THE GRANDISSIMES

BY GEORGE W. CABLE

PART 1/3

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

ALBERT HERTER

MDCCCXCIX

1899

CHAPTER I

MASKED BATTERIES

It was in the Théatre St. Philippe (they had laid a temporary floor over the parquette seats) in the city we now call New Orleans, in the month of September, and in the year 1803. Under the twinkle of numberless candles, and in a perfumed air thrilled with the wailing ecstasy of violins, the little Creole capital's proudest and best were offering up the first cool night of the languidly departing summer to the divine Terpsichore. For summer there, bear in mind, is a loitering gossip, that only begins to talk of leaving when September rises to go. It was like hustling her out, it is true, to give a select *bal*

masqué at such a very early--such an amusingly early date; but it was fitting that something should be done for the sick and the destitute; and why not this? Everybody knows the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

And so, to repeat, it was in the Théatre St. Philippe (the oldest, the first one), and, as may have been noticed, in the year in which the First Consul of France gave away Louisiana. Some might call it "sold." Old Agricola Fusilier in the rumbling pomp of his natural voice--for he had an hour ago forgotten that he was in mask and domino--called it "gave away." Not that he believed it had been done; for, look you, how could it be? The pretended treaty contained, for instance, no provision relative to the great family of Brahmin Mandarin Fusilier de Grandissime. It was evidently spurious.

Being bumped against, he moved a step or two aside, and was going on to denounce further the detestable rumor, when a masker--one of four who had just finished the contra-dance and were moving away in the column of promenaders--brought him smartly around with the salutation:

"*Comment to yé, Citoyen Agricola!*"

"H-you young kitten!" said the old man in a growling voice, and with the teased, half laugh of aged vanity as he bent a baffled scrutiny at the back-turned face of an ideal Indian Queen. It was not merely the *tutoiement* that struck him as saucy, but the further familiarity of using the slave dialect. His French was unprovincial.

"H-the cool rascal!" he added laughingly, and, only half to himself; "get into the garb of your true sex, sir, h-and I will guess who you are!"

But the Queen, in the same feigned voice as before, retorted:

"*Ah! mo piti fils, to pas connais to zancestres?* Don't you know your ancestors, my little son!"

"H-the g-hods preserve us!" said Agricola, with a pompous laugh muffled under his mask, "the queen of the Tchoupitoulas I proudly acknowledge, and my great-grandfather, Epaminondas Fusilier, lieutenant of dragoons under Bienville; but,"--he laid his hand upon his heart, and bowed to the other two figures, whose smaller stature betrayed the gentler sex--"pardon me, ladies, neither Monks nor *Filles à la Cassette* grow on our family tree."

The four maskers at once turned their glance upon the old man in the domino; but if any retort was intended it gave way as the violins burst into an agony of laughter. The floor was immediately filled with waltzers and the four figures disappeared.

"I wonder," murmured Agricola to himself, "if that Dragoon can possibly be Honoré Grandissime."

Wherever those four maskers went there were cries of delight: "Ho, ho, ho! see there! here! there! a group of first colonists! One of Iberville's Dragoons! don't you remember great-great grandfather Fusilier's portrait--the gilded casque and heron plumes? And that one behind in the fawn-skin leggings and shirt of birds' skins is an Indian Queen. As sure as sure can be, they are intended for Epaminondas and his wife, Lufki-Humma!" All, of course, in Louisiana French.

"But why, then, does he not walk with her?"

"Why, because, Simplicity, both of them are men, while the little Monk on his arm is a lady, as you can see, and so is the masque that has the arm of the Indian Queen; look at their little hands."

In another part of the room the four were greeted with, "Ha, ha, ha! well, that is magnificent! But see that Huguenotte Girl on the Indian Queen's arm! Isn't that fine! Ha, ha! she carries a little trunk. She is a *Fille à la Cassette!*"

Two partners in a cotillion were speaking in an undertone, behind a fan.

"And you think you know who it is?" asked one.

"Know?" replied the other. "Do I know I have a head on my shoulders? If that Dragoon is not our cousin Honoré Grandissime--well--"

"Honoré in mask? he is too sober-sided to do such a thing."

"I tell you it is he! Listen. Yesterday I heard Doctor Charlie Keene begging him to go, and telling him there were two ladies, strangers, newly arrived in the city, who would be there, and whom he wished him to meet. Depend upon it the Dragoon is Honoré, Lufki-Humma is Charlie Keene, and the Monk and the Huguenotte are those two ladies."

But all this is an outside view; let us draw nearer and see what chance may discover to us behind those four masks.

An hour has passed by. The dance goes on; hearts are beating, wit is flashing, eyes encounter eyes with the leveled lances of their beams, merriment and joy and sudden bright surprises thrill the breast, voices are throwing off disguise, and beauty's coy ear is bending with a venturesome docility; here love is baffled, there deceived, yonder takes prisoners and here surrenders. The very air seems to breathe, to sigh, to laugh, while the musicians, with disheveled locks, streaming brows and furious bows, strike, draw, drive, scatter from the anguished violins a never-ending rout of screaming harmonies. But the Monk and the Huguenotte are not on the floor. They are sitting where they have been left by their two companions, in one of the boxes of the theater, looking out upon the unwearied whirl and flash of gauze and light and color.

"Oh, *chérie, chérie!*" murmured the little lady in the Monk's disguise to her quieter companion, and speaking in the soft dialect of old Louisiana, "now you get a good idea of heaven!"

The *Fille à la Cassette* replied with a sudden turn of her masked face and a murmur of surprise and protest against this impiety. A low, merry laugh came out of the Monk's cowl, and the Huguenotte let her form sink a little in her chair with a gentle sigh.

"Ah, for shame, tired!" softly laughed the other; then suddenly, with her eyes fixed across the room, she seized her companion's hand and pressed it tightly. "Do you not see it?" she whispered eagerly, "just by the door--the casque with the heron feathers. Ah, Clotilde, I *cannot* believe he is one of those Grandissimes!"

"Well," replied the Huguenotte, "Doctor Keene says he is not."

Doctor Charlie Keene, speaking from under the disguise of the Indian Queen, had indeed so said; but the Recording Angel, whom we understand to be particular about those things, had immediately made a memorandum of it to the debit of Doctor Keene's account.

"If I had believed that it was he," continued the whisperer, "I would have turned about and left him in the midst of the contra-dance!"

Behind them sat unmasked a well-aged pair, "*bredouillé*," as they used to say of the wall-flowers, with that look of blissful repose which marks the married and established Creole. The lady in monk's

attire turned about in her chair and leaned back to laugh with these. The passing maskers looked that way, with a certain instinct that there was beauty under those two costumes. As they did so, they saw the *Fille à la Cassette* join in this over-shoulder conversation. A moment later, they saw the old gentleman protector and the *Fille à la Cassette* rising to the dance. And when presently the distant passers took a final backward glance, that same Lieutenant of Dragoons had returned and he and the little Monk were once more upon the floor, waiting for the music.

"But your late companion?" said the voice in the cowl.

"My Indian Queen?" asked the Creole Epaminondas.

"Say, rather, your Medicine-Man," archly replied the Monk.

"In these times," responded the Cavalier, "a medicine-man cannot dance long without professional interruption, even when he dances for a charitable object. He has been called to two relapsed patients." The music struck up; the speaker addressed himself to the dance; but the lady did not respond.

"Do dragoons ever moralize?" she asked.

"They do more," replied her partner; "sometimes, when beauty's enjoyment of the ball is drawing toward its twilight, they catch its pleasant melancholy, and confess; will the good father sit in the confessional?"

The pair turned slowly about and moved toward the box from which they had come, the lady remaining silent; but just as they were entering she half withdrew her arm from his, and, confronting him with a rich sparkle of the eyes within the immobile mask of the monk, said:

"Why should the conscience of one poor little monk carry all the frivolity of this ball? I have a right to dance, if I wish. I give you my word, Monsieur Dragoon, I dance only for the benefit of the sick and the destitute. It is you men--you dragoons and others--who will not help them without a compensation in this sort of nonsense. Why should we shrive you when you ought to burn?"

"Then lead us to the altar," said the Dragoon.

"Pardon, sir," she retorted, her words entangled with a musical, open-hearted laugh, "I am not going in that direction." She cast her glance

around the ball-room. "As you say, it is the twilight of the ball; I am looking for the evening star,--that is, my little Huguenotte."

"Then you are well mated."

"How?"

"For you are Aurora."

The lady gave a displeased start.

"Sir!"

"Pardon," said the Cavalier, "if by accident I have hit upon your real name--"

She laughed again--a laugh which was as exultantly joyous as it was high-bred.

"Ah, my name? Oh no, indeed!" (More work for the Recording Angel.)

She turned to her protectress.

"Madame, I know you think we should be going home."

The senior lady replied in amiable speech, but with sleepy eyes, and the Monk began to lift and unfold a wrapping. As the Cavalier' drew it into his own possession, and, agreeably to his gesture, the Monk and he sat down side by side, he said, in a low tone:

"One more laugh before we part."

"A monk cannot laugh for nothing."

"I will pay for it."

"But with nothing to laugh at?" The thought of laughing at nothing made her laugh a little on the spot.

