THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

Carmen and Other Stories

Translated and with an Introduction and Notes by

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1868 First version of *Lokis*.

1869 *Lokis* published.

1870 Writes *Djoûmane* (story, published posthumously in 1873).

Outbreak of Franco-Prussian War.

Empress Eugénie proclaimed Regent, July.

Capitulation of France, 1 September.

Mérimée dies in Cannes on 23 September. Buried in English Protestant cemetery.

1871 During the Commune the house at 52, rue de Lille, in which he had lived since the death of his mother, is burned down. All his papers are destroyed.

1875 First performance of *Carmen*, music by Bizet, libretto by Meilhac and Halévy.

Carmen

(1845)

Πᾶσα γυνὴ χόλος ἐστίν· ἔχει δ᾽ ἀγαθὰς δύο ὥρας
Τὴν μίαν ἐν θαλάμῳ, τὴν μίαν ἐν θανάτῳ.

PALLADAS.*

I

I HAD always suspected that the geographers were talking nonsense when they located the site of the Battle of Munda in the territory of the Bastuli-Poeni, near present-day Monda, about two leagues north of Marbella. My own theories about the text by the anonymous author of the *Bellum Hispaniense*, and some information I had gleaned in the Duke of Osuna's excellent library, led me to believe that the memorable spot where, for the last time, Caesar played double or quits against the champions of the Republic was to be found in the vicinity of Montilla*. Finding myself in Andalusia early in the autumn of 1830, I undertook a fairly lengthy excursion in order to clear up what remaining doubts I had. A paper I shall be publishing shortly, will, I hope, dispel any last vestiges of doubt from the minds of all serious archaeologists. While waiting for my dissertation to resolve once and for all the geographical problem which is holding all learned Europe in suspense, I want to tell you a little story. It in no way prejudges the fascinating question of the site of the battle of Munda.

At Córdoba I had hired a guide and two horses, and I had set off with nothing but Caesar's *Commentaries** and a few shirts for luggage. One day, as I was roaming the plain of the upper reaches of the Carchena, half-dead with exhaustion, parched with thirst, and burned by the scorching sun, I was heartily cursing Caesar and the sons of Pompey when I noticed, some distance from the path I was following, a small area of green grass dotted with reeds and rushes. It indicated that there was a spring close by. Sure enough, on approaching, I

saw that what I had first taken for grass was a marsh into which flowed a stream that appeared to emerge from a narrow gorge between two high spurs of the Sierra de Cabra. I decided that upstream I would find fresher water, fewer leeches and frogs, and perhaps some shade amongst the rocks. At the entrance to the gorge my horse whinnied, and another horse, that I could not yet see, immediately answered it. I had gone no more than a hundred paces when the gorge suddenly opened out to reveal a sort of natural arena, afforded perfect shade by the height of the escarpments surrounding it. A traveller could have found no more inviting spot in which to halt. At the foot of sheer rocks the spring gushed and bubbled, falling into a small pool whose bed was carpeted with snow-white sand. Five or six fine green oak-trees, sheltered at all times from the wind and watered by the spring, ringed the edge of the pool, over which they cast a deep shadow. To complete the picture, around the pool fine, lush grass offered a bed better than one could have hoped to find in any inn for ten leagues around.

The honour of discovering this beautiful spot had not been mine. There was already another man resting there, who had no doubt been asleep when I entered the place. Awakened by the neighing of the horses, he got up and went over to his steed, which had been taking advantage of his master's sleep to have a good browse in the grass round about. He was a young fellow, of medium height, but sturdy in appearance and with a sombre, proud expression. His complexion, which might once have been fair, had been tanned by exposure to the sun until it was darker than his hair. In one hand he gripped his horse's halter, and in the other a brass blunderbuss. I must admit that at first I was rather taken aback by the blunderbuss and the fierce expression of the man holding it; but I had ceased to believe in the existence of robbers, for I had heard many tales of them but had never yet met any. Besides, I had seen so many respectable farmers arm themselves to the teeth before setting off for market that the sight of a fire-arm did not justify my questioning the stranger's good character. And in any case, I said to myself, what would he want with my shirts and my Elzevir* *Commentaries*? I therefore greeted the man

with the blunderbuss with a friendly nod, and asked with a smile if I had disturbed his sleep. Without replying he looked me up and down; then, as if satisfied with his examination, he turned his attention to my guide, who was now approaching. I saw the latter turn pale and stop, showing evident signs of terror. My first thought was that we had encountered a brigand. But immediately prudence counselled me to show no sign of uneasiness. I dismounted, told the guide to unbridle the horses, and, kneeling down by the side of the spring, plunged my head and hands into it; then I took a good long gulp, lying flat on my stomach like the bad soldiers of Gideon*.

Meanwhile, I observed my guide and the stranger. The former was approaching with considerable reluctance. The other seemed to have no evil intentions towards us, for he had set his horse loose again, and his blunderbuss, which at first he had held at the ready, was now pointed towards the ground.

Feeling it best not to take offence at the scant regard he had seemed to show for me, I stretched myself out on the grass and casually asked the man with the blunderbuss whether he had a lighter with him. At the same time I took out my cigar-case. The stranger still made no reply, but rummaged in his pocket, took out his lighter, and lost no time in striking a light for me. He was clearly thawing, for he sat down opposite me, though without relinquishing his weapon. Having lit my cigar, I chose the best of those that were left and asked him whether he smoked.

'*Sí, señor*,' he replied. These were the first words he had uttered, and I noticed that he did not pronounce the *s* in the Andalusian manner,[1] from which I deduced that he was a traveller like myself, though one less interested in archaeology.

'You'll find this quite a good one,' I said to him, presenting him with a genuine Havana regalia.

He nodded slightly, lit his cigar from mine, thanked me with another nod, then began to smoke it with the keenest pleasure.

[1] The Andalusians lisp the *s*, confusing it in pronunciation with the soft *c* and the *z*, which Castilians pronounce like an English *th*. One can recognize an Andalusian merely by the way he pronounces the word *señor*.

'Ah!' he exclaimed, releasing the first puff through his mouth and nostrils, 'it's a long time since I smoked!'

In Spain, a cigar offered and accepted establishes relations of hospitality, as does the sharing of bread and salt in the East. The man proved to be more talkative than I had expected. Moreover, although he claimed to be from the *partido* of Montilla, he seemed to have rather a poor knowledge of the area. He did not know the name of the delightful valley in which we found ourselves; he could not name a single village in the vicinity; and, furthermore, when I asked him whether he had seen any ruined walls, large broad-rimmed tiles, or carved stones in the area, he confessed that he had never paid any attention to such things. On the other hand, he showed himself to be an authority on the subject of horses. He criticized mine (admittedly, this was not difficult); then he gave me the pedigree of his own, which was a product of the famous Córdoba stud farm, and which was indeed a noble animal—so tireless, its master claimed, that it had once covered thirty leagues in one day, at a gallop or a brisk trot. In the middle of his long speech the stranger broke off abruptly, as if taken aback and vexed at his own indiscretion.

'I was in a great hurry to get to Córdoba,' he said in some confusion. 'I had to fetch the judges for a trial.'

As he spoke he was looking at my guide, Antonio, whose eyes were lowered.

The shade and the spring so delighted me that I remembered that my friends in Montilla had put some slices of excellent ham in my guide's pannier. I got him to fetch them, and I invited the stranger to share in this improvised picnic. If it was some time since he had smoked, I reckoned that he probably hadn't eaten for at least forty-eight hours. He devoured the food like a starving wolf. It crossed my mind that his meeting me had been providential for the poor fellow. Meanwhile my guide ate little, drank still less, and spoke not at all, although he had been talking nineteen to the dozen ever since the start of our journey together. The presence of our guest seemed to make him uneasy and some sort of mistrust kept them from one another, although I was unable to guess its precise cause.

After the last scraps of the bread and ham had disappeared and we had each smoked a second cigar, I ordered the guide to bridle our horses and was about to take my leave of my new friend when he asked me where I was intending to spend the night.

Too late to heed a sign from my guide, I replied that I was going to the Venta del Cuervo*.

'No place for a person like yourself to stay, señor. I am going there myself, and if you will allow me to accompany you, we will travel together.'

'With great pleasure,' I said, mounting my horse. My guide, who was holding the stirrup for me, again tried to catch my eye. I responded by shrugging my shoulders, as if to assure him that I was perfectly easy in my mind, and we set off on our way.

Antonio's mysterious signs, his general air of uneasiness, and some remarks that the stranger had let slip, especially his tale of the thirty-league gallop and the implausible explanation he had offered for it, had already enabled me to form an opinion about my travelling companion. I had no doubt that the man I was dealing with was a smuggler, or perhaps a robber. But what odds was it to me? I knew the Spanish character well enough to be quite certain that I had nothing to fear from a man who had shared food and tobacco with me. His very presence was a guarantee of protection, should we run into any trouble. Besides, I was delighted at this chance to learn what a brigand is like. It isn't every day that you encounter one, and there is a certain pleasure in finding yourself in the presence of a dangerous individual, especially when you sense that he is feeling mild and amenable.

I was hoping gradually to induce the stranger to confide in me, and, ignoring the glances my guide kept darting at me, I led the conversation round to the topic of highwaymen. Naturally I spoke of them with respect. There was at that time in Andalusia a famous bandit by the name of José-María, whose exploits were on everyone's lips. 'Perhaps this is José-María,' I said to myself. I recounted the tales I knew of this hero, all of which showed him in a favourable light, and I was vocal in my admiration for his valour and magnanimity.

'José-María is nothing but a scoundrel,' said the stranger coldly.

'Is he passing judgement on himself or simply being over-modest?' I wondered; for, by dint of studying my companion, I had managed to fit him to the description of José-María I had seen displayed on the gates of so many towns in Andalusia. 'Yes, it's him all right: fair hair, blue eyes, large mouth, good teeth, small hands; a fine shirt, velvet jacket with silver buttons, white hide gaiters, a bay horse. . . . No doubt about it! But I shall respect his incognito.'

We arrived at the *venta*. It was as he had described it, that is to say, one of the most wretched I had yet encountered. One large room did duty as kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom. A fire burned on a flat stone hearth in the middle of the room and the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof, or rather hovered beneath it in a pall a few feet above the ground. Half a dozen old mule blankets lay on the ground along one wall: these were the travellers' beds. Twenty yards from the house, or rather from the single room I have just described, stood a sort of shed which served as a stable. The only human beings to be found in this charming abode, at any rate at that moment, were an old woman and a small girl of 10 or 12, both the colour of soot and dressed in squalid rags. 'So this', I said to myself, 'is all that is left of the population of ancient Munda Baetica! O Caesar, o Sextus Pompey, how astonished you would be if you were to return to the world!'

'Ah! Señor don José!' the old woman exclaimed in surprise, on seeing my companion.

Don José scowled and raised his hand in a gesture of authority which at once silenced the old woman. I turned towards my guide and, by a scarcely perceptible sign, intimated to him that he could tell me nothing I did not already know about the man in whose company I was going to spend the night.

Supper was better than I had expected. On a small, low table, we were served an aged fowl in a white sauce, with rice and large quantities of peppers, followed by peppers fried in oil, and to finish with, *gazpacho*, a sort of salad consisting of peppers*. Three such highly seasoned dishes caused us to have frequent recourse to a skin of Montilla wine, which proved to be delicious. After we had eaten, noticing a mandolin hanging on the wall (there are mandolins everywhere in Spain) I asked the little girl who was serving us whether she could play it.

'No,' she replied, 'but don José plays, and very well, too.'

'Be so good as to sing me something,' I said to him. 'I am passionately fond of your national music.'

'I can refuse nothing to such a good señor, who gives me such excellent cigars,' exclaimed don José good-humouredly. He took the mandolin that was handed to him, and sang to his own accompaniment. His voice was rough but agreeable, the melody plaintive and exotic. Of the words I understood nothing.

'Unless I am mistaken,' I said, 'the song you have just sung is not Spanish. It resembles the *zortziko* I have heard in the Basque Provinces,[1] and the words must be in Basque.'

'Yes,' replied don José, his face growing sombre. He placed the mandolin on the ground and, folding his arms, gazed at the dying fire with an expression of profound melancholy. By the light of a lamp placed on the little table, his face, its expression at once noble and fierce, reminded me of Milton's Satan*. Perhaps, like him, my companion was thinking of the abode he had left behind and of the exile he had earned by some transgression. I tried to rekindle the conversation but he did not respond, remaining immersed in his sad thoughts. The old woman had already gone to bed in a corner of the room screened off by a tattered blanket that hung from a rope. The little girl had followed her into this retreat reserved for the fair sex. At this point my guide rose and asked me to follow him to the stable; but at his words don José suddenly came to, and asked him abruptly where he was going.

'To the stable,' answered the guide.

'What for? The horses have enough fodder. Sleep here, the señor will let you.'

'I'm afraid the señor's horse may be sick. I should like the

[1] The privileged provinces, enjoying particular *fueros* (rights): Álava, Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, and part of Navarre. Basque is the language of the region.

señor to see for himself. Perhaps he will know what must be done.'

It was obvious that Antonio wanted to speak to me in private; but I was anxious not to arouse don José's suspicions and, at this stage in the proceedings, it seemed to me that the best course was to show complete trust. So I said to Antonio that I knew nothing about horses and that I wanted to sleep. Don José followed him to the stable, whence he soon returned alone. He told me that there was nothing wrong with the horse, but that my guide considered it such a priceless animal that he was rubbing it down with his jacket to make it sweat, and proposed to devote the rest of the night to this recreation. Meanwhile I had stretched myself out on the mule blankets, carefully wrapped in my coat so as to avoid contact with them. Don José asked my pardon for taking the liberty of joining me, then lay down by the door, after first priming his blunderbuss, which he was careful to place beneath the pannier he was using as a pillow. We wished one another goodnight, and five minutes later we were both sound asleep.

