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THE GITANA

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

VI.—(Continued.)

BROTHER & SISTER.

"Senorina," said the servant, the salts are not sufficient; the shock on the brain must have been something frightful, we shall have to bleed him."

"Can you do it, Pablo?"

"Certainly, Senorina; but I have neither lancet nor bandage with me."

"In that case you must lose no time in carrying this young man to my father's house. Tell the negroes to put down the litter, quick. I will get out and you must put him in my place."

"But, Senorina—" "Not a word more. Put him in and be quick about it. We have no time to lose."

The exchange accomplished, the young girl and her attendants started homeward. As the little cortege turned into the Caña de L'Obispo, Carmen and Morales left the empty house where they had been concealed. "Well," said the other with an ironic laugh. "I hope you are satisfied now with regard to your protégé; I can guarantee that he will be well looked after and by a pretty nurse into the bargain."

Carmen hung her head and made no answer. "And as rich as she is pretty," continued the other in a mocking tone. "And, by the way, do you know, sister, that I should not be surprised if before long your protégé were to have masses sung for the repose of the soul of your Mexican there. The poor devil has done him a good turn after all."

"How so?" asked Carmen, absently. "In trying to kill him?"

"Exactly." "I don't understand you, Morales." "And yet it is as clear as daylight, there is a young man who is wounded—consequently an interesting young man—introduced into the house of a pretty young girl who will nurse him and take care of him. And what will the result be? Of course the handsome young man and the pretty young girl will fall in love, and the attempted assassination will end in a wedding."

Carmen vouchsafed no reply. "Why don't you answer?" asked Morales. "Because I have nothing to say."

"Yet one would suppose that this charming picture is not exactly to your taste."

"Don't be foolish, Morales. Don't be cruel." "Cruel! I cruel! because I predict a happy future for your protégé. It seems to me you ought to be pleased since you take such an interest in the young fellow; for after all it is to you that he will owe his good fortune. You are the cause of his quarrel with the Mexican. If it had not been for this quarrel, Ramirez would never have attempted to assassinate him, and I should not have killed Ramirez. And yet, my poor sister, such is the ingratitude of the world, that I venture to predict that we shall receive no invitation to the wedding."

During this dialogue the brother and sister had been following at a respectful distance the palanquin which now turned into a garden fronting a large house at the other end of the Caña de L'Obispo. The pair made a halt. "Let us go on," said Carmen. "What for?" asked her brother.



"THE YOUNG GOAT-HERD, ARMED WITH A HEAVY KNOTTED STICK, BOUNDED UPON THE AGGRESSORS."

"I want to make sure of the house so as to know it again to-morrow morning."

"In that case I can spare you the trouble. The house belongs to Don José Rovero, a rich ship-owner, a widower with one daughter, the Senora Annunziata. I have often heard about her. They call her the Pearl of Havana."

For some instants Carmen stood deep in thought while her brother imperturbably smoked a small cigarette he had just made.

"And you say," asked the girl at last, "that he is immensely rich, this Don José?"

"Well, it would be difficult for him to calculate exactly his riches. He has no end of sugar plantations all over the island, ten ships, each of which is a fortune in itself, and a whole army of slaves."

"And his daughter inherits it all?" "Caramba, yes, certainly. Did I not tell you that she was his only child? So you see, the man who marries her will make a good thing of it."

"And you call that just," asked the girl with bitterness. "Can you call it justice, this absurd chance which gives everything to one person and nothing to the other? I too am young and pretty, noble blood flows in my veins, and yet I must sing and dance, and stretch out my hand for miserable alms, while this girl, who is no better than I am, bathes in wealth. She is honored, flattered and loved. It is true that I am admired, it would hardly be otherwise; but this very admiration is offensive, for the first rascal we come across can venture to offer me a handful of gold in return for a kiss. This inequality makes me angry, I protest against it and contend that any means are legitimate for those who are at the bottom of the ladder and wish to rise."

Morales burst out laughing. "Caramba," he said, "my principles exactly. I believe with you that it is quite allowable for those who wish to be rich, to seek their fortune wherever it is to be found, aye even in their neighbor's pockets."

Carmen made a gesture of disgust. "Pray don't compare yourself to me," she said, disdainfully.

"Why so, may it please you?" "I am an ambitious woman and you are, to tell the truth, a thief!"

"I don't care to contradict you, but it is possible that the thief will attain a high position sooner than a merely ambitious woman."