"We will make something to laugh at," said the Cavalier; "we will unmask to each other, and when we find each other first cousins, the laugh will come of itself."

"Ah! we will unmask?--no! I have no cousins. I am certain we are strangers."

"Then we will laugh to think that I paid for the disappointment."

Much more of this childlike badinage followed, and by and by they came around again to the same last statement. Another little laugh escaped from the cowl.

"You will pay? Let us see; how much will you give to the sick and destitute?"

"To see who it is I am laughing with, I will give whatever you ask."

"Two hundred and fifty dollars, cash, into the hands of the managers!"

"A bargain!"

The Monk laughed, and her chaperon opened her eyes and smiled apologetically. The Cavalier laughed, too, and said:

"Good! That was the laugh; now the unmasking."

"And you positively will give the money to the managers not later than to-morrow evening?"

**"She looked upon an unmasked, noble countenance, lifted her own mask a little,
and then a little more; and then shut it quickly".**

"Not later. It shall be done without fail."

"Well, wait till I put on my wrappings; I must be ready to run."

This delightful nonsense was interrupted by the return of the *Fille à la Cassette* and her aged, but sprightly, escort, from a circuit of the floor. Madame again opened her eyes, and the four prepared to depart. The Dragoon helped the Monk to fortify herself against the

outer air. She was ready before the others. There was a pause, a low laugh, a whispered "Now!" She looked upon an unmasked, noble countenance, lifted her own mask a little, and then a little more; and then shut it quickly down again upon a face whose beauty was more than even those fascinating graces had promised which Honoré Grandissime had fitly named the Morning; but it was a face he had never seen before.

"Hush!" she said, "the enemies of religion are watching us; the Huguenotte saw me. Adieu"--and they were gone.

M. Honoré Grandissime turned on his heel and very soon left the ball.

"Now, sir," thought he to himself, "we'll return to our senses."

"Now I'll put my feathers on again," says the plucked bird.

CHAPTER II

THE FATE OF THE IMMIGRANT

It was just a fortnight after the ball, that one Joseph Frowenfeld opened his eyes upon Louisiana. He was an American by birth, rearing and sentiment, yet German enough through his parents, and the only son in a family consisting of father, mother, self, and two sisters, new-blown flowers of womanhood. It was an October dawn, when, long wearied of the ocean, and with bright anticipations of verdure, and fragrance, and tropical gorgeousness, this simple-hearted family awoke to find the bark that had borne them from their far northern home already entering upon the ascent of the Mississippi.

We may easily imagine the grave group, as they came up one by one from below, that morning of first disappointment, and stood (with a whirligig of jubilant mosquitoes spinning about each head) looking out across the waste, seeing the sky and the marsh meet in the east, the north, and the west, and receiving with patient silence the father's suggestion that the hills would, no doubt, rise into view after a while.

"My children, we may turn this disappointment into a lesson; if the good people of this country could speak to us now, they might well ask us not to judge them or their land upon one or two hasty glances, or by the experiences of a few short days or weeks."

But no hills rose. However, by and by they found solace in the appearance of distant forest, and in the afternoon they entered a land--but such a land! A land hung in mourning, darkened by gigantic cypresses, submerged; a land of reptiles, silence, shadow, decay.

"The captain told father, when we went to engage passage, that New Orleans was on high land," said the younger daughter, with a tremor in the voice, and ignoring the remonstrative touch of her sister.

"On high land?" said the captain, turning from the pilot; "well, so it is--higher than the swamp, but not higher than the river," and he checked a broadening smile.

But the Frowenfelds were not a family to complain. It was characteristic of them to recognize the bright as well as the solemn virtues, and to keep each other reminded of the duty of cheerfulness. A smile, starting from the quiet elder sister, went around the group, directed against the abstracted and somewhat rueful countenance of Joseph, whereat he turned with a better face and said that what the Creator had pronounced very good they could hardly feel free to condemn. The old father was still more stout of heart.

"These mosquitoes, children, are thought by some to keep the air pure," he said.

"Better keep out of it after sunset," put in the captain.

After that day and night, the prospect grew less repellent. A gradually matured conviction that New Orleans would not be found standing on stilts in the quagmire enabled the eye to become educated to a better appreciation of the solemn landscape. Nor was the landscape always solemn. There were long openings, now and then, to right and left, of emerald-green savannah, with the dazzling blue of the Gulf far

beyond, waving a thousand white-handed good-byes as the funereal swamps slowly shut out again the horizon. How sweet the soft breezes off the moist prairies! How weird, how very near, the crimson and green and black and yellow sunsets! How dream-like the land and the great, whispering river! The profound stillness and breath reminded the old German, so he said, of that early time when the evenings and mornings were the first days of the half-built world. The barking of a dog in Fort Plaquemines seemed to come before its turn in the panorama of creation--before the earth was ready for the dog's master.

But he was assured that to live in those swamps was not entirely impossible to man--"if one may call a negro a man." Runaway slaves were not so rare in them as one--a lost hunter, for example--might wish. His informant was a new passenger, taken aboard at the fort. He spoke English.

"Yes, sir! Didn' I had to run from Bras-Coupé in de haidge of de swamp be'ine de 'abitation of my cousin Honoré, one time? You can hask 'oo you like!" (A Creole always provides against incredulity.) At this point he digressed a moment: "You know my cousin, Honoré Grandissime, w'at give two hund' fifty dolla' to de 'ospill laz mont'? An' juz because my cousin Honoré give it, somebody helse give de semm. Fo' w'y don't he give his nemm?"

The reason (which this person did not know) was that the second donor was the first one over again, resolved that the little unknown Monk should not know whom she had baffled.

"Who was Bras-Coupé?" the good German asked in French.

The stranger sat upon the capstan, and, in the shadow of the cypress forest, where the vessel lay moored for a change of wind, told in a *patois* difficult, but not impossible, to understand, the story of a man who chose rather to be hunted like a wild beast among those awful labyrinths, than to be yoked and beaten like a tame one. Joseph, drawing near as the story was coming to a close, overheard the following English:

"Friend, if you dislike heated discussion, do not tell that to my son."

The nights were strangely beautiful. The immigrants almost consumed them on deck, the mother and daughters attending in silent delight while the father and son, facing south, rejoiced in learned recognition of stars and constellations hitherto known to them only on globes and charts.

"Yes, my dear son," said the father, in a moment of ecstatic admiration, "wherever man may go, around this globe--however uninviting his lateral surroundings may be, the heavens are ever over his head, and I am glad to find the stars your favorite objects of study."

So passed the time as the vessel, hour by hour, now slowly pushed by the wind against the turbid current, now warping along the fragrant precincts of orange or magnolia groves or fields of sugar-cane, or moored by night in the deep shade of mighty willow-jungles, patiently crept toward the end of their pilgrimage; and in the length of time which would at present be consumed in making the whole journey from their Northern home to their Southern goal, accomplished the distance of ninety-eight miles, and found themselves before the little, hybrid city of "Nouvelle Orléans." There was the cathedral, and standing beside it, like Sancho beside Don Quixote, the squat hall of the Cabildo with the calabozo in the rear. There were the forts, the military bakery, the hospitals, the plaza, the Almonaster stores, and the busy rue Toulouse; and, for the rest of the town, a pleasant confusion of green tree-tops, red and gray roofs, and glimpses of white or yellow wall, spreading back a few hundred yards behind the cathedral, and tapering into a single rank of gardened and belvedered villas, that studded either horn of the river's crescent with a style of home than which there is probably nothing in the world more maternally homelike.

"And now," said the "captain," bidding the immigrants good-by, "keep out of the sun and stay in

after dark; you're not 'acclimated,' as they call it, you know, and the city is full of the fever."

Such were the Frowenfelds. Out of such a mold and into such a place came the young Américain, whom even Agricola Fusilier, as we shall see, by and by thought worthy to be made an exception of, and honored with his recognition.

The family rented a two-story brick house in the rue Bienville, No. 17, it seems. The third day after, at daybreak, Joseph called his father to his bedside to say that he had had a chill, and was suffering such pains in his head and back that he would like to lie quiet until they passed off. The gentle father replied that it was undoubtedly best to do so, and preserved an outward calm. He looked at his son's eyes; their pupils were contracted to tiny beads. He felt his pulse and his brow; there was no room for doubt; it was the dreaded scourge--the fever. We say, sometimes, of hearts that they sink like lead; it does not express the agony.

On the second day, while the unsated fever was running through every vein and artery, like soldiery through the streets of a burning city, and far down in the caverns of the body the poison was ransacking every palpitating corner, the poor immigrant fell into a moment's sleep. But what of that? The enemy that moment had mounted to the brain. And then there happened to Joseph an experience rare to the sufferer by this disease, but not entirely unknown,--a delirium of mingled pleasures and distresses. He seemed to awake somewhere between heaven and earth, reclining in a gorgeous barge, which was draped in curtains of interwoven silver and silk, cushioned with rich stuffs of every beautiful dye, and perfumed *ad nauseam* with orange-leaf tea. The crew was a single old negress, whose head was wound about with a blue Madras handkerchief, and who stood at the prow, and by a singular rotary motion, rowed the barge with a teaspoon. He could not get his head out of the hot sun; and the barge went continually round

and round with a heavy, throbbing motion, in the regular beat of which certain spirits of the air--one of whom appeared to be a beautiful girl and another a small, red-haired man,--confronted each other with the continual call and response:

"Keep the bedclothes on him and the room shut tight, keep the bedclothes on him and the room shut tight,"--"An' don' give 'im some watta, an' don' give 'im some watta."