I had thought I was tired enough to be able to sleep in such surroundings; but, after an hour, I was roused from my first slumbers by a highly disagreeable itching sensation. As soon as I had ascertained its cause I got up, convinced that it was better to spend the rest of the night out of doors than beneath that inhospitable roof. I tiptoed to the door, stepped over the spot where don José lay enjoying the sleep of the just, and managed to leave the house without waking him. Beside the door was a wide wooden bench; I stretched myself out on it and tried to make myself comfortable for the night. I was about to fall asleep for the second time when I saw in front of me what looked like the silhouettes of a man and a horse, both moving in total silence. I sat up, and recognized Antonio. Surprised to see him out of the stable at such an hour, I rose and went to meet him. He had halted, having already seen me.

'Where is he?' asked Antonio softly.

'In the *venta*. He's asleep, the bugs don't bother him. But why are you taking the horse away?'

Then I noticed that, in order to avoid making any noise as they left the outhouse, Antonio had carefully wrapped the animal's hooves in the remnants of an old blanket.

'Talk more quietly, for God's sake,' said Antonio. 'You don't know who that man is. It's José Navarro, the most notorious bandit in Andalusia. I've been trying to warn you all day, but you chose to ignore my signs.'

'What does it matter to me if he's a bandit?' I replied. 'He hasn't robbed us, and I'll lay odds he doesn't intend to.'

'That's all very well. But there's a reward of two hundred ducats for anyone who turns him in. I know of a lancers' post a league and a half from here, and before the night's out I shall be back, with a few strong lads. I would have taken his horse but it's so vicious that no one but Navarro can go near it.'

'Devil take you,' I said to him. 'What harm has the wretched man done you, that you should denounce him? Besides, are you certain he's the brigand you say he is?'

'Absolutely. Just now he followed me into the stable and said to me: "You're acting as if you recognize me. If you tell the good señor who I am I'll blow your brains out." Stay by him, señor, you have nothing to fear. So long as he knows you are here he will suspect nothing.'

As we spoke, we had already come far enough away from the *venta* for the horseshoes to be inaudible. In no time at all Antonio had removed the rags he had wrapped around the horse's hooves and was preparing to mount. I tried pleading with him and threatening him in an attempt to make him stay.

'I am a poor devil, señor,' he said. 'I can't afford to turn down two hundred ducats, especially when it means ridding the countryside of the likes of that vermin. But be on your guard: if Navarro wakes up he'll go for his blunderbuss, and then you'd best watch out! As for me, it's too late for me to turn back now. You must do whatever you think best.'

The wretch was in the saddle. He spurred his horse, and I had soon lost sight of him in the darkness.

I was extremely vexed with my guide, and somewhat uneasy. After a moment's reflection I made up my mind and returned to the *venta*. Don José was still sleeping, no doubt taking the opportunity to recover from the fatigue of several

eventful days and nights. I had to shake him roughly to wake him. Never shall I forget his fierce look and the way he reached for his blunderbuss, which, as a precaution, I had placed some distance from his bed.

'Señor,' I said to him, 'I must ask you to forgive me for waking you, but I have a silly question I must put to you: would you be glad to see half a dozen lancers arrive here?'

'Who told you of this?' he asked menacingly, leaping to his feet.

'What does it matter where I heard the information, so long as it is true?'

'Your guide has betrayed me! But he'll pay for it. Where is he?'

'I don't know . . . in the stable, I think. But I was told . . .'

'Who told you? It can't have been the old woman.'

'No one I know. . . . Look, without more ado, have you got reason to leave before the soldiers arrive, or haven't you? If you have, waste no time, if not, goodnight and please forgive me for interrupting your sleep.'

'Ah, that guide of yours! I distrusted him from the start. But I'll settle with him! Farewell, señor. May God repay you the service I owe you. I am not so thoroughly evil as you suppose. . . . Yes, there is still something within me that deserves the pity of a man of honour. Farewell, señor; my one regret is that I cannot repay you.'

'In return for what I have done for you, don José, promise me that you will suspect no one, and renounce all thoughts of vengeance. Here, take some cigars for your journey; *bon voyage*!' And I offered him my hand.

He shook it without replying, picked up his blunderbuss and his pannier, and, after saying a few words to the old woman in some argot I could not understand, he ran to the outhouse. A few moments later I heard him gallop off into the countryside.

I returned to my bench and lay down, but I did not fall asleep again. I asked myself whether I had been right to save a robber, and perhaps a murderer, from the gallows, merely because I had shared some ham and some Valencian-style rice with him. Had I not betrayed my guide, who was upholding

the cause of law and order? Had I not exposed him to the risk of incurring a blackguard's vengeance? Yes, but what about the obligations of hospitality? Primitive notions, I said to myself; I shall be answerable for all the crimes this bandit goes on to commit. Yet can one dismiss as primitive that instinctive call of conscience which is resistant to all reasoning? Perhaps, in the delicate situation in which I found myself, it would not have been possible for me to escape without some self-reproach. I was still in a state of complete uncertainty as to the rights and wrongs of my action when I saw half-a-dozen horsemen appear, with Antonio prudently bringing up the rearguard. I went to meet them and informed them that the bandit had fled over two hours earlier. Questioned by the corporal, the old woman replied that she knew Navarro but that, since she lived alone, she would never have dared risk her life by denouncing him. She added that when he came to her inn it was his habit always to leave in the middle of the night.

I had to go some leagues out of my way in order to present my passport and sign a statement before an alcalde, after which I was permitted to resume my archaeological investigations. Antonio bore me a grudge, suspecting that it was I who had prevented him from collecting the two hundred ducats' reward. However, we parted amicably in Córdoba, where I gave him the largest tip the state of my finances would allow.

II

I spent some days in Córdoba. I had been referred to a manuscript in the library of the Dominican friary, in which I was to find some interesting information on ancient Munda. The friars made me very welcome, and I spent my days in their friary and my evenings walking about the town.

Towards sunset in Córdoba, many people with nothing better to do congregate on the street above the right bank of the Guadalquivir. At this spot, the air is heavy with the stench from a tannery that still produces the fine leather for which the region has long been famous; but this is a small price to pay for the sight with which the spectator is rewarded. A few minutes before the angelus a large number of women gather at

the river's edge below the street, which is on a fairly high embankment. No man would venture to mingle with that company. As soon as the angelus had been rung, night is deemed to have fallen. At the last stroke of the bell all these women remove their clothes and leap into the water. A pandemonium of shouts and laughter ensues. From the street above, the men gaze at the bathers, peering in a vain attempt to see what is going on. Yet those white and indistinct forms visible against the dark azure of the river set poetic minds at work, and with a little effort it is not difficult to imagine one is watching Diana and her nymphs bathing, without the risk of incurring the fate of Actaeon*.

There is a story that some wags once got up a subscription in order to bribe the cathedral bell-ringer to ring the angelus twenty minutes before the appointed time. Although it was still broad daylight the nymphs of the Guadalquivir did not hesitate and, taking their cue from the angelus rather than from the sun, they performed their ablutions—which are always of the simplest—with a clear conscience. I was not present on that occasion. During my visit the bell-ringer was incorruptible, the twilight impenetrable, and only a cat could have distinguished between the most wizened old crone that sold oranges and the prettiest girl in Córdoba.

One evening at dusk I was leaning on the parapet of the embankment, smoking, when a woman came up the flight of steps that led down to the river, and sat down near me. In her hair was a large spray of jasmine, whose flowers give out an intoxicating scent in the evening. She was simply, even poorly, dressed, all in black, like most working-class girls in the evenings. (Respectable women wear black only in the morning; in the evening they dress *a la francesa*.) As she drew level with me, the girl, who had been bathing, allowed the mantilla covering her head to fall back over her shoulders and, *by the dark light that shines down from the stars**, I saw that she was slight, young, good-looking, and had very large eyes. I at once threw away my cigar. She understood this very Gallic gesture of politeness, and hastened to tell me that she enjoyed the smell of tobacco, and that she even smoked herself when she could get hold of the mild cigarettes she liked. By good

fortune I had a few of these in my case, and I lost no time in offering her some. She condescended to take one, and lit it from a piece of burning rope brought to us by a child for a small payment. As our tobacco-smoke mingled, the beautiful bather and I conversed together for so long that we found ourselves almost alone on the embankment. I thought it would not be indiscreet to propose going to have an ice at the *nevería*.[1] After a modest hesitation, she accepted the invitation; but before deciding, she asked what time it was. I made my watch strike the hour, and this seemed to astonish her a great deal.

'What ideas you foreigners dream up! Where are you from, señor? I suppose you are English?'[2]

'French, and your humble servant. And I take it you are from Córdoba, señorita, or señora?'

'No.'

'But you do come from Andalusia. I think I can tell that from your soft speech.'

'If you're so clever at recognizing people's accents, you must be able to guess what I am.'

'I think you come from the land of Jesus, two steps from paradise.' (I had learned this metaphorical description of Andalusia from my friend Francisco Sevilla*, the well-known picador.)

'Paradise! Round here they say that's not for the likes of us.'

'Then you must be Moorish, or . . . ' I stopped, hardly daring to say 'Jewish'.

'Come, come; you can see perfectly well that I'm a Gypsy. Do you want me to tell you *la baji*[3]? Have you heard people talk of Carmencita? That is my name.'

At that time, fifteen years ago, I was such an unbeliever that I did not recoil in horror at finding myself in the presence of

[1] Café with an ice-house, or rather a snow-store. Few villages in Spain cannot boast a *nevería*.

[2] In Spain, any traveller not carrying samples of calico or silk is taken for an Englishman (*Inglesito*). The same is true in the Levant. At Chalcis I had the honour to be introduced as a *Μιλόρδος Φραντζέσος* (French Milord).

[3] To tell your fortune.

a witch. Very well, I said to myself; last week I dined with a highwayman, so today why not eat ice-cream with a servant of the devil? A traveller should try to see everything.

I had another motive for cultivating her acquaintance. After leaving school I had, I confess to my shame, spent some time studying the occult sciences, and had even tried several times to call up the spirit of darkness. Long since cured of my interest in such pursuits, I was nevertheless still curious about all forms of superstition, and was looking forward to learning what heights the magic art had attained among the Gypsies.

As we talked, we had entered the *nevería*, and we sat at a small table lit by a candle enclosed in a glass globe. I now had a chance to examine my *gitana* at leisure, whilst a few respectable folk stared at me over their ices, amazed to see me in such company.

I very much doubt that Señorita Carmen was of pure Gypsy stock; at any rate, she was infinitely prettier than any other woman of her race I had ever encountered. According to the Spaniards, for a woman to be beautiful she must have thirty positive qualities; or, to put it another way, it must be possible to apply to her ten adjectives each of which describes three parts of her person. For instance, she must have three things that are dark: dark eyes, dark eyelashes, and dark eyebrows; three that are delicate: her hands, her lips, and her hair; and so forth—for the rest, see Brantôme*. My Gypsy-girl could not lay claim to such perfection. Her skin, though perfectly smooth, was nearly the colour of copper. Her eyes were slanting, but remarkably wide; her lips rather full, but finely chiselled, affording a glimpse of teeth whiter than blanched almonds. Her hair, perhaps rather coarse, and black with a blue sheen like a raven's wing, was long and shining. Not to weary you with too lengthy a description, I will sum her up by saying that for every fault she had a quality which was perhaps all the more striking from the contrast. She had a strange, wild beauty, a face that was disconcerting at first, but unforgettable. Her eyes in particular had an expression, at once voluptuous and fierce, that I have never seen on any human face. 'Gypsy's eye, wolf's eye' is a phrase Spaniards apply to people with keen powers of observation. If you don't

have time to visit the zoo in the Jardin des Plantes to study the look in a wolf's eye, watch your cat when it is stalking a sparrow.

Naturally it would have been ridiculous to have one's fortune told in a café, so I asked the pretty witch to allow me to accompany her to her home. She raised no objection, but again wanted to know how the time was passing, and again asked me to make my watch strike the hour.

'Is it really gold?' she asked, scrutinizing it with excessive attention.

Night had fallen when we left; most of the shops were shut, and the streets almost deserted. We crossed the bridge over the Guadalquivir, and in an outlying district we stopped in front of a house of anything but palatial appearance. A child opened the door to us. The Gypsy spoke a few words to it in a language I did not recognize, but which I subsequently realized was Romany, or *chipe calli*, the language of the Gypsies. The child at once took itself off, leaving us in a fairly large room whose sole furnishings consisted of a small table, two stools, and a chest—unless you include the jug of water, a heap of oranges, and a bundle of onions.

As soon as we were alone the Gypsy took from the chest a pack of cards that seemed to have come in for a lot of use, a magnet, a dried chameleon, and various other paraphernalia of her art. Then she told me to cross my left palm with a silver coin, and the magic ceremonies commenced. I need not tell you of her predictions; as for her way of going about things, she was obviously no mean sorceress.

Unfortunately it was not long before we were disturbed. The door was suddenly flung violently open and a man swathed from head to foot in a brown cloak entered the room, upbraiding the Gypsy in the most uncivil fashion. I did not understand what he said, but the tone of his voice made it clear that he was in an extremely bad temper. On seeing him the Gypsy showed neither surprise nor anger, but ran up to meet him and, with extraordinary volubility, spoke several sentences to him in the mysterious language she had already used in my presence. The word *payllo*, which recurred often, was the only one I understood. I knew this to be the word

Gypsies use to refer to any man not of their own race. Supposing myself to be the man under discussion, I was ready for an awkward scene; I already had my hand on the leg of one of the stools and was calculating the precise moment at which it would be appropriate to throw it at the intruder's head. The man pushed the Gypsy away roughly, advanced towards me, then, taking a step back, said:

'Ah, señor! It's you!'

Looking at him, I recognized my friend don José. At that moment I rather regretted not having left him to hang.

'Why, it's you, my dear fellow!' I exclaimed, with the heartiest laugh I could muster. 'The señorita was on the point of telling me some most interesting things when you interrupted us.'

'The same old story! This has got to stop!' he said between his teeth, fixing her with a ferocious look.

Meanwhile the Gypsy went on speaking to him in her language. She gradually became more excited. Her eyes grew bloodshot, her expression terrifying, her features contorted, and she stamped her foot. She seemed to be exhorting him to take some course of action about which he was showing some hesitation. What it was, I thought I understood only too well from the way she moved her little hand quickly back and forth under her chin. I was tempted to believe that they were talking of cutting someone's throat, and I had my suspicions that the throat in question might be my own.

