

MADAME DELPHINE II

CHAPTER XV.

KYRIE ELEISON.

The second Saturday afternoon following was hot and calm. The lamp burning before the tabernacle in Père Jerome's little church might have hung with as motionless a flame in the window behind. The lilies of St. Joseph's wand, shining in one of the half opened panes, were not more completely at rest than the leaves on tree and vine without, suspended in the slumbering air. Almost as still, down under the organ-gallery, with a single band of light falling athwart his box from a small door which stood ajar, sat the little priest, behind the lattice of the confessional, silently wiping away the sweat that beaded on his brow and rolled down his face. At distant intervals the shadow of some one entering softly through the door would obscure, for a moment, the band of light, and an aged crone, or a little boy, or some gentle presence that the listening confessor had known only by the voice for many years, would kneel a few moments beside his waiting ear, in prayer for blessing and in review of those slips and errors which prove us all akin.

The day had been long and fatiguing. First, early mass; a hasty meal; then a business call upon the archbishop in the interest of some projected charity; then back to his cottage, and so to the banking-house of "Vignevielle," in the Rue Toulouse. There all was open, bright, and re-assured, its master virtually, though not actually, present. The search was over and the seekers gone, personally wiser than they would tell, and officially reporting that (to the best of their knowledge and belief, based on evidence, and especially on the assurances of an unexceptionable eye-witness, to wit, Monsieur Vignevielle, banker) Capitaine Lemaitre was dead and buried. At noon there had been a wedding in the little church. Its scenes lingered before Père Jerome's vision now—the kneeling pair: the bridegroom, rich in all the excellences of man, strength and kindness slumbering interlocked in every part and feature; the bride, a saintly weariness on her pale face, her awesome eyes lifted in adoration upon the image of the

Saviour; the small knots of friends behind: Madame Thompson, large, fair, self-contained; Jean Thompson, with the affidavit of Madame Delphine showing through his tightly buttoned coat; the physician and his wife, sharing one expression of amiable consent; and last—yet first—one small, shrinking female figure, here at one side, in faded robes and dingy bonnet. She sat as motionless as stone, yet wore a look of apprehension, and in the small, restless black eyes which peered out from the pinched and wasted face, betrayed the peacelessness of a harrowed mind; and neither the recollection of bride, nor of groom, nor of potential friends behind, nor the occupation of the present hour, could shut out from the tired priest the image of that woman, or the sound of his own low words of invitation to her, given as the company left the church—"Come to confession this afternoon."

By and by a long time passed without the approach of any step, or any glancing of light or shadow, save for the occasional progress from station to station of some one over on the right who was noiselessly going the way of the cross. Yet Père Jerome tarried.

"She will surely come," he said to himself; "she promised she would come."

A moment later, his sense, quickened by the prolonged silence, caught a subtle evidence or two of approach, and the next moment a penitent knelt noiselessly at the window of his box, and the whisper came tremblingly, in the voice he had waited to hear:

"*Bénissez-moin, mo' Père, pa'ce que mo péché.*" (Bless me, father, for I have sinned.)

He gave his blessing.

"Ainsi soit-il—Amen," murmured the penitent, and then, in the soft accents of the Creole *patois*, continued:

"I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, *through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.*' I confessed on Saturday, three weeks ago, and received absolution, and I have performed the penance enjoined. Since then"—There she stopped.

There was a soft stir, as if she sank slowly down, and another as if she rose up again, and in a moment she said:

"Olive *is* my child. The picture I showed to Jean Thompson is the half-sister of my daughter's father, dead before my child was born. She is the image of her and of him; but, O God! Thou knowest! Oh, Olive, my own daughter!"

She ceased, and was still. Père Jerome waited, but no sound came. He looked through the window. She was kneeling, with her forehead resting on her arms—motionless.

He repeated the words of absolution. Still she did not stir.

"My daughter," he said, "go to thy home in peace." But she did not move.

He rose hastily, stepped from the box, raised her in his arms, and called her by name:

"Madame Delphine!" Her head fell back in his elbow; for an instant there was life in the eyes—it glimmered—it vanished, and tears gushed from his own and fell upon the gentle face of the dead, as he looked up to heaven and cried:

"Lord, lay not this sin to her charge!"

CAFÉ DES EXILÉS.

That which in 1835—I think he said thirty-five—was a reality in the Rue Burgundy—I think he said Burgundy—is now but a reminiscence. Yet so vividly was its story told me, that at this moment the old Café des Exilés appears before my eye, floating in the clouds of revery, and I doubt not I see it just as it was in the old times.

An antiquated story-and-a-half Creole cottage sitting right down on the banquette, as do the Choctaw squaws who sell bay and sassafras and life-everlasting, with a high, close board-fence shutting out of view the diminutive garden on the southern side. An ancient willow droops over the roof of round

tiles, and partly hides the discolored stucco, which keeps dropping off into the garden as though the old café was stripping for the plunge into oblivion—disrobing for its execution. I see, well up in the angle of the broad side gable, shaded by its rude awning of clapboards, as the eyes of an old dame are shaded by her wrinkled hand, the window of Pauline. Oh for the image of the maiden, were it but for one moment, leaning out of the casement to hang her mocking-bird and looking down into the garden,—where, above the barrier of old boards, I see the top of the fig-tree, the pale green clump of bananas, the tall palmetto with its jagged crown, Pauline's own two orange-trees holding up their bands toward the window, heavy with the promises of autumn; the broad, crimson mass of the many-stemmed oleander, and the crisp boughs of the pomegranate loaded with freckled apples, and with here and there a lingering scarlet blossom.

The Café des Exilés, to use a figure, flowered, bore fruit, and dropped it long ago—or rather Time and Fate, like some uncursed Adam and Eve, came side by side and cut away its clusters, as we sever the golden burden of the banana from its stem; then, like a banana which has borne its fruit, it was razed to the ground and made way for a newer, brighter growth. I believe it would set every tooth on edge should I go by there now,—now that I have heard the story,—and see the old site covered by the "Shoo-fly Coffee-house." Pleasanter far to close my eyes and call to view the unpretentious portals of the old café, with her children—for such those exiles seem to me—dragging their rocking-chairs out, and sitting in their wonted group under the long, out-reaching eaves which shaded the banquette of the Rue Burgundy.

It was in 1835 that the Café des Exilés was, as one might say, in full blossom. Old M. D'Hemecourt, father of Pauline and host of the café, himself a refugee from San Domingo, was the cause—at least the human cause—of its opening. As its white-curtained, glazed doors expanded, emitting a little puff of his own cigarette smoke, it was like the bursting of catalpa blossoms, and the exiles came like bees, pushing into the tiny room to sip its rich variety of tropical sirups, its lemonades, its orangeades, its orgeats, its barley-waters, and its outlandish wines, while they talked of dear home—that is to say, of Barbadoes, of Martinique, of San Domingo, and of Cuba.

There were Pedro and Benigno, and Fernandez and Francisco, and Benito. Benito was a tall, swarthy man, with immense gray moustachios, and hair as harsh as tropical grass and gray as ashes. When he could spare his cigarette from

his lips, he would tell you in a cavernous voice, and with a wrinkled smile that he was "a-t-thorty-seveng."

There was Martinez of San Domingo, yellow as a canary, always sitting with one leg curled under him and holding the back of his head in his knitted fingers against the back of his rocking-chair. Father, mother, brother, sisters, all, had been massacred in the struggle of '21 and '22; he alone was left to tell the tale, and told it often, with that strange, infantile insensibility to the solemnity of his bereavement so peculiar to Latin people.

But, besides these, and many who need no mention, there were two in particular, around whom all the story of the Café des Exilés, of old M. D'Hemecourt and of Pauline, turns as on a double centre. First, Manuel Mazaro, whose small, restless eyes were as black and bright as those of a mouse, whose light talk became his dark girlish face, and whose redundant locks curled so prettily and so wonderfully black under the fine white brim of his jaunty Panama. He had the hands of a woman, save that the nails were stained with the smoke of cigarettes. He could play the guitar delightfully, and wore his knife down behind his coat-collar.

The second was "Major" Galahad Shaughnessy. I imagine I can see him, in his white duck, brass-buttoned roundabout, with his sabreless belt peeping out beneath, all his boyishness in his sea-blue eyes, leaning lightly against the doorpost of the Café des Exilés as a child leans against his mother, running his fingers over a basketful of fragrant limes, and watching his chance to strike some solemn Creole under the fifth rib with a good old Irish joke.

Old D'Hemecourt drew him close to his bosom. The Spanish Creoles were, as the old man termed it, both cold and hot, but never warm. Major Shaughnessy was warm, and it was no uncommon thing to find those two apart from the others, talking in an undertone, and playing at confidantes like two schoolgirls. The kind old man was at this time drifting close up to his sixtieth year. There was much he could tell of San Domingo, whither he had been carried from Martinique in his childhood, whence he had become a refugee to Cuba, and thence to New Orleans in the flight of 1809.

It fell one day to Manuel Mazaro's lot to discover, by sauntering within earshot, that to Galahad Shaughnessy only, of all the children of the Café des Exilés, the good host spoke long and confidentially concerning his daughter. The words, half heard and magnified like objects seen in a fog, meaning Manuel

Mazaro knew not what, but made portentous by his suspicious nature, were but the old man's recital of the grinding he had got between the millstones of his poverty and his pride, in trying so long to sustain, for little Pauline's sake, that attitude before society which earns respect from a surface-viewing world. It was while he was telling this that Manuel Mazaro drew near; the old man paused in an embarrassed way; the Major, sitting sidewise in his chair, lifted his cheek from its resting-place on his elbow; and Mazaro, after standing an awkward moment, turned away with such an inward feeling as one may guess would arise in a heart full of Cuban blood, not unmixed with Indian.

As he moved off, M. D'Hemecourt resumed: that in a last extremity he had opened, partly from dire want, partly for very love to homeless souls, the Café des Exilés. He had hoped that, as strong drink and high words were to be alike unknown to it, it might not prejudice sensible people; but it had. He had no doubt they said among themselves, "She is an excellent and beautiful girl and deserving all respect;" and respect they accorded, but their *respects* they never came to pay.

"A café is a café," said the old gentleman. "It is nod possib' to ezcape him, aldough de Café des Exilés is differen from de rez."

"It's different from the Café des Réfugiés," suggested the Irishman.

"Differen' as possib'," replied M. D'Hemecourt. He looked about upon the walls. The shelves were luscious with ranks of cooling sirups which he alone knew how to make. The expression of his face changed from sadness to a gentle pride, which spoke without words, saying—and let our story pause a moment to hear it say:

"If any poor exile, from any island where guavas or mangoes or plantains grow, wants a draught which will make him see his home among the cocoa-palms, behold the Café des Exilés ready to take the poor child up and give him the breast! And if gold or silver he has them not, why Heaven and Santa Maria, and Saint Christopher bless him! It makes no difference. Here is a rocking-chair, here a cigarette, and here a light from the host's own tinder. He will pay when he can."

As this easily pardoned pride said, so it often occurred; and if the newly come exile said his father was a Spaniard—"Come!" old M. D'Hemecourt would cry; "another glass; it is an innocent drink; my mother was a Castilian." But, if the exile said his mother was a Frenchwoman, the glasses would be forthcoming all

the same, for "My father," the old man would say, "was a Frenchman of Martinique, with blood as pure as that wine and a heart as sweet as this honey; come, a glass of orgeat;" and he would bring it himself in a quart tumbler.

Now, there are jealousies and jealousies. There are people who rise up quickly and kill, and there are others who turn their hot thoughts over silently in their minds as a brooding bird turns her eggs in the nest. Thus did Manuel Mazaro, and took it ill that Galahad should see a vision in the temple while he and all the brethren tarried without. Pauline had been to the Café des Exilés in some degree what the image of the Virgin was to their churches at home; and for her father to whisper her name to one and not to another was, it seemed to Mazaro, as if the old man, were he a sacristan, should say to some single worshiper, "Here, you may have this madonna; I make it a present to you." Or, if such was not the handsome young Cuban's feeling, such, at least, was the disguise his jealousy put on. If Pauline was to be handed down from her niche, why, then, farewell Café des Exilés. She was its preserving influence, she made the place holy; she was the burning candles on the altar. Surely the reader will pardon the pen that lingers in the mention of her.

And yet I know not how to describe the forbearing, unspoken tenderness with which all these exiles regarded the maiden. In the balmy afternoons, as I have said, they gathered about their mother's knee, that is to say, upon the banquette outside the door. There, lolling back in their rocking-chairs, they would pass the evening hours with oft-repeated tales of home; and the moon would come out and glide among the clouds like a silver barge among islands wrapped in mist, and they loved the silently gliding orb with a sort of worship, because from her soaring height she looked down at the same moment upon them and upon their homes in the far Antilles. It was somewhat thus that they looked upon Pauline as she seemed to them held up half way to heaven, they knew not how. Ah, those who have been pilgrims; who have wandered out beyond harbor and light; whom fate hath led in lonely paths strewn with thorns and briers not of their own sowing; who, homeless in a land of homes, see windows gleaming and doors ajar, but not for them,—it is they who well understand what the worship is that cries to any daughter of our dear mother Eve whose footsteps chance may draw across the path, the silent, beseeching cry, "Stay a little instant that I may look upon you. Oh, woman, beautifier of the earth! Stay till I recall the face of my sister; stay yet a moment while I look from afar, with helpless-hanging hands, upon the softness of thy cheek, upon the folded coils of thy shining hair; and my

spirit shall fall down and say those prayers which I may never again—God knoweth—say at home."

