

"Zephyr, Mr. Le Vaillant's man, says some one wants to see you, miss."
 "Who is it?"
 "A poor man, a beggar apparently. He seems to want to ask a favor of you."
 "You said I could not see him?"
 "Yes, miss."
 A few minutes passed, and another knock was heard.
 Carmen uttered an exclamation of impatience. The girl again left the room, but this time she remained away longer than before.
 "What is the matter now?" asked Carmen on her return.
 "Zephyr once more, miss. It seems that the man will not go away—"
 Carmen frowned.
 "He will not go away! a beggar, eh? Let them give him something and send him away."
 "Zephyr wanted to do so, but he did not dare to."
 "Why not?"
 "Because the man says he comes from Havana, and that you know him, miss."
 Carmen felt her heart stop beating, and the blood turned cold in her veins. Swift and stunning as a thunderbolt the thought had struck her:—He knows Annunziata; all is over then! But the Gitana's nature was well tempered. Like a good steel blade it bent only to rise again. The first thought that followed was:—If he is poor I can buy his silence.
 "What shall I do, miss?" asked the girl.
 "Bring the man in, and leave the room both of you."

XXXV.

A RECOGNITION.

Carmen rose from her chair, and went to one of the windows, where she leaned her burning forehead against the glass. She was unwilling to be seen, and recognized immediately by the stranger. She was above all unwilling that any cry of surprise should escape her in the presence of the servants.
 The door was opened and the unknown entered. The two handmaidens had withdrawn, and Carmen was alone with her visitor. The latter was a tall man, frightfully lean, and of a most unprepossessing appearance. His dress consisted of a most wonderful collection of dirty rags.
 The stranger stopped on the threshold and bowed. Three steps forward and bowed again, this time more humbly than before. Carmen did not move, so the stranger opened the conversation.
 "Madam," he said in a cracked voice, the ludicrousness of which was heightened by a nasal twang, "I venture to hope that you will not refuse to recognize, in a wretched situation, a fellow-traveller who is now the most unfortunate of man—"
 On hearing the stranger's voice Carmen started. The cloud disappeared from her face as if by enchantment; for an instant her face lit up.
 "Master your surprise," she said quickly, disguising her voice as much as possible. "Be careful not to let the faintest exclamation of surprise escape you. If you are heard we are both lost."
 Here she turned round.
 The stranger started back, raised his hands, and opened mouth and eyes in astonishment.
 "My sister!" he muttered.
 "Hush!" whispered the girl, going swiftly up to him and holding out her hand. "Hush, my poor Morales!"
 "Carmen!" continued the Spaniard. "Can I believe my eyes? Is it really you, Carmen?"
 "For Heaven's sake, not that name!"
 "Why not?"
 "Because there is no such person."
 "No such person!"
 "No."
 "And you say that when I see you, when I hear you talk, and when I hold your hand?"
 "Come, come, Morales, you thought I was dead, did you not?"
 "Yes, I thought so. And Heaven is my witness that I mourned you sincerely."
 "What a good brother," said the girl ironically. "I did not expect less of you." "Well," she continued, "your tears are not lost, Carmen is really dead, and you no longer have a sister, Morales."
 "Who then are you, if you are not my sister?"
 "Look at that dress," and she pointed at the white robe spread on the chair.
 "It is a bridal dress."
 "Yes."
 "What does it mean?"
 "It means that I am Annunziata Rovero, and that in an hour I shall be married to Oliver Le Vaillant, the sole heir to fifteen millions."
 "You, Carmen," cried Morales, half guessing at the truth. "You, my sister!"
 "I tell you once more that your sister is dead; that there is no such person as Carmen."
 "I understand," said Morales, rubbing his hands, "and I beg to offer Don José's daughter my sincerest congratulations."
 "I played my cards well, eh, Morales?"
 "I should think so—to win a game for fifteen millions! It is sublime! But tell me how you did it."
 "What have I to explain? The situation is as plain as possible. Annunziata was to marry Oliver Le Vaillant. So Annunziata, the sole survivor of the shipwreck, who was saved by a miracle, is married to her betrothed. Nothing could be more simple."
 "You are right,"

