

GHOST OF THE "PENGUIN."

BY WILL LISENDER.

For more than a week the Penguin had laid at anchor in the little harbor at Bastia.

Aboard the craft there were no signs of life visible, and I knew that Muggins must be ashore.

My old friend, the captain, had been beating about the Mediterranean with his lubberly schooner for half a score of years.

But upon receipt of the goods now he was off at once, leaving his disabled schooner in charge of Muggins.

As my boat drifted alongside the Penguin I perceived a rope trailing over the port side.

I looked about me, but no one was visible. It was evident that I was the only soul aboard the Penguin.

I threw myself on a camp-stool in the shadow of the sail and fell to regarding the range of dark hills that rose back of the romantic little city.

I was interrupted by the sound of oars, and a few moments later Muggins' tawny head appeared over the rail.

"Bless me, I thought you were a ghost, I did, by the powers!" he said, seeming well pleased that his fears had not been realized.

"Well, now, what the deuce is there about me, Muggins, to make you think me a ghost?" I asked.

"Oh, it isn't that you look like a ghost, Mr. Raymond," he returned, apologetically.

"That's a fact, Mr. Raymond, though 'tain't often a cove is believed when he tells such a story. There's a ghost on this old hulk, or else I'm losing my eyesight."

"And you really believe in such nonsense?"

"I believe what I see, that's all."

"What did you see?"

"Well, since you ask, I don't mind telling you. You see, since Capt. Darke went away and the crew was discharged, the Penguin has been under my care, and I have been sleeping aboard the vessel and spending most of my time here.

Last night about two o'clock I awoke, thinking I heard something moving near me. I was sleeping in my cot on the deck, and as I looks about me I see a woman, all in white, moving like a specter right by the hatchway.

While I was watching, it seemed to sink into the deck and disappear. I'm not the man to run from a single night-prowl, but I felt queer-like at this, and can't see how a woman could be on the Penguin.

Thinking she might have descended the companion-ladder, I goes down with a lantern, but finds nothing. Then I looks all over the ship with the same result. I sleep no more that night, and though I look after the ship during the day, I shan't sleep here again if I know myself, call it ghost or what you will."

With this he picked up a lantern and descended to his boat that lay alongside.

"Then I shall spend the night here and lay your ghost for you," I said.

"You'll greatly oblige me if you will," he returned, "though I'll be blowing if I think you succeed. Good evening, Mr. Raymond. I'll drop alongside early in the morning and see how you have fared. There's the key to my cabin," he added, tossing the key upon the deck.

"You'll find pipes and plenty of tobacco, and a sip of rum in a decanter, if you look close. Now again good night to you."

His oars dipped into the water, and he was gone.

Dusk was already settling over the water. I took a seat on the deck and lit a cigar, and began ruminating over in my mind some of the events that had befallen me since my arrival in Corsica.

For more than three months I had been staying in the romantic little island, finding a restful charm in its quiet seclusion that was a pleasing contrast to the life I had been spending for the past two years in the gay capital of the restless and pleasure-loving French.

One is not likely to expect to meet with adventures of the thrilling kind in the peaceful precincts of Bastia, yet something bordering upon this had come to my lot less than a month before.

For the amateur artist the quaint little city will furnish many subjects for the pencil and brush, and I had made good my opportunities since my arrival.

The most prized among my collection was the portrait of Veda, the little Corsican fruit-seller. There was something fascinating in her very pose, and the dark beauty of her face had drawn me to her as if by some subtle witchery.

One evening, as I was strolling through the streets, I heard a cry of mental terror come from the court of a ruined building where several poor families had taken their abode, and entering hastily I perceived an aged woman, withered, hair, with uplifted hands, in the act of striking a girl who was kneeling in the corner of the wall.

I struck the knife aside, and the would-be murderess fled, leaving me

face to face with Veda, the intended victim.

She only paused a moment to press a kiss upon my hand; then she slipped through a gap in the wall and was gone. That was the last I had seen of her.

To my inquiries regarding her whereabouts I received no information, excepting a bit of her past history which told me that she had belonged to a wealthy and influential family, and that she had received a finished education. But reverses had come; her father had fallen a victim to a dreadful vendetta, and she had finally been left a penniless orphan.

I was deeply interested in her, but no one could give me the slightest clue as to whether she had fled.

Still I had lingered about the places I used to see her. Was I in love with the little Corsican beauty?

Her face would come before my mental vision asleep or waking, bringing a sweet sensation I had never before experienced; and yet I tried to dismiss her from my mind.

I sat smoking for some hours upon the deck of the Penguin, watching the yellow lights dancing in the romantic little city, and drinking in the fresh, sweet air of the night that stole up from the Mediterranean.

It was about 11 o'clock when I stretched myself upon the cot which Muggins had placed upon the deck. I fell asleep soon after, and dreamed of Muggins' ghost.

It seemed that some strange presence came to me—a woman, beautiful beyond any dream; and just as I reached out to touch her she vanished, leaving only a faint odor of some strange, sweet perfume. I awoke suddenly with that inexplicable sensation that sometimes tells us of the unseen presence of another.