She was seldom seen; but sometimes, when the lounging exiles would be sitting in their afternoon circle under the eaves, and some old man would tell his tale of fire and blood and capture and escape, and the heads would lean forward from the chair-backs and a great stillness would follow the ending of the story, old M. D'Hemecourt would all at once speak up and say, laying his hands upon the narrator's knee, "Comrade, your throat is dry, here are fresh limes; let my dear child herself come and mix you a lemonade." Then the neighbors over the way, sitting about their doors, would by and by softly say, "See, see! there is Pauline!" and all the exiles would rise from their rocking-chairs, take off their hats and stand as men stand in church, while Pauline came out like the moon from a cloud, descended the three steps of the café door, and stood with waiter and glass, a new Rebecca with her pitcher, before the swarthy wanderer.

What tales that would have been tear-compelling, nay, heart-rending, had they not been palpable inventions, the pretty, womanish Mazaro from time to time poured forth, in the ever ungratified hope that the goddess might come down with a draught of nectar for him, it profiteth not to recount; but I should fail to show a family feature of the Café des Exilés did I omit to say that these make-believe adventures were heard with every mark of respect and credence; while, on the other hand, they were never attempted in the presence of the Irishman. He would have moved an eyebrow, or made some barely audible sound, or dropped some seemingly innocent word, and the whole company, spite of themselves, would have smiled. Wherefore, it may be doubted whether at any time the curly-haired young Cuban had that playful affection for his Celtic comrade, which a habit of giving little velvet taps to Galahad's cheek made a show of.

Such was the Café des Exilés, such its inmates, such its guests, when certain apparently trivial events began to fall around it as germs of blight fall upon corn, and to bring about that end which cometh to all things.

The little seed of jealousy, dropped into the heart of Manuel Mazaro, we have already taken into account.

Galahad Shaughnessy began to be specially active in organizing a society of Spanish Americans, the design of which, as set forth in its manuscript constitution, was to provide proper funeral honors to such of their membership as might be overtaken by death; and, whenever it was practicable, to send their

ashes to their native land. Next to Galahad in this movement was an elegant old Mexican physician, Dr.—,—his name escapes me—whom the Café des Exilés sometimes took upon her lap—that is to say door-step—but whose favorite resort was the old Café des Réfugiés in the Rue Royale (Royal Street, as it was beginning to be called). Manuel Mazaro was made secretary.

It was for some reason thought judicious for the society to hold its meetings in various places, now here, now there; but the most frequent rendezvous was the Café des Exilés; it was quiet; those Spanish Creoles, however they may afterward cackle, like to lay their plans noiselessly, like a hen in a barn. There was a very general confidence in this old institution, a kind of inward assurance that "mother wouldn't tell;" though, after all, what great secrets could there be connected with a mere burial society?

Before the hour of meeting, the Café des Exilés always sent away her children and closed her door. Presently they would commence returning, one by one, as a flock of wild fowl will do, that has been startled up from its accustomed haunt. Frequenters of the Café des Réfugiés also would appear. A small gate in the close garden-fence let them into a room behind the café proper, and by and by the apartment would be full of dark-visaged men conversing in the low, courteous tone common to their race. The shutters of doors and windows were closed and the chinks stopped with cotton; some people are so jealous of observation.

On a certain night after one of these meetings had dispersed in its peculiar way, the members retiring two by two at intervals, Manuel Mazaro and M. D'Hemecourt were left alone, sitting close together in the dimly lighted room, the former speaking, the other, with no pleasant countenance, attending. It seemed to the young Cuban a proper precaution—he was made of precautions—to speak in English. His voice was barely audible.

"—— sayce to me, 'Manuel, she t-theeng I want-n to marry hore.' Senor, you shouth 'ave see' him laugh!"

M. D'Hemecourt lifted up his head, and laid his hand upon the young man's arm.

"Manuel Mazaro," he began, "iv dad w'ad you say is nod"—

The Cuban interrupted.

"If is no' t-thrue you will keel Manuel Mazaro?—a' r-r-right-a!"

"No," said the tender old man, "no, bud h-I am positeef dad de Madjor will shood you."

Mazaro nodded, and lifted one finger for attention.

"—— sayce to me, 'Manuel, you goin' tell-a Senor D'Hemecourt, I fin'-a you some nigh' an' cut-a you' heart ou'. An' I sayce to heem-a, 'Boat-a if Senor D'Hemecourt he fin'-in' ou' frone Pauline'"—

"*Silence!*" fiercely cried the old man. "My God! 'Sieur Mazaro, neider you, neider somebody helse s'all h'use de nem of me daughter. It is nod possib' dad you s'all spick him! I cannot pearmid thad."

While the old man was speaking these vehement words, the Cuban was emphatically nodding approval.

"Co-rect-a, co-rect-a, Senor," he replied. "Senor, you' r-r-right-a; escuse-a me, Senor, escuse-a me. Senor D'Hemecourt, Mayor Shanghness', when he talkin' wi' me he usin' hore-a name o the t-thime-a!"

"My fren'," said M. D'Hemecourt, rising and speaking with labored control, "I muz tell you good nighd. You 'ave sooprise me a verry gred deal. I s'all _in_ vestigade doze ting; an', Manuel Mazaro, h-I am a hole man; bud I will requez you, iv dad wad you say is nod de true, my God! not to h-ever ritturn again ad de Café des Exilés."

Mazaro smiled and nodded. His host opened the door into the garden, and, as the young man stepped out, noticed even then how handsome was his face and figure, and how the odor of the night jasmine was filling the air with an almost insupportable sweetness. The Cuban paused a moment, as if to speak, but checked himself, lifted his girlish face, and looked up to where the daggers of the palmetto-tree were crossed upon the face of the moon, dropped his glance, touched his Panama, and silently followed by the bare-headed old man, drew open the little garden-gate, looked cautiously out, said good-night, and stepped into the street.

As M. D'Hemecourt returned to the door through which he had come, he uttered an ejaculation of astonishment. Pauline stood before him. She spoke hurriedly in French.

"Papa, papa, it is not true."

"No, my child," he responded, "I am sure it is not true: I am sure it is all false; but why do I find you out of bed so late, little bird? The night is nearly gone."

He laid his hand upon her cheek.

"Ah, papa, I cannot deceive you. I thought Manuel would tell you something of this kind, and I listened."

The father's face immediately betrayed a new and deeper distress.

"Pauline, my child," he said with tremulous voice, "if Manuel's story is all false, in the name of Heaven how could you think he was going to tell it?"

He unconsciously clasped his hands. The good child had one trait which she could not have inherited from her father; she was quick-witted and discerning; yet now she stood confounded.

"Speak, my child," cried the alarmed old man; "speak! let me live, and not die."

"Oh, papa," she cried, "I do not know!"

The old man groaned.

"Papa, papa," she cried again, "I felt it; I know not how; something told me."

"Alas!" exclaimed the old man, "if it was your conscience!"

"No, no, no, papa," cried Pauline, "but I was afraid of Manuel Mazaro, and I think he hates him—and I think he will hurt him in any way he can—and I *know* he will even try to kill him. Oh! my God!"

She struck her hands together above her head, and burst into a flood of tears. Her father looked upon her with such sad sternness as his tender nature was capable of. He laid hold of one of her arms to draw a hand from the face whither both hands had gone.

"You know something else," he said; "you know that the Major loves you, or you think so: is it not true?"

She dropped both hands, and, lifting her streaming eyes that had nothing to hide straight to his, suddenly said:

"I would give worlds to think so!" and sunk upon the floor.

He was melted and convinced in one instant.

"Oh, my child, my child," he cried, trying to lift her. "Oh, my poor little Pauline, your papa is not angry. Rise, my little one; so; kiss me; Heaven bless thee. Pauline, treasure, what shall I do with thee? Where shall I hide thee?"

"You have my counsel already, papa."

"Yes, my child, and you were right. The Café des Exilés never should have been opened. It is no place for you; no place at all."

"Let us leave it," said Pauline.

"Ah! Pauline, I would close it to-morrow if I could, but now it is too late; I cannot."

"Why?" asked Pauline, pleadingly.

She had cast an arm about his neck. Her tears sparkled with a smile.

"My daughter, I cannot tell you; you must go now to bed; good-night—or good-morning; God keep you!"

"Well, then, papa," she said, "have no fear; you need not hide me; I have my prayer-book, and my altar, and my garden, and my window; my garden is my fenced city, and my window my watch-tower; do you see?"

"Ah! Pauline," responded the father, "but I have been letting the enemy in and out at pleasure."

"Good-night," she answered, and kissed him three times on either cheek; "the blessed Virgin will take care of us; good-night; *he* never said those things; not he; good-night."

The next evening Galahad Shaughnessy and Manuel Mazaro met at that "very different" place, the Café des Réfugiés. There was much free talk going on about Texan annexation, about chances of war with Mexico, about San Domingan

affairs, about Cuba and many et-ceteras. Galahad was in his usual gay mood. He strode about among a mixed company of Louisianais, Cubans, and Américains, keeping them in a great laugh with his account of one of Ole Bull's concerts, and how he had there extorted an invitation from M. and Mme. Devoti to attend one of their famous children's fancy dress balls.

"Halloo!" said he as Mazaro approached, "heer's the etheerial Angelica herself. Look-ut heer, sissy, why ar'n't ye in the maternal arms of the Café des Exilés?"

Mazaro smiled amiably and sat down. A moment after, the Irishman, stepping away from his companions, stood before the young Cuban, and asked with a quiet business air:

"D'ye want to see me, Mazaro?"

The Cuban nodded, and they went aside. Mazaro, in a few quick words, looking at his pretty foot the while, told the other on no account to go near the Café des Exilés, as there were two men hanging about there, evidently watching for him, and—

"Wut's the use o' that?" asked Galahad; "I say, wut's the use o' that?"

Major Shaughnessy's habit of repeating part of his words arose from another, of interrupting any person who might be speaking.

"They must know—I say they must know that whenever I'm nowhurs else I'm heer. What do they want?"

Mazaro made a gesture, signifying caution and secrecy, and smiled, as if to say, "You ought to know."

"Aha!" said the Irishman softly. "Why don't they come here?"

"Z-afrai'," said Mazaro; "d'they frai' to do an'teen een d-these-a crowth."

"That's so," said the Irishman; "I say, that's so. If I don't feel very much like go-un, I'll not go; I say, I'll not go. We've no business to-night, eh Mazaro?"

"No, Senor."

A second evening was much the same, Mazaro repeating his warning. But when, on the third evening, the Irishman again repeated his willingness to stay

away from the Café des Exilés unless he should feel strongly impelled to go, it was with the mental reservation that he did feel very much in that humor, and, unknown to Mazaro, should thither repair, if only to see whether some of those deep old fellows were not contriving a practical joke.

"Mazaro," said he, "I'm go-un around the caurnur a bit; I want ye to wait heer till I come back. I say I want ye to wait heer till I come back; I'll be gone about three-quarters of an hour."

Mazaro assented. He saw with satisfaction the Irishman start in a direction opposite that in which lay the Café des Exilés, tarried fifteen or twenty minutes, and then, thinking he could step around to the Café des Exilés and return before the expiration of the allotted time, hurried out.

Meanwhile that peaceful habitation sat in the moonlight with her children about her feet. The company outside the door was somewhat thinner than common. M. D'Hemecourt was not among them, but was sitting in the room behind the café. The long table which the burial society used at their meetings extended across the apartment, and a lamp had been placed upon it. M. D'Hemecourt sat by the lamp. Opposite him was a chair, which seemed awaiting an expected occupant. Beside the old man sat Pauline. They were talking in cautious undertones, and in French.

"No," she seemed to insist; "we do not know that he refuses to come. We only know that Manuel says so."

The father shook his head sadly. "When has he ever staid away three nights together before?" he asked. "No, my child; it is intentional. Manuel urges him to come, but he only sends poor excuses."

"But," said the girl, shading her face from the lamp and speaking with some suddenness, "why have you not sent word to him by some other person?"

M. D'Hemecourt looked up at his daughter a moment, and then smiled at his own simplicity.

"Ah!" he said. "Certainly; and that is what I will—run away, Pauline. There is Manuel, now, ahead of time!"

A step was heard inside the café. The maiden, though she knew the step was not Mazaro's, rose hastily, opened the nearest door, and disappeared. She had barely closed it behind her when Galahad Shaughnessy entered the apartment.

M'Hemecourt rose up, both surprised and confused.

"Good-evening, Munsher D'Himecourt," said the Irishman. "Munsher D'Himecourt, I know it's against rules—I say, I know it's against rules to come in here, but"—smiling,—“I want to have a private wurd with ye. I say, I want to have a private wurd with ye.”

In the closet of bottles the maiden smiled triumphantly. She also wiped the dew from her forehead, for the place was very close and warm.

With her father was no triumph. In him sadness and doubt were so mingled with anger that he dared not lift his eyes, but gazed at the knot in the wood of the table, which looked like a caterpillar curled up.

Mazaro, he concluded, had really asked the Major to come.

"Mazaro tol' you?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the Irishman. "Mazaro told me I was watched, and asked"—

"Madjor," unluckily interrupted the old man, suddenly looking up and speaking with subdued fervor, "for w'y—iv Mazaro tol' you—for w'y you din come more sooner? Dad is one 'eavy charge again' you."

"Didn't Mazaro tell ye why I didn't come?" asked the other, beginning to be puzzled at his host's meaning.