"And you, Morales?"
 "I too was saved, as you see. It seems to me that you thought I was lost."
 "Alas, yes!"
 "And you mourned my loss?"
 "A little."
 "Well, you are straightforward, at all events. But I forgive you with all my heart. You had so much to occupy yourself with that you had no time to think of that poor devil, Morales. Now, what do you intend doing for me?"
 "I hardly know yet. But within a few days I shall be able to find you a comfortable place in the house."
 "Try to give me the stewardship of the property. It is a place that would suit me first-rate."
 "I don't doubt it. But I take too great an interest in you to give you a chance of getting yourself hanged. I will take care that you have a good place with nothing to do. Don't be afraid, you will want for nothing."
 "Then I count on you. The place will be all the more welcome as I have absolutely nothing in the world."
 "What did you do with your money?"
 "Now you are touching me in a sore place. Here is my story. It is short and sad. When I threw myself into the sea on the night of the shipwreck, I was tied to a hencoop. Inside the coop was a small cask which contained my treasure. To all appearances we should have sunk or floated together."
 "The notion was worthy of you. And then?"
 "During the whole of the day that followed the loss of the "Marsouin," we floated, the coop the cask, and I, tossed hither and thither by the waves, which carried us far away from the wreck. Although my cork belt and coop kept me pretty well above water, I was exhausted with fatigue, hunger, and thirst, besides being frozen to the marrow. Already I had given myself up for lost when I saw land a little distance away. The sight restored my courage a little. Collecting all my strength I swam for the shore. I had almost reached it—there was only a reef to cross—when unfortunately a wave threw me on a rock. I lost all consciousness. When I recovered I was lying on the sand, whither I had been thrown by the waves. But alas! the hencoop had been smashed to pieces on the rocks, and my cask, consequently, containing every penny I owned in the world, was at the bottom of the sea."
 "Poor Morales," said Carmen half pityingly and half sarcastically.
 "Ah, you have reason to say poor Morales, for I had not a penny left and I was in Spain where I might have been discovered and punished for the numerous peccadilloes of my younger days. What could I do? I had often heard, on board the "Marsouin," of the generosity of Philip Le Vaillant. I resolved to go to Havre to apply to him for assistance. I set out at once. I traversed the whole of France on foot, begging my way. I arrived at Havre, this morning, broken with fatigue and privation. I learned with profound astonishment that I was not the sole survivor of our shipwreck and that Annunziata was to be married this very day to the son of the shipowner. Convinced that she would receive Don Guzman Morales y Tullipano, the brother of Madame de Najac, I asked to be admitted to her presence. I have now the honor to stand before her."
 "I have listened to you with interest," said Carmen. "Now listen to me."
 "I am all ears."
 "You will admit that however cunning you may be, I am still more clever than you are."
 "I allow that with all my heart. Your plan to become Madame de Najac was really superb and the magnificent business which you are terminating to-day is a masterpiece."
 "Then you consent to be ruled by me?"
 "Entirely. Only answer me one question."
 "Namely?"
 "Will you make my fortune?"
 "I will make your fortune!"
 "Very well. I abandon myself to you. Dispose of Morales as you will."
 "You will go out of this house without speaking to any one, and without answering any question which the servants may put to you."
 "I will be deaf and dumb."
 "On the harbor there is a modest inn that I have remarked more than once in passing. Its sign is a silver anchor. You will put up there, after having dressed yourself in a suitable manner. You will live comfortably. Have all you want, but do not attract attention to yourself."
 "That is easily done."
 "Go out as little as possible. Avoid curious people, and manage so that no one will suspect that you come from Havana, that you were on the "Marsouin," or that you are acquainted with me."
 "I will take care. But may I ask what is the object of all these precautions."
 "You would never guess. However, I will tell you. I do not yet know what story I shall have to tell about you, and under what pretext I can bring you to my husband's father-in-law. So it is important that you should not let fall any imprudent expressions which might be used to contradict my story."
 "Right! you are always right."
 "As soon as possible I shall find the means to communicate with you, and to let you know what course you are to take."
 "I shall wait patiently, and you may be sure that I will carry out to the letter any instructions you may send me."
 "In that case all will go well. Now, señor Don Guzman, farewell, or rather, to the pleasure of seeing you again. For the time fixed for the wedding is at hand. My toilet is not finished