During what lapse of time--whether moments or days--this lasted, Joseph could not then know; but at last these things faded away, and there came to him a positive knowledge that he was on a sick-bed, where unless something could be done for him he should be dead in an hour. Then a spoon touched his lips, and a taste of brandy and water went all through him; and when he fell into sweet slumber and awoke, and found the teaspoon ready at his lips again, he had to lift a little the two hands lying before him on the coverlet to know that they were his--they were so wasted and yellow. He turned his eyes, and through the white gauze of the mosquito-bar saw, for an instant, a strange and beautiful young face; but the lids fell over his eyes, and when he raised them again the blue-turbaned black nurse was tucking the covering about his feet.

"Sister!"

No answer.

"Where is my mother?"

The negress shook her head.

He was too weak to speak again, but asked with his eyes so persistently, and so pleadingly, that by and by she gave him an audible answer. He tried hard to understand it, but could not, it being in these words:

"*Li pa' oulé vini 'ci--li pas capabe*."

Thrice a day, for three days more, came a little man with a large head surrounded by short, red curls and with small freckles in a fine skin, and sat down by the bed with a word of good cheer and the air of a commander. At length they had something like an extended conversation.

"So you concluded not to die, eh? Yes, I'm the doctor--Doctor Keene. A young lady? What young lady? No, sir, there has been no young lady here. You're mistaken. Vagary of your fever. There has been no one here but this black girl and me. No, my dear fellow, your father and mother can't see you yet; you don't want them to catch the fever, do you? Good-bye. Do as your nurse tells you, and next week you may raise your head and shoulders a little; but if you don't mind her you'll have a backset, and the devil himself wouldn't engage to cure you."

The patient had been sitting up a little at a time for several days, when at length the doctor came to pay a final call, "as a matter of form;" but, after a few pleasantries, he drew his chair up gravely, and, in a tender tone--need we say it? He had come to tell Joseph that his father, mother, sisters, all, were gone on a second--a longer--voyage, to shores where there could be no disappointments and no fevers, forever.

"And, Frowenfeld," he said, at the end of their long and painful talk, "if there is any blame attached to not letting you go with them, I think I can take part of it; but if you ever want a friend,--one who is courteous to strangers and ill-mannered only to those he likes,--you can call for Charlie Keene. I'll drop in to see you, anyhow, from time to time, till you get stronger. I have taken a heap of trouble to keep you alive, and if you should relapse now and give us the slip, it would be a deal of good physic wasted; so keep in the house."

The polite neighbors who lifted their cocked hats to Joseph, as he spent a slow convalescence just within his open door, were not bound to know how or when

he might have suffered. There were no "Howards" or "Y.M.C.A.'s" in those days; no "Peabody Reliefs." Even had the neighbors chosen to take cognizance of those bereavements, they were not so unusual as to fix upon him any extraordinary interests an object of sight; and he was beginning most distressfully to realize that "great solitude" which the philosopher attributes to towns, when matters took a decided turn.

CHAPTER III

"AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"

We say matters took a turn; or, better, that Frowenfeld's interest in affairs received a new life. This had its beginning in Doctor Keene's making himself specially entertaining in an old-family-history way, with a view to keeping his patient within doors for a safe period. He had conceived a great liking for Frowenfeld, and often, of an afternoon, would drift in to challenge him to a game of chess--a game, by the way, for which neither of them cared a farthing. The immigrant had learned its moves to gratify his father, and the doctor--the truth is, the doctor had never quite learned them; but he was one of those men who cannot easily consent to acknowledge a mere affection for one, least of all one of their own sex. It may safely be supposed, then, that the board often displayed an arrangement

of pieces that would have bewildered Morphy himself.

"By the by, Frowenfeld," he said one evening, after the one preliminary move with which he invariably opened his game, "you haven't made the acquaintance of your pretty neighbors next door."

Frowenfeld knew of no specially pretty neighbors next door on either side--had noticed no ladies.

"Well, I will take you in to see them some time." The doctor laughed a little, rubbing his face and his thin, red curls with one hand, as he laughed.

The convalescent wondered what there could be to laugh at.

"Who are they?" he inquired.

"Their name is De Grapion--oh, De Grapion, says I! their name is Nancanou. They are, without exception, the finest women--the brightest, the best, and the bravest--that I know in New Orleans." The doctor resumed a cigar which lay against the edge of the chess-board, found it extinguished, and proceeded to relight it. "Best blood of the province; good as the Grandissimes. Blood is a great thing here, in certain odd ways," he went on. "Very curious sometimes." He stooped to the floor where his coat had fallen, and took his handkerchief from a breast-pocket. "At a grand mask ball about two months ago, where I had a bewilderingly fine time with those ladies, the proudest old turkey in the theater was an old fellow whose Indian blood shows in his very behavior, and yet--ha, ha! I saw that same old man, at a quadroon ball a few years ago, walk up to the handsomest, best dressed man in the house, a man with a skin whiter than his own,--a perfect gentleman as to looks and manners,--and without a word slap him in the face."

"You laugh?" asked Frowenfeld.

"Laugh? Why shouldn't I? The fellow had no business there. Those balls are not given to

quadroon *males*, my friend. He was lucky to get out alive, and that was about all he did.

"They are right!" the doctor persisted, in response to Frowenfeld's puzzled look. "The people here have got to be particular. However, that is not what we were talking about. Quadroon balls are not to be mentioned in connection. Those ladies--" He addressed himself to the resuscitation of his cigar. "Singular people in this country," he resumed; but his cigar would not revive. He was a poor story-teller. To Frowenfeld--as it would have been to any one, except a Creole or the most thoroughly Creoleized Américain--his narrative, when it was done, was little more than a thick mist of strange names, places and events; yet there shone a light of romance upon it that filled it with color and populated it with phantoms. Frowenfeld's interest rose--was allured into this mist--and there was left befogged. As a physician, Doctor Keene thus accomplished his end,--the mental diversion of his late patient,--for in the midst of the mist Frowenfeld encountered and grappled a problem of human life in Creole type, the possible correlations of whose quantities we shall presently find him revolving in a studious and sympathetic mind, as the poet of to-day ponders the

"Flower in the crannied wall."

The quantities in that problem were the ancestral--the maternal--roots of those two rival and hostile families whose descendants--some brave, others fair--we find unwittingly thrown together at the ball, and with whom we are shortly to have the honor of an unmasked acquaintance.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY TREES

In the year 1673, and in the royal hovel of a Tchoupitoulas village not far removed from that "Buffalo's Grazing-ground," now better known as New Orleans, was born Lufki-Humma, otherwise Red Clay. The mother of Red Clay was a princess by birth as well as by marriage. For the father, with that devotion to his people's interests presumably common to rulers, had ten moons before ventured northward into the territory of the proud and exclusive Natchez nation, and had so prevailed with--so outsmoked--their "Great Sun," as to find himself, as he finally knocked the ashes from his successful calumet, possessor of a wife whose pedigree included a long line of royal mothers--fathers being of little account in Natchez heraldry--extending back beyond the Mexican origin of her nation, and disappearing only in the effulgence of her great original, the orb of day himself. As to Red Clay's paternal ancestry, we must content ourselves with the fact that the father was not only the diplomate we have already found him, but a chief of considerable eminence; that is to say, of seven feet stature.

It scarce need be said that when Lufki-Humma was born, the mother arose at once from her couch of skins, herself bore the infant to the neighboring bayou and bathed it--not for singularity, nor for independence, nor for vainglory, but only as one of the heart-curdling conventionalities which made up the experience of that most pitiful of holy things, an Indian mother.

