

began to repent of the opinion he had secretly formed in the morning.

"Well, sir," asked Carmen in a broken voice, "what news have you for me?"

"Alas, madam, very bad news."

"What! Has the Marquis de Grancey —?" She stopped short, as though unable to overcome her emotion.

"You are right, madam, the marquis is the victim of a cowardly murder."

Carmen hid her face in her hands, and her visitor could see the tears trickling through her fingers.

"Thanks to the information you furnished us," he continued, "we have succeeded in finding the body of the noble and generous gentleman whose loss is mourned by the whole city. The marquis was killed in the little house hard by your own."

"Alas!" continued the lieutenant, after pausing for a reply, "at the risk of increasing your sorrow, I must inform you, for you will learn it sooner or later, that the marquis' passion was the cause of his death."

Carmen raised her head.

"Then, sir, my suspicions are correct. Some cowardly murderer thought he was doing my husband a service in killing this noble gentleman."

"There can be no doubt, madam, that it was jealousy that provoked the deed."

"Are you sure of it? Have you any proof?"

"We have."

"And you know the name of the murderer?"

"We do."

"Tell me who it is."

"Madam, are you firm and strong enough to bear the news?"

"Yes, yes. But why do you ask me? Am I acquainted with the murderer?"

"Only too well."

"You frighten me, sir! Tell me at once, in the name of Heaven!"

"It is —"

"Well?"

"Oliver Le Vaillant."

"My husband!" murmured Carmen, "my husband!" For some moments she sat as if bewildered, then she suddenly broke out with the greatest vehemence:

"No, no! I do not believe it! I can not, I will not believe it! my husband is neither a coward nor an assassin! You are led away by appearances! It may have been one of Oliver's servants or friends, but Oliver, never! I could swear to it, I could stake my salvation it is not!"

"I wish it were possible for me, madam," interrupted the magistrate, "to doubt the fact, and to bid you calm yourself. But it is not. The evidence is irrefragable."

"I do not admit your evidence!" cried Carmen, in a paroxysm of indignation and rage. "I deny it and despise it! They lie who accuse Oliver of murder. If you accuse him you lie like the rest!"

"Madam," murmured the magistrate sadly, "your unwillingness to believe it does you honor. I respect you for it though it is my duty to convince you. Listen to me and judge for yourself," and he commenced to relate the results of the search in the small house where the marquis' body had been found. As she listened Carmen's face fell, and when the magistrate had finished she rose with an expression of the most intense horror.

"You are right, sir!" she exclaimed. "I understand it all now. The man whose name I bear is a miserable assassin. I renounce him, and leave him to you."

Panting and sobbing she dropped, as if heart-broken, on the sofa.

Carmen was certainly a great actress.

XLVII.

FROM HAVRE TO ST. NAZAIRE.

While Oliver was pushing his horse forward, the events of his life since his marriage crowded in his mind with the rush and confusion of the whirlwind.

"O my father!" he exclaimed, "you have ruined me, but happily you do not live to see my misery."

Gradually, however, these thoughts passed away, and a certain calm pervaded his mind. He began to examine in what part of the country he was, and what a distance he had gone over.

He soon recognized the familiar landscape of Brittany. His horse, as if it divined the intentions of his master, had taken the route to St. Nazaire.

"Will I go to meet Dinorah?" said he. And he reflected a long time.

"What if she too were married?" he added. This was not all.

Another terrible thought prevented itself to his imagination.

"What if she were dead?"

And he resolved, then and there, that if she were dead, he too would die at once.

He rode all night, but only slowly, as his poor beast was spent. At seven o'clock the next morning, he dismounted at the *Breton Arms*.

The innkeeper received him, at the door, with every sign of pleasure and welcome.

"You have returned among us at last?" he exclaimed. "Will you tarry some time?"

"Yes, I hope so."

"Will you take your old room?"

"By all means."

He was at once shown to this room. Not a piece of furniture was disturbed. He bathed his head in a basin of ice cold water and felt refreshed.

The host came up with a bottle of his famous Canary wine.

"Anything new in this part of the country, since I left it?" Oliver asked.

"As everywhere, sir, children have been born, old people have died and lovers have got married. Nothing more."