Don José responded to this torrent of eloquence with only a few brief utterances. At this the Gypsy darted him a look of profound scorn; then, seating herself cross-legged in a corner of the room, she selected an orange, peeled it, and began to eat it.

Don José took me by the arm, opened the door, and led me out into the street. We walked about two hundred paces in total silence. Then, extending his hand, he said:

'Straight ahead, and you'll come to the bridge.'

At once he turned his back on me and walked rapidly away. I returned to my inn feeling a trifle sheepish, and more than somewhat annoyed. To make matters worse, when the time came to undress I discovered that my watch was missing.

Various considerations prevented me from going next day to claim it back, or from requesting the *corregidor** to be so good as to have it traced. I finished my work on the Dominicans' manuscript and left for Seville. After several months' wanderings through Andalusia, the time came to return to Madrid, and I had once again to pass through Córdoba. I did not intend to stay there long, for I had taken a dislike to that beautiful town and to the lady bathers of the Guadalquivir. However, I had to see a few friends again and deliver some messages, and this entailed my spending three or four days in the ancient capital of the Moslem princes.

As soon as I reappeared at the Dominican friary, one of the friars who had always shown great interest in my research on the site of Munda welcomed me with open arms, exclaiming:

'God be praised! Welcome, my dear friend. We all took you for dead, and I myself have recited any number of *Paters* and *Aves* for the salvation of your soul—not that I regret them. So they didn't murder you—for we know that you were robbed.'

'How come?' I asked him in some surprise.

'Yes, indeed: you know that fine repeater watch you used to make strike the hour, in the library, when we told you it was time to go to service? Well, it's been found, and it will be returned to you.'

'It's true that I'd mislaid it,' I broke in, somewhat abashed.

'The scoundrel is behind bars, and since he was known to be a man who would shoot a Christian to rob him of a peseta, we were scared to death he'd done away with you. I'll go with you to the *corregidor* and we'll get them to return your beautiful watch to you. Then, when you're back in France you won't be able to say there's no justice here in Spain.'

'Quite frankly,' I said to him, 'I'd sooner lose my watch than give evidence against some poor wretch that will lead to his being hanged, especially because, well . . .'

'Oh, set your mind at rest. He's been tried on a number of other counts, and you can't hang a man twice. Besides, it's not a question of hanging: the man who robbed you is an *hidalgo*, so in two days' time he will be garrotted, with no reprieve.[1]

[1] In 1830 this was still the privilege of the nobility. Today, under the constitutional regime, commoners have won the right to be garrotted.

So you see, one robbery more or less will make no difference to his case. Would to God he had only stolen! But he has committed a number of murders, each more hideous than the one before.'

'What is his name?'

'In these parts he goes by the name of José Navarro, but he has another name, a Basque one, that you and I could never hope to pronounce. Look, he's not the sort of man one encounters every day, and since you like getting to know the idiosyncrasies of our country, you mustn't miss this opportunity of learning how felons take their leave of the world here in Spain. He's in the prison chapel.* Brother Martínez will take you to see him.'

My friend the Dominican friar was so insistent that I should see the preparations for this *'verry preety leetle hanging'** that I could not refuse the offer. I went to see the prisoner, taking with me a packet of cigars which, I hoped, would help him to overlook my indiscretion.

I was ushered in to don José's presence as he was eating his meal. He nodded to me rather coldly and thanked me politely for the gift I had brought him. After counting the cigars in the packet I had put at his disposal, he selected a few and returned the rest to me, remarking that he would not be needing more.

I asked him whether, with money or the influence of my friends, there was anything I could do to mitigate his fate. At first he shrugged his shoulders, smiling sadly; then, on second thoughts, he asked me to have a mass said for the salvation of his soul.

'And would you have another one said, for someone who has offended you?' he added timidly.

'Certainly, my friend,' I said. 'Though to the best of my knowledge no one in this country has offended me.'

He took my hand and shook it gravely. After a moment's silence he went on:

'May I be so bold as to ask you to do something else for me? When you return to your country, perhaps you will be passing through Navarre. At any rate you'll be going through Vitoria, which is not very far from there.'

'Yes,' I said, 'I shall indeed be passing through Vitoria. But it's not inconceivable that I may make a detour in order to visit Pamplona, and I'm sure I would be glad to go out of my way on your behalf.'

'If you go to Pamplona you'll see plenty of things to interest you—it's a beautiful town. I will give you this medallion.' (He showed me a small silver medallion which hung from a chain round his neck.) 'You can wrap it up . . .'—he paused for a moment to control his emotion—'and deliver it, or see it is delivered, to an old woman whose address I shall give you. You should say I am dead, but not how I died.'

I promised to carry out his commission. I saw him again the next day, part of which I spent with him. It was then that he told me the sad tale you are about to read.

III

'I was born,' he said, 'in Elizondo, in the valley of Baztán. My name is don José Lizarrabengoa, and you are familiar enough with Spain, senor, to be able to tell at once from my name that I am a Basque and an Old Christian*. If I call myself *don*, it is because I am entitled to do so, and if we were in Elizondo I would show you my genealogy on parchment. They wanted me to go into the Church, and I was given some schooling, but little good did it do me. I was too fond of playing pelota—that was my undoing. When we Navarrese play pelota we don't spare a thought for anything else. Once when I'd won a game, a lad from Álava province picked a quarrel with me. We took up our *maquilas,*[1] and once again I was the victor; but I had to leave the province as a result.

'I met up with some dragoons and enlisted in the Almansa Cavalry Regiment. We mountain folk are quick to learn military ways. I soon became a corporal, and had already been promised promotion to sergeant when it was my misfortune to be put on guard at the cigar factory in Seville. If you've been to Seville you must have seen that big building* outside the town walls, near the Guadalquivir. I can still picture the

[1] Iron-tipped sticks used by the Basques.

gate with the guard on duty outside. The Spaniards play cards or sleep when they're on guard; but as a true man of Navarre I tried always to have something to keep me occupied. I was making a chain with some brass wire, so I could attach the priming needle for my rifle to it.

'Suddenly my comrades said: "There goes the bell—the girls will be coming back to work."

'You probably know, señor, that around four or five hundred women work in the factory. They roll the cigars in a large room in which men aren't allowed without a pass from the *Veinticuatro*,[1] because when it's hot the girls don't believe in over-dressing, especially the younger ones. When these factory-girls return to work after lunch, lots of young men go and watch them pass, and make all sorts of propositions to them. Few of the girls would refuse the offer of a mantilla made out of taffeta, and anyone with a taste for such sport has only to reach out for the fish to swim into his hand.

'While the others watched, I stayed on my bench near the gate. I was young then; I was still homesick, and I didn't believe any girl could be pretty unless she wore blue skirts and hair plaited over her shoulders.[2] Besides, Andalusian women frightened me; I wasn't yet used to them and their ways, forever mocking, never a serious word. So there I was engrossed in my chain when I heard some townsfolk saying, "Here comes the *gitanilla*." I raised my head, and saw her. It was a Friday; I'll never forget it. I saw Carmen, whom you know, and at whose place we met a few months ago.

'She was wearing a very short red skirt, beneath which you could see her white silk stockings with holes in them and dainty red morocco-leather shoes fastened with flame-coloured ribbons. Her mantilla was parted so as to reveal her shoulders and a big bunch of acacia flowers which she had in the front of her blouse. She had another acacia bloom in one corner of her mouth, and she moved forward swaying her hips like some filly out of the Córdoba stud. In my part of the world everyone

[1] The magistrate responsible for law and order, and for municipal administration.

[2] The usual costume of country women in Navarre and the Basque Provinces.

would have crossed themselves at the sight of a woman dressed like that; but there in Seville everyone paid her some risqué compliment on her appearance. She replied to them all, eyeing them archly, with her fist on her hip, brazen like the true Gypsy she was. At first I didn't find her attractive, and I returned to my task; but, acting as women and cats usually do, refusing to come when they are called, but coming when they are not called, she stopped in front of me and said, addressing me in the Andalusian manner:

' "*Compadre*, will you give me your chain, to keep the keys to my strongbox on?"

' "It's for my priming needle," I replied.

' "Your priming needle!" she laughed. "The señor must go in for lace-making, since he needs needles!" Everyone around us began to laugh. I could feel myself blushing and could think of nothing to say to her in reply.

' "Very well, my love," she went on. "Make me seven ells of black lace for a mantilla, needle-seller of my heart!"

'And taking the acacia flower from her mouth, she flicked it at me with her thumb, right between the eyes. Señor, it was like a bullet hitting me. I didn't know where to hide myself, I stood there like a block of wood. When she had gone into the factory, I saw the acacia flower that had fallen to the ground at my feet. I don't know what came over me, but I picked it up without my companions noticing and tucked it away in my tunic for safe keeping. That was my first piece of folly!

'I was still thinking about it two or three hours later when a porter arrived in the guardroom, breathless and with alarm written all over his face. He told us that a woman had been murdered in the big room where they roll the cigars, and that the guard would have to be sent in. The sergeant told me to take two men and go in and see. I picked two men and went on up. Just imagine, señor: the first thing I found when I went into the room was three hundred women in their undergarments and precious little else, all shouting, screaming, gesticulating, kicking up the most unholy row. On one side lay one of the women, sprawled flat on her back, with blood all over her and two knife-slashes across her face in the

shape of a letter X. Facing the injured woman, who was being helped by some of the better-natured girls, I saw Carmen, held by five or six of her cronies. The injured woman was shouting, "A priest, a priest! I'm dying!" Carmen said nothing. She was clenching her teeth and rolling her eyes like a chameleon.

' "Now what's all this?" I asked.

'I had great difficulty in discovering what had happened, for the factory-girls were all talking at once. The injured woman had apparently been boasting that she had enough money in her pockets to buy a donkey at the Triana* market. Carmen, who had a sharp tongue in her head, said, "Isn't a broomstick good enough for you, then?" Stung by the reproof, perhaps because she knew she wasn't blameless on that score, the other woman replied that she wasn't herself an authority on broomsticks, not having the honour to be a Gypsy or an adopted daughter of Satan, but that señorita Carmencita would shortly be making the acquaintance of her donkey, when the *corregidor* took her for a ride, with two lackeys following behind to keep the flies off her*.

' "I'll make some gashes on those cheeks of yours for the flies to drink from," said Carmen, "and I'll paint a chequer-board on them."[1] Thereupon she began slashing away, carving crosses on the woman's face with the knife she used for cutting the ends off the cigars.

'It was an open-and-shut case. I took Carmen by the arm. "Young lady," I said to her politely, "you must come with me." She darted me a look, as if of recognition; but then she said resignedly, "Let's go. Where's my mantilla?" She put it over her head so that only one of her big eyes was visible, and followed my two men, as meek as a lamb.

'When we arrived at the guardroom the sergeant said it was a serious matter, and that she must be taken to prison. I was again given the task of escorting her. I placed a dragoon on either side of her and marched behind them, as a corporal should on such occasions. We set off for the town. At first the Gypsy remained silent, but in the Street of the Serpent—you

[1] *Pintar un jabeque*, to paint a xebec. A xebec, a type of Spanish boat, generally has red and white checks painted along its sides.

know how it lives up to its name, the way it twists and turns* —she began by letting her mantilla fall to her shoulders, so as to show me her face with its cajoling expression, and, turning towards me as far as she could, she said:

' "Where are you taking me, officer?"

' "To prison, poor child," I replied as kindly as I was able, as every good soldier should speak to a prisoner, especially a woman.

' "Alas, what will become of me? Officer, have pity on me! You are so young, so kind!" Then, more quietly, she said: "Let me escape and I'll give you a piece of the *bar lachi*, that will make all women desire you."

'The *bar lachi*, señor, is a piece of lodestone with which the Gypsies claim you can cast all sorts of spells, if you know how to use it. Give a woman a piece grated into a glass of white wine, and she will find you irresistible. As solemnly as I could, I replied:

' "We aren't here to talk nonsense. You must go to prison; those are the orders, there's no help for it."

'We Basques have an accent that makes us easily recognizable to Spaniards, although not one of them can learn so much as a *bai, jaona*.[1] So it wasn't difficult for Carmen to guess that I was from the Basque Country. As you know, señor, the Gypsies have no country of their own. Being always on the move, they speak every language, and most of them are equally at home in Portuguese, French, Basque, or Catalan. They can even make themselves understood among the Moors and the English. Carmen had quite a fair knowledge of Basque.

' "*Laguna, ene bihotzarena*—companion of my heart," she said suddenly. "Are you from the Basque Provinces?"

'Our language is so beautiful, señor, that when we hear it spoken far from home our hearts leap at the sound of it.—I should like to have a Basque confessor,' the bandit added, more softly.

After a silence he went on.

' "I'm from Elizondo," I replied in Basque, deeply moved at hearing my language spoken.

[1] Yes, sir.

' "And I'm from Etxalar!" she said. "Your village is only four hours' journey from ours. I was kidnapped by Gypsies, who brought me to Seville. I've been working at the cigar factory so as to earn enough money to return to Navarre and be with my poor mother, who has no one but me to support her, and a little *baratz*[1] with a couple of dozen cider apple trees. Ah! how I wish I were back at home, among the white mountains! They insulted me because I wasn't from this land of thieves and pedlars of rotten oranges. And those sluts ganged up on me because I told them that all the *jaques*[2] of Seville with their knives wouldn't frighten one of our lads with his blue beret and his *maquila*. My comrade, my friend, will you do nothing to help a fellow-countrywoman?"

'She was lying, señor, as she always lied. I wonder whether that girl ever spoke one word of truth in her life; but whenever she spoke, I believed her—I couldn't help it. She spoke Basque atrociously, yet I believed her when she said she was from Navarre. You only had to look at her eyes, her mouth, and her complexion to tell she was a Gypsy. I was mad, I overlooked the most obvious things. I was thinking that if any Spaniards had taken it into their heads to speak ill of my homeland I would have slashed them across the face, exactly as she had just done to her companion. In short, I was behaving like a drunken man; I was beginning to talk like a fool, and I was on the point of acting like one too.

