morning and evening to watch over Don José Rovero and yourself, and to protect him as I would have Him protect you?"

"Well, Oliver, your childish prayers have not been answered."

"What has happened to Don José? If we can help him in any way we must do it, father! We will do for him what he has done for us! We will save him!"

Philip Le Vaillant pressed his son's hand.

"Don José has written to me. Here is his letter." And the old man read aloud the touching pages that we saw penned in Don José's study at Havana. More than once during the perusal Oliver had to wipe his eyes.

"Father," he asked when the letter was concluded, "what was your answer?"

"This." And as he had read his friend's letter Philip Le Vaillant read out his own reply. It terminated, it will be remembered, as follows:

"My friend, my brother, I ask for my son Oliver the hand of your daughter Annunziata in marriage."

These words fell upon the young man like a thunder-bolt. He was compelled to clutch a chair to keep himself from falling. His father remarked his agitation, but attributed it to the surprise that a young man would naturally feel on learning unexpectedly that he was betrothed, and that without a possible chance of withdrawing; for no man of honor can break, without shame, hardly without crime, an engagement made in so solemn a manner, before a dying father and an orphan. He asked, however, noticing that his son's emotion increased rather than diminished:

"Have I acted right, my boy, in disposing of you in this manner? Have I done my duty?"

"You have done your duty," replied Oliver; "and you have acted right."

Here then was the secret of the young man's habitual melancholy and of his evasive answers when questioned as to his sad demeanor.

XXXIII.

DEAD AND YET ALIVE.

From the day on which he received the letter dated St. Nazaire and bearing the signature of Annunziata, Philip Le Vaillant was in a state of continual unrest. This letter announced the young girl's early departure in a vessel sailing from Croisic with a cargo of salt for Havre.

The old merchant would not for anything in the world have allowed the orphan to whom he had sworn to take the place of father to be landed at Havre, like an abandoned child, with no one to meet her. He had therefore taken measures to be informed in time of the appearance of the vessel he expected. During the day he paced the harbor in anxious expectation, and at night his place was taken by a couple of servants.

On the ninth day after the receipt of Annunziata's letter, early in the morning, Zephyr burst panting into his master's room, where Philip Le Vaillant was at his toilet, and announced the arrival of the expected vessel with a young lady on board.

"It was impossible to make out her signal until she entered the harbor," he exclaimed, "so if it is really Miss Annunziata she will be here immediately, though I ran as fast as my legs would carry me to bring you the news."

The man's words received immediate confirmation. A carriage was heard to enter the courtyard and stop at the front door.

"It is she! it is she!" cried the merchant rushing from the room and hurrying down the stairs with all the eagerness of a young man of twenty. He reached the hall just in time to receive in his arms a young lady, very beautiful, very pale, and dressed in deep mourning.

"Annunziata!" he cried, almost sobbing with emotion, "my child! my daughter!"

The girl returned the old man's embrace, and throwing back the long veil that covered her tear stained countenance, knelt before him and with touching simplicity besought his pity and affection.

"My father, give your blessing to the orphan who seeks a refuge in your house and who beseeches you to love her for the sake of her dead father."

"Annunziata, my daughter," he replied, "before God and your father who looks down on us I swear that you are no longer an orphan. I have two children now." And Philip Le Vaillant raised his friend's child from the ground and pressed her to his heart.

The simple attractive young orphan who had so speedily found her way to the old merchant's heart was Carmen!

How and where had the quondam dancing-girl, the widow of the Chevalier de Najac, conceived the infamous project she had just succeeded in carrying out?

During the voyage on the vessel which had picked her up off Cape St. Adrian and was taking her to St. Nazaire, Carmen had had time to reflect fully on her forlorn condition.

What was to become of her? Her brother, (a weak and miserable support indeed, but a support nevertheless) was no more. Annunziata, whose love and confidence she had won, and who would certainly have helped her, was dead. It would be useless to seek her husband's family, for she had lost in the confusion of the shipwreck the certificate of her marriage, and it was anything but advisable to cause an enquiry into the matter to be made in Havana. She had never felt so completely alone, so utterly desolate. Whichever way she turned she could find no means of escape——. Yes, there was one. Why should she not go to Philip Le Vaillant at Havre and say to him! "I was the companion and friend of Don José Rovero's daughter, who at the last moment of her life placed in my charge for you this casket which contains Don José's letter and your own. I am without a home or a protector; do not forsake me!"