Outside the lodge door sat and continued to sit, as she passed out, her master or husband. His interest in

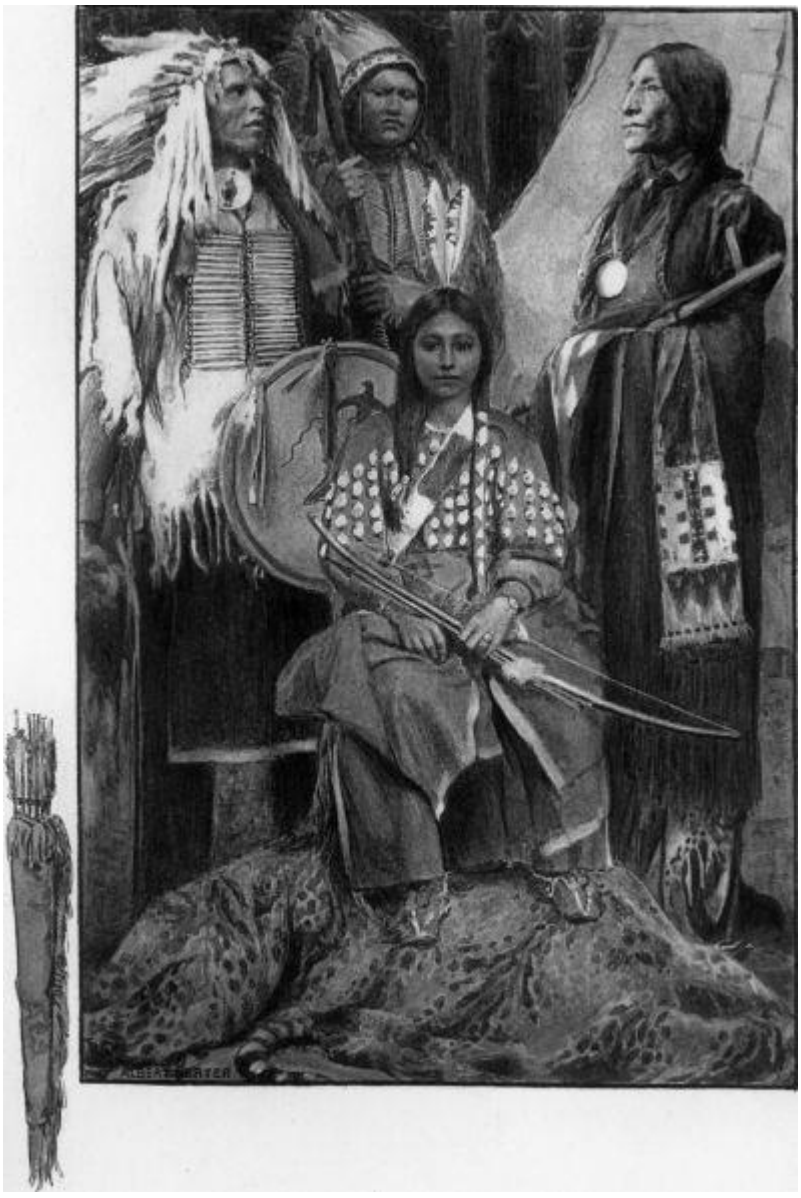
the trivialities of the moment may be summed up in this, that he was as fully prepared as some men are in more civilized times and places to hold his queen to strict account for the sex of her offspring. Girls for the Natchez, if they preferred them, but the chief of the Tchoupitoulas wanted a son. She returned from the water, came near, sank upon her knees, laid the infant at his feet, and lo! a daughter.

Then she fell forward heavily upon her face. It may have been muscular exhaustion, it may have been the mere wind of her hasty-tempered matrimonial master's stone hatchet as it whiffed by her skull; an inquest now would be too great an irony; but something blew out her "vile candle."

Among the squaws who came to offer the accustomed funeral howlings, and seize mementoes from the deceased lady's scant leavings, was one who had in her own palmetto hut an empty cradle scarcely cold, and therefore a necessity at her breast, if not a place in her heart, for the unfortunate Lufki-Humma; and thus it was that this little waif came to be tossed, a droll hypothesis of flesh, blood, nerve and brain, into the hands of wild nature with *carte blanche* as to the disposal of it. And now, since this was Agricola's most boasted ancestor--since it appears the darkness of her cheek had no effect to make him less white, or qualify his right to smite the fairest and most distant descendant of an African on the face, and since this proud station and right could not have sprung from the squalid surroundings of her birth, let us for a moment contemplate these crude materials.

As for the flesh, it was indeed only some of that "one flesh" of which we all are made; but the blood--to go into finer distinctions--the blood, as distinguished from the milk of her Alibamon foster-mother, was the blood of the royal caste of the great Toltec mother-race, which, before it yielded its Mexican splendors to the conquering Aztec, throned the jeweled and gold-laden Inca in the South, and sent the sacred fire of its temples into the North by the

hand of the Natchez. For it is a short way of expressing the truth concerning Red Clay's tissues to say she had the blood of her mother and the nerve of her father, the nerve of the true North American Indian, and had it in its finest strength.



"The daughter of the Natchez sitting in majesty, clothed in many-colored robes of shining feathers crossed and recrossed with girdles of serpent-skins and of wampum".

As to her infantine bones, they were such as needed not to fail of straightness in the limbs, compactness in the body, smallness in hands and feet, and exceeding symmetry and comeliness throughout. Possibly between the two sides of the occipital profile there may have been an Incaean tendency to inequality; but if by any good fortune her impressible little cranium should escape the cradle-straps, the shapeliness that nature loves would soon appear. And this very fortune befell her. Her father's detestation of an infant that had not consulted his wishes as to sex prompted a verbal decree which, among other prohibitions, forbade her skull the distortions that ambitious and fashionable Indian mothers delighted to produce upon their offspring.

And as to her brain: what can we say? The casket in which Nature sealed that brain, and in which Nature's great step-sister, Death, finally laid it away, has never fallen into the delighted fingers--and the remarkable fineness of its texture will never kindle admiration in the triumphant eyes--of those whose scientific hunger drives them to dig for *crania Americana*; nor yet will all their learned excavatings ever draw forth one of those pale souvenirs of mortality with walls of shapelier contour or more delicate fineness, or an interior of more admirable spaciousness, than the fair council-chamber under whose dome the mind of Lufki-Humma used, about two centuries ago, to sit in frequent conclave with high thoughts.

"I have these facts," it was Agricola Fusilier's habit to say, "by family tradition; but you know, sir, h-tradition is much more authentic than history!"

Listening Crane, the tribal medicine-man, one day stepped softly into the lodge of the giant chief, sat down opposite him on a mat of plaited rushes, accepted a lighted calumet, and, after the silence of a decent hour, broken at length by the warrior's

intimation that "the ear of Raging Buffalo listened for the voice of his brother," said, in effect, that if that ear would turn toward the village play-ground, it would catch a murmur like the pleasing sound of bees among the blossoms of the catalpa, albeit the catalpa was now dropping her leaves, for it was the moon of turkeys. No, it was the repressed laughter of squaws, wallowing with their young ones about the village pole, wondering at the Natchez-Tchoupitoulas child, whose eye was the eye of the panther, and whose words were the words of an aged chief in council.

There was more added; we record only enough to indicate the direction of Listening Crane's aim. The eye of Raging Buffalo was opened to see a vision: the daughter of the Natchez sitting in majesty, clothed in many-colored robes of shining feathers crossed and recrossed with girdles of serpent-skins and of wampum, her feet in quilled and painted moccasins, her head under a glory of plumes, the carpet of buffalo-robes about her throne covered with the trophies of conquest, and the atmosphere of her lodge blue with the smoke of embassadors' calumets; and this extravagant dream the capricious chief at once resolved should eventually become reality. "Let her be taken to the village temple," he said to his prime-minister, "and be fed by warriors on the flesh of wolves."

The Listening Crane was a patient man; he was the "man that waits" of the old French proverb; all things came to him. He had waited for an opportunity to change his brother's mind, and it had come. Again, he waited for him to die; and, like Methuselah and others, he died. He had heard of a race more powerful than the Natchez--a white race; he waited for them; and when the year 1682 saw a humble "black gown" dragging and splashing his way, with La Salle and Tonti, through the swamps of Louisiana, holding forth the crucifix and backed by French carbines and Mohican tomahawks, among the

marvels of that wilderness was found this: a child of nine sitting, and--with some unostentatious aid from her medicine-man--ruling; queen of her tribe and high-priestess of their temple. Fortified by the acumen and self-collected ambition of Listening Crane, confirmed in her regal title by the white man's Manitou through the medium of the "black gown," and inheriting her father's fear-compelling frown, she ruled with majesty and wisdom, sometimes a decreer of bloody justice, sometimes an Amazonian counselor of warriors, and at all times--year after year, until she had reached the perfect womanhood of twenty-six--a virgin queen.

On the 11th of March, 1699, two overbold young Frenchmen of M. D'Iberville's little exploring party tossed guns on shoulder, and ventured away from their canoes on the bank of the Mississippi into the wilderness. Two men they were whom an explorer would have been justified in hoarding up, rather than in letting out at such risks; a pair to lean on, noble and strong. They hunted, killed nothing, were overtaken by rain, then by night, hunger, alarm, despair.

And when they had lain down to die, and had only succeeded in falling asleep, the Diana of the Tchoupitoulas, ranging the magnolia groves with bow and quiver, came upon them in all the poetry of their hope-forsaken strength and beauty, and fell sick of love. We say not whether with Zephyr Grandissime or Epaminondas Fusilier; that, for the time being, was her secret.

The two captives were made guests. Listening Crane rejoiced in them as representatives of the great gift-making race, and indulged himself in a dream of pipe-smoking, orations, treaties, presents and alliances, finding its climax in the marriage of his virgin queen to the king of France, and unvaryingly tending to the swiftly increasing aggrandizement of Listening Crane. They sat down to bear's meat, sagamite and beans. The queen sat down with them,

clothed in her entire wardrobe: vest of swan's skin, with facings of purple and green from the neck of the mallard; petticoat of plaited hair, with embroideries of quills; leggings of fawn-skin; garters of wampum; black and green serpent-skin moccasins, that rested on pelts of tiger-cat and buffalo; armlets of gars' scales, necklaces of bears' claws and alligators' teeth, plaited tresses, plumes of raven and flamingo, wing of the pink curlew, and odors of bay and sassafras. Young men danced before them, blowing upon reeds, hooting, yelling, rattling beans in gourds and touching hands and feet. One day was like another, and the nights were made brilliant with flambeau dances and processions.