"Yez," replied M. D'Hemecourt, "bud one brev zhenteman should not be afraid of"—

The young man stopped him with a quiet laugh, "Munsher D'Himecourt," said he, "I'm nor afraid of any two men living—I say I'm nor afraid of any two men living, and certainly not of the two that's bean a-watchin' me lately, if they're the two I think they are."

M. D'Hemecourt flushed in a way quite incomprehensible to the speaker, who nevertheless continued:

"It was the charges," he said, with some slyness in his smile. "They *are* heavy, as ye say, and that's the very reason—I say that's the very reason why I staid away, ye see, eh? I say that's the very reason I staid away."

Then, indeed, there was a dew for the maiden to wipe from her brow, unconscious that every word that was being said bore a different significance in the mind of each of the three. The old man was agitated. "Bud, sir," he began, shaking his head and lifting his hand.

"Bless yer soul, Munsher D'Himecourt," interrupted the Irishman. "Wut's the use o' grapplin' two cut-throats, when"—

"Madjor Shaughnessy!" cried M. D'Hemecourt, losing all self-control. "H-I am nod a cud-troad, Madjor Shaughnessy, h-an I 'ave a r-r-right to wadge you."

The Major rose from his chair.

"What d'ye mean?" he asked vacantly, and then: "Look-ut here, Munsher D'Himecourt, one of uz is crazy. I say one"—

"No, sar-r-r!" cried the other, rising and clenching his trembling fist. "H-I am not crezzy. I 'ave de right to wadge dad man wad mague rimark about me dotter."

"I never did no such a thing."

"You did."

"I never did no such a thing."

"Bud you 'ave jus hacknowledge'—"

"I never did no such a *thing*, I tell ye, and the man that's told ye so is a liur!"

"Ah-h-h-h!" said the old man, wagging his finger "Ah-h-h-h! You call Manuel Mazaro one liar?"

The Irishman laughed out.

"Well, I should say so!"

He motioned the old man into his chair, and both sat down again.

"Why, Munsher D'Himecourt, Mazaro's been keepin' me away from heer with a yarn about two Spaniards watchin' for me. That's what I came in to ask ye about. My dear sur, do ye s'pose I wud talk about the goddess—I mean, yer daughter—to the likes o' Mazaro—I say to the likes o' Mazaro?"

To say the old man was at sea would be too feeble an expression—he was in the trough of the sea, with a hurricane of doubts and fears whirling around him. Somebody had told a lie, and he, having struck upon its sunken surface, was dazed and stunned. He opened his lips to say he knew not what, when his ear caught the voice of Manuel Mazaro, replying to the greeting of some of his comrades outside the front door.

"He is comin'!" cried the old man. "Mague you'sev hide, Madjor; do not led 'im kedge you, Mon Dieu!"

The Irishman smiled.

"The little yellow wretch!" said he quietly, his blue eyes dancing. "I'm goin' to catch *him*."

A certain hidden hearer instantly made up her mind to rush out between the two young men and be a heroine.

"*Non, non!*" exclaimed M. D'Hemecourt excitedly. "Nod in de Café des Exilés—nod now, Madjor. Go in dad door, hif you pliz, Madjor. You will heer 'im w'at he 'ave to say. Mague you'sev de troub'. Nod dad door—diz one."

The Major laughed again and started toward the door indicated, but in an instant stopped.

"I can't go in theyre," he said. "That's yer daughter's room."

"*Oui, oui, mais!*" cried the other softly, but Mazaro's step was near.

"I'll just slip in heer," and the amused Shaughnessy tripped lightly to the closet door, drew it open in spite of a momentary resistance from within which he had no time to notice, stepped into a small recess full of shelves and bottles, shut the door, and stood face to face—the broad moonlight shining upon her through a small, high-grated opening on one side—with Pauline. At the same instant the voice of the young Cuban sounded in the room.

Pauline was in a great tremor. She made as if she would have opened the door and fled, but the Irishman gave a gesture of earnest protest and re-assurance. The re-opened door might make the back parlor of the *Café des Exilés* a scene of blood. Thinking of this, what could she do? She staid.

"You goth a heap-a thro-vle, Senor," said Manuel Mazaro, taking the seat so lately vacated. He had patted M. D'Hemecourt tenderly on the back and the old gentleman had flinched; hence the remark, to which there was no reply.

"Was a bee crowth a' the *Café the Réfugiés*," continued the young man.

"Bud, w'ere dad Madjor Shaughnessy?" demanded M. D'Hemecourt, with the little sternness he could command.

"Mayor Shaughness'—yez-a; was there; boat-a," with a disparaging smile and shake of the head, "*he* woon-a come-a to you. Senor, oh' no."

The old man smiled bitterly.

"*Non?*" he asked.

"Oh, no, Senor!" Mazaro drew his chair closer. "Senor;" he paused,—"*eez a- vary bath-a fore-a you thaughter, eh?*"

"W'at?" asked the host, snapping like a tormented dog.

"D-theze talkin' 'bou'," answered the young man; "d-theze coffee-howces noth a goo' plaze-a fore hore, eh?"

The Irishman and the maiden looked into each other's eyes an instant, as people will do when listening; but Pauline's immediately fell, and when Mazaro's words were understood, her blushes became visible even by moonlight.

"He's r-right!" emphatically whispered Galahad.

She attempted to draw back a step, but found herself against the shelves. M. D'Hemecourt had not answered. Mazaro spoke again.

"Boat-a you canno' help-a, eh? I know, 'out-a she gettin' marry, eh?"

Pauline trembled. Her father summoned all his force and rose as if to ask his questioner to leave him; but the handsome Cuban motioned him down with a gesture that seemed to beg for only a moment more.

"Senor, if a-was one man whath lo-va you' thaughter, all is possiblee to lo-va."

Pauline, nervously braiding some bits of wire which she had unconsciously taken from a shelf, glanced up—against her will,—into the eyes of Galahad. They were looking so steadily down upon her that with a great leap of the heart for joy she closed her own and half turned away. But Mazaro had not ceased.

"All is possiblee to lo-va, Senor, you shouth-a let marry hore an' tak'n 'way frone d'these plaze, Senor."

"Manuel Mazaro," said M. D'Hemecourt, again rising, "you 'ave say enough."

"No, no, Senor; no, no; I want tell-a you—is a-one man—*whath lo-va* you' thaughter; an' I *knowce* him!"

Was there no cause for quarrel, after all? Could it be that Mazaro was about to speak for Galahad? The old man asked in his simplicity:

"Madjor Shaughnessy?"

Mazaro smiled mockingly.

"Mayor Shaughness'," he said; "oh, no; not Mayor Shaughness'!"

Pauline could stay no longer; escape she must, though it be in Manuel Mazaro's very face. Turning again and looking up into Galahad's face in a great fright, she opened her lips to speak, but—

"Mayor Shaughness'," continued the Cuban; "*he nev'r-a lo-va* you' thaughter."

Galahad was putting the maiden back from the door with his hand.

"Pauline," he said, "it's a lie!"

"An', Senor," pursued the Cuban, "if a was possiblee you' thaughter to lo-va heem, a-wouth-a be worse-a kine in worlt; but, Senor, *I*"—

M. D'Hemecourt made a majestic sign for silence. He had resumed his chair, but he rose up once more, took the Cuban's hat from the table and tendered it to him.

"Manuel Mazaro, you 'ave"—

"Senor, I goin' tell you"—

"Manuel Mazaro, you"—

"Boat-a Senor"—

"Bud, Manuel Maz"—

"Senor, excuse-a me"—

"Huzh!" cried the old man. "Manuel Mazaro, you ave deceive' me! You 'ave *mocque* me, Manu"—

"Senor," cried Mazaro, "I swear-a to you that all-a what I sayin' ees-a"—

He stopped aghast. Galahad and Pauline stood before him.

"Is what?" asked the blue-eyed man, with a look of quiet delight on his face, such as Mazaro instantly remembered to have seen on it one night when Galahad was being shot at in the Sucking Calf Restaurant in St. Peter Street.

The table was between them, but Mazaro's hand went upward toward the back of his coat-collar.

"Ah, ah!" cried the Irishman, shaking his head with a broader smile and thrusting his hand threateningly into his breast; "don't ye do that! just finish yer speech."

"Was-a notthin'," said the Cuban, trying to smile back.

"Yer a liur," said Galahad.

"No," said Mazaro, still endeavoring to smile through his agony; "z-was on'y tellin' Senor D'Hemecourt someteen z-was t-thrue."

"And I tell ye," said Galahad, "ye'r a liur, and to be so kind an' get yersel' to the front stoop, as I'm desiruz o' kickin' ye before the crowd."

"Madjor!" cried D'Hemecourt—

"Go," said Galahad, advancing a step toward the Cuban.

Had Manuel Mazaro wished to personate the prince of darkness, his beautiful face had the correct expression for it. He slowly turned, opened the door into the café, sent one glowering look behind, and disappeared.

Pauline laid her hand upon her lover's arm.

"Madjor," began her father.

"Oh, Madjor and Madjor," said the Irishman; "Munsher D'Hemecourt, just say 'Madjor, heer's a gude wife fur ye,' and I'll let the little serpent go."

Thereupon, sure enough, both M. D'Hemecourt and his daughter, rushing together, did what I have been hoping all along, for the reader's sake, they would have dispensed with; they burst into tears; whereupon the Major, with his Irish appreciation of the ludicrous, turned away to hide his smirk and began good-humoredly to scratch himself first on the temple and then on the thigh.

Mazaro passed silently through the group about the door-steps, and not many minutes afterward, Galahad Shaughnessy, having taken a place among the exiles, rose with the remark that the old gentleman would doubtless be willing to tell them good-night. Good-night was accordingly said, the Café des Exilés closed her windows, then her doors, winked a moment or two through the cracks in the shutters and then went fast asleep.

The Mexican physician, at Galahad's request, told Mazaro that at the next meeting of the burial society he might and must occupy his accustomed seat without fear of molestation; and he did so.

The meeting took place some seven days after the affair in the back parlor, and on the same ground. Business being finished, Galahad, who presided, stood up, looking, in his white duck suit among his darkly-clad companions, like a white sheep among black ones, and begged leave to order "dlasses" from the front room. I say among black sheep; yet, I suppose, than that double row of languid, effeminate faces, one would have been taxed to find a more harmless-looking company. The glasses were brought and filled.

"Gentlemen," said Galahad, "comrades, this may be the last time we ever meet together an unbroken body."

Martinez of San Domingo, he of the horrible experience, nodded with a lurking smile, curled a leg under him and clasped his fingers behind his head.

"Who knows," continued the speaker, "but Senor Benito, though strong and sound and har'ly thirty-seven"—here all smiled—"may be taken ill tomorrow?"

Martinez smiled across to the tall, gray Benito on Galahad's left, and he, in turn, smilingly showed to the company a thin, white line of teeth between his moustachios like distant reefs.

"Who knows," the young Irishman proceeded to inquire, "I say, who knows but Pedro, theyre, may be struck wid a fever?"

Pedro, a short, compact man of thoroughly mixed blood, and with an eyebrow cut away, whose surname no one knew, smiled his acknowledgments.

"Who knows?" resumed Galahad, when those who understood English had explained in Spanish to those who did not, "but they may soon need the services not only of our good doctor heer, but of our society; and that Fernandez and Benigno, and Gonzalez and Dominguez, may not be chosen to see, on that very schooner lying at the Picayune Tier just now, their beloved remains and so forth safely delivered into the hands and lands of their people. I say, who knows bur it may be so!"

The company bowed graciously as who should say, "Well-turned phrases, Senor—well-turned."

"And *amigos*, if so be that such is their approoching fate, I will say:"

He lifted his glass, and the rest did the same.

"I say, I will say to them, Creoles, countrymen, and lovers, boun voyadge an' good luck to ye's."

For several moments there was much translating, bowing, and murmured acknowledgments; Mazaro said: "*Bueno!*" and all around among the long double rank of moustachioed lips amiable teeth were gleaming, some white, some brown, some yellow, like bones in the grass.

"And now, gentlemen," Galahad recommenced, "fellow-exiles, once more. Munsher D'Himecourt, it was yer practice, until lately, to reward a good talker with a dlass from the hands o' yer daughter." (*Si, si!*) "I'm bur a poor speaker." (*Si, si, Senor, z-a-fine-a kin'-a can be; si!*) "However, I'll ask ye, not knowun bur it may be the last time we all meet together, if ye will not let the goddess of the Café des Exilés grace our company with her presence for just about one minute?" (*Yez-a, Senor; si; yez-a; oui.*)

Every head was turned toward the old man, nodding the echoed request.

"Ye see, friends," said Galahad in a true Irish whisper, as M. D'Hemecourt left the apartment, "her poseetion has been a-growin' more and more embarrassin' daily, and the operaytions of our society were likely to make it wurse in the future; wherefore I have lately taken steps—I say I tuke steps this morn to relieve the old gentleman's distresses and his daughter's"—

He paused. M. D'Hemecourt entered with Pauline, and the exiles all rose up. Ah!—but why say again she was lovely?

Galahad stepped forward to meet her, took her hand, led her to the head of the board, and turning to the company, said:

"Friends and fellow-patriots, Misthress Shaughnessy."

There was no outburst of astonishment—only the same old bowing, smiling, and murmuring of compliment. Galahad turned with a puzzled look to M. D'Hemecourt, and guessed the truth. In the joy of an old man's heart he had already that afternoon told the truth to each and every man separately, as a secret too deep for them to reveal, but too sweet for him to keep. The Major and Pauline were man and wife.