There could be no manner of doubt that the rich merchant would comply with her request. But however much he might do for her it would be mere charity; however generously he might behave towards her position would be nothing to that of which she had dreamed and for which she had plotted.

"No!" she said to herself. "My pride revolts from an obligation. I will never go and stretch out my hand for charity. My life is crushed, my future dead. Better would it have been for me to have perished with Annunziata. But my fate was against it. Poor Carmen, who does not know how she is to live, is living; and the millionaire's bride lies in a watery grave. I wish," she added bitterly, "that I could exchange places with her."

She started as if struck by a shot, and sunk into deep thought.

"Why not?" she cried, her face lighting up and a triumphant blaze kindling in her eyes. "It is a daring scheme, certainly; dangerous perhaps! But what matter? Every soul on the "Marsouin" but me has perished. I am acquainted with the smallest details of Annunziata's story and of her father's career and death. No one in France knows me, nor does anyone know Don José's daughter. Who could betray me? Who could give me the lie? I was wrong to bewail my fate. It has long treated me badly but now that it puts such a chance within my reach it would be a sin not to avail myself of it. So, the die is cast! Carmen is dead, long life to Annunziata!"

The reader has already witnessed the successful carrying out of the Gitana's determination.

The good merchant was on thorns. Where could Oliver be all this time.

After having been thrice summoned the young man finally made his appearance. Notwithstanding all his efforts to control his emotion his face wore a look of sadness and embarrassment.

"This is Oliver, my son," said Le Vaillant quickly.

And in a lower time he added so as to be heard by Carmen only: "Your betrothed."

The girl advanced to where Oliver was standing, and taking his hands with a timid confidence, murmured in a supplicating tone:

"Oh, sir!—oh, my brother!—say that I am welcome under your roof! Say that you will love me a little! I have suffered so much! I need so much some one to love me!"

"Kiss her!" cried the merchant. "Kiss her, my boy, if she will allow you."

Oliver could not refuse. He touched his lips to Carmen's cheek, and the girl blushed at the cool salute like the most timid and modest of maidens.

"What can I tell you," said the young man constrainedly, "more than you already know? Does not the house of Philip Le Vaillant and of his son belong to Don José Rovero's daughter. I agree with all that my father has said. He has spoken for both of us. You are no longer an orphan. Our family is yours.

"Thank you, brother," replied Carmen.

As though obeying to an irresistible impulse she once more seized Oliver's hand and pressed it to her lips. At this unexpected contact the young man trembled and for the first time raised his eyes to the Gitana.

Carmen was dazzlingly beautiful. Her cheeks were still tinged with crimson, her eyes swam in tears, and her hair which had become unfastened streamed in rich luxuriance down her neck.

As his eye rested on her Oliver's thoughts flew to Dinorah.

"Dinorah," he said to himself, "I will always love you."

Once more he glanced at Carmen and murmured:

"She is too beautiful. She frightens me!"

(To be continued.)

AUTHENTICATING A GHOST.

"Do I believe in dreams and ghosts?" That is no way to put it. Do I believe in dreams? Yes! In ghosts! Listen to *me!*

As long ago as 1859 I was County Surveyor of Hooppole County, State of Arkansas. My brother-in-law, Jack Henley, enjoyed the official title and drew the salary; but I used to go along with him on duty to carry the chain and set the stakes. I preferred this part of the business because I could never make the compass work properly; it would always point north for me; and sometimes I wanted to go in other directions. How Jack managed it I never could understand. Jack, by the way, was the most intolerably ugly mortal I ever beheld—except his sister Margaret my wife, now in heaven, poor thing! There is no sense in such ugliness as Jack's.

One evening Jack came over to my cabin, and we had a little game—played with the full pack. My wife—since dead—retired early, leaving us with the bottle and cigars to have it out. I soon had it out—out of Jack's pocket, every cent of it! And we were both "in a condition." About eleven o'clock we shook hands a few dozen times, and Jack started for home—returning at variable intervals to shake hands. He lived about a mile away, down the Bulburg road—first house of the left. When he was unmistakably gone I collected such of my faculties as I could lay my mind on, put the room in order, and went to bed. I had no sooner shut my eyes than I dreamed Jack was dead. I saw him, as plainly as possible, stagger down the road till he had passed the little bridge over Possum Creek; then the moon coming out suddenly he fell down and died of pure ugliness. I dreamed and redreamed this so many times that it began to worry me; so I got out of bed, dressed, and left the house.