' "If I were to push you, my fellow-countryman, and if you were to fall," she continued in Basque, "it would take more than those two Castilian conscripts to stop me."

'As God is my truth, I forgot my orders, I forgot everything, and I said to her:

' "Well then, my dear, my sister, try. And may Our Lady of the Mountains be your aid!"

'At that moment we were passing one of those narrow alleys of which there are so many in Seville. Suddenly Carmen turned and punched me in the chest. I allowed myself to fall backwards. She leaped over me and began to run, showing us a fine pair of legs. "Run like a Basque", they say; she could

[1] Paddock, garden. [2] Braggarts.

run with the best of them, and her legs were as swift as they were shapely. I got up at once, but turned my lance[1] so as to block the alleyway, with the result that no sooner had my men started to pursue her than they found their way barred. Then I began to run too, and they followed after me, but there was no chance of our catching her, what with our spurs, our sabres, and our lances! In less time than it takes to tell, the prisoner had got away. Furthermore, all the gossips in the neighbourhood aided and abetted her in her escape, jeering at us and sending us off on the wrong scent. After much marching to and fro, we had to return to the guardroom without a certificate of receipt from the prison governor.

'To avoid punishment, my men said that Carmen had spoken to me in Basque; and, to be honest, it did seem rather unlikely that a strapping lad like me could so easily be floored by a punch from such a small girl. It all seemed a bit of a mystery, or rather it all seemed only too clear. When we came off guard I was reduced to the ranks and sentenced to a month's detention. It was the first punishment I'd earned during my time in the army. I could kiss goodbye to those sergeant's stripes I'd thought were as good as mine!

'My first days in prison were a very sad time for me. When I joined up I had imagined I would become an officer at the very least. My compatriots Longa and Mina became generals; Chapalangarra*, who, like Mina, is a liberal and an exile in your country, rose to the rank of colonel, and I've played pelota a score of times with his brother, who was just an ordinary lad like myself. Now I kept telling myself: "All the time you've served with a clean record has gone for nothing. You've earned yourself a black mark. In order to get back into your superiors' good books you'll have to work ten times harder than when you enlisted as a recruit!" And what had I got myself punished for? For the sake of a villainous Gypsy girl who had made a fool of me and who was doubtless going about the town stealing at that very moment. Yet I could not prevent myself from thinking of her. Would you believe it, señor, those silk stockings with the hole in, that she'd given me a good glimpse of when she ran away—I couldn't get them

[1] All Spanish cavalrymen are equipped with lances.

out of my mind. I used to look out into the street through the prison bars, and among all the women who went past I never saw a single one who could hold a candle to that devil in female form. And then, despite myself, I used to smell the acacia flower she had thrown at me, which was dry now, but still kept its scent. The girl was a witch, if ever there was one . . .

'One day the gaoler came in and gave me a loaf of Alcalá bread.[1] "Here," he said, "look what your cousin has sent you."

'I took the loaf, extremely surprised, since I didn't have a cousin in Seville. "Perhaps there's some mistake," I thought, looking at the bread. But it looked so appetizing and smelt so good that, without troubling to discover where it came from or who it was intended for, I determined to eat it. When I tried to cut it my knife encountered something hard. On investigating I found a small English file that had been slipped into the dough before the bread was baked. There was also a gold two-piastre coin in the loaf. There could be no further doubt: it was a present from Carmen. For the people of her nation freedom is everything, and they would set fire to a town if it meant avoiding a day's imprisonment. Besides, the girl was crafty, and this loaf was a way of pulling a fast one on the gaolers. In an hour, I could saw through the thickest bar with the little file, and with the two-piastre coin I could trade in my uniform greatcoat for civilian clothes at the nearest second-hand clothes shop.

'You can imagine that a man like myself, who had many times taken young eagles from their nests on our rocky crags, was not going to think twice before climbing from a window less than thirty feet above street level. But the truth of the matter was, I didn't want to escape. I still had my soldier's honour, and I considered desertion a great crime. Still, I was touched by this sign that I was not forgotten. When you're in prison, it's good to know you have a friend out there who is thinking of you. I was a bit offended by the gold coin, and

[1] Alcalá de los Panaderos, a small town two leagues from Seville, where delicious rolls are baked. They are said to owe their quality to the water of Alcalá, and are delivered to Seville in large quantities every day.

would have liked to give it back; but where was I to find my benefactor? It was easier said than done.

'After my ceremonial reduction to the ranks I thought I had nothing further to suffer; but I had to swallow one more humiliation. On leaving prison, I was ordered on duty and made to stand sentry as a private. You cannot imagine what a man of spirit feels in such circumstances. I think I would as soon have been shot. At least then you are out there alone in front of your troop; you feel you are of some importance, and that you are the centre of attention.

'I was put on sentry duty at the colonel's front door. He was a rich, good-natured young fellow, who believed in enjoying himself. All the young officers had been invited to his home, together with a number of townspeople, including some women—actresses, or so it was said. To me it seemed as if the whole town had arranged to congregate at his door so as to take a look at me.

'Suddenly the colonel's carriage arrived, with his batman seated on the box. Who should I see getting out but the *gitanilla*. This time she was decked out like an altar in her jewels and finery, all gold and ribbons. She wore a spangled dress, blue shoes that were also spangled, and she was covered from head to foot in flowers and braid. In her hand she held a tambourine. There were two other Gypsy women with her, a girl and an old woman. They always have an old woman to lead them, and an old man with a guitar, also a Gypsy, to play and accompany their dancing. As you know, Gypsies are often invited to social gatherings to entertain guests by performing their dance, the *romalis*, to say nothing of other forms of amusement.

'Carmen recognized me, and our eyes met. I don't know why, but at that moment I wished the ground would swallow me up. "*Agur, laguna*,"[1] she said. "Officer, you are mounting guard like a recruit!" And before I had found a word to say in reply, she was inside the house.

'The guests had all gathered in the patio and, in spite of the

[1] Good day, comrade.

crowd, through the grille[1] I could see more or less everything that was going on. I could hear the castanets and the tambourine, the laughter and cheers; sometimes I caught a glimpse of her head as she leaped up with her tambourine. Then I heard more officers saying a number of things to her that made the colour mount to my cheeks. I could not hear her replies. It was that day, I think, that I fell in love with her in earnest. Several times I felt like entering the patio, going up to those conceited idiots who were flirting with her, and running them all through with my sabre.

'My ordeal lasted a good hour. Then the Gypsies emerged and the carriage took them away. As she passed, Carmen looked at me again with that expression with which you're familiar, and said to me in an undertone: "My fellow Basque, people who enjoy good fried fish go to Triana to get it, at Lillas Pastia's tavern." Agile as a young goat she leaped into the carriage, the coachman whipped up his mules, and the whole happy band set off for heaven knows where.

'You can easily guess that the moment I came off duty I went to Triana. But first I had myself shaved and smartened myself up as though I was going on parade. She was at the tavern of Lillas Pastia, an old man who kept a fish restaurant, a Gypsy with a face as black as a Moor. Many townspeople used to go to his place to sample his wares, particularly, I suspect, since Carmen had taken up residence there.

' "Lillas," she said as soon as she saw me, "that's enough for today. *Mañana será otro día*![2] Come on, fellow-countryman, let's go for a walk."

'She covered her face with her mantilla, and I found myself in the street with her, with no idea where I was going.

' "Señorita," I said to her, "I believe I have you to thank for a present that was sent to me when I was in prison. The bread I ate; the file I shall use to sharpen my lance, and I'll

[1] Most houses in Seville have an inner courtyard surrounded by porticos, where one can sit in summer. The courtyard is covered by an awning which is kept moist during the day and drawn back in the evenings. The door leading on to the street is almost always open, and the passage leading to the courtyard (*el zaguán*) is barred by an elegant wrought-iron grille.

[2] Tomorrow is another day (Spanish proverb).

keep it as something to remember you by; but as for the money, you can have it back."

' "Why, he's still got the money!" she exclaimed with a laugh. "Just as well, too, I'm not exactly flush at present. But what does it matter?—a dog that roams will find a bone.[1] Why don't we squander the lot? You can treat me."

'We had taken the road back to Seville. As we entered the Street of the Serpent she bought a dozen oranges and got me to tie them up in my handkerchief. A little further on she also bought a loaf, some sausage, and a bottle of *manzanilla**; then finally she went into a confectioner's. She threw down on the counter the gold coin I had given back to her, together with another she had in her pocket, and some silver coins; after which she asked me to put down what I had. I only had a peseta and a few cuartos, which I gave her, deeply ashamed not to have more. I thought she was intending to buy the whole shop. She took all the best and most expensive items, *yemas*,[2] *turrón*,[3] and candied fruit, until the money had all been spent. I had somehow to carry it all in paper bags.

'You probably know the Calle del Candilejo, where there is a bust of don Pedro the Justicer.[4] It ought to have given me pause.

[1] *Chuquel sos pirela, cocal terela* (Gypsy proverb).

[2] Candied egg yolks.

[3] A kind of nougat.

[4] King Pedro I, known to us as Pedro the Cruel, whom Queen Isabel the Catholic used always to call Pedro the Justicer, liked to roam the streets of Seville in the evenings in search of adventure, like Caliph Haroûn-al-Raschid*. One night, in a back street, he fell foul of a man who was serenading his lady-love. They fought, and the King killed the amorous knight. Hearing the sound of swords an old woman leaned out of her window and lighted the scene with the small lamp (*candilejo*) she held in her hand. Now although he was agile and sturdy, don Pedro suffered from an extraordinary disability: when he walked his knee-joints cracked loudly. Hearing this sound, the old woman had no difficulty in recognizing him. The following day the *Veinticuatro* on duty came to submit his report to the King. 'Sire, a duel took place last night in such and such a street. One of the participants was killed.' 'Have you discovered the murderer?' 'Yes, Sire.' 'Why has he not already been punished?' 'Sire, I await your orders.' 'Enforce the law.' Now the King had just issued a decree ordering that duellists should be beheaded, and their heads exposed on the site of the duel. The *Veinticuatro* got out of this predicament like a man of spirit: he had the head sawn off a statue of the King, and exposed it in a recess halfway along the street where the murder had taken place. The

We stopped in that street, in front of an old house. She went into the alley and knocked at the entrance. A Gypsy woman, a true servant of Satan, opened the door for us. Carmen said a few words to her in Romany. At first the old woman grumbled. To placate her, Carmen gave her two oranges and a handful of sweets, and let her have a taste of the wine. Then she put her cloak on the woman's back and led her to the door, which she secured with the wooden bolt. As soon as we were alone she began to dance and laugh like a madwoman, singing, "You are my *rom*, I am your *romi*".[1] There I was, standing in the middle of the room, laden with all the things she had bought, not knowing where to put them. She threw everything on to the floor and flung her arms around my neck, saying, "I pay my debts! I pay my debts! That's the law of the *Calé*!"[2] What a day that was, señor! When I think of that day I forget about what awaits me tomorrow.'

For a moment the bandit was silent. Then, after relighting his cigar, he continued:

'We spent the whole of that day together, eating, drinking, and what have you. She ate sweets like a child of six, then crammed handfuls of them into the old woman's water jar. "That's to make some sherbet for her," she said. She took some *yemas* and spattered them against the wall. "Now the flies will leave us in peace," she said. She got up to every possible kind of trick and nonsense. I told her I would like to see her dance; but where were we to find any castanets? At once she took the old woman's only plate, broke it in pieces, and began to dance the *romalis*, clicking the bits of crockery

King and all the people of Seville found this an excellent jest. The street took its name from the lamp held by the old woman, the only witness to the event.

So runs the popular tradition. Zuñiga gives a rather different version of the story (see *Anales de Sevilla*, vol. II, p. 126). Whatever the truth of the matter, there is still a Calle del Candilejo in Seville, and a stone bust in the street, which is said to depict don Pedro. Unfortunately the bust is modern. In the seventeenth century the original had become badly worn, and the Town Council had it replaced by the one that can be seen today.

[1] *rom*, husband; *romi*, wife.

[2] *Calo*; feminine *calli*, plural *calé*. Literally 'black', the name by which the Gypsies refer to themselves in their own language.

just as if they were real castanets made of ivory or ebony. Rest assured, there was never a dull moment when that girl was around.

'Evening came, and I heard the drums sounding the retreat.

' "I must get back to barracks for roll-call," I said to her.

' "To barracks?" she said scornfully. "Are you a slave, that you must run at their beck and call? What a canary you are! You dress like one, and you act like one too![1] Go, then, since you're so chicken-hearted."

'I stayed, already resigned to a spell in the guardroom.

'In the morning, she was the first to talk about leaving. "Listen, Joseito," she said, "have I repaid you? Our law would say that I owed you nothing, since you are a *payllo*; but you're a good-looking boy and I liked you. Now we are quits. Good day to you."

'I asked her when I would see her again.

' "When you are less of a simpleton," she replied with a laugh. Then, more gravely, she went on: "Do you know, my friend, I think I love you a little. But it can't last, dog and wolf don't stay friends for long. Perhaps, if you were to submit to Gypsy law, I should like to become your *romi*. But that's all nonsense, such things can never be. No, believe me, my friend, you've got off lightly! You've had a brush with the devil—yes, the devil. He isn't always black, and he hasn't wrung your neck. I may wear wool but I'm not a sheep.[2] Go and place a candle before your *majari*,[3] she's certainly earned it. Come—once more, farewell. Think no more of Carmencita, or else she may wed you to a widow with wooden legs."[4]

'As she spoke she was unfastening the bolt that secured the door, and once out in the street she wrapped herself in her mantilla, turned on her heel and vanished.

'She was right. I would have been wise to think no more of her; but since that day in the Calle del Candilejo I could think of nothing else. I used to walk around all day in the hope of

[1] Spanish dragoons wear yellow.

[2] *Me dicas vriardâ de jorpoy, bus ne sino braco* (Gypsy proverb).

[3] The blessed one, i.e. The Virgin.