The last laugh that was ever heard in the Café des Exilés sounded softly through the room.

"Lads," said the Irishman. "Fill yer dlasses. Here's to the Café des Exilés, God bless her!"

And the meeting slowly adjourned.

Two days later, signs and rumors of sickness began to find place about the Café des Réfugiés, and the Mexican physician made three calls in one day. It was

said by the people around that the tall Cuban gentleman named Benito was very sick in one of the back rooms. A similar frequency of the same physician's calls was noticed about the Café des Exilés.

"The man with one eyebrow," said the neighbors, "is sick. Pauline left the house yesterday to make room for him."

"Ah! is it possible?"

"Yes, it is really true; she and her husband. She took her mocking-bird with her; he carried it; he came back alone."

On the next afternoon the children about the Café des Réfugiés enjoyed the spectacle of the invalid Cuban moved on a trestle to the Café des Exilés, although he did not look so deathly sick as they could have liked to see him, and on the fourth morning the doors of the Café des Exilés remained closed. A black-bordered funeral notice, veiled with crape, announced that the great Caller-home of exiles had served his summons upon Don Pedro Hernandez (surname borrowed for the occasion), and Don Carlos Mendez y Benito.

The hour for the funeral was fixed at four P.M. It never took place. Down at the Picayune Tier on the river bank there was, about two o'clock that same day, a slight commotion, and those who stood aimlessly about a small, neat schooner, said she was "seized." At four there suddenly appeared before the Café des Exilés a squad of men with silver crescents on their breasts—police officers. The old cottage sat silent with closed doors, the crape hanging heavily over the funeral notice like a widow's veil, the little unseen garden sending up odors from its hidden censers, and the old weeping-willow bending over all.

"Nobody here?" asks the leader.

The crowd which has gathered stares without answering.

As quietly and peaceably as possible the officers pry open the door. They enter, and the crowd pushes in after. There are the two coffins, looking very heavy and solid, lying in state but unguarded.

The crowd draws a breath of astonishment. "Are they going to wrench the tops off with hatchet and chisel?"

Bap, rap, rap; wrench, rap, wrench. Ah! the cases come open.

"Well kept?" asks the leader flippantly.

"Oh, yes," is the reply. And then all laugh.

One of the lookers-on pushes up and gets a glimpse within.

"What is it?" ask the other idlers.

He tells one quietly.

"What did he say?" ask the rest, one of another.

"He says they are not dead men, but new muskets"—

"Here, clear out!" cries an officer, and the loiterers fall back and by and by straggle off.

The exiles? What became of them, do you ask? Why, nothing; they were not troubled, but they never all came together again. Said a chief-of-police to Major Shaughnessy years afterward:

"Major, there was only one thing that kept your expedition from succeeding—you were too sly about it. Had you come out flat and said what you were doing, we'd never a-said a word to you. But that little fellow gave us the wink, and then we had to stop you."

And was no one punished? Alas! one was. Poor, pretty, curly-headed traitorous Mazaro! He was drawn out of Carondelet Canal—cold, dead! And when his wounds were counted—they were just the number of the *Café des Exilés'* children, less Galahad. But the mother—that is, the old *café*—did not see it; she had gone up the night before in a chariot of fire.

In the files of the old "*Picayune*" and "*Price-Current*" of 1837 may be seen the mention of Galahad Shaughnessy among the merchants—"our enterprising and accomplished fellow-townsmen," and all that. But old M. D'Hemecourt's name is cut in marble, and his citizenship is in "a city whose maker and builder is God."

Only yesterday I dined with the Shaughnessys—fine old couple and handsome. Their children sat about them and entertained me most pleasantly. But there isn't one can tell a tale as their father can—'twas he told me this one, though here and there my enthusiasm may have taken liberties. He knows the history of every old

house in the French Quarter; or, if he happens not to know a true one, he can make one up as he goes along.

BELLES DEMOISELLES PLANTATION.

The original grantee was Count——, assume the name to be De Charleu; the old Creoles never forgive a public mention. He was the French king's commissary. One day, called to France to explain the lucky accident of the commissariat having burned down with his account-books inside, he left his wife, a Choctaw Comtesse, behind.

Arrived at court, his excuses were accepted, and that tract granted him where afterwards stood Belles Demoiselles Plantation. A man cannot remember every thing! In a fit of forgetfulness he married a French gentlewoman, rich and beautiful, and "brought her out." However, "All's well that ends well;" a famine had been in the colony, and the Choctaw Comtesse had starved, leaving nought but a half-caste orphan family lurking on the edge of the settlement, bearing our French gentlewoman's own new name, and being mentioned in Monsieur's will.

And the new Comtesse—she tarried but a twelvemonth, left Monsieur a lovely son, and departed, led out of this vain world by the swamp-fever.

From this son sprang the proud Creole family of De Charleu. It rose straight up, up, up, generation after generation, tall, branchless, slender, palm-like; and finally, in the time of which I am to tell, flowered with all the rare beauty of a century-plant, in Artemise, Innocente, Felicite, the twins Marie and Martha, Leontine and little Septima; the seven beautiful daughters for whom their home had been fitly named Belles Demoiselles.

The Count's grant had once been a long Pointe, round which the Mississippi used to whirl, and seethe, and foam, that it was horrid to behold. Big whirlpools would open and wheel about in the savage eddies under the low bank, and close up again, and others open, and spin, and disappear. Great circles of muddy surface would boil up from hundreds of feet below, and gloss over, and seem to float away,—sink, come back again under water, and with only a soft hiss surge up again, and again drift off, and vanish. Every few minutes the loamy bank would tip down a great load of earth upon its besieger, and fall back a foot,—

sometimes a yard,—and the writhing river would press after, until at last the Pointe was quite swallowed up, and the great river glided by in a majestic curve, and asked no more; the bank stood fast, the "caving" became a forgotten misfortune, and the diminished grant was a long, sweeping, willowy bend, rustling with miles of sugar-cane.

Coming up the Mississippi in the sailing craft of those early days, about the time one first could descry the white spires of the old St. Louis Cathedral, you would be pretty sure to spy, just over to your right under the levee, Belles Demoiselles Mansion, with its broad veranda and red painted cypress roof, peering over the embankment, like a bird in the nest, half hid by the avenue of willows which one of the departed De Charleus,—he that married a Marot,—had planted on the levee's crown.

The house stood unusually near the river, facing eastward, and standing four-square, with an immense veranda about its sides, and a flight of steps in front spreading broadly downward, as we open arms to a child. From the veranda nine miles of river were seen; and in their compass, near at hand, the shady garden full of rare and beautiful flowers; farther away broad fields of cane and rice, and the distant quarters of the slaves, and on the horizon everywhere a dark belt of cypress forest.

The master was old Colonel De Charleu,—Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot, and "Colonel" by the grace of the first American governor. Monsieur,—he would not speak to any one who called him "Colonel,"—was a hoary-headed patriarch. His step was firm, his form erect, his intellect strong and clear, his countenance classic, serene, dignified, commanding, his manners courtly, his voice musical, —fascinating. He had had his vices,—all his life; but had borne them, as his race do, with a serenity of conscience and a cleanness of mouth that left no outward blemish on the surface of the gentleman. He had gambled in Royal Street, drunk hard in Orleans Street, run his adversary through in the duelling-ground at Slaughter-house Point, and danced and quarrelled at the St. Philippe-street-theatre quadron balls. Even now, with all his courtesy and bounty, and a hospitality which seemed to be entertaining angels, he was bitter-proud and penurious, and deep down in his hard-finished heart loved nothing but himself, his name, and his motherless children. But these!—their ravishing beauty was all but excuse enough for the unbounded idolatry of their father. Against these seven goddesses he never rebelled. Had they even required him to defraud old De Carlos—

I can hardly say.

Old De Carlos was his extremely distant relative on the Choctaw side. With this single exception, the narrow thread-like line of descent from the Indian wife, diminished to a mere strand by injudicious alliances, and deaths in the gutters of old New Orleans, was extinct. The name, by Spanish contact, had become De Carlos; but this one surviving bearer of it was known to all, and known only, as Injin Charlie.

One thing I never knew a Creole to do. He will not utterly go back on the ties of blood, no matter what sort of knots those ties may be. For one reason, he is never ashamed of his or his father's sins; and for another,—he will tell you—he is "all heart!"

So the different heirs of the De Charleu estate had always strictly regarded the rights and interests of the De Carloses, especially their ownership of a block of dilapidated buildings in a part of the city, which had once been very poor property, but was beginning to be valuable. This block had much more than maintained the last De Carlos through a long and lazy lifetime, and, as his household consisted only of himself, and an aged and crippled negress, the inference was irresistible that he "had money." Old Charlie, though by *alias* an "Injin," was plainly a dark white man, about as old as Colonel De Charleu, sunk in the bliss of deep ignorance, shrewd, deaf, and, by repute at least, unmerciful.

The Colonel and he always conversed in English. This rare accomplishment, which the former had learned from his Scotch wife,—the latter from up-river traders,—they found an admirable medium of communication, answering, better than French could, a similar purpose to that of the stick which we fasten to the bit of one horse and breast-gear of another, whereby each keeps his distance. Once in a while, too, by way of jest, English found its way among the ladies of Belles Demoiselles, always signifying that their sire was about to have business with old Charlie.

Now a long-standing wish to buy out Charlie troubled the Colonel. He had no desire to oust him unfairly; he was proud of being always fair; yet he did long to engross the whole estate under one title. Out of his luxurious idleness he had conceived this desire, and thought little of so slight an obstacle as being already somewhat in debt to old Charlie for money borrowed, and for which Belles Demoiselles was, of course, good, ten times over. Lots, buildings, rents, all, might as well be his, he thought, to give, keep, or destroy. "Had he but the old

man's heritage. Ah! he might bring that into existence which his *belles demoiselles* had been begging for, 'since many years;' a home,—and such a home,—in the gay city. Here he should tear down this row of cottages, and make his garden wall; there that long rope-walk should give place to vine-covered ardors; the bakery yonder should make way for a costly conservatory; that wine warehouse should come down, and the mansion go up. It should be the finest in the State. Men should never pass it, but they should say—'the palace of the De Charleus; a family of grand descent, a people of elegance and bounty, a line as old as France, a fine old man, and seven daughters as beautiful as happy; whoever dare attempt to marry there must leave his own name behind him!'

"The house should be of stones fitly set, brought down in ships from the land of 'les Yankees,' and it should have an airy belvedere, with a gilded image tiptoeing and shining on its peak, and from it you should see, far across the gleaming folds of the river, the red roof of Belles Demoiselles, the country-seat. At the big stone gate there should be a porter's lodge, and it should be a privilege even to see the ground."

Truly they were a family fine enough, and fancy-free enough to have fine wishes, yet happy enough where they were, to have had no wish but to live there always.

To those, who, by whatever fortune, wandered into the garden of Belles Demoiselles some summer afternoon as the sky was reddening towards evening, it was lovely to see the family gathered out upon the tiled pavement at the foot of the broad front steps, gayly chatting and jesting, with that ripple of laughter that comes so pleasingly from a bevy of girls. The father would be found seated in their midst, the centre of attention and compliment, witness, arbiter, umpire, critic, by his beautiful children's unanimous appointment, but the single vassal, too, of seven absolute sovereigns.

Now they would draw their chairs near together in eager discussion of some new step in the dance, or the adjustment of some rich adornment. Now they would start about him with excited comments to see the eldest fix a bunch of violets in his button-hole. Now the twins would move down a walk after some unusual flower, and be greeted on their return with the high pitched notes of delighted feminine surprise.

As evening came on they would draw more quietly about their paternal centre. Often their chairs were forsaken, and they grouped themselves on the lower

steps, one above another, and surrendered themselves to the tender influences of the approaching night. At such an hour the passer on the river, already attracted by the dark figures of the broad-roofed mansion, and its woody garden standing against the glowing sunset, would hear the voices of the hidden group rise from the spot in the soft harmonies of an evening song; swelling clearer and clearer as the thrill of music warmed them into feeling, and presently joined by the deeper tones of the father's voice; then, as the daylight passed quite away, all would be still, and he would know that the beautiful home had gathered its nestlings under its wings.

And yet, for mere vagary, it pleased them not to be pleased.

"Arti!" called one sister to another in the broad hall, one morning,—mock amazement in her distended eyes,—"something is goin' to took place!"

"*Comm-e-n-t?*"—long-drawn perplexity.

"Papa is goin' to town!"

The news passed up stairs.

"Inno!"—one to another meeting in a doorway,—"something is goin' to took place!"

"*Qu'est-ce-que c'est!*"—vain attempt at gruffness.

"Papa is goin' to town!"

The unusual tidings were true. It was afternoon of the same day that the Colonel tossed his horse's bridle to his groom, and stepped up to old Charlie, who was sitting on his bench under a China-tree, his head as was his fashion, bound in a Madras handkerchief. The "old man" was plainly under the effect of spirits and smiled a deferential salutation without trusting himself to his feet.

"Eh, well Charlie!"—the Colonel raised his voice to suit his kinsman's deafness,—"how is those times with my friend Charlie?"

"Eh?" said Charlie, distractedly.

"Is that goin' well with my friend Charlie?"

"In de house,—call her,"—making a pretence of rising.

"*Non, non!* I don't want,"—the speaker paused to breathe—"ow is collection?"

"Oh!" said Charlie, "every day he make me more poorer!"