Some days later M. D'Iberville's canoe fleet, returning down the river, found and took from the shore the two men, whom they had given up for dead, and with them, by her own request, the abdicating queen, who left behind her a crowd of weeping and howling squaws and warriors. Three canoes that put off in their wake, at a word from her, turned back; but one old man leaped into the water, swam after them a little way, and then unexpectedly sank. It was that cautious wader but inexperienced swimmer, the Listening Crane.

When the expedition reached Biloxi, there were two suitors for the hand of Agricola's great ancestress. Neither of them was Zephyr Grandissime. (Ah! the strong heads of those Grandissimes.)

They threw dice for her. Demosthenes De Grapion--he who, tradition says, first hoisted the flag of France over the little fort--seemed to think he ought to have a chance, and being accorded it, cast an astonishingly high number; but Epaminondas cast a number higher by one (which Demosthenes never could quite understand), and got a wife who had loved him from first sight.

Thus, while the pilgrim fathers of the Mississippi Delta with Gallic recklessness were taking wives and

moot-wives from the ill specimens of three races, arose, with the church's benediction, the royal house of the Fusiliers in Louisiana. But the true, main Grandissime stock, on which the Fusiliers did early, ever, and yet do, love to marry, has kept itself lily-white ever since France has loved lilies--as to marriage, that is; as to less responsible entanglements, why, of course--

After a little, the disappointed Demosthenes, with due ecclesiastical sanction, also took a most excellent wife, from the first cargo of House of Correction girls. Her biography, too, is as short as Methuselah's, or shorter; she died. Zephyr Grandissime married, still later, a lady of rank, a widow without children, sent from France to Biloxi under a *lettre de cachet*. Demosthenes De Grapion, himself an only son, left but one son, who also left but one. Yet they were prone to early marriages.

So also were the Grandissimes, or, as the name is signed in all the old notarial papers, the Brahmin Mandarin de Grandissimes. That was one thing that kept their many-stranded family line so free from knots and kinks. Once the leisurely Zephyr gave them a start, generation followed generation with a rapidity that kept the competing De Grapions incessantly exasperated, and new-made Grandissime fathers continually throwing themselves into the fond arms and upon the proud necks of congratulatory grandsires. Verily it seemed as though their family tree was a fig-tree; you could not look for blossoms on it, but there, instead, was the fruit full of seed. And with all their speed they were for the most part fine of stature, strong of limb and fair of face. The old nobility of their stock, including particularly the unnamed blood of her of the *lettre de cachet,* showed forth in a gracefulness of carriage, that almost identified a De Grandissime wherever you saw him, and in a transparency of flesh and classic beauty of feature, that made their daughters extra-marriageable

in a land and day which was bearing a wide reproach for a male celibacy not of the pious sort.

In a flock of Grandissimes might always be seen a Fusilier or two; fierce-eyed, strong-beaked, dark, heavy-taloned birds, who, if they could not sing, were of rich plumage, and could talk, and bite, and strike, and keep up a ruffled crest and a self-exalting bad humor. They early learned one favorite cry, with which they greeted all strangers, crying the louder the more the endeavor was made to appease them: "Invaders! Invaders!"

There was a real pathos in the contrast offered to this family line by that other which sprang up, as slenderly as a stalk of wild oats, from the loins of Demosthenes De Grapion. A lone son following a lone son, and he another--it was sad to contemplate, in that colonial beginning of days, three generations of good, Gallic blood tripping jocundly along in attenuated Indian file. It made it no less pathetic to see that they were brilliant, gallant, much-loved, early epauletted fellows, who did not let twenty-one catch them without wives sealed with the authentic wedding kiss, nor allow twenty-two to find them without an heir. But they had a sad aptness for dying young. It was altogether supposable that they would have spread out broadly in the land; but they were such inveterate duelists, such brave Indian-fighters, such adventurous swamp-rangers, and such lively free-livers, that, however numerously their half-kin may have been scattered about in an unacknowledged way, the avowed name of De Grapion had become less and less frequent in lists where leading citizens subscribed their signatures, and was not to be seen in the list of managers of the late ball.

It is not at all certain that so hot a blood would not have boiled away entirely before the night of the *bal masqué*, but for an event which led to the union of that blood with a stream equally clear and ruddy, but of a milder vintage. This event fell out some fifty-

two years after that cast of the dice which made the princess Lufki-Humma the mother of all the Fusiliers and of none of the De Grapions. Clotilde, the Casket-Girl, the little maid who would not marry, was one of an heroic sort, worth--the De Grapions maintained--whole swampfuls of Indian queens. And yet the portrait of this great ancestress, which served as a pattern to one who, at the ball, personated the long-deceased heroine *en masque*, is hopelessly lost in some garret. Those Creoles have such a shocking way of filing their family relics and records in rat-holes.

One fact alone remains to be stated: that the De Grapions, try to spurn it as they would, never could quite suppress a hard feeling in the face of the record, that from the two young men, who, when lost in the horrors of Louisiana's swamps, had been esteemed as good as dead, and particularly from him who married at his leisure,--from Zephyr de Grandissime,--sprang there so many as the sands of the Mississippi innumerable.

CHAPTER V

A MAIDEN WHO WILL NOT MARRY

Midway between the times of Lufki-Humma and those of her proud descendant, Agricola Fusilier, fifty-two years lying on either side, were the days of Pierre Rigaut, the magnificent, the "Grand Marquis,"

the Governor, De Vaudreuil. He was the Solomon of Louisiana. For splendor, however, not for wisdom. Those were the gala days of license, extravagance and pomp. He made paper money to be as the leaves of the forest for multitude; it was nothing accounted of in the days of the Grand Marquis. For Louis Quinze was king.

Clotilde, orphan of a murdered Huguenot, was one of sixty, the last royal allotment to Louisiana, of imported wives. The king's agents had inveigled her away from France with fair stories: "They will give you a quiet home with some lady of the colony. Have to marry?--not unless it pleases you. The king himself pays your passage and gives you a casket of clothes. Think of that these times, fillette; and passage free, withal, to--the garden of Eden, as you may call it--what more, say you, can a poor girl want? Without doubt, too, like a model colonist, you will accept a good husband and have a great many beautiful children, who will say with pride, 'Me, I am no House-of-Correction-girl stock; my mother'--or 'grandmother,' as the case may be--'was a *fille à la cassette!*'"

The sixty were landed in New Orleans and given into the care of the Ursuline nuns; and, before many days had elapsed, fifty-nine soldiers of the king were well wived and ready to settle upon their riparian land-grants. The residuum in the nuns' hands was one stiff-necked little heretic, named, in part, Clotilde. They bore with her for sixty days, and then complained to the Grand Marquis. But the Grand Marquis, with all his pomp, was gracious and kind-hearted, and loved his ease almost as much as his marchioness loved money. He bade them try her another month. They did so, and then returned with her; she would neither marry nor pray to Mary.

Here is the way they talked in New Orleans in those days. If you care to understand why Louisiana has grown up so out of joint, note the tone of those who governed her in the middle of the last century:

"What, my child," the Grand Marquis said, "you a *fille à la cassette?* France, for shame! Come here by my side. Will you take a little advice from an old soldier? It is in one word--submit. Whatever is inevitable, submit to it. If you want to live easy and sleep easy, do as other people do--submit. Consider submission in the present case; how easy, how comfortable, and how little it amounts to! A little hearing of mass, a little telling of beads, a little crossing of one's self--what is that? One need not believe in them. Don't shake your head. Take my example; look at me; all these things go in at this ear and out at this. Do king or clergy trouble me? Not at all. For how does the king in these matters of religion? I shall not even tell you, he is such a bad boy. Do you not know that all the *noblesse*, and all the *savants*, and especially all the archbishops and cardinals,--all, in a word, but such silly little chicks as yourself,--have found out that this religious business is a joke? Actually a joke, every whit; except, to be sure, this heresy phase; that is a joke they cannot take. Now, I wish you well, pretty child; so if you--eh?--truly, my pet, I fear we shall have to call you unreasonable. Stop; they can spare me here a moment; I will take you to the Marquise: she is in the next room.... Behold," said he, as he entered the presence of his marchioness, "the little maid who will not marry!"

The Marquise was as cold and hard-hearted as the Marquis was loose and kind; but we need not recount the slow tortures of the *fille à la cassette's* second verbal temptation. The colony had to have soldiers, she was given to understand, and the soldiers must have wives. "Why, I am a soldier's wife, myself!" said the gorgeously attired lady, laying her hand upon the governor-general's epaulet. She explained, further, that he was rather softhearted, while she was a business woman; also that the royal commissary's rolls did not comprehend such a thing as a spinster, and--incidentally--that living by principle was rather out of fashion in the province just then.

After she had offered much torment of this sort, a definite notion seemed to take her; she turned her lord by a touch of the elbow, and exchanged two or three business-like whispers with him at a window overlooking the Levee.

"Fillette," she said, returning, "you are going to live on the sea-coast. I am sending an aged lady there to gather the wax of the wild myrtle. This good soldier of mine buys it for our king at twelve livres the pound. Do you not know that women can make money? The place is not safe; but there are no safe places in Louisiana. There are no nuns to trouble you there; only a few Indians and soldiers. You and Madame will live together, quite to yourselves, and can pray as you like."