[4] The gallows, the widow of the last man hanged.

meeting her. I would ask the old woman and Pastia if they had any news of her. They both told me she had gone to Laloro[1]—that's what they call Portugal. No doubt Carmen had told them to say this, but I soon learned they were lying. A few weeks after my day in the Calle del Candilejo, I was on sentry duty at one of the town gates. A short distance from the gate, a breach had been made in the city wall. During the day men were working to repair it, and at night they posted a sentry to stop smugglers. That day I saw Lillas Pastia hanging about the guard-house and chatting with some of my fellow-soldiers. They all knew him, and his fried fish and fritters better still. He came up to me and asked if I had any news of Carmen.

' "No," I said.

' "Well, you soon will have, *compadre.*"

'He was not mistaken. That night I was put on sentry duty at the breach. As soon as the corporal had taken himself off, I saw a woman coming up to me. I knew instinctively that it was Carmen. However, I shouted, "Keep away! No one passes!"

' "Don't come that fierce act with me," she said, identifying herself.

' "Carmen! Is that you?"

' "Yes, my fellow-countryman. Let's get straight to the point: would you like to earn a *duro*? Some men are going to come by with some packages. Don't interfere with them."

' "No," I replied, "I must stop them from passing. Those are my orders."

' "Orders! Orders! You didn't think of that in the Calle del Candilejo!"

' "Ah!" I replied, overcome at the mere memory. "That was worth forgetting my orders for. But I want no money from smugglers."

' "Well then, if you don't want money, would you like us to go and eat again at old Dorotea's place?"

' "No," I said, half-choking with the effort. "I cannot."

' "Very well, if you're going to be difficult, I know who to

[1] The Red (Land).

go to. I'll invite your superior officer to come to Dorotea's with me. He seems a nice fellow, and he'll arrange for some lad to be posted sentry who sees only what he ought to see. Farewell, canary, I'll laugh the day the orders are to hang you."

'I was weak enough to call her back, and I promised to let the entire Tribe of Egypt pass, if need be, on condition I received the only reward I wanted. She at once swore to honour her promise the very next day, and ran to inform her friends, who were waiting a stone's throw away. There were five of them, Pastia among them, all laden with English merchandise. Carmen was acting as look-out. She was to give the alarm by clicking her castanets the moment she spotted the watch patrol; but she had no need to do so. The smugglers' business was done in a moment.

'The next day I went to the Calle del Candilejo. Carmen kept me waiting, and arrived in a bad temper. "I don't like having to ask people twice," she said. "You did more for me the first time without knowing whether you were going to get anything out of it. Yesterday you haggled with me. I don't know why I've come, I don't love you any more. Go on, get out of here! And there's a *duro* for your trouble!"

'I very nearly threw the money in her face, and it cost me an enormous effort to restrain myself from striking her. We quarrelled for an hour, then I left in a fury. I wandered around the town for some time, walking aimlessly this way and that, like a madman. In the end I went into a church, sat down in the darkest corner, and wept bitterly.

'Suddenly I heard a voice: "Dragon's tears, dragoon's tears—I shall make a love potion with them."

'I raised my eyes. Carmen stood before me.

' "Well, my fellow-countryman, are you still angry with me?" she asked. "It must be that I love you, whether I like the fact or not, for since you left me I don't know what's been the matter with me. You see, now it's my turn to ask you if you will come to the Calle del Candilejo."

'So we made it up. But Carmen's temperament was as capricious as the weather in our mountains, where the sun never shines more brightly than when a storm is imminent.

She had promised to see me again at Dorotea's, but she didn't turn up. And Dorotea again insisted that she had gone to Laloro on Gypsy business.

'Having learned from experience how much credence to lend this story, I looked for Carmen in all her usual haunts, and I called in at the Calle del Candilejo twenty times daily. One evening I was with Dorotea, whom I had almost won over by standing her the occasional glass of *anís*, when Carmen entered, followed by a young lieutenant from our regiment.

' "Go quickly!" she said to me in Basque. I stood there stunned, with fury in my heart.

' "What are you doing here?" asked the lieutenant. "Go on, make yourself scarce!"

'I could not move an inch, I stood stock-still as if paralysed. Angry that I did not move, and that I hadn't even taken off my forage cap, the officer seized me by the scruff of the neck and shook me roughly. I don't know what I said to him. He drew his sabre and I unsheathed my own sword. The old woman grabbed my arm, and the lieutenant gave me a cut on the forehead from which I still have the scar. I stepped back and elbowed Dorotea out of the way so that she fell back; then, as the lieutenant was pursuing me, I pointed my sword at him and he impaled himself on it. At this Carmen extinguished the lamp and, in her own language, told Dorotea to make her escape. I myself fled into the street and set off blindly at a run. I had the impression that someone was following me. When I became aware of my surroundings once more, I found that Carmen had not left me.

' "What a great fool you are, Canary!" she said. "You do nothing but put your foot in it! There, didn't I tell you I'd bring you bad luck? Still, there's a cure for every ill when you have a *Flamenca de Roma*[1] for a sweetheart. First of all, tie this handkerchief round your head and throw away that sword-belt. Wait for me in this alley. I'll be back in two minutes."

[1] A slang term for a Gypsy woman. *Roma* is not an allusion to the Eternal City, but to the nation of the Roma or 'married folk', a name by which the Gypsies refer to themselves. The first Gypsies seen in Spain probably came from the Low Countries: hence the name *flamenco* (Flemish).

'She vanished, and soon brought me back a striped cloak that she had fetched from somewhere or other. She made me take off my uniform and put the cloak on over my shirt. In that get-up, wearing the handkerchief with which she had bound the wound on my forehead, I looked not unlike one of those Valencian peasants who come to Seville to sell their *horchata*.[1] Then she took me into a house rather like Dorotea's, at the end of a small alley. She and another Gypsy woman washed and bandaged me better than any army surgeon would have done, and gave me something to drink. Finally they placed me on a mattress, and I fell asleep.

'The women had probably mixed into my drink some of those soporific drugs whose secret they possess, for I woke very late the following day. I had a bad headache and was a bit feverish. It took me some time to recall the terrible events in which I had been involved the day before. After dressing my wound, Carmen and her friend squatted on their heels by my mattress, and had what seemed to be a brief medical consultation in *chipe calli*. Then they both assured me that I would soon be well, but that I must leave Seville as soon as possible, since if I was caught there I would be shot without mercy.

' "Young man," said Carmen, "you'll have to find something to do. Now that the King no longer provides your rice and dried cod,[2] you'll have to give some thought to earning a living. You're too stupid to steal *à pastesas*,[3] but you are agile and strong. If you've got the pluck, take yourself off to the coast and become a smuggler. Didn't I promise to get you hanged? Better that than be shot. Besides, if you know how to set about it, you'll live like a prince, as long as the *miñones*[4] and the coastguards don't collar you."

'Such were the engaging terms in which that diabolical female spoke to me of the new career she had in store for me—the only one, to tell the truth, still open to me now that I had committed a capital offence. I must confess, señor, I

[1] A pleasant drink made from *chufas* (tiger-nuts), a bulbous root.
[2] The usual fare of the Spanish soldier.
[3] *Ustilar à pastesas*, to steal skilfully, rob without violence.
[4] Type of irregular infantry unit.

didn't need much persuading. I thought that such a rebellious and hazardous existence would bring me closer to her. I thought that from then on I could be sure of her love. I had often heard tell of a group of smugglers who roamed Andalusia on fine horses, blunderbuss in hand, each with his mistress riding pillion behind him. I could already picture myself trotting up and down the mountainsides with the pretty Gypsy girl seated behind me. When I spoke to her of it she laughed fit to burst, and told me that there was nothing to beat a night spent in the open, when each *rom* retires with his *romi* to their small tent, that consists of three hoops with a blanket laid over the top.

' "Once we are up in the mountains," I said, "I shall be sure of you! Then there'll be no lieutenants to share you with."

' "Ah! You're jealous!" she replied. "More fool you. How could you be so stupid? Can't you see that I love you, since I've never asked you for money?"

'When she talked like that I felt like strangling her.

'To cut a long story short, señor, Carmen procured me an outfit of civilian clothes, wearing which I left Seville unrecognized. I went to Jerez with a letter from Pastia to an *anís* merchant at whose place smugglers used to meet. I was introduced to these people, whose leader, who went by the name of El Dancaire, took me into his band. We set off for Gaucín, where I joined Carmen, who had arranged to meet me there. On our expeditions she acted as spy for our group, and there never was a better one. She was just back from Gibraltar, and had already made arrangements with the skipper of a vessel for the shipment of some English merchandise that we were to be on the coast to receive. We went to wait for it near Estepona, then we hid some of it up in the mountains; the rest we loaded up and took with us to Ronda. Carmen had gone on ahead of us. Once again it was she who told us when it was safe to enter the town.

'That first journey and a few of the subsequent ones were happy times. I preferred the life of a smuggler to that of a soldier. I used to give presents to Carmen. I had money and a mistress. I had few regrets, for, as the Gypsies say, a pleasurable itch is no itch at all.[1] Everywhere we were well received. My companions treated me well, and even showed me some marks of esteem. The reason for this was that I had killed a man, and there were some among them who did not have such an exploit on their conscience.

'But what was most important to me in my new life was that I saw Carmen often. She was more affectionate than ever towards me; yet she would not acknowledge in front of our companions that she was my mistress, and she had even made me swear every oath under the sun that I would say nothing to them of our relationship. I was so weak in the presence of this creature that I submitted to her every whim. Besides, it was the first time I had seen her behave with the reserve that befits a respectable woman, and I was simple enough to believe she really had turned over a new leaf.

'Our band, which consisted of eight or ten men, seldom met as a group except at critical moments, and usually we were scattered around the towns and villages in twos and threes. Each of us was supposed to have a trade: one was a coppersmith, another a horse-dealer; as for me, I used to trade in haberdashery, but I seldom showed myself in places of any size, on account of the trouble I'd got into in Seville. One day, or rather one night, we had arranged to rendezvous below Véjer de la Frontera. Dancaire and I arrived there before the rest of them. He seemed in high spirits.

' "We're going to be joined by another companion," he said to me. "Carmen's just pulled off one of her finest strokes. She's sprung her *rom* from the gaol at Tarifa."

'I was already beginning to understand Romany, which almost all my companions spoke, and at the word *rom* my blood suddenly ran cold.

' "What? Her husband? You mean she's married?" I asked our captain.

' "Yes," he replied. "To García the One-eyed, a Gypsy as cunning as she is. The poor lad was sentenced to hard labour. Carmen wormed her way so successfully into the prison surgeon's good graces that she's secured her husband's

[1] *Sarapia sat pesquital ne punzava.*

release. Ah, that girl's worth her weight in gold! She's been trying to get him out for two years now. Nothing worked, until they took it into their heads to change the surgeon. It seems she pretty soon managed to strike a bargain with the new one."

'You can imagine the joy with which I greeted this news. I soon met García the One-Eyed. He was certainly the ugliest monster a Gypsy ever gave birth to. Dark-skinned and darker still of soul, he was the most arrant rascal I've met in all my life. Carmen was with him, and when she called him her *rom* in my presence, you should have seen the looks she gave me, and the faces she pulled when García's back was turned. I was furious, and I didn't speak to her all that night.

'The next morning we had packed our bundles and were already on our way when we realized that a dozen horsemen were at our heels. The Andalusian braggarts, always full of murderous talk, at once grew faint-hearted. It was every man for himself. Dancaire, García, a good-looking lad from Écija whom they called El Remendado, and Carmen were the only ones to keep their presence of mind. The rest had abandoned the mules and run for the ravines where the horses could not follow them. We could not save our animals, and we hurriedly unloaded our choicest contraband and lifted it onto our backs, then tried to get away down the steepest slopes through the rocks. We threw our bundles ahead of us and followed them as best we could, careering downhill on our heels. All this time the enemy were sniping at us. It was the first time I'd been under fire, and it made little impression on me. When you are being watched by a woman, scorning death is nothing to be proud of. We all got away except for poor Remendado, who received a bullet in the back. I threw down my bundle and tried to pick him up.

' "You fool!" shouted García. "What business have we with a corpse? Finish him off, and don't go losing those cotton stockings!"

' "Drop him, drop him!" Carmen shouted at me.

'Exhaustion forced me to set him down for a moment in the shelter of a rock. García came forward and emptied his blunderbuss in Remendado's face.

' "It'd take a clever man to recognize him now," he said, looking at the face which a dozen bullets had reduced to a pulp.

'You see, señor, what an admirable life I led.

' "That evening we found ourselves in a copse, utterly spent, with nothing to eat, and our livelihood gone with the loss of our mules. What did that infernal García do but take a pack of cards from his pocket and, by the light of a fire they had lit, begin a round of cards with Dancaire. Meanwhile I lay looking up at the stars, thinking about Remendado and telling myself that I would as soon be in his place. Carmen was squatting near me, and from time to time she sang softly and rattled her castanets. Then, drawing close as if to whisper something to me, she kissed me two or three times, though something in me resisted her.

' "You are the Devil incarnate," I said to her.

' "Yes," she replied.

'After a few hours' rest she set off for Gaucín, and the next morning a little goatherd came and brought us bread. We spent the whole day there, and that night we headed for Gaucín. We were waiting for news from Carmen. None came. At daybreak we saw a muleteer preceding a well-dressed woman with a parasol and a little girl who seemed to be her servant. García said to us:

' "Here come two mules and two women, a present from Saint Nicholas*. I'd sooner have four mules, but never mind, I'll take charge of them!"

'He took his blunderbuss and went down towards the path, concealing himself amidst the scrub. Dancaire and I followed a little way behind. When we were within range we showed ourselves and shouted to the muleteer to stop. On seeing us, instead of showing alarm, which our unkempt appearance alone would have justified, the woman burst into peals of laughter.

' "Ah! the *lillipendi* take me for an *erani*!"[1] It was Carmen, but so well disguised that I would not have recognized her if she had spoken in another language. She leaped from her

[1] The fools take me for a fine lady.

mule, spoke for a few moments in an undertone with Dancaire and García, then said to me: "Canary, we shall meet again before they hang you. I'm going to Gibraltar on Gypsy business. You'll soon hear word of me."

