of news to give you—I am happy!

"To ensure the transmission of your letters you will do as follows:

"On a first envelope you will write my name, without further directions.

"This first envelope you will put inside another, very thick and opaque; you will seal it three times and write thereon this address:

"MONSIEUR LAUNDA,  
Proprietor of the Breton Arms,  
Saint-Nazaire,  
Brittany."

Oliver despatched this letter, and for a few days thereafter enjoyed comparative ease of mind.

At the end of that time, he went to Saint-Nazaire and made arrangements with the host about the letters to be received from Zephyr. The host was to keep them in a secret place, and Oliver was to come every day to the inn to inquire whether any had arrived.

ZEPHYR'S REPLY.

Oliver made twelve visits to the inn, before he received the first of the expected letters from Zephyr. But it came at last. It read thus:

"Most dear and honored Master:

"I answer your letter with pain, though glad to know that you are living and well. Why have I survived so long to see all these miseries fall upon your house?

"I have not the heart to write, but as you ask to know everything, I am obliged to obey.

"Well, then, poor master, you must know this. Your wife is not dead, and you are charged with assassination and you will be condemned to death.

"Madame, whom you left in an insensible condition, was not dead, but quite alive, and the following day felt not the least effect of the catastrophe.

"Her women say that she had a remedy which cured her of her indisposition like a charm.

"The day after your departure, one of the magistrates of the city came up to the house at the request of madame.

"Mr. de Grancey had been missed and every one was in search of him. But it appears that madame knew something about it and directed the magistrate to the little kiosk in the garden. The door was opened by a locksmith and the body of the marquis found on a sofa. They found, besides, a bit of paper, half burned, bearing your name and dated 24th August. Everybody in the city declares you guilty. Powerful friends of the marquis have come from Paris and swear to have their revenge out of you. Secret police are also on your track in every direction.

"Hide yourself, my poor master, hide yourself.

"Madame is against you and says that she detests you. Don Guzman is now master of the house."

After Oliver had finished this letter, he thought that either he must become mad, or else nerve himself boldly for his fate.

After long reflection, he resolved to do the latter.

The charge of assassination did not trouble him. He had in his possession the note of de Grancey to prove his innocence.

The danger lay elsewhere. The terrible, inevitable danger was that Annunziata still lived.

By his marriage with Dinorah, Oliver had unknowingly committed the odious and disgusting crime of bigamy. He felt that he was lost and Dinorah with him.

The chaste girl, shorn of the veil of her spotless purity, ceased to be his lawful wife and became his mistress.

"I am not guilty," he exclaimed, "and God knows it, but it is impossible for me to prove my innocence to any one. Not even Dinorah will believe me."

## LL.

## MORALES AND CARMEN.

Oliver resolved to take three days before breaking the sad news to his wife. Having made up his mind on that point, he burned Zephyr's letter and called the innkeeper up to his room. With him he came to an agreement that if any persons called at St. Nazaire inquiring for Oliver Le Vaillant, he should profess entire ignorance of that person and put the searchers as much as possible off the scent.

Meantime Carmen and Morales had held, on their side, an important interview.

"What would you give?" said the latter to the former, "to the man revealing the spot where your husband lies hidden?"

Carmen fixed her sharp eyes on her brother. "Morales," she muttered, "you know something."

"Well, yes, I do."

"Then name your price."

"Fifty thousand livres."

"I accept. Tell me your secret."

"Give me that money first."

Carmen opened a casket, took therefrom a handful of jewels which she placed in the Gitanos's hand.

"That is well," said he. "Now this is what you have to know."

And he handed Carmen a paper folded in four.

"What is this?"

"Look at it."

The dancing girl opened the paper and uttered a cry on recognizing the handwriting of her husband.

It was no other than the letter addressed by Oliver to Zephyr.

Carmen read it through.

"Ah now!" she exclaimed with a ferocious joy, "now I hold him. Thanks Morales. I do not regret my diamonds. But how did you get this letter?"

"I stole it by a cunning stratagem from the room of old Zephyr."

"Morales, you are a precious man."

"Caramba! I know that."

"Now, a service."

"You may command me."

Carmen opened her casket again and took out her bridal necklace of pearls.

"You will sell your diamonds, will you not?" she said.

"That is my intention."

"Well, at the same time you must sell these pearls and fetch me the money."

"I shall do so faithfully. In an hour's time you will have the funds. Anything else?"

"Yes, tell the valets to hunt up two detectives."

"Very well."

"Make haste, brother. Time presses. I do not wish to lose a moment."

"What are your plans?"

"You will know them later."

Morales took his departure.

Two hours later he brought Carmen thirty thousand livres, the price of the pearl necklace.

At the same time the police officers sent up word that they were at the disposition of Madame Le Vaillant.

(To be continued.)

## TRUE UNTO DEATH.

BY GARNET R. FREEMAN.

