



CHAPTER XV—(Continued.)
She had not long to wait before she caught sight of Cherubine toiling along in the hot sunshine with a great basket on her head. She was singing merrily as she came, and from time to time raised and smelt a great bunch of flowers, smiling with satisfaction, and then she began singing again.

She was in perfect ignorance of the presence of any one else till she was abreast of the clump of thick foliage where Genie was standing, and then she started so violently that she disarranged her flowers by clapping both hands to her head, which nearly fell.

"You, Genie?" she said. "You frightened me."

"Yes," said Cherubine, beginning to look uneasy, and trying to hide her perturbation with a curious laugh.

"You have stopped away from us," said Genie, sternly. "Why?"

"Oh, been so busy with young misses," she said, hastily: "but coming again soon."

The mulatto girl fixed her with her eyes, and said in a low whisper:

"The serpent grows angry with his children who do not come; and if they stay away too much they grow sick and die."

"Oh, I come soon," cried Cherubine, trembling visibly now, and her black shiny skin seemed to turn dull and strange, as white rings appeared round the pupils of her dark eyes. "You tell him I'm not going to stay away any more."

"Take care then," said the mulatto girl, keeping her eyes fixed on the trembling woman. "You have not been since the two new white brothers came to us."

"No, not once," said Cherubine, trembling.

"Yes, when but I come next time?"

"Yesterday," said Cherubine eagerly.

"Where?"

"He came to Nousie's."

"What for?"

Cherubine smiled, then looked horrified. "Don't look at me like that," she said, hastily, as she tried to take her eyes off her questioner, but stared at her again as if fascinated.

"I am not looking at you," said Genie, slowly; "it is the serpent looking out of my eyes. He is everywhere. He is asking with my lips why Etienne Saintone comes to Nousie's house."

"I—I don't know," said Cherubine, shuddering, and the rings about her pupils grew more defined.

"Mind what you are saying," said Genie, sternly.

"I only think," said Cherubine, hurriedly—"I think he fall in love with little missus. An' 't's very dreadful," she said, in a whimpering tone as she stood shivering in the hot sunshine and watching Genie, who as soon as she had spoken turned suddenly, and went up the narrow path taken by her black companion. "Wish sometimes I never went to You-doux. Frightens me."

For the next few minutes as she continued her journey back, the flowers seemed to have lost their sweetness, and she remained perfectly mute, but with the natural carelessness of her race, all was forgotten again in a short time, and she reached the house singing, to go straight to the window of Aube's room, call her by name, and laughing merrily she thrust in the bunch of flowers, kissed the little white hand which took them, and then went into the front room behind the veranda, where, in the dim light, she saw her mistress hastily put away a handkerchief, and on going closer with her basket, which she now held under her arm, she said, sharply:

"What missus cry about?" the sight of Nousie's red eyes completely chased away all thoughts of her late encounter.

"Oh, I don't know," said Nousie, sadly. "I'm not happy, Cherub."

"Nousie ought to be happy, then," cried the woman. "Got lots of money, big house, and been here once again."

"But she is not happy," cried Nousie, passionately. "Oh, Cherub, he is killing me to see her look so quiet and sad."

"Ah, nonsense!" cried Cherubine sharply. "She laughed just now when I took her flowers."

"Laughed?" cried Nousie, eager. Then, with a sigh, "she only tries to smile when I take her anything."

She looked wistfully at her faithful old servant, for the revelation was coming fast with its painful enlightenment, and the making clear to her of complications of which she had never dreamed.

Cherubine looked at her wonderingly, for she could not comprehend her mistress' trouble, and setting it down to one of her old fits of sadness, such as had often come to her since the terrible day when she had seen her husband shot down before her eyes, the woman took her basket into the house as horses' hoofs were heard, a shadow was cast across the veranda, and Saintone dismounted, threw his bridle across a hook, and entered the place.

Nousie looked at him sharply, as at a fresh source of trouble at a time when her spirit was very low, but the young man came up to her with so smile and friendly a look that she was disarmed.