It was a misty kind of night, but there was a moon somewhere behind the fog, and I could see things close at hand with tolerable distinctness. I had gone about a quarter of a mile towards the spot where my dream had "located" Jack's body, when I met him coming my way. He was walking very steadily now, and had the oddest look! It was as if his eyes had nothing behind them — you know how I mean.

"Halloo, Jack!" I exclaimed in profound surprise; "I swear, old man, I dreamed you were dead, and believed it."

"I am," was the reply in a tone of unutterable hollowness that seemed to come from anywhere but his lips; and at the sound of it a chill wind circulated as freely through my hair as if I'd no hat on.

Never having met many dead men I did not quite know what was etiquette, but I have always thought the best thing to do when you don't know what to do is to shake hands; so I proffered my palm.

Jack merely stared at me, as if he did not see anything there, and said in the same unearthly tone:

"I can't do it, Bill, it's contrary to the constitution an' by-laws. I should forfeit my leave."

"But, Jack," persisted I, "can't you take any chances for friendship's sake?"

"We never shakes hands," said he; "an' that's enough."

Now I knew exactly how to manage Jack. Before going to bed I had put the black bottle, some cigars, and the cards in the pocket of my coat; and that coat I had on. I pulled out the bottle and held it out.

"Drink!"

Then for the first time this solemn ghost smiled a sweet, sad smile.

I had learned to distinguish Jack's sweet, sad smile from his scowls of wrath, though most people couldn't. Taking the bottle, he drank deeply, and, after carefully returning the cork to its place, put the whole thing under his arm. All this time I could see right through him at any point; and the expression of his face depending largely upon the color and configuration of whatever object happened to be behind it, whenever he moved his head there was a deceitful appearance of a play of emotion upon his features. Once when he got his face between me and a knot-hole in a tree I thought he was going to eat me—so I hastily offered a cigar.

"Smoke!"

"Thanks! Got a light?"

Striking a match on the sole of my boot I gave it him, and he gravely ignited the weed, blowing great banks of smoke. I next produced the cards, asking if we should have a game—"just for pastime," I added, knowing he had no money.

He nodded silently, sat down by the roadside, and spread out his legs like a pair of dividers until they subtended an angle of sixty degrees. I took position between them and we were soon absorbed in the rational delight of "seven-up." Sometimes I won, sometimes he did; but whatever was the result of the game he always ended it by a pull at the bottle, never offering it to me. I thought this mean of Jack, but when I mentioned it he merely remarked, "We never offers anything," and continued his play. But I began to plan vengeance.

Presently Jack began to feel it working in his spectral head. Sometimes he would play as low as the four-spot and claim "high." Once he stood his hand on a queen and seven; and finally saying something severe about "fellers as would take advantage of a poor ghost," he dropped the cards from his visionary fingers, lopped over upon his unsubstantial back, and emitted a sepulchral snore. I sat still a moment and thought to the following effect:

"This is a mean ghost. It would be rather fine to teach a wholesome lesson to the supernatural. Besides, it is no small distinction to have played seven-up with a resident of another and a warmer world; and some slight evidence of the fact would be acceptable."

I arose and went home. I remembered that standing at the head of my bed were my surveying pins and the mallet with which I drove them in where the ground was stony or frozen. These pins were of iron, about eighteen inches long and pointed at one end. Opening the door I entered quietly so as not to arouse Margaret —since deceased—and selecting a clean, sharp pin returned with it and my mallet to the spot. Jack was sleeping in exactly the same position as at first—the cards scattered about him like autumn leaves, the bottle vacuous and overthrown at his side. I passed my foot through him two or three times to make sure he would not wake, then knelt at his side. His transparent head was lying on a clean, even surface of yellow clay, and I could not help remarking his wonderful ressemblance to his sister—now no more. I suspended the point of the iron pin above the centre of his chest, holding it with my left hand, and lifting high the mallet in my right with one powerful blow I smote home the spike! There was a sudden struggle, a long sharp scream, and I awoke. There at my knees lay the late Margaret, with the iron transfixing her vitals—pegged rigidly to the bed like a black beetle impaled upon cardboard of an entomologer.