"And yonder?" asked Oliver again.

"Nothing particular, except—"

"What?"

"A very queer thing, I assure you."

"Name it, please."

"Have you ever heard speak of Magul Tréal?"

"Never."

"Well, she lived in a little hut near here. She was old, a widow and a sorceress."

"Sorceress?"

"Yes," and the worthy went on to tell a wonderful tale of Magul Tréal's last trip to the moon, astride a broomstick.

This did not suit Oliver, who was dying to hear something about Dinorah. So he drank his Canary wine and prepared to go out.

"What I going already?"

"A walk after a long ride is good."

"Will you return to breakfast?"

"Yes, unless I wander too far."

Oliver took his hat and went down the stairs, accompanied to the door by the old innkeeper.

XLVIII.

DINORAH.

He had soon passed the last houses of St. Nazaire. He entered on the hollow road which led to the residence of Dinorah. Through the foliage he saw the mossy crest of the thatched roof. A thin line of smoke rising from the chimney showed that the house was not abandoned. He came at length to the little gate. Here he moderated his impetuous advance. He was even obliged to sit down on the grass for a few seconds. After recovering his calm, he arose and continued his march.

He reached the enclosure at length. He turned the postern on its wooden hinges and penetrated into the sanctuary of his love, going by instinct to the place where he had last met Dinorah.

Here he saw her.

She was dressed, as of yore, in a dark dress and wore no other ornament than the splendid diadem of her blond tresses. Her pretty head was bent upon her bosom.

Her pale cheeks looked thin and her eyes seemed to have grown larger.

On her knees were folded her two beautiful hands.

On one finger Oliver saw the sparkling of a gold ring.

"Is that my mother's ring?" he asked himself. "The ring which I gave her in betrothal. If it is, O, then, she has not forgotten me."

Dinorah unclasped her hands.

Oliver threw himself behind a tree.

The young girl took from her corage a well-worn paper. She opened it and was absorbed in reading it, for several minutes. She then pressed it to her lips with passionate fervor, while two tears stood in her eyes.

"What is that letter," thought Oliver, "which she thus kisses?"

He walked forth from his shelter and made several steps forward. Dinorah, absorbed in her own thoughts, did not perceive him at first. But at length she raised her head.

He saw him, she recognized him, fire darted from her eyes, she uttered a ringing cry, and with a single bound, threw herself upon the neck of Oliver.

"It is you, at last, it is you!"

"Dinorah! my beloved—is it possible that you still love me?"

"Could I love twice in my life?" she answered proudly.

"And you waited for me?"

"I should have waited for you till death."

"But had I not written, expect me no more Dinorah?"

"Yes, but you had added: 'for without a miracle, I can never return.' I waited for that miracle, and I was right, for here you are."

"Yes, and for ever, for ever, my darling."

"It must be so. If I were separated from you, I should die, for you are my life, Oliver."

Many moments passed in a sweet, in a divine embrace. Oliver then picked up his letter from the grass, tore it into bits and scattered it to the winds.

"O my beloved, let the past with its bitter memories thus disappear from our minds."

"Our happiness has no need of unhappy recollections to ensure its continuance."

"Still it is well to remember what God has done for us, that we may thank Him and bless Him all the days of our lives."

"Dinorah, you are an angel!" cried Oliver.

"Where are my wings?" smilingly asked the girl.

"I almost seem to see them."

"Well, take care that I do not use them to fly away from you. Come and sit down and let me look at you."

Taking Oliver by the hand Dinorah led him to a little grassy mound, on which they took their places, and sat side by side for some moments without speaking. The young girl was the first to break the silence.

"Oliver," she asked almost timidly, "this terrible, insurmountable obstacle which separated us so long exists no more than?"

"No, my beloved, thanks be to Heaven!"

"It will never return?"

"Never."

"Are you sure?"

"I swear it on my honor and by my love!"

"May I know what it is?"

"Impossible!"

Dinorah dropped her eyes.

"Oh, my beloved, my adored," murmured Oliver, dropping on one knee, "I entreat you not to feel hurt at my silence. Henceforth there will not be a single mystery in my life, all my thoughts will be open to you. But I beseech you on my knees, never to question me as to the miserable year I have passed far from here."

