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THE GITANA.

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

XXI.

QUIRINO TURNS UP.

Moralès had the best reasons in the world for declining to accompany Tancred on his visit to the captain of the "Marsoin." In the first place the worthy and gallant Gitano had not presented himself under his true colors, nor as a Spanish gentleman, but in the disguise of an old negro who had been commissioned by his master to make arrangements for taking passage to France.

Furthermore it was his intention to resume his disguise as quickly as possible and follow his brother-in-law, in order to make sure that the latter did not engage in any imprudent conversation that might compromise them.

When Tancred returned to the garden Carmen was alone.

"Where is Don Guzman?" asked the young man.

"My brother just left me," she answered. "He was called away suddenly on important business, and will not return before evening."

Berenice here made her appearance to announce that the *volante* was ready.

"Come back soon, my love," whispered Carmen as she kissed her husband.

"However quickly I may return," Tancred whispered back, "I am always too long away from you."

The young man had hardly taken his seat in the carriage when Moralès, once more metamorphosed into a negro, slyly perched himself at the back of the *volante* in the manner we have already once described.

On arriving at the quay Tancred hailed a boat and was rowed off at once to the "Marsoin." Since Don José's death the captain had returned to his own quarters on board, and he in person received the young officer.

"Sir," said he, with a bow, "unless I am mistaken, you are the Chevalier de Najac."

"You are quite right, captain," returned Tancred, in amazement at the recognition.

"I was about to do myself the honor of paying you a visit."

"Then you know where I live?"

"You lodge, I believe, with a fellow-countryman of ours, a Breton, named Elol Sandric."

"Captain, I am longing to ask you a question or two."

"Command me, Monsieur the Chevalier. I shall be happy to answer any questions you may put to me."

"Well, then, to what should I have had the pleasure of attributing your visit? And how came you to know both my name and my lodging?"

"The object of my visit would have been to inform you that I hold a berth at your disposal in case it should be your wish to return home."

"But I was given to understand that you were refusing to take passengers."

"I was doing so, but my orders are to make an exception in your case."

"I am extremely grateful to the person who gave you the order. May I ask his name?"

"Certainly, his name will give you an answer



"HE IS GOING TO MURDER ME," THOUGHT THE GITANO.

to the second question you put to me just now. It was Don José Rovero, from whose funeral I have just returned, who gave me the order to make an exception in your case, and who furnished me with your name and address."

"The poor, kind-hearted old gentleman!" exclaimed Tancred, the tears standing in his eyes. "In his last moments he thought of me! Poor man!"

"He was a good man, indeed, Monsieur the Chevalier. But it is useless to mourn for him; he is in heaven. It is his poor daughter that we should pity."

"Poor Annunziata! Poor child! What will become of her, alone in the world, and the possessor of an immense fortune?"

"Thank God, she will not be entirely alone. In France she will find a home. Philip Le Vaillant, Don José's old friend, the merchant of Havre and owner of this vessel, will be a father to her, and Mr. Oliver, Mr. Le Vaillant's son, will be a brother to her."

"When does she leave?"

"We sail in three days."

"What! Does Mademoiselle Rovero go with you?"

"Yes, Monsieur the Chevalier. And it is owing to Mademoiselle Annunziata's presence on board that, in deference to Don José's last wishes, I take no other passengers."

"Ha!" thought Tancred, "I begin to understand now."

"But, as I said before," continued the captain, "an exception has been made in your favor. Is it your intention to profit thereby?"

"Certainly, captain. That is to say if you can take upon yourself to extend the exception to two persons more, whom I cannot leave behind."

"Who are they?"

"My wife and my brother-in-law,

Your wife! I was not aware that you were married. Don José made no mention of it."

"He was no more aware of it than were you. I have only been married eight days."

The captain shook his head in an undecided and embarrassed manner.

"Captain," said Tancred, noticing the other's embarrassment, "I understand, as an officer, that orders must be obeyed. If your conscience insists that yours must be carried out strictly and to the letter, I will withdraw my request, and you shall sail without me."

"It is not that," said Lemonnier, more embarrassed than ever.

"I have it," cried Tancred, with sudden inspiration. "You do not know the lady, and perhaps you are not quite certain that she is my wife. Is that it?"

"There is something in that," admitted the captain, evidently much relieved.

"Well, in that case you may set your mind at ease. Eight days ago I was married at my brother-in-law's house by the prior of the Barnabite monastery to the sister of a Spanish gentleman of high birth and great wealth, Don Guzman Moralès y Tullipano."

"God forgive me, Monsieur the Chevalier. There will be no difficulty, and I shall be happy to receive Madam and Don Guzman on the "Marsoin."

"Many thanks, captain. I am extremely grateful to you."

"It is not me you have to thank, sir, but the last wishes of a dead man."

"I am none the less obliged to you, I assure you. And you say you sail in three days."

"In three days without fail, wind and weather permitting. If you have any heavy goods to ship it would be as well to send them at once."

Cordially shaking the captain's hand Tancred went down the side of the vessel, and re-entered his boat.

Half-an-hour after he found himself again with Carmen.

"Well, my love," asked the latter, "how have you succeeded? Have you made a satisfactory arrangement?"

"It is all settled. We leave in three days for France."

"What happiness!" cried the Gitana, throwing her beautifully curved arms round her husband's neck. "It seems to me that in your own beautiful country you will love me still more."

"Is that possible?" asked Tancred in a tender whisper.

Yet he took care not to tell his wife that Annunziata was to be their fellow-passenger.

"With her woman's instinct," he argued, "she guesses that I was on the point of falling in love with the poor girl, and is jealous. She might refuse to go, did she know that Annunziata is to be our fellow-passenger."

Let us go back a few days and return to one of our characters, who, though a mere outsider in the story, is about to play a terrible part. We refer to Quirino.

On returning to Havana, the day after the scene with Carmen, the semi-savage, as the Gitana called him, found the hut that had been occupied by the

brother and sister deserted. The door was wide open, and the remains of broken furniture to which Moralès had set fire were smouldering on the hearth. It was evident that both Moralès and Carmen had quitted their former home with the intention of returning no more.

Quirino's anger at the sight that greeted him was only equalled by his despair. In a few moments he left the place and plunged into the surrounding thicket, and careless of the scorpions and cascabels that lurked in the thick grass beneath his feet, threw himself on the ground beneath a spreading tree, hid his face in his hands and began to think.

Moralès knew, as we have already heard him say, that an Indian rarely threatens what he does not carry out, and that his vengeance is implacable.

Quirino was pondering on the best means of gratifying his thirst for vengeance.

"If they are still in the city," he thought, "I am sure of them; and if they have gone away I will follow them to the ends of the world."

This resolution made, he rose, and took the road to the harbor. On the quay he learnt that owing to contrary winds, no vessel had left the port since the previous day. This simplified his task, for it was evident that the brother and sister could not be far off.

In the evening Quirino returned to his own hut in the forest. Providing himself with a thousand dollars from his store, and a couple of muskets, he returned to the city and took up his abode in the shanty that Carmen and Moralès had abandoned only two days before.

The next day, at daybreak, he assumed the costume of a *cargador*, or stévedore, and having completed his disguise by staining his skin a deep brown, entered upon his new character of spy. For two days he loitered about the harbor and at the corners of the principal streets; but