I had seen no ghost—I had not been out of the room. Thank heaven, it was but a dream!

FILOUBON,

AND THE LITTLE MARIE.

Monsieur Trombone was a fine picturesque old soldier. He had lost a leg in the service of his country, and acquired a strategic ability worthy of the great general under whom he had fought. That general was Turenne, as every one in Gomarche had reason to know—for every one went at some time of the day to the Soleil d'Or, and never without hearing Monsieur Trombone parade that one memorable fact of his existence. He was a man of great imaginative and inventive powers; but though vain he disguised his poetical accomplishments under the sober garb of reality, and in recounting his adventures mingled facts with his fictions so judiciously as to arouse the suspicion that he was not altogether a liar. Apart from his intellectual occupation, he was nominally a clockmaker; really he did nothing but talk and drink. In the winter he sat in the chimney of the Soleil d'Or, and looked after the fire; in the summer he sat in the porch of the Soleil d'Or, and looked after the honeysuckle; at the same time, in both seasons he looked after himself.

Madame Trombone, in conformity with that great law of nature which mercifully provides that nothing perfectly useless shall live upon this earth, died when Trombone returned from the wars with his wooden leg and his pension. In his absence she had sustained his reputation —for she was as voluble and inventive as he— and with the assistance of an apprentice made a very snug and reliable business. So far she was useful, and lived. When Trombone returned he could sustain his own reputation, and the business required no more making; then Madame Trombone was perfectly useless. Moreover, she was ugly. So she died—poor thing!—and her widower devoutly thanked his saint and Providence for the mercies that are inscrutable.

It was a marvel to the few ignorant of Trombone's strategigal attainments how he, sitting all day in the Soleil d'Or, could manage his business on the other side of the Place. But he did manage it, and in this wise.

First, however, suffer me to parenthesise that parental prerogative—a faint semblance and simulacrum of which still lingers in France— which obtained to a very great degree a century and a half ago. Then in that paradise there was marriage and giving in marriage, and also, it is necessary to add there was selling in marriage. A father's care was less engaged as to what he should make of his daughters than as to what he might make by them. Trombone contrived to make a very pretty two sous by his child.

It has been said that Madame Trombone made a business with the assistance of an apprentice. Now Pepin, the apprentice, in the earlier part of his time, was simply engaged in selling the cheap jewellery forming Madame's stock-in-trade, whilst the good woman did the household duties or sounded her husband's clarion in the ears of her friend. For the sake of variety she sometimes sat in the shop with her knitting, and set Pepin to make the beds and boil the soup. At this time he was fifteen, bright and ingenious. It was with the view of exercising his ingenuity that he elected to be a jeweller's apprentice; little scope did he find in Madame's establishment. Still, there were tools and appliances for repairing, and the like, exhibited in the window as a bait, and with these the lad amused himself in leisure moments.

One day a glorious flunkey made his appearance in the shop; he was come from the château of Monsieur le Marquis de la Grenouille-gonflée to bid Madame Trombone send a workman up to the château instantly. Monsieur le Marquis de la Grenouillegonflée's clock was suffering from an internal disarrangement. Pepin was despatched on a forlorn hope. He had seen but one clock before in his lifetime. The lame clock was put before him. He declared he could do nothing without his tools, and took the wondrous piece of mechanism home with him. He studied it for a whole day, and lay awake thinking about in the whole night. The following evening he returned the clock to the marquis, mended and in complete going order. From that time Madame Trombone was a clockmaker, and Pepin was continually making and repairing work of this kind. At eighteen he made a clock with a sentry-box on the top, from which an effigy of M. Trombone emerged, and saluted as many times as denoted the hour of day. It was the marvel of the province, and brought customers from far and wide. Pepin was bound for seven years, and when Trombone returned from the wars, three of the apprenticeship, were unexpired. As one in some way connected with the State, the old soldier felt bound to act up to the letter of the law; so he gave Pepin six sous per diem with bed and board, as the articles stipulated, and he gave him no more. And now Pepin's time was up; but still he stayed at the little shop, taking his six sous, and Trombone was not distressed with anxiety for the things of the morrow. He toiled not, neither did he mend clocks. For Monsieur had a daughter, and she kept Pepin in his place,