"What do you hask for it?" asked the planter indifferently, designating the house by a wave of his whip.

"Ask for w'at?" said Injin Charlie.

"*De house!* What you ask for it?"

"I don't believe," said Charlie.

"What you would *take* for it!" cried the planter.

"Wait for w'at?"

"What you would *take* for the whole block?"

"I don't want to sell him!"

"I'll give you *ten thousand dollah* for it."

"Ten t'ousand dollah for dis house? Oh, no, dat is no price. He is blame good old house,—dat old house." (Old Charlie and the Colonel never swore in presence of each other.) "Forty years dat old house didn't had to be paint! I easy can get fifty t'ousand dollah for dat old house."

"Fifty thousand picayunes; yes," said the Colonel.

"She's a good house. Can make plenty money," pursued the deaf man.

"That's what make you so rich, eh, Charlie?"

"*Non*, I don't make nothing. Too blame clever, me, dat's de troub'. She's a good house,—make money fast like a steamboat,—make a barrel full in a week! Me, I lose money all de days. Too blame clever."

"Charlie!"

"Eh?"

"Tell me what you'll take."

"Make? I don't make *nothing*. Too blame clever."

"What will you *take*?"

"Oh! I got enough already,—half drunk now."

"What will you take for the 'ouse?"

"You want to buy her?"

"I don't know,"—(shrug),—"may_be_,—if you sell it cheap."

"She's a bully old house."

There was a long silence. By and by old Charlies commenced—

"Old Injin Charlie is a low-down dog."

"*C'est vrai, oui!*" retorted the Colonel in an undertone.

"He's got Injin blood in him."

"But he's got some blame good blood, too, ain't it?"

The Colonel nodded impatiently.

"*Bien!* Old Charlie's Injin blood says, 'sell de house, Charlie, you blame old fool!' *Mais*, old Charlie's good blood says, 'Charlie! if you sell dat old house, Charlie, you low-down old dog, Charlie, what de Compte De Charleu make for you grace-gran'muzzer, de dev' can eat you, Charlie, I don't care.'"

"No!" And the *no* rumbled off in muttered oaths like thunder out on the Gulf. The incensed old Colonel wheeled and started off.

"Curl!" (Colonel) said Charlie, standing up unsteadily.

The planter turned with an inquiring frown.

"I'll trade with you!" said Charlie.

The Colonel was tempted. "'Ow'l you trade?" he asked.

"My house for yours!"

The old Colonel turned pale with anger. He walked very quickly back, and came close up to his kinsman.

"Charlie!" he said.

"Injin Charlie,"—with a tipsy nod.

But by this time self-control was returning. "Sell Belles Demoiselles to you?" he said in a high key, and then laughed "Ho, ho, ho!" and rode away.

A cloud, but not a dark one, overshadowed the spirits of Belles Demoiselles' plantation. The old master, whose beaming presence had always made him a shining Saturn, spinning and sparkling within the bright circle of his daughters, fell into musing fits, started out of frowning reveries, walked often by himself, and heard business from his overseer fretfully.

No wonder. The daughters knew his closeness in trade, and attributed to it his failure to negotiate for the Old Charlie buildings,—so to call them. They began to depreciate Belles Demoiselles. If a north wind blew, it was too cold to ride. If a shower had fallen, it was too muddy to drive. In the morning the garden was wet. In the evening the grasshopper was a burden. *Ennui* was turned into capital; every headache was interpreted a premonition of ague; and when the native exuberance of a flock of ladies without a want or a care burst out in laughter in the father's face, they spread their French eyes, rolled up their little hands, and with rigid wrists and mock vehemence vowed and vowed again that they only laughed at their misery, and should pine to death unless they could move to the sweet city. "Oh! the theatre! Oh! Orleans Street! Oh! the masquerade! the Place d'Armes! the ball!" and they would call upon Heaven with French irreverence, and fall into each other's arms, and whirl down the hall singing a waltz, end with a grand collision and fall, and, their eyes streaming merriment, lay the blame on the slippery floor, that would some day be the death of the whole seven.

Three times more the fond father, thus goaded, managed, by accident,—business accident,—to see old Charlie and increase his offer; but in vain. He finally went to him formally.

"Eh?" said the deaf and distant relative. "For what you want him, eh? Why you don't stay where you halways be 'appy? Dis is a blame old rat-hole,—good for old Injin Charlie,—da's all. Why you don't stay where you be halways 'appy? Why you don't buy somewheres else?"

"That's none of your business," snapped the planter. Truth was, his reasons were unsatisfactory even to himself.

A sullen silence followed. Then Charlie spoke:

"Well, now, look here; I sell you old Charlie's house."

"*Bien!* and the whole block," said the Colonel.

"Hold on," said Charlie. "I sell you de 'ouse and de block. Den I go and git drunk, and go to sleep de dev' comes along and says, 'Charlie! old Charlie, you blame low-down old dog, wake up! What you doin' here? Where's de 'ouse what Monsieur le Compte give your grace-gran-muzzer? Don't you see dat fine gentyman, De Charleu, done gone and tore him down and make him over new, you blame old fool, Charlie, you low-down old Injin dog!'"

"I'll give you forty thousand dollars," said the Colonel.

"For de 'ouse?"

"For all."

The deaf man shook his head.

"Forty-five!" said the Colonel.

"What a lie? For what you tell me 'What a lie?' I don't tell you no lie."

"*Non, non!* I give you *forty-five!*" shouted the Colonel.

Charlie shook his head again.

"Fifty!"

He shook it again.

The figures rose and rose to—

"Seventy-five!"

The answer was an invitation to go away and let the owner alone, as he was, in certain specified respects, the vilest of living creatures, and no company for a fine gentyman.

The "fine gentyman" longed to blaspheme—but before old Charlie!—in the name of pride, how could he? He mounted and started away.

"Tell you what I'll make wid you," said Charlie.

The other, guessing aright, turned back without dismounting, smiling.

"How much Belles Demoiselles hoes me now?" asked the deaf one.

"One hundred and eighty thousand dollars," said the Colonel, firmly.

"Yass," said Charlie. "I don't want Belle Demoiselles."

The old Colonel's quiet laugh intimated it made no difference either way.

"But me," continued Charlie, "me,—I'm got le Compte De Charleu's blood in me, any'ow,—a litt' bit, any'ow, ain't it?"

The Colonel nodded that it was.

"*Bien!* If I go out of dis place and don't go to Belles Demoiselles, de peoples will say,—dey will say, 'Old Charlie he been all doze time tell a blame *lie!* He ain't no kin to his old grace-gran-muzzer, not a blame bit! He don't got nary drop of De Charleu blood to save his blame low-down old Injin soul! No, sare! What I want wid money, den? No, sare! My place for yours!"

He turned to go into the house, just too soon to see the Colonel make an ugly whisk at him with his riding-whip. Then the Colonel, too, moved off.

Two or three times over, as he ambled homeward, laughter broke through his annoyance, as he recalled old Charlie's family pride and the presumption of his offer. Yet each time he could but think better of—not the offer to swap, but the preposterous ancestral loyalty. It was so much better than he could have expected from his "low-down" relative, and not unlike his own whim withal—the proposition which went with it was forgiven.

This last defeat bore so harshly on the master of Belles Demoiselles, that the daughters, reading chagrin in his face, began to repent. They loved their father as daughters can, and when they saw their pretended dejection harassing him seriously they restrained their complaints, displayed more than ordinary tenderness, and heroically and ostentatiously concluded there was no place like Belles Demoiselles. But the new mood touched him more than the old, and only

refined his discontent. Here was a man, rich without the care of riches, free from any real trouble, happiness as native to his house as perfume to his garden, deliberately, as it were with premeditated malice, taking joy by the shoulder and bidding her be gone to town, whither he might easily have followed, only that the very same ancestral nonsense that kept Injin Charlie from selling the old place for twice its value prevented him from choosing any other spot for a city home.

But by and by the charm of nature and the merry hearts around him prevailed; the fit of exalted sulks passed off, and after a while the year flared up at Christmas, flickered, and went out.

New Year came and passed; the beautiful garden of Belles Demoiselles put on its spring attire; the seven fair sisters moved from rose to rose; the cloud of discontent had warmed into invisible vapor in the rich sunlight of family affection, and on the common memory the only scar of last year's wound was old Charlie's sheer impertinence in crossing the caprice of the De Charleus. The cup of gladness seemed to fill with the filling of the river.

How high that river was! Its tremendous current rolled and tumbled and spun along, hustling the long funeral flotillas of drift,—and how near shore it came! Men were out day and night, watching the levee. On windy nights even the old Colonel took part, and grew light-hearted with occupation and excitement, as every minute the river threw a white arm over the levee's top, as though it would vault over. But all held fast, and, as the summer drifted in, the water sunk down into its banks and looked quite incapable of harm.

On a summer afternoon of uncommon mildness, old Colonel Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot, being in a mood for reverie, slipped the custody of his feminine rulers and sought the crown of the levee, where it was his wont to promenade. Presently he sat upon a stone bench,—a favorite seat. Before him lay his broad-spread fields; near by, his lordly mansion; and being still,—perhaps by female contact,—somewhat sentimental, he fell to musing on his past. It was hardly worthy to be proud of. All its morning was reddened with mad frolic, and far toward the meridian it was marred with elegant rioting. Pride had kept him well-nigh useless, and despised the honors won by valor; gaming had dimmed prosperity; death had taken his heavenly wife; voluptuous ease had mortgaged his lands; and yet his house still stood, his sweet-smelling fields were still fruitful, his name was fame enough; and yonder and yonder, among the trees and

flowers, like angels walking in Eden, were the seven goddesses of his only worship.

Just then a slight sound behind him brought him to his feet. He cast his eyes anxiously to the outer edge of the little strip of bank between the levee's base and the river. There was nothing visible. He paused, with his ear toward the water, his face full of frightened expectation. Ha! There came a single plashing sound, like some great beast slipping into the river, and little waves in a wide semi-circle came out from under the bank and spread over the water!

"My God!"

He plunged down the levee and bounded through the low weeds to the edge of the bank. It was sheer, and the water about four feet below. He did not stand quite on the edge, but fell upon his knees a couple of yards away, wringing his hands, moaning and weeping, and staring through his watery eyes at a fine, long crevice just discernible under the matted grass, and curving outward on either hand toward the river.

"My God!" he sobbed aloud; "my God!" and even while he called, his God answered: the tough Bermuda grass stretched and snapped, the crevice slowly became a gape, and softly, gradually, with no sound but the closing of the water at last, a ton or more of earth settled into the boiling eddy and disappeared.

At the same instant a pulse of the breeze brought from the garden behind, the joyous, thoughtless laughter of the fair mistresses of Belles Demoiselles.

The old Colonel sprang up and clambered over the levee. Then forcing himself to a more composed movement he hastened into the house and ordered his horse.

"Tell my children to make merry while I am gone," he left word. "I shall be back to-night," and the horse's hoofs clattered down a by-road leading to the city.

"Charlie," said the planter, riding up to a window, from which the old man's nightcap was thrust out, "what you say, Charlie,—my house for yours, eh, Charlie—what you say?"

"Ello!" said Charlie; "from where you come from dis time of to-night?"

"I come from the Exchange in St. Louis Street." (A small fraction of the truth.)

"What you want?" said matter-of-fact Charlie.

"I come to trade."

The low-down relative drew the worsted off his ears. "Oh! yass," he said with an uncertain air.

"Well, old man Charlie, what you say: my house for yours,—like you said,—eh, Charlie?"

"I dunno," said Charlie; "it's nearly mine now. Why you don't stay dare youse'f?"

"*Because I don't want!*" said the Colonel savagely. "Is dat reason enough for you? You better take me in de notion, old man, I tell you,—yes!"

Charlie never winced; but how his answer delighted the Colonel! Quoth Charlie:

"I don't care—I take him!—*mais*, possession give right off."

"Not the whole plantation, Charlie; only"—

"I don't care," said Charlie; "we easy can fix dat *Mais*, what for you don't want to keep him? I don't want him. You better keep him."

"Don't you try to make no fool of me, old man," cried the planter.

"Oh, no!" said the other. "Oh, no! but you make a fool of yourself, ain't it?"

The dumbfounded Colonel stared; Charlie went on:

"Yass! Belles Demoiselles is more wort' dan tree block like dis one. I pass by dare since two weeks. Oh, pritty Belles Demoiselles! De cane was wave in de wind, de garden smell like a bouquet, de white-cap was jump up and down on de river; seven *belles demoiselles* was ridin' on horses. 'Pritty, pritty, pritty!' says old Charlie. Ah! *Monsieur le Père*, 'ow 'appy, 'appy, 'appy!"

"Yass!" he continued—the Colonel still staring—"le Compte De Charleu have two familie. One was low-down Choctaw, one was high up *noblesse*. He gave the low-down Choctaw dis old rat-hole; he give Belles Demoiselles to you gran-fozzer; and now you don't be *satisfait*. What I'll do wid Belles Demoiselles?"

She'll break me in two years, yass. And what you'll do wid old Charlie's house, eh? You'll tear her down and make you'se'f a blame old fool. I rather wouldn't trade!"

The planter caught a big breathful of anger, but Charlie went straight on:

"I rather wouldn't, *mais* I will do it for you;—just the same, like Monsieur le Compte would say, 'Charlie, you old fool, I want to shange houses wid you.'"