"I have not the slightest doubt of it. In fact,

I think you will end in reaching a high position; for the truth is you are destined for the gal-lows."

"Thank you for the prediction." "It only remains with you to falsify the prediction, but I am very much afraid you won't do it."

At this moment the clock of the church della Trinidad struck three and was re-echoed by the bells of the neighboring convents.

"Three o'clock already!" exclaimed Morales. "Don't you think it is high time for us to go home?"

"Come along then," returned the girl. The two retraced their steps, left the city by the Puerta de Tierra and reached a small house, not far from the limits.

It was a miserable building with mud walls, thatched with straw, standing in the middle of an enclosure which had at one time been a garden, but was now overrun with weeds and thick undergrowth.

The brother and sister made their way along a narrow path which led to the door and entered the house. Morales struck a light and lit a candle, which was stuck in the neck of a black bottle.

The interior of the house consisted of two rooms entirely unplanked and unceiled. The floor was of beaten earth and overhead unplanked rafters supported a rude, blackened roof. The first room was occupied by Morales, the second by Carmen. In each room was a bed, a small table, and a common straw chair. The first apartment also contained a rusty iron pot hanging over the hearth, and on a shelf three or four plates, a couple of knives, two iron forks and two glasses. In Carmen's room were also an old trunk without a lock, a large stone jug and an earthen bowl. The whole appearance of the place evidenced utter poverty.

Morales, who seemed extremely eager to be left alone, handed a candle to Carmen.

"Good night, Carmen," he said with his peculiar smile, "try to dream that you marry a hidalgo as rich as a king, and that you become a grand lady."

"Thank you, brother," answered Carmen, "and do you try to dream that you are not hung and that you become an honest man."

With this retort the girl entered the inner room, closed the door after her, and shot the bolt.

Left alone Morales lit a small dark lantern, divested himself of his rapier and the guitar

stone he raised with the point of his knife, disclosing a hole a foot square and some two feet deep, into which he turned the light of the lantern. The excavation was nearly full of gold and silver pieces symmetrically arranged in piles. To this store Morales, after having deducted a small sum for current expenses, added his newly acquired riches. Then replacing the stone and the bed he extinguished the light and throwing himself on the mattress soon fell into a sweet sleep which very much resembled what poets and novelists are pleased to term "the slumber of innocence."

With the reader's permission we will take the liberty of looking into the dancing girl's room.

We have already said that Carmen was good looking. When she had taken off her veil, thereby disclosing features of the purest type of Greek beauty, the brightest of eyes and hair such as a coiffeur might dream of, she was simply divine.

Standing by the table she was engaged in examining the little wallet which had fallen from the Frenchman's pocket. It was a thin volume bound in red morocco and furnished with three silver clasps. On the cover was emblazoned a coat of arms—on a field gules, a sword argent, beneath a chevalier's helmet and supported by two sirens. After some contemplation of her acquisition she unclasped the fastenings and opened the wallet. It was furnished with two pockets and contained a small note-book. The latter was entirely in blank except the first page, on which was written in a fine delicate hand:

"TANCREDE DE NAJAC,
Toulon, September, 1789.

"So his name is Tancred de Najac," murmured Carmen, "he is a nobleman."

She then proceeded to examine the pockets. In the first was a commission made out in the name of the Chevalier de Najac, as lieutenant of the ship "Thunderer."

"He is an officer," thought the girl. "A lieutenant becomes a captain; in time a captain becomes an admiral; and an admiral has only himself to thank if he does not become a minister."

Then she continued her search. In the second pocket she found three papers, carefully folded, each bearing a name; on one "Diana," on the second "Sylvandire," on the third "Marinette." "What is the meaning of this?" she asked herself.

which hung on his back, took off his broad brimmed sombrero and untied the black bandage which covered his eye.

As if by a miracle his whole appearance was changed; the silk handkerchief had concealed a bright black eye which, like his twin brother, gave to the man's face a frightful expression of villainy, deceit, and in a word all that is bad. Without the disguise Morales was another man.

Drawing from his pockets the receipts as well as the plunder of the evening, he commenced with a trembling hand to count up the total of his "earnings."

This pleasant task completed he gave vent to an exclamation of joy. The total reached a sum of \$2,500.

"Caramba," he cried, in triumph, "while my sister dreams of a fortune, I possess one!"

Rising from the chair on which he was seated, he raised the straw mattress which did duty as a bed. Underneath was a square stone which appeared to be firmly embedded in the earth. This