'We parted after she had told us of a place where we could lie low for a few days. That girl was like a guardian angel for our band. We soon received some money from her, and, what was more important to us, the information that on such-and-such a day two wealthy Englishmen would be setting out to travel by a particular road from Gibraltar to Granada. A word to the wise is enough. They were well and truly laden with gold sovereigns. García wanted to kill them, but Dancaire and I vetoed this. Apart from their shirts, of which we had urgent need*, we took only their money and their watches.

'Señor, a man turns into a villain without realizing what is happening to him. You fall for a pretty girl, get into a fight over her; misfortune befalls you; you have to take to the mountains; and from smuggling you've turned to robbery before you know where you are. We thought things had got too hot for us round Gibraltar after the business with the Englishmen, and we withdrew into the mountains around Ronda. I remember you once mentioned José-María to me; it was there that I met him. He used to bring his mistress with him on his expeditions. She was a pretty girl, sensible, modest, and well-mannered, who never spoke an uncivil word and was utterly devoted to him. In return he made her very unhappy. He was always chasing after other girls, he ill-treated her, and sometimes he'd take it into his head to get jealous. Once he stabbed her; she only loved him the more for it. Women are like that, especially Andalusian women. She was proud of the scar on her arm, and used to show it to people as if it were the most beautiful thing in the world. What's more, José-María was the worst companion imaginable! On one of our expeditions he fixed things so that he reaped all the profits, while we got all the blows and the inconvenience. But let me return to my story.

'We had heard no news of Carmen. Dancaire said, "One of us must go to Gibraltar to find out what's happened to her. She must have been organizing some deal. I'd go myself, but I'm too well known there."

' "The same goes for me," said García. "I've played so

many tricks on the Lobsters![1] And as I've only got one eye I'm not easy to disguise."

' "Had I better go then?" I asked, delighted at the very thought of seeing Carmen again. "Tell me what has to be done."

'The others said to me: "Make arrangements to go by boat, or overland by way of San Roque, whichever you prefer, and when you get to Gibraltar, ask at the port for the address of a woman called La Rollona, who sells chocolate. When you've found her she'll tell you what the score is over there."

'It was agreed that we would all three set off for the Sierra de Gaucín, and that at Gaucín I would leave my two companions and travel on to Gibraltar disguised as a fruit seller. At Ronda a man who was in league with us had procured me a passport. At Gaucín I was given a donkey. I loaded it with oranges and melons and started on my way. On arrival at Gibraltar I found that La Rollona was well known there, but that she had died, or else gone to *finibus terrae*.[2] I was satisfied that her disappearance explained how we had come to lose contact with Carmen. I put my donkey in a stable and, taking my oranges, I went about the town as if to sell them, but in reality to see whether I could find a familiar face. You find every kind of riff-raff there, from the four corners of the earth, and it's like the Tower of Babel, for you can't go ten paces along a street without hearing ten different languages spoken. I saw plenty of Gypsies, but I hardly dared trust them. We were weighing one another up—it was obvious that we were all crooked: the question was, whether we belonged to the same gang. After two days running around on a wild-goose chase, I had learned nothing concerning La Rollona or Carmen, and was thinking of making a few purchases before returning to my companions when, walking down a street at dusk, I heard a woman's voice at a window, calling out to me: "Orange seller!"

'I looked up and saw Carmen leaning from a balcony, in the

[1] Name given by Spanish common folk to the British on account of the colour of their uniform.
[2] To prison, or 'the devil knows where'.

company of an officer in a red uniform, with gold epaulettes and curled hair, every inch the wealthy aristocrat. Carmen herself was superbly dressed, all in silk, with a shawl over her shoulders and a gold comb in her hair; and, as usual, the creature was laughing fit to burst. In broken Spanish, the Englishman called to me to come up, saying that the lady wanted some oranges; and Carmen added in Basque: "Come up, and don't be surprised at anything you see."

'The fact is, nothing she did could have surprised me. I don't know whether I felt more joy or sorrow at finding her again. There was a tall, powdered English servant at the door, who ushered me into a magnificent drawing room. Carmen at once said to me in Basque:

' "You don't speak a word of Spanish, and you've never met me before." Then, turning to the Englishman, she went on: "I told you so. I could tell he was a Basque right away; you'll be able to hear what an odd language it is. Doesn't he look stupid, like a cat that's been caught in the larder!"

' "And you," I said to her in my own language, "look like an impudent jade, and I could cheerfully slash you across the face in front of your lover."

' "My lover!" she said. "Did you work that out all by yourself? You mean you're jealous of this idiot? You're even more of a simpleton than you used to be before our evenings in the Calle del Candilejo. Fool that you are, can't you see that at the moment I'm engaged in Gypsy business—and a brilliant stroke of business it is too. This house is mine; the Lobster's guineas will be mine. I've got him by the nose, and I'll lead him to a place there's no returning from."

' "And if you engage in any more Gypsy business of this sort," I said, "I'll make sure it's the last time you get the chance."

' "Oh, indeed? Are you my *rom*, to give me orders? García approves: what concern is it of yours? Don't you think you should be quite content to be the only one who can call himself my *minchorrò*?"[1]

' "What's he saying?" asked the Englishman.

[1] My lover, or rather, my passing fancy.

' "He says he's thirsty and could do with a drink," replied Carmen. And she fell back on a sofa, overcome with mirth at her translation.

'When that girl laughed, señor, there was no talking sensibly. Everyone laughed with her. The big Englishman began to laugh too, like the fool he was, and ordered the servant to bring me something to drink.

'While I was drinking she said: "You see that ring he has on his finger? If you like I'll give it to you."

' "I'd give a finger to be up in the mountains with your gentleman friend, and each of us with a *maquila* in his fist," I replied.

' "What does *maquila* mean?" asked the Englishman.

' "*Maquila* means an orange," said Carmen, still laughing. "It's a funny word for an orange, isn't it? He says he'd like to get you to eat some *maquila*."

' "Would he?" said the Englishman. "Well, bring some more *maquila* tomorrow."

'While we were talking, the servant entered and announced that dinner was served. At this the Englishman got up, gave me a piastre, and offered his arm to Carmen, as if she were incapable of walking without assistance. Still laughing, Carmen said to me:

' "I can't invite you to dinner, my friend; but tomorrow, as soon as you hear the drum for parade, come back, and bring some oranges with you. You'll find a room better furnished than the one in the Calle del Candilejo, and then you'll see whether I'm still your Carmencita. And afterwards we can discuss Gypsy business."

'I made no reply. From the street, I heard the Englishman calling to me, "Bring your *maquila* tomorrow!", and Carmen's peals of laughter.

'I left with no idea of what I would do, I hardly slept, and the next morning I found I was so angry with the treacherous creature that I resolved to leave Gibraltar without seeing her again; but, at the first roll of the drum, all my determination forsook me. I took my bundle of oranges and I hurried to the house where Carmen was staying. Her blind was half-open, and I could see one of her great dark eyes peeping round it,

watching out for me. The powdered servant ushered me in at once. Carmen sent him off on some errand, and as soon as we were alone, she gave vent to one of her hypocritical shrieks of mirth and flung her arms around my neck. I had never seen her so beautiful: decked out like a madonna, and perfumed, amid the silk upholstery and the embroidered curtains. Ah! and there was I, dressed like the robber I was.

' "*Minchorrò*!" said Carmen. "I feel like smashing this room to bits, setting fire to the house, and running off to the sierra." Then she was lavish in her caresses; she laughed, danced, and tore her flounces—a monkey could not have competed with her for capers, grimaces, and mischievousness.

'When she had calmed down, she said: "Listen, now to Gypsy business. I shall ask him to take me to Ronda, where I have a sister who is a nun . . ." (here more peals of laughter ensued). "The road takes us past a spot of which you will be notified. You'll all set upon him and strip him bare. The best thing would be to bump him off. But", she added, with the diabolical smile she wore at certain moments—and when she smiled like that, no one felt like returning her smile—"you know what you must do? Make sure García is the first to show himself. The rest of you hold back a little; the Lobster's brave, he's a good shot, and he's got good pistols. Am I making myself clear?" Her words were interrupted by another gust of laughter which made me shudder.

' "No," I said. "I hate García, but he is my comrade. Perhaps one day I'll rid you of him, but then we'll settle scores the way it's done in my part of the world. It's only chance that's made a Gypsy of me, and in certain respects I shall always remain a *Navarro fino*,[1] as the proverb says."

' "You are a fool, a simpleton, a real *payllo*," she retorted. "You're like the dwarf who thought he was big when he spat a long way.[2] You don't love me, get out of here."

'When she told me to go, I could not do so. I promised I would set off, go back to my companions, and wait for the

[1] A true man of Navarre.

[2] Gypsy proverb: *Or esorjié de or narsichislé, sin chismar lachinguel* (The most a dwarf can do is to spit a long way).

Englishman. In return, she promised to feign illness until the time came to leave Gibraltar for Ronda. I stayed another two days in Gibraltar. She had the nerve to come disguised to my inn to visit me. I set off. I had my own plans.

'I returned to our rendezvous, already knowing when and where Carmen and the Englishman would be passing. I found Dancaire and García waiting for me. We spent the night in a wood, beside a fire of pine-cones that made a wonderful blaze. I suggested a game of cards to García. He accepted. In the second game I accused him of cheating. He began to laugh. I threw the cards in his face. He went for his blunderbuss. I placed my foot on it and said to him:

' "They say you can fight with a knife like the best *jaque* in Málaga. Do you want to take me on?"

'Dancaire tried to separate us. I had already punched García two or three times. Anger had given him courage. He drew his knife, and I drew mine. We told Dancaire to keep his distance and let us fight it out fairly. Seeing that there was no way of stopping us, he stood aside. García was already crouched like a cat ready to spring at a mouse. He held his hat in his left hand to parry my thrusts, and his knife in front of him, in the Andalusian mode of defence. I took up the Navarrese stance, facing him head-on, with my left arm raised, my left leg forward, and my knife against my right thigh. I felt stronger than a giant. He flew at me like a dart. I turned on my left foot and he encountered empty air; but my knife found his throat, and went in so deep that my hand met his chin. I turned the blade so hard that it broke. It was over. A gush of blood as thick as my arm forced the blade out of the wound. He fell on his face as stiff as a post.

' "What have you done?" exclaimed Dancaire.

' "Listen," I said. "There wasn't room for both of us. I love Carmen, and I want no rivals. Anyway, García was a scoundrel, and I still remember what he did to poor Remendado. There are only two of us now, but we're men of honour. Come, will you have me as a friend, in life and death?"

'Dancaire offered me his hand. He was a man of 50.

' "To hell with these love affairs!" he exclaimed. "If you'd asked him for Carmen he would have sold her to you for a piastre. We are the only two left. How will we manage tomorrow?"

' "Leave it to me," I replied. "I don't care a damn for anyone or anything any more."

'We buried García and moved our camp two hundred paces further on. The next day Carmen and her Englishman passed with two muleteers and a servant. I said to Dancaire: "I'll see to the Englishman. Frighten the others off, they're not armed."

'The Englishman had courage. If Carmen hadn't jogged his arm I would have been a dead man. The long and the short of it was that I won Carmen back that day, and my first words were to tell her she was a widow.

'When she learned how it had come about, she said to me: "You will always be a *lillipendi*! García ought to have killed you. You and your Navarrese defence—why, he'd put paid to better fighters than you. It's because his time had come. So will yours."

' "And yours too," I replied, "if you are not a true *romi* to me."

' "So be it," she said. "More than once I've seen in the coffee-grounds that we would be together to the end. Bah! Time will tell!" And she clacked her castanets, as she always did when she wanted to banish some disturbing idea.

'It's easy to get carried away talking about oneself. All these details probably bore you, but I've almost finished.

'This life we were leading went on for quite some time. Dancaire and I had collected together a group of companions who were more reliable than the first lot, and we went in for smuggling, and sometimes, I must confess, for highway robbery too, but only as a last resort, when there was nothing else for it. Besides, we didn't ill-treat the travellers, and we contented ourselves with taking their money. For a few months I was happy with Carmen. She continued to be useful to us in our operations, keeping us informed of any good business that might come our way. At times she was in Málaga, at times in Córdoba or Granada; but at a word from me she would leave everything and come and join me in some remote *venta*, or even at our camp. Only once, in Málaga, did she give me any cause for uneasiness. I knew she had singled out a very rich merchant, on whom she was no doubt intending to try her Gibraltar trick again. In spite of everything Dancaire could say to dissuade me, I set off and entered Málaga in broad daylight. I looked for Carmen, and at once took her away with me. We had it out in a fierce altercation.

' "Do you know," she said to me, "that ever since you've been my *rom* in earnest, I've loved you less than when you were my *minchorrò*? I don't want to be plagued, still less ordered around. What I want is to be free and to do as I please. Take care not to overstep the mark. If you anger me I'll find some fine lad who will do to you what you did to One-Eyed García."

'Dancaire patched it up between us; but we had said things to one another which rankled, and things were never the same afterwards.

'Soon after, misfortune overtook us. We were surprised by soldiers. Dancaire was killed, along with two of my comrades. Two others were captured. I myself was seriously wounded and, but for my good horse, I would have been captured by the soldiers. At the end of my tether, and with a bullet lodged in my body, I went and hid in a wood with my only remaining companion. On dismounting I fainted, and I thought I was going to die in the undergrowth like a shot hare. My comrade carried me to a cave we knew, then he went to fetch Carmen. She was in Granada, and at once hastened to my side. For a fortnight she did not leave me for a moment. She did not sleep; she nursed me with skill and devotion such as no woman ever showed for her beloved.

'As soon as I was able to stand, she took me to Granada in the utmost secrecy. The Gypsy women find safe hiding places everywhere, and I spent more than six weeks in a house two doors away from the *corregidor* who was hunting me. More than once I looked from behind a shutter and saw him passing. At last I recovered. But I had pondered deeply whilst on my sick-bed, and I was planning to change my way of life. I spoke to Carmen of leaving Spain and trying to live honestly in the New World. She laughed at me.

' "We weren't born to plant cabbages," she said. "It is our destiny to live at the expense of the *payllos*. Listen, I've arranged some business with Nathan ben-Joseph in Gibraltar.

He's got some cotton goods ready to come through—it's only you he's waiting for. He knows you are alive, he's counting on you. What would our partners in Gibraltar say if you broke your word?"