and my waiting-women will be surprised at the length of our interview."
 "Miss Annunziata thinks she has provided for everything," said Morales, smiling, "and yet she has forgotten one thing of the highest importance."
 "What is that?"
 "To give me some money."
 "You are right."
 Carmen went to a table, that was covered with jewels and thinkets, some of the wedding presents.
 Among the heap of objects remarkable for their richness or their elegance, there was a square casket, of polished steel, with band of chased silver.
 Carmen opened this casket.
 It was full of new pieces of gold, amounting to a hundred thousand francs.
 Philip Le Vaillant had himself brought them to his son's bride after the signing of the contract.
 "Hold out your hands!" said Carmen to Morales.
 The Gitano did not wait to be told twice. The young woman took a handful of gold and laid them in the palms of her brother.
 "Now you have all you want?" said Carmen.
 "Yes—at least for the present."
 "Go now quickly, for time presses."
 "Only one word more."
 "Well?"
 "Do you authorize me to witness your marriage *incognito*?"
 "On the contrary, I positively forbid you to be present."
 "That's a pity—I should have wished—but I will obey."
 "You must."
 "Write me as soon as possible."
 "I will."
 "Au revoir, Annunziata!"
 "Au revoir, Don Guzman."
 As soon as he has gone, Carmen said to her two women.
 "Finish my toilet."
 She sat down and yielded her splendid hair to the dexterous manipulations of the maids.
 When the work was done, it was half-past ten o'clock, and the invited guests were arriving in the parlors.
 Carmen let fall her dressing gown and put on her bridal dress, with the help of the women. Then going to the glass, she mirrored herself in its crystal depths. A smile rippled on her lips, a light flashed in her eyes.
 "Yes," she murmured, "I am beautiful."
 A servant entered, inquiring whether she was ready to receive Mr. Philip and Mr. Oliver.
 "Let them enter," she answered. "They are welcome."

XXXVI.

CONSUMMATUM EST.

From the adjoining room, the old man and his son heard the word of invitation and immediately entered.
 For the first time they saw Oliver's bride clad in other than those trailing garments of mourning which added so much to her exquisite beauty.
 Carmen, in her white bridal robes, Carmen with arms and shoulders bare, Carmen crowned with flowers and adorned with jewels whose immense value did not exclude simplicity of design, Carmen transfigured and radiant, appeared before them like a dream, a madonna, the complete realization of the most impossible ideal.
 The looks of the young woman and of Oliver met. One was charged with a tender languor and an amorous electricity. The other expressed a fond and ardent admiration.
 Oliver drooped his eyes. He was troubled in mind, and he whispered to himself:
 "I am a coward and a felon. My heart, which is not mine is already flying to the enchantress. Oh! Dinorah! Dinorah, my beloved, I am unworthy of you. Forgive me, for I have betrayed you."
 Meantime Carmen went forward to meet Philip Le Vaillant.
 "Father," she murmured, in the act of kneeling before him, "bless me. I am to become your daughter. And I am worthy of this great happiness by my love for you."
 And she added loud enough that Oliver might hear:
 "And for him."
 The old man did not give Carmen time to kneel. He bent over her, raised her up, pressed her in his arms and covered her forehead and cheeks with his kisses.
 "Oh! my dear child, your place is not at my feet, but on my heart whose love you share with my son Oliver. The blessing which you ask, I give with all my soul. I will owe you the happiness of my declining years, for the dream of my life is being fulfilled. This is the happiest of all my days. Alas! that your father is not here to partake of our mutual joy."
 "My father," muttered Carmen, "he beholds us from on high. He blesses us. He thanks you."
 A considerable silence ensued, and the tears flowed from the eyes of Philip Le Vaillant. Finally, he exclaimed:
 "O Annunziata, but you are beautiful!"
 "If what you say is true," replied Carmen, "I am glad of it for his sake."
 Oliver took the hand of Carmen and bore it to his lips, against which it pressed palpitating and feverish.
 The touch of that perfumed hand increased the agitation of the youth and sent the blood up