So long as the Colonel suspected irony he was angry, but as Charlie seemed, after all, to be certainly in earnest, he began to feel conscience-stricken. He was by no means a tender man, but his lately-discovered misfortune had unhinged him, and this strange, undeserved, disinterested family fealty on the part of Charlie touched his heart. And should he still try to lead him into the pitfall he had dug? He hesitated;—no, he would show him the place by broad daylight, and if he chose to overlook the "caving bank," it would be his own fault;—a trade's a trade.

"Come," said the planter, "come at my house to-night; to-morrow we look at the place before breakfast, and finish the trade."

"For what?" said Charlie.

"Oh, because I got to come in town in the morning."

"I don't want," said Charlie. "How I'm goin' to come dere?"

"I git you a horse at the liberty stable."

"Well—anyhow—I don't care—I'll go." And they went.

When they had ridden a long time, and were on the road darkened by hedges of Cherokee rose, the Colonel called behind him to the "low-down" scion:

"Keep the road, old man."

"Eh?"

"Keep the road."

"Oh, yes; all right; I keep my word; we don't goin' to play no tricks, eh?"

But the Colonel seemed not to hear. His ungenerous design was beginning to be hateful to him. Not only old Charlie's unprovoked goodness was prevailing; the eulogy on Belles Demoiselles had stirred the depths of an intense love for his beautiful home. True, if he held to it, the caving of the bank, at its present fearful speed, would let the house into the river within three months; but were it not better to lose it so, than sell his birthright? Again,—coming back to the first thought,—to betray his own blood! It was only Injin Charlie; but had not the De Charleu blood just spoken out in him? Unconsciously he groaned.

After a time they struck a path approaching the plantation in the rear, and a little after, passing from behind a clump of live-oaks, they came in sight of the villa. It looked so like a gem, shining through its dark grove, so like a great glow-worm in the dense foliage, so significant of luxury and gayety, that the poor master, from an overflowing heart, groaned again.

"What?" asked Charlie.

The Colonel only drew his rein, and, dismounting mechanically, contemplated the sight before him. The high, arched doors and windows were thrown wide to the summer air; from every opening the bright light of numerous candelabra darted out upon the sparkling foliage of magnolia and bay, and here and there in the spacious verandas a colored lantern swayed in the gentle breeze. A sound of revel fell on the ear, the music of harps; and across one window, brighter than the rest, flitted, once or twice, the shadows of dancers. But oh! the shadows flitting across the heart of the fair mansion's master!

"Old Charlie," said he, gazing fondly at his house, "You and me is both old, eh?"

"Yaas," said the stolid Charlie.

"And we has both been bad enough in our times eh, Charlie?"

Charlie, surprised at the tender tone, repeated "Yaas."

"And you and me is mighty close?"

"Blame close, yaas."

"But you never know me to cheat, old man!"

"No,"—impassively.

"And do you think I would cheat you now?"

"I dunno," said Charlie. "I don't believe."

"Well, old man, old man,"—his voice began to quiver,—"I sha'n't cheat you now. My God!—old man, I tell you—you better not make the trade!"

"Because for what?" asked Charlie in plain anger; but both looked quickly toward the house! The Colonel tossed his hands wildly in the air, rushed forward a step or two, and giving one fearful scream of agony and fright, fell forward on his face in the path. Old Charlie stood transfixed with horror. Belles Demoiselles, the realm of maiden beauty, the home of merriment, the house of dancing, all in the tremor and glow of pleasure, suddenly sunk, with one short, wild wail of terror—sunk, sunk, down, down, down, into the merciless, unfathomable flood of the Mississippi.

Twelve long months were midnight to the mind of the childless father; when they were only half gone, he took his bed; and every day, and every night, old Charlie, the "low-down," the "fool," watched him tenderly, tended him lovingly, for the sake of his name, his misfortunes, and his broken heart. No woman's step crossed the floor of the sick-chamber, whose western dormer-windows overpeered the dingy architecture of old Charlie's block; Charlie and a skilled physician, the one all interest, the other all gentleness, hope, and patience—these only entered by the door; but by the window came in a sweet-scented evergreen vine, transplanted from the caving bank of Belles Demoiselles. It caught the rays of sunset in its flowery net and let them softly in upon the sick man's bed; gathered the glancing beams of the moon at midnight, and often wakened the sleeper to look, with his mindless eyes, upon their pretty silver fragments strewn upon the floor.

By and by there seemed—there was—a twinkling dawn of returning reason. Slowly, peacefully, with an increase unseen from day to day, the light of reason came into the eyes, and speech became coherent; but withal there came a failing of the wrecked body, and the doctor said that monsieur was both better and worse.

One evening, as Charlie sat by the vine-clad window with his fireless pipe in his hand, the old Colonel's eyes fell full upon his own, and rested there.

"Charl—," he said with an effort, and his delighted nurse hastened to the bedside and bowed his best ear. There was an unsuccessful effort or two, and then he whispered, smiling with sweet sadness,—

"We didn't trade."

The truth, in this case, was a secondary matter to Charlie; the main point was to give a pleasing answer. So he nodded his head decidedly, as who should say—"Oh yes, we did, it was a bona-fide swap!" but when he saw the smile vanish, he tried the other expedient and shook his head with still more vigor, to signify that they had not so much as approached a bargain; and the smile returned.

Charlie wanted to see the vine recognized. He stepped backward to the window with a broad smile, shook the foliage, nodded and looked smart.

"I know," said the Colonel, with beaming eyes,"—many weeks."

The next day—

"Charl—"

The best ear went down.

"Send for a priest."

The priest came, and was alone with him a whole afternoon. When he left, the patient was very haggard and exhausted, but smiled and would not suffer the crucifix to be removed from his breast.

One more morning came. Just before dawn Charlie, lying on a pallet in the room, thought he was called, and came to the bedside.

"Old man," whispered the failing invalid, "is it caving yet?"

Charlie nodded.

"It won't pay you out."

"Oh, dat makes not'ing," said Charlie. Two big tears rolled down his brown face. "Dat makes not'in."

The Colonel whispered once more:

"*Mes belles demoiselles!* in paradise;—in the garden—I shall be with them at sunrise;" and so it was.

"POSSON JONE'." [1]

[Footnote 1: Published in Appletons' Journal. Republished by permission.]

To Jules St.-Ange—elegant little heathen—there yet remained at manhood a remembrance of having been to school, and of having been taught by a stony-headed Capuchin that the world is round—for example, like a cheese. This round world is a cheese to be eaten through, and Jules had nibbled quite into his cheese-world already at twenty-two.

He realized this as he idled about one Sunday morning where the intersection of Royal and Conti Streets some seventy years ago formed a central corner of New Orleans. Yes, yes, the trouble was he had been wasteful and honest. He discussed the matter with that faithful friend and confidant, Baptiste, his yellow body-servant. They concluded that, papa's patience and *tante's* pin-money having been gnawed away quite to the rind, there were left open only these few easily-enumerated resorts: to go to work—they shuddered; to join Major Innerarity's filibustering expedition; or else—why not?—to try some games of confidence. At twenty-two one must begin to be something. Nothing else tempted; could that avail? One could but try. It is noble to try; and, besides, they were hungry. If one could "make the friendship" of some person from the country, for instance, with money, not expert at cards or dice, but, as one would say, willing to learn, one might find cause to say some "Hail Marys."

The sun broke through a clearing sky, and Baptiste pronounced it good for luck. There had been a hurricane in the night. The weed-grown tile-roofs were still dripping, and from lofty brick and low adobe walls a rising steam responded to the summer sunlight. Up-street, and across the Rue du Canal, one could get glimpses of the gardens in Faubourg Ste.-Marie standing in silent wretchedness, so many tearful Lucretias, tattered victims of the storm. Short remnants of the wind now and then came down the narrow street in erratic puffs heavily laden with odors of broken boughs and torn flowers, skimmed the little pools of rain-

water in the deep ruts of the unpaved street, and suddenly went away to nothing, like a juggler's butterflies or a young man's money.

It was very picturesque, the Rue Royale. The rich and poor met together. The locksmith's swinging key creaked next door to the bank; across the way, crouching, mendicant-like, in the shadow of a great importing-house, was the mud laboratory of the mender of broken combs. Light balconies overhung the rows of showy shops and stores open for trade this Sunday morning, and pretty Latin faces of the higher class glanced over their savagely-pronged railings upon the passers below. At some windows hung lace curtains, flannel duds at some, and at others only the scraping and sighing one-hinged shutter groaning toward Paris after its neglectful master.

M. St.-Ange stood looking up and down the street for nearly an hour. But few ladies, only the inveterate mass-goers, were out. About the entrance of the frequent *cafés* the masculine gentility stood leaning on canes, with which now one and now another beckoned to Jules, some even adding pantomimic hints of the social cup.

M. St.-Ange remarked to his servant without turning his head that somehow he felt sure he should soon return those *bons* that the mulatto had lent him.

"What will you do with them?"

"Me!" said Baptiste, quickly; "I will go and see the bull-fight in the Place Congo."

"There is to be a bull-fight? But where is M. Cayetano?"

"Ah, got all his affairs wet in the tornado. Instead of his circus, they are to have a bull-fight—not an ordinary bull-fight with sick horses, but a buffalo-and-tiger fight. I would not miss it"—

Two or three persons ran to the opposite corner, and commenced striking at something with their canes. Others followed. Can M. St.-Ange and servant, who hasten forward—can the Creoles, Cubans, Spaniards, San Domingo refugees, and other loungers—can they hope it is a fight? They hurry forward. Is a man in a fit? The crowd pours in from the side-streets. Have they killed a so-long snake? Bareheaded shopmen leave their wives, who stand upon chairs. The crowd

huddles and packs. Those on the outside make little leaps into the air, trying to be tall.

"What is the matter?"

"Have they caught a real live rat?"

"Who is hurt?" asks some one in English.

"*Personne*," replies a shopkeeper; "a man's hat blow' in the gutter; but he has it now. Jules pick' it. See, that is the man, head and shoulders on top the res'."

"He in the homespun?" asks a second shopkeeper. "Humph! an *Américain*—a West-Floridian; bah!"

"But wait; 'st! he is speaking; listen!"

"To who is he speak——?"

"Sh-sh-sh! to Jules."

"Jules who?"

"Silence, you! To Jules St.-Ange, what howe me a bill since long time. Sh-sh-sh!"

Then the voice was heard.

Its owner was a man of giant stature, with a slight stoop in his shoulders, as if he was making a constant, good-natured attempt to accommodate himself to ordinary doors and ceilings. His bones were those of an ox. His face was marked more by weather than age, and his narrow brow was bald and smooth. He had instantaneously formed an opinion of Jules St.-Ange, and the multitude of words, most of them lingual curiosities, with which he was rasping the wide-open ears of his listeners, signified, in short, that, as sure as his name was Parson Jones, the little Creole was a "plum gentleman."

M. St.-Ange bowed and smiled, and was about to call attention, by both gesture and speech, to a singular object on top of the still uncovered head, when the nervous motion of the *Américain* anticipated him, as, throwing up an immense hand, he drew down a large roll of bank-notes. The crowd laughed, the West-Floridian joining, and began to disperse.

"Why, that money belongs to Smyrny Church," said the giant.

"You are very dangerous to make your money expose like that, Misty Posson Jone'," said St.-Ange, counting it with his eyes.

The countryman gave a start and smile of surprise.

"How d'you know my name was Jones?" he asked; but, without pausing for the Creole's answer, furnished in his reckless way some further specimens of West-Floridian English; and the conciseness with which he presented full intelligence of his home, family, calling, lodging-house, and present and future plans, might have passed for consummate art, had it not been the most run-wild nature. "And I've done been to Mobile, you know, on busi_ess_ for Bethesdy Church. It's the on'yest time I ever been from home; now you wouldn't of believed that, would you? But I admire to have saw you, that's so. You've got to come and eat with me. Me and my boy ain't been fed yit. What might one call yo' name? Jools? Come on, Jools. Come on, Colossus. That's my niggah—his name's Colossus of Rhodes. Is that yo' yallah boy, Jools? Fetch him along, Colossus. It seems like a special provi_dence_.—Jools, do you believe in a special provi_dence?_"

Jules said he did.

The new-made friends moved briskly off, followed by Baptiste and a short, square, old negro, very black and grotesque, who had introduced himself to the mulatto, with many glittering and cavernous smiles, as "d'body-sarvant of d'Rev'n' Mr. Jones."

Both pairs enlivened their walk with conversation. Parson Jones descanted upon the doctrine he had mentioned, as illustrated in the perplexities of cotton-growing, and concluded that there would always be "a special provi_dence_ again' cotton untell folks quits a-pressin' of it and haulin' of it on Sundays!"

"*Je dis*," said St.-Ange, in response, "I thing you is juz right. I believe, me, strong-strong in the improvidence, yes. You know my papa he hown a sugah-plantation, you know. 'Jules, me son,' he say one time to me, 'I goin' to make one baril sugah to fedge the moze high price in New Orleans.' Well, he take his bez baril sugah—I nevah see a so careful man like me papa always to make a so beautiful sugah *et sirop*. 'Jules, go at Father Pierre an' ged this lill pitcher fill with holy water, an' tell him sen' his tin bucket, and I will make it fill with *quitte*.' I

ged the holy-water; my papa sprinkle it over the baril, an' make one cross on the 'ead of the baril."

"Why, Jools," said Parson Jones, "that didn't do no good."

"Din do no good! Id brought the so great value! You can strike me dead if thad baril sugah din fedge the more high cost than any other in the city. *Parce-que*, the man what buy that baril sugah he make a mistake of one hundred pound"—falling back—" *Mais* certainlee!"