'I allowed myself to be prevailed upon, and embarked again on my ugly trade.

'While I was in hiding in Granada there was a bullfight, to which Carmen went. On her return she talked a lot about a very skilful picador called Lucas. She knew the name of his horse, and how much he had paid for his embroidered jacket. I gave no thought to the matter. A few days later Juanito, my surviving comrade, told me he had seen Carmen with Lucas at a merchant's in the Zacatín. I began to be alarmed. I asked Carmen how and why she had got to know the picador.

' "We may be able to make use of him," she replied. "The river that makes a noise has either water or stones in it.[1] He earned twelve hundred *reales* at the bullfight. There are two possibilities: either we must have his money, or else, since he's a good horseman and a brave young fellow, we can enlist him in our band. Some of them have been killed and will have to be replaced. Take him along with you."

' "I want neither his money nor his services, and I forbid you to speak to him," I replied.

' "Take care," she said. "When someone defies me to do a thing, it is soon done."

'Fortunately, the picador went away to Málaga, and I turned to the business of getting the Jew's cotton goods ashore. I had plenty to do on that expedition, as had Carmen, and I forgot about Lucas. Perhaps she forgot about him too, for a while at least. It was about that time, señor, that I met you, first near Montilla, then again in Córdoba. I shall not speak to you of our last encounter—perhaps you know more about it than I do. Carmen stole your watch. She also wanted your money, and especially that ring on your finger, which she claimed was a magic ring and which she was most anxious to acquire. We had a violent quarrel and I struck her. She turned pale and wept. It was the first time I had seen her weep, and it affected

[1] *Len sos sonsi abela / Pani o reblendani terela* (Gypsy proverb).

me profoundly. I begged her to forgive me, but she sulked for a whole day, and when I left again for Montilla she refused to kiss me.

'I was still despondent when three days later she came looking for me, cheerful and blithe as a lark. All was forgotten, and we were like lovers who have known one another for two days. When the time came to part she said to me:

' "There's a *fiesta* in Córdoba. I shall go to it, and when I know which people are going home with money in their pockets, I'll let you know."

'I let her go. Alone, I thought about the *fiesta* and about Carmen's change of mood. She must have had her revenge already, I said to myself, since she came back of her own free will.

'A peasant told me that there were some bullfights taking place in Córdoba. My blood suddenly boiled, and I set off like a madman and went to the bullring. They pointed out Lucas to me, and on the front-row seats I recognized Carmen. I only needed to watch her for a moment to be sure of my ground. When the first bull came on, Lucas played the gallant, as I had expected. He plucked the rosette[1] from the bull and offered it to Carmen, who straightaway put it in her hair. The bull took it upon himself to avenge me: Lucas was knocked down, with his horse on his chest and the bull on top of both of them. I looked at Carmen; she had already left her seat. I wasn't able to get out from where I was sitting, and had to wait until the bullfight was over. Then I went to the house that you know, and I lay low there all that evening and part of the night. About two o'clock in the morning Carmen came back, and was somewhat surprised to see me.

' "Come with me," I said.

' "Very well," she said. "Let's go."

'I went and fetched my horse, set her on the crupper,

[1] *La divisa*, a bow of ribbons whose colour shows on which ranch the bull was raised. The bow is attached to the bull's hide by a hook, and it is regarded as the height of gallantry to pluck it from the live animal and present it to a woman.

and we rode for the rest of that night without exchanging a single word. At daybreak we stopped at a remote *venta* close by a little hermitage. There I said to Carmen:

' "Listen. I shall forget the past. I shall reproach you with nothing. But swear to me one thing: that you will come with me to America and settle down there."

' "No," she said sullenly. "I don't want to go to America. I'm happy where I am."

' "That's because you are near Lucas. But think about it carefully—even if he recovers, he won't make old bones. Anyway, why should I lay the blame at his door? I'm tired of killing all your lovers; I shall kill you instead."

'She stared at me with her wild look, and said:

' "I've always felt that you would kill me. The first time I saw you I had just met a priest at the door of my house. And last night, when we left Córdoba, didn't you notice anything? A hare ran across the road between your horse's legs. It is fated."

' "Carmencita," I asked her, "don't you love me any more?"

'She made no reply. She was sitting cross-legged on a mat, tracing figures on the ground with her finger.

' "Let's begin a new life, Carmen," I entreated her. "Let's go and live somewhere where we will never be separated. You know that not far from here we have a hundred and twenty gold *onzas* buried under an oak tree. And we have other money with the Jew ben-Joseph."

'She began to smile, and said: "First me, then you. I knew it had to be so."

' "Think carefully," I went on. "My patience is exhausted, I'm at the end of my tether. Make up your mind, or I shall take my own decision."

'I left her and began to walk in the direction of the hermitage. I found the hermit praying. I waited for him to finish. I would have liked to pray myself, but I could not. When he rose to his feet I went up to him.

' "Father," I said to him, "will you pray for someone who is in great peril?"

' "I pray for all those who are afflicted," he said.

' "Can you say a mass for a soul that may be going to meet its Maker?"

' "Yes," he replied, staring at me. And, as there was something strange about my manner, he tried to draw me into conversation.

' "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" he asked.

'I placed a piastre on his bench. "When will you say the mass?" I asked him.

' "In half an hour. The innkeeper's son from the inn over there is coming to serve. Tell me, young man, is there something on your conscience that is troubling you? Will you listen to the counsel of a Christian?"

'I could feel I was on the verge of tears. I told him I would return, and made my escape. I went and lay on the grass until I heard the bell. Then I approached, but I stayed outside the chapel.

'When mass was over I returned to the *venta*. I was almost hoping that Carmen would have fled; she could have taken my horse and got away. But I found her still there. She didn't want anyone to be able to say of her that I had made her afraid. During my absence she had unpicked the hem of her dress and taken the lead weights out of it. Now she was at a table, looking at a bowl full of water into which she had just poured the molten lead. She was so engrossed in her magic that at first she did not notice my return. First she would take a piece of lead and turn it sadly this way and that, then she would sing one of those magic songs invoking María Padilla, the mistress of don Pedro I, who was said to be the *Bari Crallisa*, the great Queen of the Gypsies.[1]

' "Carmen," I said. "Will you come with me?"

'She got up, threw aside her wooden bowl, and put her mantilla over her head as if in readiness to leave. My horse was brought to me, she mounted behind me, and we set off.

'After journeying a little way I said to her: "So, my Carmen, you will follow me, won't you?"

[1] María Padilla was accused of bewitching don Pedro I. According to popular tradition, she had presented Queen Blanche of Bourbon with a gold belt, that to the bewitched king looked like a live snake. Hence the repugnance he always showed for the unfortunate princess.

' "I will follow you till death, yes, but I will no longer live with you."

'We were in a lonely gorge. I stopped my horse.

' "Is it to be here?" she asked; and with a leap she had dismounted. She took off her mantilla, threw it to her feet, and stood motionless, one fist on her hip, staring at me.

' "You want to kill me, I can see that," she said. "It is fated. But you shall not make me submit."

' "I beg you," I said, "see reason. Listen to me! I will forget the past—though you know it's you who have been my undoing. It was for you that I became a robber and a murderer. Carmen! My Carmen! Let me save you, and save myself with you!"

' "José," she replied, "you are asking the impossible of me. I no longer love you. But you still love me, and that's why you want to kill me. I could easily tell you another lie, but I'd sooner spare myself the trouble. Everything is over between us. As my *rom*, you have the right to kill your *romi*. But Carmen will always be free. *Calli* she was born, *calli* she will die."

' "Then do you love Lucas?" I asked her.

' "Yes, I loved him, as I loved you, for a moment, perhaps less than I loved you. Now I no longer love anything, and I hate myself for having loved you."

'I fell at her feet, I took her hands, I moistened them with my tears. I reminded her of all the moments of happiness we had spent together. I offered to remain a brigand to please her. Anything, señor, anything! I offered to do anything for her, if only she would love me again!

'She said: "To love you again is impossible. I do not want to live with you."

'Fury gripped me. I drew my knife. I would have liked her to show fear and beg for mercy, but that woman was a demon.

' "For the last time," I cried, "will you stay with me?"

' "No! No! No!" she cried, stamping her foot. And she took from her finger a ring I had given her, and threw it into the bushes.

'I struck her twice. The knife was García's—the one I had taken from him after breaking my own. She fell at the second

thrust without uttering a sound. I can still see her great dark eyes that stared at me, then grew clouded, and closed.

'For a good hour I stood aghast, contemplating the corpse. Then I remembered how Carmen had often told me she would like to be buried in a wood. I dug a grave for her with my knife, and placed her in it. I spent a long time looking for her ring, and eventually I found it. I put it by her in the grave, together with a little cross. Perhaps I was wrong to do that. Then I mounted my horse, galloped to Córdoba, and gave myself up at the first guard-house. I told them I had killed Carmen, but I would not say where her body was. The hermit was a holy man, he prayed for her! He said a mass for her soul. . . . Poor child! The *Calé* are to blame, for bringing her up as they did.'

APPENDIX

The final chapter of *Carmen* added to the 1847 edition

IV

Spain is one of the countries where large numbers of those nomads who are scattered throughout Europe, and are known by such names as *Gypsies*, *Bohémiens*, *Gitanos*, and *Zigeuner*, may still be found today. Most of them inhabit, or rather roam, the provinces of the south and east—Andalusia, Extremadura, and the kingdom of Murcia. A fair number of them live in Catalonia, often crossing over into France, where they can be seen at any of our southern fairs. Usually the men make a living as horse dealers, horse doctors, or mule clippers; they supplement this work by occupations such as repairing saucepans and copper utensils, to say nothing of smuggling and other illicit activities. The women tell fortunes, beg, and deal in all sorts of drugs, innocuous and otherwise.

The physical characteristics of the race are easier to recognize than to describe, yet once you have seen one, you could spot a Gypsy in a crowd of a thousand faces. It is above all in the cast and expression of their features that they differ from the indigenous peoples of the same country. Their complexion is very swarthy, always darker than that of the people among whom they live: hence the name *Calé*, blacks, by which they often refer to themselves.[1] Their eyes have a pronounced slant and are almond-shaped, very dark, and fringed with long thick eyelashes. Their expression can best be compared to that of a wild beast. It expresses both boldness and timidity, and in this respect their eyes faithfully reflect the character of the people, wily, daring, but, like Panurge, 'naturally fearful of blows.'*

[1] I got the impression that, although they understand the term *Calé* well enough, the Gypsies of Germany dislike being referred to in this way. Their own term is *Romané tchavé*.

For the most part the men are muscular, slim, and lithe; I cannot recall ever having seen one who was running to fat. In Germany the Gypsy girls are often very pretty, but beauty is a truly rare attribute among the *gitanas* of Spain. While they are still very young, their ugliness may be not unattractive; but once they have borne children they become positively repulsive. The filthiness of both sexes has to be seen to be believed. Picture to yourself the most unkempt, the greasiest, and the dustiest mane imaginable, and you will still find it hard to conceive of the state of a Gypsy matron's hair unless you have seen the reality. In some of the large towns in Andalusia a few of the girls are rather more attractive than the rest, and take greater care of their personal appearance. Girls of this kind earn money by performing dances very similar to those it is forbidden to perform in public at our Shrovetide carnivals.

Mr Borrow*, an English missionary and the author of two extremely interesting works on the Spanish Gypsies, whom he was sent by the Bible Society to convert, assures us that it is unheard of for a Gypsy woman to show any partiality towards a man not of her race. It seems to me that his praise for their chastity is somewhat exaggerated. In the first place, what Ovid wrote of the ugly girl can also be said of most Gypsy women: *Casta quam nemo rogavit**. As for the pretty ones, they are like all Spanish women—difficult to please when it comes to choosing a lover. Not only must he be attractive to them; he must also be worthy of them. Mr Borrow cites one trait as evidence of their virtue, which does credit to his own virtue, though it is also a measure of his naïveté: he tells how a rake of his acquaintance tried unsuccessfully to seduce a pretty Gypsy girl by offering her some gold *onzas*. An Andalusian to whom I told this anecdote claimed that the rake would have stood a better chance of success if he had shown her two or three piastres, and that to offer gold *onzas* to a Gypsy girl was as poor a way of going about persuading her as promising a couple of million piastres to a barmaid. Be that as it may, it is certain that Gypsy women are extraordinarily loyal to their husbands. There is no danger or privation they will not undergo to help them in their hour of need. One of the names

by which Gypsies refer to themselves, *Romé* or 'married folk', seems to me to testify to the respect their race feels for the institution of marriage. As a generalization it may be said that their chief virtue is their patriotism—if one can so characterize the solidarity that is a feature of their relations with people of the same origin as themselves, their readiness to help one another, and the scrupulousness with which they observe secrecy in their illicit dealings. And indeed, much the same is true of every mysterious association that lies beyond the pale of the law.

A few months ago I visited a band of Gypsies at their camp in the Vosges. In the hut of an old woman, the oldest of her tribe, lay a Gypsy who did not belong to her family, and who was suffering from a fatal illness. This man had left a hospital, where he had been well looked after, in order to come and die among people of his own race. For thirteen weeks he had been confined to bed in the home of his hosts, and was receiving much better treatment than the sons and sons-in-law living in the same home. He had a good bed of straw and moss, with fairly clean sheets; whereas the rest of the family, eleven people in all, were sleeping on boards three feet long. This is a measure of their hospitality. The same woman, who treated her guest so humanely, used to say to me within earshot of the sick man, '*Singo, singo, homte hi mulo*' ('Very soon, very soon, he is going to die'). The fact is, the life these people lead is so wretched that the imminence of death holds no terrors for them.

One remarkable feature of the Gypsy character is their indifference to religion. Not that they are unbelievers or sceptics: they have never professed atheism. On the contrary, they adopt the religion of the country in which they happen to find themselves; but they change it whenever they change their homeland. The superstitions which, among primitive peoples, replace religious feelings are equally alien to them. How, indeed, could superstition exist among a people used to living by the credulity of others? However, I noticed that Spanish Gypsies have a marked aversion to the company of corpses. Few of them would consent to bear a dead man to his grave, even for money.