"Oliver," returned the young girl, "whatever you wish I will do. I shall never ask you as to the past."

"In that case," continued Oliver, "shall we speak of the future, since the future is all our own?"

"Yes, if you will. The more so as to us the future means happiness."

"You are my betrothed, Dinorah."

"Yes, since we have exchanged hearts, and I besides am wearing your mother's ring."

"Betrothed—it is a dear name. But when may I call you by a nearer and a dearer?"

(To be continued.)

IN QUEER COMPANY.

BY ANTHONY LEIGH.

Bow common is hardly the district for an admirer of the simple and the beautiful to explore, and much less the sort of place you'd care to reside in. Yet I live there; but not from choice—O dear, no!

If the unsavoury and villainous odors from the adjacent factories which daily pollute the atmosphere, and the midnight serenade of the festive oostermonger as he clutches the top of my front railings in an imbecile endeavor to maintain his perpendicular, and howls out the burden of some lugubrious ditty under my bedroom-window at midnight—if these and no end of other lively little incidents, can afford inducement to any sane man to take up his abode in that "location," I say, let him go, by all means.

As I've already said, I don't live there from choice. Fact is, I'm a railway clerk, on duty at a station about ten minutes' walk from where I "hang out," and I can't, with any degree of safety for my situation, reside any farther away from it. I must be there at 5.10 A.M., you see, to book the "workmen's" train.

No, my nearest road to the station is right through a long dismal thoroughfare—if you can call it that even—bounded by the Tower Hamlets Cemetery on the one hand, and by the arches of the Blackwall Railway on the other; there are no houses near it; and it isn't by any means the sort of promenade that a nervous person would care to select for a "moonlight walk." There are fine facilities for gentlemen in the garrotting interest; then, again, the proximity of the cemetery isn't altogether so pleasant at night-time.

I was popping along there about 4.55 one morning last winter—walking, in fact, as fast as I knew how, for I was a good seven minutes behind, and I'd no time to lose. I feared I should miss my first train after all, when I noticed a small black object lying close to the buttress of an arch on my left. I picked it up, and hurried on faster after pocketing it, to make up for the one or two seconds I'd lost over it. It was an old tobacco-pouch; and I hadn't got my full supply of the weed with me, so I regarded this as a bit of a windfall. Arriving almost breathless at the station, I unlocked the door and threw up my window to book about thirty workmen standing in a group outside, and who were making some strong comments upon my tardy appearance. This done, I turned up an extra gas-jet and proceeded to inspect my prize, wondering what tobacco it contained—I smoke "shag" myself. There wasn't any tobacco though, much to my disgust; the contents were a pair of dice, a small key, and a couple of printed cards, together with a pawnticket inscribed, "Waistcoat, 2s." The dice and pawnticket didn't interest me, so I put them in my till-drawer, and looked at the cards; the larger of the two was headed:

"A FRIENDLY LEAD"

Will take place at the Alfred's Head, on Saturday the 26th instant, for the benefit of Paddy Turner, better known as 'Jack the Lemon,' who has been in 'trouble' the last four months, and hopes to find his old pals gather round him now he needs it. Paddy was never the man to ruck himself, and it is to be hoped he may see old faces rallying round him on this trying occasion. Sparring up-stairs from 7 till 8, after which hour harmony will commence. Chair to be taken by Paddy in person, faced by 'Cuttle,' and assisted by Grandfather Vinegar, Corkey Jen, Hosten Tostin, Tommy the Shootsman, Young Cocklin, Porkey Cannon, Cast Iron, Young Curley, Jack the Flatman, Young Imperial, and a host of talent and old friends too numerous to mention."

This concoction rather puzzled me. I felt curious as to the nature of 'the trouble' that had laid heavy on the soul of Mr. Turner for four

long months. "I think I should have resigned myself to it by that time," I thought; and then, just then, I began to have a faint suspicion of what "the trouble" was.

The other card was simply an announcement of an approaching raffle for a silk handkerchief, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the sole and especial benefit of some ornament to society yclept "Young Tadger;" and the welfare of that worthy having but little interest for me, I threw it aside, and hearing a tap at the office-door, opened it for the admittance of my ticket-collector, Harry Stocks, who had come to pay-in the previous day's excess fares.