"And not marry a soldier," said the Grand Marquis.

"No," said the lady, "not if you can gather enough myrtle-berries to afford me a profit and you a living."

It was some thirty leagues or more eastward to the country of the Biloxis, a beautiful land of low, evergreen hills looking out across the pine-covered sand-keys of Mississippi Sound to the Gulf of Mexico. The northern shore of Biloxi Bay was rich in candleberry-myrtle. In Clotilde's day, though Biloxi was no longer the capital of the Mississippi Valley, the fort which D'Iberville had built in 1699, and the first timber of which is said to have been lifted by Zephyr Grandissime at one end and Epaminondas Fusilier at the other, was still there, making brave against the possible advent of corsairs, with a few old culverines and one wooden mortar.

And did the orphan, in despite of Indians and soldiers and wilderness, settle down here and make a moderate fortune? Alas, she never gathered a berry! When she--with the aged lady, her appointed companion in exile, the young commandant of the fort, in whose pinnace they had come, and two or three French sailors and Canadians--stepped out

upon the white sand of Biloxi beach, she was bound with invisible fetters hand and foot, by that Olympian rogue of a boy, who likes no better prey than a little maiden who thinks she will never marry.

The officer's name was De Grapion--Georges De Grapion. The Marquis gave him a choice grant of land on that part of the Mississippi river "coast" known as the Cannes Brulées.

"Of course you know where Cannes Brulées is, don't you?" asked Doctor Keene of Joseph Frowenfeld.

"Yes," said Joseph, with a twinge of reminiscence that recalled the study of Louisiana on paper with his father and sisters.

There Georges De Grapion settled, with the laudable determination to make a fresh start against the mortifyingly numerous Grandissimes.

"My father's policy was every way bad," he said to his spouse; "it is useless, and probably wrong, this trying to thin them out by duels; we will try another plan. Thank you," he added, as she handed his coat back to him, with the shoulder-straps cut off. In pursuance of the new plan, Madame De Grapion,--the precious little heroine!--before the myrtles offered another crop of berries, bore him a boy not much smaller (saith tradition) than herself.

Only one thing qualified the father's elation. On that very day Numa Grandissime (Brahmin-Mandarin de Grandissime), a mere child, received from Governor de Vaudreuil a cadetship.

"Never mind, Messieurs Grandissime, go on with your tricks; we shall see! Ha! we shall see!"

"We shall see what?" asked a remote relative of that family. "Will Monsieur be so good as to explain himself?"

Bang! bang!

Alas, Madame De Grapion!

It may be recorded that no affair of honor in Louisiana ever left a braver little widow. When Joseph and his doctor pretended to play chess together, but little more than a half-century had elapsed since the *fille à la cassette* stood before the Grand Marquis and refused to wed. Yet she had been long gone into the skies, leaving a worthy example behind her in twenty years of beautiful widowhood. Her son, the heir and resident of the plantation at Cannes Brulées, at the age of--they do say--eighteen, had married a blithe and pretty lady of Franco-Spanish extraction, and, after a fair length of life divided between campaigning under the brilliant young Galvez and raising unremunerative indigo crops, had lately lain down to sleep, leaving only two descendants--females--how shall we describe them?--a Monk and a *Fille à la Cassette*. It was very hard to have to go leaving his family name snuffed out and certain Grandissime-ward grievances burning.

"There are so many Grandissimes," said the weary-eyed Frowenfeld, "I cannot distinguish between--I can scarcely count them."

"Well, now," said the doctor, "let me tell you, don't try. They can't do it themselves. Take them in the mass--as you would shrimps."

CHAPTER VI

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

The little doctor tipped his chair back against the wall, drew up his knees, and laughed whimperingly in his freckled hands.

"I had to do some prodigious lying at that ball. I didn't dare let the De Grapion ladies know they were in company with a Grandissime."

"I thought you said their name was Nancanou."

"Well, certainly--De Grapion-Nancanou. You see, that is one of their charms: one is a widow, the other is her daughter, and both as young and beautiful as Hebe. Ask Honoré Grandissime; he has seen the little widow; but then he don't know who she is. He will not ask me, and I will not tell him. Oh, yes; it is about eighteen years now since old De Grapion--elegant, high-stepping old fellow--married her, then only sixteen years of age, to young Nancanou, an indigo-planter on the Fausse Rivière--the old bend, you know, behind Pointe Coupée. The young couple went there to live. I have been told they had one of the prettiest places in Louisiana. He was a man of cultivated tastes, educated in Paris, spoke English, was handsome (convivial, of course), and of perfectly pure blood. But there was one thing old De Grapion overlooked: he and his son-in-law were the last of their names. In Louisiana a man needs kinsfolk. He ought to have married his daughter into a strong house. They say that Numa Grandissime (Honoré's father) and he had patched up a peace between the two families that included even old Agricola, and that he could have married her to a Grandissime. However, he is supposed to have known what he was about.

"A matter of business called young Nancanou to New Orleans. He had no friends here; he was a Creole, but what part of his life had not been spent on his plantation he had passed in Europe. He could not leave his young girl of a wife alone in that exiled sort of plantation life, so he brought her and the child (a girl) down with him as far as to her father's place, left them there, and came on to the city alone.

"Now, what does the old man do but give him a letter of introduction to old Agricole Fusilier! (His name is Agricola, but we shorten it to Agricole.) It seems that old De Grapion and Agricole had had the indiscretion to scrape up a mutually complimentary correspondence. And to Agricole the young man went.

"They became intimate at once, drank together, danced with the quadroons together, and got into as much mischief in three days as I ever did in a fortnight. So affairs went on until by and by they were gambling together. One night they were at the Piety Club, playing hard, and the planter lost his last quarti. He became desperate, and did a thing I have known more than one planter to do: wrote his pledge for every arpent of his land and every slave on it, and staked that. Agricole refused to play. 'You shall play,' said Nancanou, and when the game was ended he said: 'Monsieur Agricola Fusilier, you cheated.' You see? Just as I have frequently been tempted to remark to my friend, Mr. Frowenfeld.

"But, Frowenfeld, you must know, withal the Creoles are such gamblers, they never cheat; they play absolutely fair. So Agricole had to challenge the planter. He could not be blamed for that; there was no choice--oh, now, Frowenfeld, keep quiet! I tell you there was no choice. And the fellow was no coward. He sent Agricole a clear title to the real estate and slaves,--lacking only the wife's signature,--accepted the challenge and fell dead at the first fire.

"Stop, now, and let me finish. Agricole sat down and wrote to the widow that he did not wish to deprive her of her home, and that if she would state in writing her belief that the stakes had been won fairly, he would give back the whole estate, slaves and all; but that if she would not, he should feel compelled to retain it in vindication of his honor. Now wasn't that drawing a fine point?" The doctor laughed according to his habit, with his face down in his hands. "You see, he wanted to stand before all creation--the Creator did not make so much difference--in the most exquisitely proper light; so he puts the laws of humanity under his feet, and anoints himself from head to foot with Creole punctilio."

"Did she sign the paper?" asked Joseph.

"She? Wait till you know her! No, indeed; she had the true scorn. She and her father sent down another and a better title. Creole-like, they managed to bestir themselves to that extent and there they stopped.

"And the airs with which they did it! They kept all their rage to themselves, and sent the polite word, that they were not acquainted with the merits of the case, that they were not disposed to make the long and arduous trip to the city and back, and that if M. Fusilier de Grandissime thought he could find any pleasure or profit in owning the place, he was welcome; that the widow of *his late friend* was not disposed to live on it, but would remain with her father at the paternal home at Cannes Brulées.

"Did you ever hear of a more perfect specimen of Creole pride? That is the way with all of them. Show me any Creole, or any number of Creoles, in any sort of contest, and right down at the foundation of it all, I will find you this same preposterous, apathetic, fantastic, suicidal pride. It is as lethargic and ferocious as an alligator. That is why the Creole almost always is (or thinks he is) on the defensive. See these De Grapions' haughty good manners to old Agricole; yet there wasn't a Grandissime in

Louisiana who could have set foot on the De Grapion lands but at the risk of his life.

"But I will finish the story: and here is the really sad part. Not many months ago old De Grapion--'old,' said I; they don't grow old; I call him old--a few months ago he died. He must have left everything smothered in debt; for, like his race, he had stuck to indigo because his father planted it, and it is a crop that has lost money steadily for years and years. His daughter and granddaughter were left like babes in the wood; and, to crown their disasters, have now made the grave mistake of coming to the city, where they find they haven't a friend--not one, sir! They called me in to prescribe for a trivial indisposition, shortly after their arrival; and I tell you, Frowenfeld, it made me shiver to see two such beautiful women in such a town as this without a male protector, and even"--the doctor lowered his voice--"without adequate support. The mother says they are perfectly comfortable; tells the old couple so who took them to the ball, and whose little girl is their embroidery scholar; but you cannot believe a Creole on that subject, and I don't believe her. Would you like to make their acquaintance?"

Frowenfeld hesitated, disliking to say no to his friend, and then shook his head.

"After a while--at least not now, sir, if you please."

The doctor made a gesture of disappointment.