"And you think that was growin' out of the holy-water?" asked the parson.

" *Mais*, what could make it else? Id could not be the *quitte*, because my papa keep the bucket, an' forget to sen' the *quitte* to Father Pierre."

Parson Jones was disappointed.

"Well, now, Jools, you know, I don't think that was right. I reckon you must be a plum Catholic."

M. St.-Ange shrugged. He would not deny his faith.

"I am a *Catholique, mais*"—brightening as he hoped to recommend himself anew—"not a good one."

"Well, you know," said Jones—"where's Colossus? Oh! all right. Colossus strayed off a minute in Mobile, and I plum lost him for two days. Here's the place; come in. Colossus and this boy can go to the kitchen.—Now, Colossus, what *air* you a-beckonin' at me faw?"

He let his servant draw him aside and address him in a whisper.

"Oh, go 'way!" said the parson with a jerk. "Who's goin' to throw me? What? Speak louder. Why, Colossus, you shayn't talk so, saw. 'Pon my soul, you're the mightiest fool I ever taken up with. Jest you go down that alley-way with this yalla boy, and don't show yo' face untell yo' called!"

The negro begged; the master wrathily insisted.

"Colossus, will you do ez I tell you, or shell I hev to strike you, saw?"

"O Mahs Jimmy, I—I's gwine; but"—he ventured nearer—"don't on no account drink nothin', Mahs Jimmy."

Such was the negro's earnestness that he put one foot in the gutter, and fell heavily against his master. The parson threw him off angrily.

"Thar, now! Why, Colossus, you most of been doted with sumthin'; yo' plum crazy.—Humph, come on, Jools, let's eat! Humph! to tell me that when I never taken a drop, exceptin' for chills, in my life—which he knows so as well as me!"

The two masters began to ascend a stair.

"*Mais*, he is a sassy; I would sell him, me," said the young Creole.

"No, I wouldn't do that," replied the parson; "though there is people in Bethesdy who says he is a rascal. He's a powerful smart fool. Why, that boy's got money, Jools; more money than religion, I reckon. I'm shore he fallen into mighty bad company"—they passed beyond earshot.

Baptiste and Colossus, instead of going to the tavern kitchen, passed to the next door and entered the dark rear corner of a low grocery, where, the law notwithstanding, liquor was covertly sold to slaves. There, in the quiet company of Baptiste and the grocer, the colloquial powers of Colossus, which were simply prodigious, began very soon to show themselves.

"For whilst," said he, "Mahs Jimmy has eddication, you know—whilst he has eddication, I has 'scretion. He has eddication and I has 'scretion, an' so we gits along."

He drew a black bottle down the counter, and, laying half his length upon the damp board, continued:

"As a p'inciple I discredits de imbimin' of awjus liquors. De imbimin' of awjus liquors, de wiolution of de Sabbaf, de playin' of de fiddle, and de usin' of by-words, dey is de fo' sins of de conscience; an' if any man sin de fo' sins of de conscience, de debble done sharp his fork fo' dat man.—Ain't that so, boss?"

The grocer was sure it was so.

"Neberdeless, mind you"—here the orator brimmed his glass from the bottle and swallowed the contents with a dry eye—"mind you, a roytious man, sech as

ministers of de gospel and dere body-sarvants, can take a *leetle* for de weak stomach."

But the fascinations of Colossus's eloquence must not mislead us; this is the story of a true Christian; to wit, Parson Jones.

The parson and his new friend ate. But the coffee M. St.-Ange declared he could not touch; it was too wretchedly bad. At the French Market, near by, there was some noble coffee. This, however, would have to be bought, and Parson Jones had scruples.

"You see, Jools, every man has his conscience to guide him, which it does so in"—

"Oh, yes!" cried St.-Ange, "conscien'; thad is the bez, Posson Jone'. Certainlee! I am a *Catholique*, you is a *schismatique*; you thing it is wrong to dring some coffee—well, then, it *is* wrong; you thing it is wrong to make the sugah to ged the so large price—well, then, it *is* wrong; I thing it is right—well, then, it is right; it is all 'abit; *c'est tout*. What a man thing is right, *is right*; 'tis all 'abit. A man muz nod go again' his conscien'. My faith! do you thing I would go again' my conscien'? *Mais allons*, led us go and ged some coffee."

"Jools."

"W'at?"

"Jools, it ain't the drinkin' of coffee, but the buyin' of it on a Sabbath. You must really excuse me, Jools, it's again' conscience, you know."

"Ah!" said St.-Ange, "*c'est* very true. For you it would be a sin, *mais* for me it is only 'abit. Rilligion is a very strange; I know a man one time, he thing it was wrong to go to cock-fight Sunday evening. I thing it is all 'abit. *Mais*, come, Posson Jone'; I have got one friend, Miguel; led us go at his house and ged some coffee. Come; Miguel have no familie; only him and Joe—always like to see friend; *allons*, led us come yonder."

"Why, Jools, my dear friend, you know," said the shamefaced parson, "I never visit on Sundays."

"Never w'at?" asked the astounded Creole.

"No," said Jones, smiling awkwardly.

"Never visite?"

"Exceptin' sometimes amongst church-members." said Parson Jones.

"*Mais*," said the seductive St.-Ange, "Miguel and Joe is church-member'—certainlee! They love to talk about rilligion. Come at Miguel and talk about some rilligion. I am nearly expire for me coffee."

Parson Jones took his hat from beneath his chair and rose up.

"Jools," said the weak giant, "I ought to be in church right now."

"*Mais*, the church is right yonder at Miguel', yes. Ah!" continued St.-Ange, as they descended the stairs, "I thing every man muz have the rilligion he like' the bez—me, I like the *Catholique* rilligion the bez—for me it *is* the bez. Every man will sure go to heaven if he like his rilligion the bez."

"Jools," said the West-Floridian, laying his great hand tenderly upon the Creole's shoulder, as they stepped out upon the *banquette*, "do you think you have any shore hopes of heaven?"

"Yass!" replied St.-Ange; "I am sure-sure. I thing everybody will go to heaven. I thing you will go, *et* I thing Miguel will go, *et* Joe—everybody, I thing—*mais*, hof course, not if they not have been christen'. Even I thing some niggers will go."

"Jools," said the parson, stopping in his walk—"Jools, I *don't* want to lose my niggah."

"Yon will not loose him. With Baptiste he *cannot* ged loose."

But Colossus's master was not re-assured.

"Now," said he, still tarrying, "this is jest the way; had I of gone to church"—

"Posson Jone'," said Jules.

"What?"

"I tell you. We goin' to church!"

"Will you?" asked Jones, joyously.

"*Allons*, come along," said Jules, taking his elbow.

They walked down the Rue Chartres, passed several corners, and by and by turned into a cross street. The parson stopped an instant as they were turning and looked back up the street.

"W'at you lookin'?" asked his companion.

"I thought I saw Colossus," answered the parson, with an anxious face; "I reckon 'twa'n't him, though." And they went on.

The street they now entered was a very quiet one. The eye of any chance passer would have been at once drawn to a broad, heavy, white brick edifice on the lower side of the way, with a flag-pole standing out like a bowsprit from one of its great windows, and a pair of lamps hanging before a large closed entrance. It was a theatre, honey-combed with gambling-dens. At this morning hour all was still, and the only sign of life was a knot of little barefoot girls gathered within its narrow shade, and each carrying an infant relative. Into this place the parson and M. St.-Ange entered, the little nurses jumping up from the sills to let them pass in.

A half-hour may have passed. At the end of that time the whole juvenile company were laying alternate eyes and ears to the chinks, to gather what they could of an interesting quarrel going on within.

"I did not, saw! I given you no cause of offence, saw! It's not so, saw! Mister Jools simply mistaken the house, thinkin' it was a Sabbath-school! No such thing, saw; I *ain't* bound to bet! Yes, I kin git out. Yes, without bettin'! I hev a right to my opinion; I reckon I'm a *white man*, saw! No saw! I on'y said I didn't think you could get the game on them cards. 'Sno such thing, saw! I do *not* know how to play! I wouldn't hev a rascal's money ef I should win it! Shoot, ef you dare! You can kill me, but you cayn't scare me! No, I shayn't bet! I'll die first! Yes, saw; Mr. Jools can bet for me if he admires to; I ain't his mostah."

Here the speaker seemed to direct his words to St.-Ange.

"Saw, I don't understand you, saw. I never said I'd loan you money to bet for me. I didn't suspicion this from you, saw. No, I won't take any more lemonade; it's the most notorious stuff I ever drank, saw!"

M. St.-Ange's replies were in *falsetto* and not without effect; for presently the parson's indignation and anger began to melt. "Don't ask me, Jools, I can't help you. It's no use; it's a matter of conscience with me, Jools."

"*Mais oui!* 'tis a matt' of conscien' wid me, the same."

"But, Jools, the money's none o' mine, nohow; it belongs to Smyrny, you know."

"If I could make jus' *one* bet," said the persuasive St.-Ange, "I would leave this place, fas'-fas', yes. If I had thing—*mais* I did not soup suspicion this from you, Posson Jone"—

"Don't, Jools, don't!"

"No! Posson Jone'."

"You're bound to win?" said the parson, wavering.

"*Mais certainement!* But it is not to win that I want;'tis me conscien'—me honor!"

"Well, Jools, I hope I'm not a-doin' no wrong. I'll loan you some of this money if you say you'll come right out 'thout takin' your winnin's."

All was still. The peeping children could see the parson as he lifted his hand to his breast-pocket. There it paused a moment in bewilderment, then plunged to the bottom. It came back empty, and fell lifelessly at his side. His head dropped upon his breast, his eyes were for a moment closed, his broad palms were lifted and pressed against his forehead, a tremor seized him, and he fell all in a lump to the floor. The children ran off with their infant-loads, leaving Jules St.-Ange swearing by all his deceased relatives, first to Miguel and Joe, and then to the lifted parson, that he did not know what had become of the money "except if" the black man had got it.

In the rear of ancient New Orleans, beyond the sites of the old rampart, a trio of Spanish forts, where the town has since sprung up and grown old, green with all the luxuriance of the wild Creole summer, lay the Congo Plains. Here stretched the canvas of the historic Cayetano, who Sunday after Sunday sowed the sawdust for his circus-ring.

But to-day the great showman had fallen short of his printed promise. The hurricane had come by night, and with one fell swash had made an irretrievable sop of every thing. The circus trailed away its bedraggled magnificence, and the ring was cleared for the bull.

Then the sun seemed to come out and work for the people. "See," said the Spaniards, looking up at the glorious sky with its great, white fleets drawn off upon the horizon—"see—heaven smiles upon the bull-fight!"

In the high upper seats of the rude amphitheatre sat the gayly-decked wives and daughters of the Gascons, from the *métaries* along the Ridge, and the chattering Spanish women of the Market, their shining hair un-bonneted to the sun. Next below were their husbands and lovers in Sunday blouses, milkmen, butchers, bakers, black-bearded fishermen, Sicilian fruiterers, swarthy Portuguese sailors, in little woollen caps, and strangers of the graver sort; mariners of England, Germany, and Holland. The lowest seats were full of trappers, smugglers, Canadian *voyageurs*, drinking and singing; *Américains*, too—more's the shame—from the upper rivers—who will not keep their seats—who ply the bottle, and who will get home by and by and tell how wicked Sodom is; broad-brimmed, silver-braided Mexicans, too, with their copper cheeks and bat's eyes and their tinkling spurred heels. Yonder, in that quieter section, are the quadron women in their black lace shawls—and there is Baptiste; and below them are the turbaned black women, and there is—but he vanishes—Colossus.

The afternoon is advancing, yet the sport, though loudly demanded, does not begin. The *Américains* grow derisive and find pastime in gibes and raillery. They mock the various Latins with their national inflections, and answer their scowls with laughter. Some of the more aggressive shout pretty French greetings to the women of Gascony, and one bargeman, amid peals of applause, stands on a seat and hurls a kiss to the quadrons. The mariners of England, Germany, and Holland, as spectators, like the fun, while the Spaniards look black and cast defiant imprecations upon their persecutors. Some Gascons, with timely caution, pick their women out and depart, running a terrible fire of gallantries.

In hope of truce, a new call is raised for the bull: "The bull, the bull!—hush!"

In a tier near the ground a man is standing and calling—standing head and shoulders above the rest—calling in the *Américaine* tongue. Another man, big and red, named Joe, and a handsome little Creole in elegant dress and full of laughter, wish to stop him, but the flat-boatmen, ha-ha-ing and cheering, will not

suffer it. Ah, through some shameful knavery of the men, into whose hands he has fallen, he is drunk! Even the women can see that; and now he throws his arms wildly and raises his voice until the whole great circle hears it. He is preaching!

Ah! kind Lord, for a special providence now! The men of his own nation—men from the land of the open English Bible and temperance cup and song are cheering him on to mad disgrace. And now another call for the appointed sport is drowned by the flat-boatmen singing the ancient tune of Mear. You can hear the words—

"Old Grimes is dead, that good old soul"

—from ribald lips and throats turned brazen with laughter, from singers who toss their hats aloft and roll in their seats; the chorus swells to the accompaniment of a thousand brogans—

"He used to wear an old gray coat
All buttoned down before."

A ribboned man in the arena is trying to be heard, and the Latins raise one mighty cry for silence. The big red man gets a hand over the parson's mouth, and the ribboned man seizes his moment.