Now, Stocks was somewhat of an original in his way, a sort of nineteenth-century Sam Weller, and, in fact, the most arrant Cockney I had ever encountered. He had been born and bred in Mile-end, and, as he was wont to boast, had never been more than thirty miles out of London in his life—and that only once.

As far as acquaintance with the beerhouses and "pubs" of the East were concerned, he was better than a directory. I thought, therefore, that the *ménage* of a "friendly lead" must be familiar to him; so I showed him the cards, and, describing the manner of my finding them, inquired what sort of affair it was.

"Well," said Stocks, "this is rather a mix job. I know nearly all the lot myself—by name at least—know the 'ouse too; it's used mostly by costers and such. This Turner was a coster; now he's a sort of half coster, half fightin'-man. Lor bless you, no! Prize-fightin' isn't knocked on the head so far as them little bits goes. You see, he's reckoned rather a good man with his fists among such as himself, and they often gets up a purse of five pound or so, to be fought for, and such like. You can see 'em at it almost any Sunday mornin' out Temple Mills way. They get it among themselves, and there's generally a beershop-keeper or two lays two, three, or it might be five pound on the man he fancies. I don't know altogether—that is, exactly—what Paddy got 'put away' for. No, not for theft, sir; 'sault and battery, I think. Least-ways, he gave some bloke a awful hiding in a 'ouse down Steyne-green way one night. I know that was the bottom of it. Ah, yes, aggravated assault, that was it. Now, as for a 'lead,' why, it's a bit of a meetin', and a 'sing-song,' an' just when you go in you put whatever you can spare into a plate they bring round. No, they are a run lot, too; but anybody—any gentleman—might sit there night after night an' never have a nasty word offered him as long as he kep' a civil tongue in his head. Be as well to drink though if you was asked; if you didn't, and the bloke happened to be a bit 'boozed,' he'd very like chuck it over you; and they don't say 'no' if you call for a pet after drinkin' along with 'em. What's that other card? Raffle—ah, same sort of thing—pretty much—there's always a song or a bit o' sparrin' goin' on. You ought to drop in an' see 'em, sir."

"I was just thinking of the same thing. Let's see, I'm off at two on Saturday; surely you can get Lodge to work your staff for that day. I shouldn't care about going there by myself."

Stocks said he knew Lodge would do duty for him on that afternoon; so it was arranged that he should call at my lodgings at 6 P.M. on the evening in question, and we'd both go down together.

Sure enough, at five past six, a quiet double knock at the door of my domicile announced the presence of Mr. Stocks. Then a rustling and a giggling sound apprised me that, according to his usual custom, Mr. Harry was attempting a slight flirtation with my landlady's servant, which I nipped in the bud by calling him upstairs. He marched up, and sauntering into my solitary bedroom, inquired whether I was ready. I said, "I hardly knew what to wear;" so Stocks, rummaging over my wardrobe, selected a reefing-jacket, a single-breasted waistcoat, and a billycock, and proceeded to attire me to his own satisfaction. When he'd done with me, I ventured to survey myself in the looking-glass, and found my appearance was as much like a decent young workman who had "cleaned himself" for an evening stroll as anything I'd ever seen. So Harry and I lit our pipes and sallied forth down the Bow-road en route for the Alfred's Head.

We strolled quietly down through Mile-end-road, meeting with nothing of interest, until we got to the corner of Commercial-street; when it occurred to my friend that "the best drop of Irish in London" was procurable at an adjacent "pub"; and having plenty of time to spare, we must needs drop in; and having tested the quality of the whiskey, and got a cigar each, we strolled on till our farther progress was impeded by about eighteen or twenty of the élite of White-chapel, who were pensively gazing into a clothier's shop-window—obviously there was some attraction.

"What's up there, Harry?"

"Only those bills of Smith's—circulars, you know. Seen 'em, ain't you?"

I said I hadn't; and Harry stepped into the shop, and came out with a couple of the bills in question, one of which he handed me:

To His Rile Highness the Prince of Nails, and
His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and

His Wench.

SMITH,

Well known by everybody to be the only Genuine Clothing Manufacturer in White-chapel, and acknowledged by the Natives to be the Cheapest