"Um-hum," he said grumly--"the only man in New Orleans I would honor with an invitation!--but all right; I'll go alone."

He laughed a little at himself, and left Frowenfeld, if ever he should desire it, to make the acquaintance of his pretty neighbors as best he could.

CHAPTER VII

WAS IT HONORÉ GRANDISSIME?

A Creole gentleman, on horseback one morning with some practical object in view,--drainage, possibly,--had got what he sought,--the evidence of his own eyes on certain points,--and now moved quietly across some old fields toward the town, where more absorbing interests awaited him in the Rue Toulouse; for this Creole gentleman was a merchant, and because he would presently find himself among the appointments and restraints of the counting-room, he heartily gave himself up, for the moment, to the surrounding influences of nature.

It was late in November; but the air was mild and the grass and foliage green and dewy. Wild flowers bloomed plentifully and in all directions; the bushes were hung, and often covered, with vines of sprightly green, sprinkled thickly with smart-looking little worthless berries, whose sparkling complacency the combined contempt of man, beast and bird could not dim. The call of the field-lark came continually out of the grass, where now and then could be seen his yellow breast; the orchard oriole was executing his fantasias in every tree; a covey of partridges ran across the path close under the horse's feet, and stopped to look back almost within reach of the riding-whip; clouds of starlings, in their odd, irresolute way, rose from the high bulrushes and settled again, without discernible cause; little wandering companies of sparrows undulated from hedge to hedge; a great rabbit-hawk sat alone in the

top of a lofty pecan-tree; that petted rowdy, the mocking-bird, dropped down into the path to offer fight to the horse, and, failing in that, flew up again and drove a crow into ignominious retirement beyond the plain; from a place of flags and reeds a white crane shot upward, turned, and then, with the slow and stately beat peculiar to her wing, sped away until, against the tallest cypress of the distant forest, she became a tiny white speck on its black, and suddenly disappeared, like one flake of snow.

The scene was altogether such as to fill any hearty soul with impulses of genial friendliness and gentle candor; such a scene as will sometimes prepare a man of the world, upon the least direct incentive, to throw open the windows of his private thought with a freedom which the atmosphere of no counting-room or drawing-room tends to induce.

The young merchant--he was young--felt this. Moreover, the matter of business which had brought him out had responded to his inquiring eye with a somewhat golden radiance; and your true man of business--he who has reached that elevated pitch of serene, good-natured reserve which is of the high art of his calling--is never so generous with his pennyworths of thought as when newly in possession of some little secret worth many pounds.

By and by the behavior of the horse indicated the near presence of a stranger; and the next moment the rider drew rein under an immense live-oak where there was a bit of paling about some graves, and raised his hat.

"Good-morning, sir." But for the silent r's, his pronunciation was exact, yet evidently an acquired one. While he spoke his salutation in English, he was thinking in French: "Without doubt, this rather oversized, bareheaded, interrupted-looking convalescent who stands before me, wondering how I should know in what language to address him, is Joseph Frowenfeld, of whom Doctor Keene has had

so much to say to me. A good face--unsophisticated, but intelligent, mettlesome and honest. He will make his mark; it will probably be a white one; I will subscribe to the adventure.

"You will excuse me, sir?" he asked after a pause, dismounting, and noticing, as he did so, that Frowenfeld's knees showed recent contact with the turf; "I have, myself, some interest in two of these graves, sir, as I suppose--you will pardon my freedom--you have in the other four."

He approached the old but newly whitened paling, which encircled the tree's trunk as well as the six graves about it. There was in his face and manner a sort of impersonal human kindness, well calculated to engage a diffident and sensitive stranger, standing in dread of gratuitous benevolence or pity.

"Yes, sir," said the convalescent, and ceased; but the other leaned against the palings in an attitude of attention, and he felt induced to add: "I have buried here my father, mother, and two sisters,"--he had expected to continue in an unemotional tone; but a deep respiration usurped the place of speech. He stooped quickly to pick up his hat, and, as he rose again and looked into his listener's face, the respectful, unobtrusive sympathy there expressed went directly to his heart.

"Victims of the fever," said the Creole with great gravity. "How did that happen?"

As Frowenfeld, after a moment's hesitation, began to speak, the stranger let go the bridle of his horse and sat down upon the turf. Joseph appreciated the courtesy and sat down, too; and thus the ice was broken.

The immigrant told his story; he was young--often younger than his years--and his listener several years his senior; but the Creole, true to his blood, was able at any time to make himself as young as need be, and possessed the rare magic of drawing one's confidence

without seeming to do more than merely pay attention. It followed that the story was told in full detail, including grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of an unknown friend, who had granted this burial-place on condition that he should not be sought out for the purpose of thanking him.

So a considerable time passed by, in which acquaintance grew with delightful rapidity.

"What will you do now?" asked the stranger, when a short silence had followed the conclusion of the story.

"I hardly know. I am taken somewhat by surprise. I have not chosen a definite course in life--as yet. I have been a general student, but have not prepared myself for any profession; I am not sure what I shall be."

A certain energy in the immigrant's face half redeemed this childlike speech. Yet the Creole's lips, as he opened them to reply, betrayed amusement; so he hastened to say:

"I appreciate your position, Mr. Frowenfeld,--excuse me, I believe you said that was your father's name. And yet,"--the shadow of an amused smile lurked another instant about a corner of his mouth,--"if you would understand me kindly I would say, take care--"

What little blood the convalescent had rushed violently to his face, and the Creole added:

"I do not insinuate you would willingly be idle. I think I know what you want. You want to make up your mind *now* what you will *do*, and at your leisure what you will *be*; eh? To be, it seems to me," he said in summing up,--"that to be is not so necessary as to do, eh? or am I wrong?"

"No, sir," replied Joseph, still red, "I was feeling that just now. I will do the first thing that offers; I can dig."

The Creole shrugged and pouted.

"And be called a *dos brile*--a 'burnt-back.'"

"But"--began the immigrant, with overmuch warmth.

The other interrupted him, shaking his head slowly and smiling as he spoke.

"Mr. Frowenfeld, it is of no use to talk; you may hold in contempt the Creole scorn of toil--just as I do, myself, but in theory, my-de'-seh, not too much in practice. You cannot afford to be *entirely* different from the community in which you live; is that not so?"

"A friend of mine," said Frowenfeld, "has told me I must 'compromise.'"

"You must get acclimated," responded the Creole; "not in body only, that you have done; but in mind--in taste--in conversation--and in convictions too, yes, ha, ha! They all do it--all who come. They hold out a little while--a very little; then they open their stores on Sunday, they import cargoes of Africans, they bribe the officials, they smuggle goods, they have colored housekeepers. My-de'-seh, the water must expect to take the shape of the bucket; eh?"

"One need not be water!" said the immigrant.

"Ah!" said the Creole, with another amiable shrug, and a wave of his hand; "certainly you do not suppose that is my advice--that those things have my approval."

Must we repeat already that Frowenfeld was abnormally young? "Why have they not your condemnation?" cried he with an earnestness that made the Creole's horse drop the grass from his teeth and wheel half around.

The answer came slowly and gently.

"Mr. Frowenfeld, my habit is to buy cheap and sell at a profit. My condemnation? My-de'-seh, there is no

sa-a-ale for it! it spoils the sale of other goods my-de'-seh. It is not to condemn that you want; you want to suc-*ceed*. Ha, ha, ha! you see I am a merchant, eh? My-de'-seh, can *you* afford not to succeed?"

The speaker had grown very much in earnest in the course of these few words, and as he asked the closing question, arose, arranged his horse's bridle and, with his elbow in the saddle, leaned his handsome head on his equally beautiful hand. His whole appearance was a dazzling contradiction of the notion that a Creole is a person of mixed blood.

"I think I can!" replied the convalescent, with much spirit, rising with more haste than was good, and staggering a moment.

The horseman laughed outright.

"Your principle is the best, I cannot dispute that; but whether you can act it out--reformers do not make money, you know." He examined his saddle-girth and began to tighten it. "One can condemn--too cautiously--by a kind of--elevated cowardice (I have that fault); but one can also condemn too rashly; I remember when I did so. One of the occupants of those two graves you see yonder side by side--I think might have lived longer if I had not spoken so rashly for his rights. Did you ever hear of Bras-Coupé, Mr. Frowenfeld?"

"I have heard only the name."

"Ah! Mr. Frowenfeld, *there* was a bold man's chance to denounce wrong and oppression! Why, that negro's death changed the whole channel of my convictions."

The speaker had turned and thrown up his arm with frowning earnestness; he dropped it and smiled at himself.

"Do not mistake me for one of your new-fashioned Philadelphia '*negrophiles*'; I am a merchant, my-de'-

seh, a good subject of His Catholic Majesty, a Creole of the Creoles, and so forth, and so forth. Come!"

He slapped the saddle.

To have seen and heard them a little later as they moved toward the city, the Creole walking before the horse, and Frowenfeld sitting in the saddle, you might have supposed them old acquaintances. Yet the immigrant was wondering who his companion might be. He had not introduced himself--seemed to think that even an immigrant might know his name without asking. Was it Honoré Grandissime? Joseph was tempted to guess so; but the initials inscribed on the silver-mounted pommel of the fine old Spanish saddle did not bear out that conjecture.