"What a morning," he said, cheerily; "and how well you look, Madame Dulau."

She winced, for his words and tones brought back compliments paid her by her husband's friend.

He noticed her manner and became serious directly, as he said in a half-reproachful tone:

"I thought that when a man joined you, he found help and friendship, but you always look at me as if I were an enemy."

"Ah, no," said Nousie, forcing a smile, "you are mistaken. What do you want me to do? You can help yourself now with me going to anyone."

"Don't do with me, Nousie," he said, leaning over the couch and catching her hand, which she tried to snatch away, but he retained. "You know well I can. You must see that my mother approves of it, and though I am not good enough for her, still I would indeed be to her the best of husbands, and it would be for her good. There, I am very poor at this sort of thing, but you know I love her, and I ask you humbly now for your help."

She looked at him wildly, for his prayer to her seemed horrible, bringing back as it did the past, and she shook her head.

"Oh, come," he said, "you say no be-

fore hurrying out to where Saintone was impatiently waiting.

He stared as she came toward him, erect and proud-looking, and as if some sudden change had taken place in the brief time since they parted.

"Ah," he cried, joyously, "she will come!"

"No," Monsieur Saintone, said Nousie, firmly. "My child refuses, and asks you and your mother to leave us in peace."

A look of rage convulsed his face, and he turned upon her fiercely.

"It is not true," he said. "You have been setting her against me. I'll speak to her myself."

He made for the door, but Nousie interposed—at bay now to spare her child.

But her manner changed, and it seemed to Saintone no longer Nousie, the keeper of the cabaret, but Madame Dulau, wife of his father's old friend, who said firmly, and with a dignity of mien which started him:

"Stop, sir!"

Then after a pause:

"You shall have it from her own lips."

She went through the door, leaving him packing the room, and in a minute she came back, leading Aube, no longer the shrinking timid girl, but calm and self-possessed, looking more beautiful in her eyes than ever.

"Ah, Mademoiselle Aube," he cried, as he stepped forward and tried to take her hand.

"You wished to hear from me," said Aube, gravely. "The words my mother said to me the day she died, and I thank Madame Saintone for her kindness, that I cannot accept her invitations, and that she would wish me impossible."

"No!" he cried, hotly, "it is not impossible."

"Impossible," repeated Aube, and she turned from him to whisper, as she clung to her mother's arm: "No one must ever come between us now."

And the door was darkened as a man appeared dark against the sunshine which hindered him for a moment from seeing the group before him.

"Is this Madame Dulau's?" he said, sharply.

Aube uttered a wild cry, while Saintone's eyes half closed, and his lips tightened, as he looked from one to the other, saying beneath his breath:

"Who is this?"

(To be continued.)

A FATAL MISTAKE.

It Was Made by a Profuse Frenchman in His Leave-Taking.

A citizen of France who has an interesting habit of confounding everything which is said to him, and has been endeavoring to acquire a knowledge of our vernacular, was about leaving his boarding-house for a more comfortable quarter. All the little mysteries of his wardrobe, including his last nether garment and umbrella, had been packed up, when he thought to himself the unpleasant duty now devolving upon him, that of bidding "ze folks" good-bye.

The order of the Golden Fleece is one of the oldest in existence, having been founded in the fifteenth century, by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, at the City of Bruges, as a compliment to that town.

It seems that the King of Spain is always grand master of the eight Spanish orders of knighthood, the principal of which is that of the Golden Fleece.

Toisón de Oro, as they call it in Spanish.

Two years ago the baby king, with due pomp and ceremony, presented the decoration of the order to his young cousin, the Duke of Braganza.

The decoration consists of the arms, which includes

besides the arms of Castile, Leon, Grenada and the like of the royal house of Bourbon the arms of Austria, Sicily, Saxon and Brabant. Surrounding the whole is a representation of the Golden Fleece, with the motto, "Ante feret quam flammae micet." The order is worn on a red and yellow ribbon, the national colors of Spain.

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