"They have been endeavoring for hours," he says, "to draw the terrible animals from their dens, but such is their strength and fierceness, that"—

His voice is drowned. Enough has been heard to warrant the inference that the beasts cannot be whipped out of the storm-drenched cages to which menagerie-life and long starvation have attached them, and from the roar of indignation the man of ribbons flies. The noise increases. Men are standing up by hundreds, and women are imploring to be let out of the turmoil. All at once, like the bursting of a dam, the whole mass pours down into the ring. They sweep across the arena and over the showman's barriers. Miguel gets a frightful trampling. Who cares for gates or doors? They tear the beasts' houses bar from bar, and, laying hold of the gaunt buffalo, drag him forth by feet, ears, and tail; and in the midst of the *mêlée*, still head and shoulders above all, wilder, with the cup of the wicked, than any beast, is the man of God from the Florida parishes!

In his arms he bore—and all the people shouted at once when they saw it—the tiger. He had lifted it high up with its back to his breast, his arms clasped under its shoulders; the wretched brute had curled up caterpillar-wise, with its long tail against its belly, and through its filed teeth grinned a fixed and impotent wrath. And Parson Jones was shouting:

"The tiger and the buffler *shell* lay down together! You dah to say they shayn't and I'll comb you with this varmint from head to foot! The tiger and the buffler *shell* lay down together. They *shell*! Now, you, Joe! Behold! I am here to see it done. The lion and the buffler *shell* lay down together!"

Mouthing these words again and again, the parson forced his way through the surge in the wake of the buffalo. This creature the Latins had secured by a lariat over his head, and were dragging across the old rampart and into a street of the city.

The northern races were trying to prevent, and there was pommelling and knocking down, cursing and knife-drawing, until Jules St.-Ange was quite carried away with the fun, laughed, clapped his hands, and swore with delight, and ever kept close to the gallant parson.

Joe, contrariwise, counted all this child's-play an interruption. He had come to find Colossus and the money. In an unlucky moment he made bold to lay hold of the parson, but a piece of the broken barriers in the hands of a flat-boatman felled him to the sod, the terrible crowd swept over him, the lariat was cut and the giant parson hurled the tiger upon the buffalo's back. In another instant both brutes were dead at the hands of the mob; Jones was lifted from his feet, and prating of Scripture and the millennium, of Paul at Ephesus and Daniel in the "buffler's" den, was borne aloft upon the shoulders of the huzzaing *Américains*. Half an hour later he was sleeping heavily on the floor of a cell in the *calaboza*.

When Parson Jones awoke, a bell was somewhere tolling for midnight. Somebody was at the door of his cell with a key. The lock grated, the door swung, the turnkey looked in and stepped back, and a ray of moonlight fell upon M. Jules St.-Ange. The prisoner sat upon the empty shackles and ring-bolt in the centre of the floor.

"Misty Posson Jone'," said the visitor, softly.

"O Jools!"

"*Mais*, w'at de matter, Posson Jone'?"

"My sins, Jools, my sins!"

"Ah! Posson Jone', is that something to cry, because a man get sometime a litt' bit intoxicate? *Mais*, if a man keep *all the time* intoxicate, I think that is again' the conscien'."

"Jools, Jools, your eyes is darkened—oh I Jools, Where's my pore old niggah?"

"Posson Jone', never min'; he is wid Baptiste."

"Where?"

"I don' know w'ere—*mais* he is wid Baptiste. Baptiste is a beautiful to take care of somebody."

"Is he as good as you, Jools?" asked Parson Jones, sincerely.

Jules was slightly staggered.

"You know, Posson Jone', you know, a nigger cannot be good as a w'ite man—*mais* Baptiste is a good nigger."

The parson moaned and dropped his chin into his hands.

"I was to of left for home to-morrow, sun-up, on the Isabella schooner. Pore Smyrny!" He deeply sighed.

"Posson Jone'," said Jules, leaning against the wall and smiling, "I swear you is the moz funny man I ever see. If I was you I would say, me, 'Ah! 'ow I am lucky! the money I los', it was not mine, anyhow!' My faith! shall a man make hisse'f to be the more sorry because the money he los' is not his? Me, I would say, 'it is a specious providence.'

"Ah! Misty Posson Jone'," he continued, "you make a so droll sermon ad the bull-ring. Ha! ha! I swear I thing you can make money to preach thad sermon many time ad the theatre St. Philippe. Hah! you is the moz brave dat I never see, *mais* ad the same time the moz rilligious man. Where I'm goin' to fin' one priest to make like dat? *Mais*, why you can't cheer up an' be 'appy? Me, if I should be miserabl' like that I would kill meself."

The countryman only shook his head.

"*Bien*, Posson Jone', I have the so good news for you."

The prisoner looked up with eager inquiry.

"Las' evening when they lock' you, I come right off at M. De Blanc's house to get you let out of de calaboose; M. De Blanc he is the judge. So soon I was entering—'Ah! Jules, me boy, juz the man to make complete the game!' Posson Jone', it was a specious providence! I win in t'ree hours more dan six hundred dollah! Look." He produced a mass of bank-notes, *bons*, and due-bills.

"And you got the pass?" asked the parson, regarding the money with a sadness incomprehensible to Jules.

"It is here; it take the effect so soon the daylight."

"Jools, my friend, your kindness is in vain."

The Creole's face became a perfect blank.

"Because," said the parson, "for two reasons: firstly, I hare broken the laws, and ought to stand the penalty; and secondly—you must really excuse me, Jools, you know, but the pass has been got onfairly, I'm afeerd. You told the judge I was innocent; and in neither case it don't become a Christian (which I hope I can still say I am one) to 'do evil that good may come.' I muss stay."

M. St.-Ange stood up aghast, and for a moment speechless, at this exhibition of moral heroism; but an artifice was presently hit upon. "*Mais*, Posson Jone'!"—in his old *falsetto*—"de order—you cannot read it, it is in French—compel you to go hout, sir!"

"Is that so?" cried the parson, bounding up with radiant face—"is that so, Jools?"

The young man nodded, smiling; but, though he smiled, the fountain of his tenderness was opened. He made the sign of the cross as the parson knelt in prayer, and even whispered "Hail Mary," etc., quite through, twice over.

Morning broke in summer glory upon a cluster of villas behind the city, nestled under live-oaks and magnolias on the banks of a deep bayou, and known as Suburb St. Jean.

With the first beam came the West-Floridian and the Creole out upon the bank below the village. Upon the parson's arm hung a pair of antique saddle-bags. Baptiste limped wearily behind; both his eyes were encircled with broad, blue rings, and one cheek-bone bore the official impress of every knuckle of Colossus's left hand. The "beautiful to take care of somebody" had lost his charge. At mention of the negro he became wild, and, half in English, half in the "gumbo" dialect, said murderous things. Intimidated by Jules to calmness, he became able to speak confidently on one point; he could, would, and did swear that Colossus had gone home to the Florida parishes; he was almost certain; in fact, he thought so.

There was a clicking of pulleys as the three appeared upon the bayou's margin, and Baptiste pointed out, in the deep shadow of a great oak, the Isabella, moored among the bulrushes, and just spreading her sails for departure. Moving down to where she lay, the parson and his friend paused on the bank, loath to say farewell.

"O Jools!" said the parson, "supposin' Colossus ain't gone home! O Jools, if you'll look him out for me, I'll never forget you—I'll never forget you, nohow, Jools. No, Jools, I never will believe he taken that money. Yes, I know all niggahs will steal"—he set foot upon the gang-plank—"but Colossus wouldn't steal from me. Good-by."

"Misty Posson Jone," said St.-Ange, putting his hand on the parson's arm with genuine affection, "hol' on. You see dis money—w'at I win las' night? Well, I win' it by a specious providence, ain't it?"

"There's no tellin'," said the humbled Jones. "Providence

Moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

"Ah!" cried the Creole, "*c'est* very true. I ged this money in the mysterieuze way. *Mais*, if I keep dis money, you know where it goin' be to-night?"

"I really can't say," replied the parson.

"Goin' to de dev'," said the sweetly-smiling yonng man.

The schooner-captain, leaning against the shrouds, and even Baptiste, laughed outright.

"O Jools, you mustn't!"

"Well, den, w'at I shall do wid *it*?"

"Any thing!" answered the parson; "better donate it away to some poor man"—

"Ah! Misty Posson Jone', dat is w'at I want. You los' five hondred dollar'—'twas me fault."

"No, it wa'n't, Jools."

"*Mais*, it was!"

"No!"

"It *was* me fault! I *swear* it was me fault! *Mais*, here is five hondred dollar'; I wish you shall take it. Here! I don't got no use for money.—Oh, my faith! Posson Jone', you must not begin to cry some more."

Parson Jones was choked with tears. When he found voice he said:

"O Jools, Jools, Jools! my pore, noble, dear, misguided friend! ef you hed of hed a Christian raisin'! May the Lord show you your errors better'n I kin, and bless you for your good intentions—oh, no! I cayn't touch that money with a ten-foot pole; it wa'n't rightly got; you must really excuse me, my dear friend, but I cayn't touch it."

St.-Ange was petrified.

"Good-by, dear Jools," continued the parson. "I'm in the Lord's haynds, and he's very merciful, which I hope and trust you'll find it out. Good-by!"—the schooner swang slowly off before the breeze—"good-by!"

St.-Ange roused himself.

"Posson Jone'! make me hany'ow *dis* promise: you never, never, *never* will come back to New Orleans."

"Ah, Jools, the Lord willin', I'll never leave home again!"

"All right!" cried the Creole; "I thing he's willin'. Adieu, Posson Jone'. My faith! you are the so fighting an' moz rilligious man as I never saw! Adieu! Adieu!"

Baptiste uttered a cry and presently ran by his master toward the schooner, his hands full of clods.

St.-Ange looked just in time to see the sable form of Colossus of Rhodes emerge from the vessel's hold, and the pastor of Smyrna and Bethesda seize him in his embrace.

"O Colossus! you outlandish old nigger! Thank the Lord! Thank the Lord!"

The little Creole almost wept. He ran down the tow-path, laughing and swearing, and making confused allusion to the entire *personnel* and furniture of the lower regions.

By odd fortune, at the moment that St.-Ange further demonstrated his delight by tripping his mulatto into a bog, the schooner came brushing along the reedy bank with a graceful curve, the sails flapped, and the crew fell to poling her slowly along.

Parson Jones was on the deck, kneeling once more in prayer. His hat had fallen before him; behind him knelt his slave. In thundering tones he was confessing himself "a plum fool," from whom "the conceit had been jolted out," and who had been made to see that even his "nigger had the longest head of the two."

Colossus clasped his hands and groaned.

The parson prayed for a contrite heart.

"Oh, yes!" cried Colossus.

The master acknowledged countless mercies.

"Dat's so!" cried the slave.

The master prayed that they might still be "piled on."

"Glory!" cried the black man, clapping his hands; "pile on!"

"An' now," continued the parson, "bring this pore, backslidin' jackace of a parson and this pore ole fool nigger back to thar home in peace!"

"Pray fo' de money!" called Colossus.

But the parson prayed for Jules.

"Pray fo' de *money!*" repeated the negro.

"And oh, give thy servant back that there lost money!"

Colossus rose stealthily, and tiptoed by his still shouting master. St.-Ange, the captain, the crew, gazed in silent wonder at the strategist. Pausing but an instant over the master's hat to grin an acknowledgment of his beholders' speechless interest, he softly placed in it the faithfully-mourned and honestly-prayed-for Smyrna fund; then, saluted by the gesticulative, silent applause of St.-Ange and the schooner-men, he resumed his first attitude behind his roaring master.

"Amen!" cried Colossus, meaning to bring him to a close.

"Onworthy though I be"—cried Jones.

"*Amen!*" reiterated the negro.

"A-a-amen!" said Parson Jones.

He rose to his feet, and, stooping to take up his hat, beheld the well-known roll. As one stunned, he gazed for a moment upon his slave, who still knelt with clasped hands and rolling eyeballs; but when he became aware of the laughter and cheers that greeted him from both deck and shore, he lifted eyes and hands to heaven, and cried like the veriest babe. And when he looked at the roll again, and hugged and kissed it, St.-Ange tried to raise a second shout, but choked, and the crew fell to their poles.

And now up runs Baptiste, covered with slime, and prepares to cast his projectiles. The first one fell wide of the mark; the schooner swung round into a long reach of water, where the breeze was in her favor; another shout of laughter drowned the maledictions of the muddy man; the sails filled; Colossus of Rhodes, smiling and bowing as hero of the moment, ducked as the main boom swept round, and the schooner, leaning slightly to the pleasant influence, rustled a moment over the bulrushes, and then sped far away down the rippling bayou.

M. Jules St.-Ange stood long, gazing at the receding vessel as it now disappeared, now re-appeared beyond the tops of the high undergrowth; but, when an arm of the forest hid it finally from sight, he turned townward, followed by that fagged-out spaniel, his servant, saying, as he turned, "Baptiste."

"*Miché?*"

"You know w'at I goin' do wid dis money?"

"*Non, m'sieur.*"

"Well, you can strike me dead if I don't goin' to pay hall my debts! *Allons!*"

He began a merry little song to the effect that his sweetheart was a wine-bottle, and master and man, leaving care behind, returned to the picturesque Rue Royale. The ways of Providence are indeed strange. In all Parson Jones's after-life, amid the many painful reminiscences of his visit to the City of the Plain, the sweet knowledge was withheld from him that by the light of the Christian virtue that shone from him even in his great fall, Jules St.-Ange arose, and went to his father an honest man.