I have said that most Gypsy women engage in fortune-telling. They make an excellent job of it. But their major source of income is the sale of charms and love philtres. Not only do they sell toads' feet to secure inconstant hearts, and powdered lodestone that will make even the most obdurate fall in love; but, if need be, they will utter powerful spells to oblige the Devil to come to their aid.

Last year a Spanish woman told me the following story. She was walking one day along the Calle de Alcalá, plunged in melancholy thoughts. A Gypsy woman squatting on the pavement called out to her, 'My pretty lady, your lover has betrayed you.' (This was in fact the case.) 'Do you want me to get him back for you?'

You can imagine the joy with which this proposal was greeted, and the confidence inspired by a person who could, at a glance, penetrate the inmost secrets of the heart. As it would have been impractical to perform the magic ceremonies there in the busiest street in Madrid, they arranged to meet the following day.

'Nothing could be simpler than to make your faithless lover fall at your feet again,' said the Gypsy woman. 'Do you happen to have a handkerchief, a scarf, or a mantilla given to you by him?' She was handed a silk shawl.

'Now, with crimson silk, sew a piastre into one corner of the shawl. Into another, sew half a piastre; into the next, a peseta, and in the last a two-*real* piece. Then you must sew a gold coin into the middle—a doubloon would be best.'

The doubloon and other coins were duly sewn into the shawl.

'Now give me the shawl. I shall take it to the cemetery on the stroke of midnight. If you want to see a fine piece of witchcraft, come with me then. I can promise that tomorrow you will see your beloved again.'

The Gypsy set off for the cemetery alone, for the lady was too afraid of black magic to accompany her. I leave you to guess whether the poor lovelorn creature ever saw her shawl or her faithless lover again.

Despite their poverty and the feeling of antipathy they inspire, Gypsies are held in some regard by uneducated folk, a

fact of which they are extremely proud. They regard themselves as a race endowed with superior intelligence, and cordially despise the nation that gives them hospitality. 'The Gentiles are so stupid', a Gypsy woman in the Vosges said to me, 'that there is no merit in cheating them. The other day a peasant woman called to me in the street, and I went into her house. Her stove was smoking, and she asked me to cast a spell to put it right. First of all I got her to give me a largish piece of bacon. Then I began to mutter a few words in Romany. "You're a fool," I said. "You were born a fool, and a fool you'll die." When I was near the door I said to her in good German, "The surest way of stopping your stove from smoking is not to light it." At that I took to my heels.'

The history of the Gypsies is still a matter for conjecture. It is known that the first few isolated bands appeared in eastern Europe towards the beginning of the fifteenth century. But no one can say where they came from or why they came to Europe; and, strangest of all, no one knows how it came about that their numbers soon increased so prodigiously in several countries so far apart. The Gypsies themselves have preserved no tradition as to their origin, and although most of them talk of Egypt as their original homeland, they are merely repeating an old tale that others have told about them since time immemorial.

Most of the orientalists who have studied the language of the Gypsies believe that they originally came from India. It does indeed seem that a number of roots and many of the grammatical forms of Romany can also be found in the languages derived from Sanscrit. Understandably, the Gypsies have adopted many foreign words in the course of their long wanderings. A number of Greek words can be found in all dialects of Romany: for example, *cocal*, bone, from *κόκκαλον*; *petali*, horseshoe, from *πέταλον*; *cafi*, nail, from *καρφί*, and so forth. Today there are almost as many different Romany dialects as there are separate bands of their race. Everywhere they speak the language of their adopted country in preference to their own, which they seldom use except in order to communicate freely in front of strangers. If one compares the dialect of the German Gypsies with that of their Spanish

kinsmen, who for centuries have been cut off from contact with those in Germany, one can identify a very large number of words common to both. But everywhere, though to varying extents, the original language has undergone significant changes through contact with the more developed languages these nomads have been obliged to use. German in the one case, and Spanish in the other, have so modified the basic Romany that it would be impossible for a Gypsy from the Black Forest to have a conversation with one of his brothers from Andalusia, although they would only need to exchange a few sentences to recognize that they were both speaking a dialect of the same language. A few very frequently used words are, I believe, common to all dialects. Thus, in every vocabulary I have been able to see, *pani* means 'water', *manro*, 'bread', *mâs*, 'meat', and *lon* 'salt'.

The numerals are more or less the same everywhere. The German dialect seems to me much purer than that spoken in Spain, for it has preserved a number of primitive grammatical forms, whereas the *Gitanos* have adopted those of Castilian Spanish. However, a few words are exceptions, providing evidence that the two languages were once one and the same. In the German dialect the preterites are formed by adding *-ium* to the imperative, which is always the root of the verb. In the Romany of Spain all verbs conjugate on the model of first-conjugation verbs in Castilian. From the infinitive *jamar*, to eat, the regular form would be *jamé*, I ate, from *lillar*, to take, *lillé*, I took. However, some of the old Gypsies prefer the form *jayon*, *lillon*. I have found no other verbs that have conserved this ancient form.

Whilst I am airing my scanty knowledge of the Romany language, I must draw attention to a few slang words borrowed from the Gypsies by our thieves here in France. Polite society has learned from *The Mysteries of Paris** that *chourin* means 'a knife'. This is pure Romany, *tchouri* being one of the words common to all dialects. Monsieur Vidocq* calls a horse *grès*, which again is the Gypsy word *gras*, *gre*, *graste*, *gris*. To this can be added the word *romamichel*, used to refer to Gypsies in Parisian slang. It is a corruption of *rommané tchave* (Gypsy lads). But one etymology of which I am proud

is that of *frimousse* (face, expression), a word used by all schoolchildren, at least in my day. Note, firstly, that in his curious dictionary of 1640, Oudin records the word *firlimouse*. Now *firla* or *fila* in Romany means 'face', and *mui* has the same meaning, being the precise equivalent of *os* in Latin. A speaker of pure Romany instantly understood the combination *firlamui*, which, furthermore, is consistent with the spirit of the language.

This should be more than sufficient to give readers of *Carmen* an idea of my studies in the field of Romany. I shall finish with an appropriate proverb: *En retudi panda nasti abela macha*. A closed mouth, no fly can enter.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

CARMEN

1 *Epigraph*: 'Every woman is as bitter as gall. But she has two good moments: one in bed, the other at her death.' This epigram is a pun on the Greek words *thalamos* (bedroom, bridal chamber) and *thanatos* (death). Palladas lived in Alexandria in the fifth century AD. His writings are contained in the *Greek Anthology*.

Montilla: on 17 Mar. 45 BC, Julius Caesar defeated Cnaeus and Sextus Pompeius, the sons of Pompey, thereby ending the Civil Wars and definitively establishing his supremacy over all Roman dominions. The site of the battle is still disputed. The location close to Montilla favoured by the narrator of *Carmen* is about 40 km south of Córdoba, and thus more than 100 km north-north-east of the rival site to which he refers, at Monda, inland from Marbella in Málaga province.

Caesar's Commentaries: the *Commentarii* is the name usually given to the seven books by Caesar covering the first seven years of the Gallic Wars (*De bello gallico*) and to the three books covering the Civil Wars down to the beginning of the Alexandrine War (48–7 BC) (*De bello civili*). *De bello hispaniensi* is an anonymous continuation of Caesar's record of the earlier Civil Wars.

2 *Elzevir*: the Elzevirs were a Leiden-based family of Dutch booksellers, publishers, and printers of learned books in the period 1581–1712. They specialized in high-quality editions of literary classics, often in small format.

3 *the bad soldiers of Gideon*: cf. Judges 7: 5–7: 'So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.'

5 *the Venta del Cuervo*: the Raven Inn. A *venta* is a rural hostelry or wayside inn.

6 *gazpacho, a sort of salad consisting of peppers*: *gazpacho* is not in

fact a salad, but a soup served throughout the hotter regions of Spain. The ingredients vary widely from province to province, but almost invariably include olive oil, garlic, cucumber, and red or green peppers, usually with onion, tomato, breadcrumbs, and vinegar. The soup is served cold or iced.

7 *Milton's Satan*: cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 589–604. Milton's lines had become well known in France in a translation by Chateaubriand contained in his *Génie du christianisme* (1802).

12 *Actaeon*: according to one version of the story, while hunting, Actaeon witnessed Diana bathing naked on Mount Cithaeron. To prevent him from recounting the incident she metamorphosed him into a stag, whereupon he was devoured by his own hounds.

by the dark light that shines down from the stars: an allusion to an earlier work of French literature with an Andalusian setting, Corneille's *Le Cid*, IV. 3, ll. 1273–4: '*Cette obscure clarté qui tombe des étoiles / Enfin avec le flux nous fait voir trente voiles*'. The line Mérimée quotes is well known, and is often cited as an example of an oxymoron.

13 *Francisco Sevilla*: (*c.* 1809–41), a figure renowned in the annals of tauromachy. His exploits are recounted in Gautier's *Voyage en Espagne* and in Mérimée's own first *Lettre d'Espagne* (1831), which contains an 1842 postscript announcing Sevilla's recent death. Despite the claim advanced here, Mérimée and Sevilla were not personal friends, though they did once dine together. However, it should be borne in mind that the narrator of the first two chapters of *Carmen* is himself a fictional creation who is not to be identified with Mérimée in every respect—a consideration Mérimée himself appears to have overlooked when he came to add a fourth chapter to *Carmen* in 1846. (See Appendix.)

14 *see Brantôme*: Pierre Brantôme, *c.* 1540–1614, soldier and chronicler. The passage in question appears in Book 2 of *Les Vies des dames galantes* (Lives of Gallant Ladies), where the following enumeration is to be found, in Spanish and in French: 'Three white things: her skin, her teeth, and her hands. Three dark: her eyes, her eyebrows, and her eyelashes. Three red: her lips, her cheeks, and her nails. Three long: her body, her hair, and her hands. Three short: her teeth, her ears, and her feet. Three wide: her bosom, her forehead, and the space between her eyebrows. Three narrow: her mouth (both of them), her waist, and her ankles. Three plump: her arm, her thigh, and her calf. Three delicate: her fingers, her hair, and her lips. Three small: her breasts, her nose, and her head.'

17 *corregidor*: at this period, the chief magistrate in some Spanish towns, with civil, administrative, and criminal jurisdiction.

18 *the prison chapel*: it was once the custom in Spain for prisoners condemned to death to spend the three days before their execution confined to the prison chapel, in the company of their confessors. Mérimée's second *Lettre d'Espagne* (1831) also contains an account of this practice.

'*verry preety leetle hanging*': a quotation from Molière's *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, III. 3. Molière's phrase imitates a Swiss, not a Spanish accent. Mérimée's intention is to stress the manifest relish with which the friar contemplates the impending execution.

19 *Old Christian*: in Spain the term *cristiano viejo* was formerly used to denote anyone of purely Christian ancestry, that is, with no known admixture of Moorish, Jewish, or 'pagan' blood.

that big building: this vast and imposing eighteenth-century Baroque edifice near the centre of Seville now houses the University.

22 *Triana*: a working-class district of Seville, south-west of the city centre across the Guadalquivir, much frequented by Gypsies.

to keep the flies off her: a reference to the *azotes*, a punishment prescribed for witches and habitual adulteresses. The guilty party was mounted on a donkey, paraded through the streets of the town, and flogged across the bare shoulders at every crossroads.

Street of the Serpent . . . twists and turns: the French text has *rue du Serpent*. Despite its narrowness, the *Calle de las Sierpes* (Street of the Serpents) is one of the main commercial thoroughfares of old Seville; however, it does not 'twist and turn', and is in fact quite straight. The name is thought to allude to the snakes depicted on a tavern sign that once hung there. This is not an oversight on Mérimée's part, or simply another example of the French tendency to Gallicize place-names: don José succumbs to Carmen the temptress in a street whose name evokes the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

25 *Longa . . . Mina . . . Chapalangarra*: prominent figures in the guerrilla campaigns against the French during and after the Peninsular War (War of Independence), 1808–14. Francisco Tomás de Longa (b. Francisco Anchía, in Longa (Vizcaya), 1783; d. 1831) commanded the Iberia Division in the Peninsular War, in which he defeated the French in a number of guerrilla actions. Francisco Espoz y Mina (b. Indocín, Navarre, 1781; d. 1836) rose from partisan to general, but was forced to flee to France on the restoration of Fernando VII in 1814, on account of his liberal political views.

He returned to Spain in 1820 and fought against the conservative Absolutists and the French troops backing them, but again fled Spain from 1823 to 1833. Joaquín de Pablo y Antón, known as Chapalangarra, Governor of Alicante in 1823, resisted the French troops that had invaded Spain in an attempt to restore the absolute monarchy. He took refuge in England, returned to Spain in 1830 intending to organize a revolution, but was captured by Royalist forces and shot.

29 *manzanilla*: a very dry, fortified white wine, sometimes classed as a sherry. Sanlúcar de Barrameda is the centre for the trade in this wine. It has a slightly salty taste, supposedly attributable to the proximity of the vines to the sea.

Caliph Haroûn-al-Raschid: the historical Harun ar-Rashīd (b. 766 or 763, d. 809) was fifth caliph of the 'Abbâsid dynasty. From his capital, Baghdad, he ruled an empire that extended from the western Mediterranean to India, excluding only Byzantium. The opulence and luxury of his court were romanticized in the fabulous descriptions of the *Thousand and One Nights*, which contains many tales recounting his nocturnal wanderings in disguise through the streets of Baghdad.

39 *Saint Nicholas*: Mérimée appears to have overlooked the fact that in Spain Christmastide gifts are traditionally brought to children not by Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus), but by the Three Wise Men (*Los Reyes Magos*), on 6 Jan. (Epiphany).

40 *their shirts, of which we had urgent need*: this remark throws new light on the first narrator's reflexion in the third paragraph of the story (page 2): '. . . what would he want with my shirts and my Elzevir *Commentaries*?' Is it simply coincidence that five years earlier, in *Colomba* (chapter XX), Mérimée had made another bandit, Castriconi, request Orso della Rebbia to provide him with an edition of Horace, whereupon Orso had offered the bandit an Elzevir edition?