Dusk crept over the city hours ago. The hurrying crowd has found a resting-place, and the sounds of labor have ceased for a brief season. I am a Southern refugee. Far away, where summer sits a queen the long bright year through, my home lies a mass of blackened, unsightly ruins, as yours were when—that terrible night whose date is too recent to be forgotten—ferce, merciless flames rioted like fiends amid your household-gods. There was another—we were but two of thousands—who had not where to lay her head when they drove us, like thieves, from the luxury amid which we were born. Sweet Annie M.—Wild grasses grow over her pulseless heart, while mine throbs on. The proudest blood of the South ran blue in her veins. While her father was yet a penniless man, without profession or name, the beautiful heiress of the old estates eloped with him from school, and they were married without so much as "by your leave" to a pompous suitor whose white looks and venerable years, backed by a million dollars, appealed more strongly to the favor of her family than her own.

Blinded by the adoration she bestowed upon her husband, the young wife fastened with him to her father, with never a doubt but that they would be welcome, or at least forgiven, to find herself a discarded, disowned outcast, disinherited and forsaken, the dog of house closed to her

forever, and the curse of disobedience resting upon her shelterless head.

In a wild and rugged section of one of the Southwestern States stood a poor dwelling, half farm-house, half cottage, where the mother—a kind and generous woman, used to hardships and privations all her life—cooked the frugal meals, washed the home-made linen, and scoured the hard white floors with her own hands; and the father, sturdy and independent, tolled upon his scanty acres, and literally earned his bread "by the sweat of his brow."

This was the birthplace, and home of Annie's father; and here her mother, the late heiress and belle-petted child of fortune, whose lightest whim had been law—found a refuge. No show and pomp met the disheartened and humiliated fugitive bride, but love gave her tenderest greeting and welcome to a refuge from which she never went until her last home was made ready and she borne out to sleep in the valley. The daintily reared girl became the idol of the household, and in that vine-covered cot, where love transformed poverty into luxury and content sweetened hardship, were passed the happiest days of her life.

Little cared she—this bonnie bride, this love-crowned Queen of her husband's heart—for the palaces wherein kings dwell. Soon a new joy stirred in her bosom, and day by day she busied her cunning white fingers with embroidery and bits of muslins; and here, a year after her marriage, she sang soft, sweet lullabies over her first-born, a little daughter whom she named Annie. "Surely," she said, with solemnly tender eyes, "my cup runneth over."

Sweet little mother!—I seem to see her now, as she lay, with her baby on her arm, studying the pink, placid, expressionless face of the sleeping mite of humanity, persuaded that it was the "very picture" of the dark, handsome, bearded face that bent smiling over his treasures.

But a shadow, dark as the grave in its gloom, hovered over the dear, new home—the shadow of the Angel of Death, who stood at the portal. Softer grew the voice of the young mother, and slower the step that tended downward to the valley of shadows. A mighty yearning was in her heart to see her father once more, to hear his voice pronounce her forgiveness and give assurance of protection to her babe, so soon to know, as she had, the want of a mother's love and guidance. "I cannot die if I may not see him; I could not rest in my grave at last if I do not hear him promise," she pleaded, as she tossed with fever-crimsoned cheeks and lips. So he came in time to hear her last eloquent appeal to grant her petition with tears and sobs, and to pour out unavailing prayers that her life might be spared him. True to his prejudice against her husband, he stipulated that the child should never bear its father's name, but adopt that of its mother—Annie M.—

Objection could not be made at such a time; but when, with her last words, she asked that it be left in care of her husband's mother, his wrath blazed in fiercely; but the will that never bent before yielded to the pleading eyes of his dying child as they followed him, and he sealed his consent upon the lips that would ask no more of him on earth. An hour later, with her hands clasped in her husband's, and her head pillowed on the bosom where it had lain in its infancy, she slept the sleep that knows no waking.

Mr. M.—returned home after the funeral; but slaves were sent to care for the babe, the cottage was made comfortable, and even elegant, and every luxury surrounded the little heiress. The loss of his wife was a terrible blow to the husband, who reproached himself for the blindness of the love and the rashness of the youthful passion that had led him to take her from inheritance and friends to share his poverty and struggles. Nothing was left him now but fame—no home on earth—no hope but for position—no love, no wife, no mistress, but ambition. The babe she had borne him had been torn from his heart, separated from his protection, given for a price to strangers who despoiled him; even his name was stripped from her, as if it were some filthy and polluted garment that defiled her infant purity. In after-years we hear of him from the battle-fields of Mexico, from the Senate Chamber, as a leader in the counsels of the nation; but he never returned to his old home—never married or saw his child again.

Annie's education was finished at a city in the Southwest; and here, as if some fatality attended them, at the same school from which her mother eloped she learned to love a penniless man by the name of Charles L.—, the last scion of an impoverished family, whose patent of nobility dated back to the Norman Conqueror. He had left England to establish himself in business in America, wishing first to graduate from a Southern college; but the rigid caste—at that time more tyrannical there than in India—barred his entrance. The principal of the school, himself an aspirant for the hand and estate of one of the wealthiest and most beautiful heiresses in the State, looked with little pleasure upon the intimacy between the young people. At this time a forgery was committed upon the Principal, who charged it to Mr. L.—. A warrant was issued, and he arrested. On her way to the recitation-room Annie heard the facts, and, glancing from the window, saw him passing in charge of an officer. All the hot, ungoverned temper of her race leaped to her heart and brain. She knew, though she could not prove it, that the whole thing was a plot to ruin her lover, against whom prejudice already existed on account of his openly expressed anti-slavery sentiments. That night she had a council of war with her room-mate. The girls were both