I sat up and looked about me in vague bewilderment. The moon had risen out of the sea and was flooding the deck with its mellow radiance.

As my mind grew more composed I detected a subtle perfume on the night air, the same that had come to me in my dream.

Was it only the effect of my imagination? No; there could be no mistake as to its reality. Something white lay at my feet; I picked it up; it was a delicate piece of lace embroidered linen, and exhaled the breath of perfume that had before greeted my senses.

While I stood bewildered at the amazing circumstance, I perceived a white form emerge from the hatchway and move forward, with a slow, gliding movement.

I stood immovable, watching the figure as it came toward me. As it drew near, I perceived that it was a girl, and as the moonbeams fell on the pale face I recognized it as belonging to Veda Dorios, the little fruit seller.

Her eyes were wide open, and staring vacantly ahead in a way peculiar to the somnambulist. She was a sleep-walker! The thought came to me like a flash. Yet, what could account for her presence aboard the Penguin?

Without attempting to answer the puzzling question, I started toward the figure, but as I did so, the sound of something like the dropping of an oar in a boat came from over the port. Then a moment later the dark figure of a woman—the same I had seen making the assault on the little fruit-seller—slipped noiselessly over the rail. She paused for a moment to glance about the ship, then, with a cry of rage that might have proceeded from some wild animal in deadly combat, she leaped upon the unconscious girl, the blade of a long knife glinting in the rays of the moon. Roused to action by the sight of the murderous intruder, I leaped quickly forward, and before the knife descended to do its deadly work, I caught the hand that held it.

But if I reckoned on an easy victory in subduing my adversary, I soon discovered my mistake, for the woman, though aged to all appearances, seemed to possess the strength of the strongest man, and, finding herself foiled in her murderous attempt, she turned upon me with the ferocity of a panther. Coming unexpectedly as the attack did, it caught me off my guard, and before I realized my peril, the hand that held the knife was wrenched from my grasp; then there was a swift blow, a keen pain in my shoulder as the blade entered; then a mist gathered before my eyes, and I sank unconscious upon the deck.

When my senses returned it was broad daylight, and I was lying on a cot in Muggins' cabin, the beautiful but troubled face of Veda bending over me.

It was about a week before I was able to get ashore, and, though I had a trained nurse from Bastia, Veda refused to leave me entirely in the hands of another.

Well, in that week I had learned to love the little Corsican beauty with such an intense devotion that I could not bear the thought of separation.

Her life had been one of trials and misfortunes. The old hag who had twice sought the life of Veda was prevented from taking my life by the timely arrival of Muggins, who had come over to the vessel in his boat just before day-break to see how I was faring. Finding herself thwarted, she leaped into the bay, and was drowned before she could be rescued by Muggins.

She was the last of the Baralodo family, between whom and the Dorios a dreadful vendetta had existed, and it was to escape the vengeance of the old woman that Veda had stowed herself aboard the Penguin, hoping to be carried to some foreign land, and thus escape the violence and death that constantly threatened her.

Veda and I were married, and a month later sailed for America in the Penguin with my old friend Capt. Darke, who had returned and had the vessel repaired.

Muggins was much elated over the happy ending of my attempt to "lay" his ghost, though he always declared I had made a most lucky failure, and instead of laying the ghost, I had myself been laid by it.—N. Y. Ledger.

SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY.

Generally speaking, we say that the curvature of the earth amounts to about seven inches to the statute mile; it is exactly 0.29 inches, or 7,903 inches for a geographical mile.

Scientists say that no negro has ever tamed an elephant or any wild animal, though negroes frequently perform with wild animals after they have been cowed into subjection by white men.

Lightning is zigzag because, as it condenses the air in the immediate advance of its path it flies from side to side in order to pass where there is the least resistance to its progress.

A gray, green or yellowish green sunset indicates rain. A red sunset means rain. A deep blue sky means fair weather. A growing whiteness, a storm. Unusually bright or twinkling stars mean rain.

Prof. Barnard's photograph of the milky way shows the existence of 500,000,000 stars, each supposed to be the center of a system of planets, where hitherto it was thought to contain only about 20,000,000 such stars.

A female codfish will lay 45,000,000 eggs during a single season. Piscatorial authorities say that were it not for the work of the natural enemies of fish, they would fill all the available space in the seas, rivers and oceans.

Snow appears white because it is an aggregation of an infinite number of minute crystals, each reflecting all the colors of the rainbow; these colors, uniting before they reach the eye, cause it to appear white to every normal eye.

The nautical term "trade wind" applies to constant winds which blow at sea to the distance of about 30 degrees on both sides of the equator. On the north of the equator they blow from the northeast and on the south from the southeast.

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GATHERS SKULLS.

A Medical Student Who Risks His Life to Get Them.

About 45 miles below Portland, on the Oregon side of the Columbia, the broad expanse of water flows without a ripple, and is deep and as still as death. The bank rises high above the water's level and stretches away back to the timber line. Just above this point is "Coffin rock," which was the starting place to "the happy hunting grounds" of the various Oregon tribes of Indians.

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