bubbling to his brain. It seemed to him that he had drunk a philter, or a draught of those waters of Lethe which bring on pleasant forgetfulness.
 Still Oliver did not forget Dinorah. Her image still floated, however dimly, before his vision.
 "My daughter, my Annunziata," resumed Philip, "the hour approaches. Our friends and relatives await your presence with impatience. Are you ready and will you join them?"
 "I am ready, father, and whatever you desire, I desire also."
 The old man offered his hand to Carmen and in the company of her and Oliver, he descended the magnificent stairway covered with velvet carpet and fragrant flowers, crossed an antichamber where a double row of lackeys, stood in line and penetrated into the reception rooms where a large number of the most important persons of the town and neighborhood was assembled.
 On the entrance of Carmen, a murmur of wonder and admiration ran around the apartment. She was so radiant, so dazzling, so evidently superior in beauty to all about, that even the ladies present forgot to be jealous of her. On the other hand, all the gentlemen envied the lot of Oliver.
 Among the guests, the one on whom the beauty of Carmen made the deepest impression was the Marquis George de Grancey, Governor of the City of Havre, for His Majesty Louis XV. The marquis was only twenty years of age, rich, brilliant, fascinating. He approached Philip Le Vaillant and asked to be presented to Carmen without further delay.
 Carmen had already noticed him.
 "He must be a courtesan," she said. "He resembles no other man I have ever seen. Tanned was only a gentleman. This is a great lord. And I dreamed that I should become the wife of a great lord. Oliver is ten times a millionaire, but he is not even noble."
 And the young woman sighed.
 The hour approached. It was half-past eleven. The ceremony, as we know, was to take place at noon.
 The bells of the church were ringing. The workmen in the yards of Philip Le Vaillant fired blunderbusses. The ship in the harbor were gay with bunting. All the inhabitants were in the streets to see the procession pass.
 Carmen, Philip, Oliver and the Governor of the City took their seats on the velvet cushions of the superb coach and the triumphant march to the church was opened. The journey occupied considerable time, but at length the sacred vestibule was reached. The Marquis de Grancey alighted the first and offering his hand to Carmen conducted her to the sculptured *prédieu* which awaited her at the chancel railing.
 The crowd poured into the church and talked in a low voice.
 "She is a madonna!" said some.
 "She is a goddess!" said others.
 "She is a wonder!" was the general remark.
 And they all added:
 "How happy Oliver Le Vaillant must be."
 The wedding mass began. The Bishop of Rouen had come to Havre expressly to celebrate it. The organ thundered; the perfumed incense rose in spirals; the voices of the chanters filled the nave with harmony.
 At length, the prelate advancing toward the young couple, demanded whether they mutually and freely accepted each other as husband and wife.
 "Yes," replied Oliver.
 "Yes," replied Carmen.
 The Bishop murmured the sacramental words and added:
 "You are united before God. Love one another."
 These words were followed by a little sermon, simple and appropriate. Then the ceremony was over, and the parties, followed by a large number of friends, went to the vestry to sign the register.
 All was done.
 Carmen the dancing girl, Carmen the widow of Tancred de Najac, had, under the name of Annunziata Rovero, enchained to her life the existence of Oliver Le Vaillant.
 Morales, hidden behind a pillar, had assisted at the marriage, spite of the formal prohibition of his sister.
 When the ceremony was concluded, he rubbed his hands and returned to the *Silver Anchor*.
 "Carmen has been working for both of us," he said. "Caramba! I am now a millionaire."
 (To be continued.)

A VENETIAN GHOST STORY.

We were travelling in Italy, my friend Paul Riverston and myself; our time was our own, we had well-filled purses, we were both blessed with the same taste—a love for the poetical and beautiful in every phase—a love for the fine arts; and we enjoyed our tour exceedingly.
 It was in the month of May, we reached Venice—I am not going to describe it—the city of the silent waters; my story only relates to something strange I heard there.
 I am not actually a believer in ghosts; the vulgar legends of haunted houses, rappings by night, &c., I utterly despise; but I do not, and cannot doubt, at times, spirits from another world revisit this. There are too many well-authenticated stories of such associations for me to doubt it; and this old Venetian legend that has been told for generations past must, according to human evidence, be true.