The stranger talked freely. The sun's rays seemed to set all the sweetness in him a-working, and his pleasant worldly wisdom foamed up and out like fermenting honey.

By and by the way led through a broad, grassy lane where the path turned alternately to right and left among some wild acacias. The Creole waved his hand toward one of them and said:

"Now, Mr. Frowenfeld, you see? one man walks where he sees another's track; that is what makes a path; but you want a man, instead of passing around this prickly bush, to lay hold of it with his naked hands and pull it up by the roots."

"But a man armed with the truth is far from being barehanded," replied the convalescent, and they went on, more and more interested at every step,--one in this very raw imported material for an excellent man, the other in so striking an exponent of a unique land and people.

They came at length to the crossing of two streets, and the Creole, pausing in his speech, laid his hand upon the bridle.

Frowenfeld dismounted.

"Do we part here?" asked the Creole. "Well, Mr. Frowenfeld, I hope to meet you soon again."

"Indeed, I thank you, sir," said Joseph, "and I hope we shall, although--"

The Creole paused with a foot in the stirrup and interrupted him with a playful gesture; then as the horse stirred, he mounted and drew in the rein.

"I know; you want to say you cannot accept my philosophy and I cannot appreciate yours; but I appreciate it more than you think, my-de'-seh."

The convalescent's smile showed much fatigue.

The Creole extended his hand; the immigrant seized it, wished to ask his name, but did not; and the next moment he was gone.

The convalescent walked meditatively toward his quarters, with a faint feeling of having been found asleep on duty and awakened by a passing stranger. It was an unpleasant feeling, and he caught himself more than once shaking his head. He stopped, at length, and looked back; but the Creole was long since out of sight. The mortified self-accuser little knew how very similar a feeling that vanished person was carrying away with him. He turned and resumed his walk, wondering who Monsieur might be, and a little impatient with himself that he had not asked.

"It is Honoré Grandissime; it must be he!" he said.

Yet see how soon he felt obliged to change his mind.

CHAPTER VIII

SIGNED--HONORÉ GRANDISSIME

On the afternoon of the same day, having decided what he would "do," he started out in search of new quarters. He found nothing then, but next morning came upon a small, single-story building in the rue Royale,--corner of Conti,--which he thought would suit his plans. There were a door and show-window in the rue Royale, two doors in the intersecting street, and a small apartment in the rear which would answer for sleeping, eating, and studying purposes, and which connected with the front apartment by a door in the left-hand corner. This connection he would partially conceal by a prescription-desk. A counter would run lengthwise toward the rue Royale, along the wall opposite the side-doors. Such was the spot that soon became known as "Frowenfeld's Corner."

The notice "À Louer" directed him to inquire at numero--rue Condé. Here he was ushered through the wicket of a *porte cochère* into a broad, paved corridor, and up a stair into a large, cool room, and into the presence of a man who seemed, in some respects, the most remarkable figure he had yet seen in this little city of strange people. A strong, clear, olive complexion; features that were faultless (unless a woman-like delicacy, that was yet not effeminate, was a fault); hair *en queue*, the handsomer for its premature streakings of gray; a tall, well knit form, attired in cloth, linen and leather of the utmost fineness; manners Castilian, with a gravity almost oriental,--made him one of those rare masculine figures which, on the public promenade, men look back at and ladies inquire about.

Now, who might *this* be? The rent poster had given no name. Even the incurious Frowenfeld would fain

guess a little. For a man to be just of this sort, it seemed plain that he must live in an isolated ease upon the unceasing droppings of coupons, rents, and like receivables. Such was the immigrant's first conjecture; and, as with slow, scant questions and answers they made their bargain, every new glance strengthened it; he was evidently a *rentier*. What, then, was his astonishment when Monsieur bent down and made himself Frowenfeld's landlord, by writing what the universal mind esteemed the synonym of enterprise and activity--the name of Honoré Grandissime. The landlord did not see, or ignored, his tenant's glance of surprise, and the tenant asked no questions.

We may add here an incident which seemed, when it took place, as unimportant as a single fact well could be.

The little sum that Frowenfeld had inherited from his father had been sadly depleted by the expenses of four funerals; yet he was still able to pay a month's rent in advance, to supply his shop with a scant stock of drugs, to purchase a celestial globe and some scientific apparatus, and to buy a dinner or two of sausages and crackers; but after this there was no necessity of hiding his purse.

His landlord early contracted a fondness for dropping in upon him, and conversing with him, as best the few and labored English phrases at his command would allow. Frowenfeld soon noticed that he never entered the shop unless its proprietor was alone, never sat down, and always, with the same perfection of dignity that characterized all his movements, departed immediately upon the arrival of any third person. One day, when the landlord was making one of these standing calls,--he always stood' beside a high glass case, on the side of the shop opposite the counter,--he noticed in Joseph's hand a sprig of basil, and spoke of it.

"You ligue?"

The tenant did not understand. "You--find--dad--nize?"

Frowenfeld replied that it had been left by the oversight of a customer, and expressed a liking for its odor.

"I sand you," said the landlord,--a speech whose meaning Frowenfeld was not sure of until the next morning, when a small, nearly naked black boy, who could not speak a word of English, brought to the apothecary a luxuriant bunch of this basil, growing in a rough box.

CHAPTER IX

ILLUSTRATING THE TRACTIVE POWER OF BASIL

On the twenty-fourth day of December, 1803, at two o'clock, P.M., the thermometer standing at 79, hygrometer 17, barometer 29.880, sky partly clouded, wind west, light, the apothecary of the rue Royale, now something more than a month established in his calling, might have been seen standing behind his counter and beginning to show embarrassment in the presence of a lady, who, since she had got her prescription filled and had paid for it, ought in the conventional course of things to have hurried out, followed by the pathetically ugly black woman who tarried at the door as her attendant; for

to be in an apothecary's shop at all was unconventional. She was heavily veiled; but the sparkle of her eyes, which no multiplication of veils could quite extinguish, her symmetrical and well-fitted figure, just escaping smallness, her grace of movement, and a soft, joyous voice, had several days before led Frowenfeld to the confident conclusion that she was young and beautiful.

For this was now the third time she had come to buy; and, though the purchases were unaccountably trivial, the purchaser seemed not so. On the two previous occasions she had been accompanied by a slender girl, somewhat taller than she, veiled also, of graver movement, a bearing that seemed to Joseph almost too regal, and a discernible unwillingness to enter or tarry. There seemed a certain family resemblance between her voice and that of the other, which proclaimed them--he incautiously assumed--sisters. This time, as we see, the smaller, and probably elder, came alone.

She still held in her hand the small silver which Frowenfeld had given her in change, and sighed after the laugh they had just enjoyed together over a slip in her English. A very grateful sip of sweet the laugh was to the all but friendless apothecary, and the embarrassment that rushed in after it may have arisen in part from a conscious casting about in his mind for something--anything--that might prolong her stay an instant. He opened his lips to speak; but she was quicker than he, and said, in a stealthy way that seemed oddly unnecessary:

"You 'ave some basilic?"

She accompanied her words with a little peeping movement, directing his attention, through the open door, to his box of basil, on the floor in the rear room.

Frowenfeld stepped back to it, cut half the bunch and returned, with the bold intention of making her a

present of it; but as he hastened back to the spot he had left, he was astonished to see the lady disappearing from his farthest front door, followed by her negress.

"Did she change her mind, or did she misunderstand me?" he asked himself; and, in the hope that she might return for the basil, he put it in water in his back room.

The day being, as the figures have already shown, an unusually mild one, even for a Louisiana December, and the finger of the clock drawing by and by toward the last hour of sunlight, some half dozen of Frowenfeld's townsmen had gathered, inside and out, some standing, some sitting, about his front door, and all discussing the popular topics of the day. For it might have been anticipated that, in a city where so very little English was spoken and no newspaper published except that beneficiary of eighty subscribers, the "Moniteur de la Louisiane," the apothecary's shop in the rue Royale would be the rendezvous for a select company of English-speaking gentlemen, with a smart majority of physicians.

The Cession had become an accomplished fact. With due drum-beatings and act-reading, flag-raising, cannonading and galloping of aides-de-camp, Nouvelle Orléans had become New Orleans, and Louisiane was Louisiana. This afternoon, the first week of American jurisdiction was only something over half gone, and the main topic of public debate was still the Cession. Was it genuine? and, if so, would it stand?

"Mark my words," said one, "the British flag will be floating over this town within ninety days!" and he went on whittling the back of his chair.

From this main question, the conversation branched out to the subject of land titles. Would that great majority of Spanish titles, derived from the

concessions of post-commandants and others of minor authority, hold good?

"I suppose you know what ---- thinks about it?"

"No."

"Well, he has quietly purchased the grant made by Carondelet to the Marquis of----, thirty thousand acres, and now says the grant is two hundred *and* thirty thousand. That is one style of men Governor Claiborne is going to have on his hands. The town will presently be as full of them as my pocket is of tobacco crumbs,--every one of them with a Spanish grant as long as Clark's ropewalk and made up since the rumor of the Cession."

"I hear that some of Honoré Grandissime's titles are likely to turn out bad,--some of the old Brahmin properties and some of the Mandarin lands."

"Fudge!" said Dr. Keene.

There was also the subject of rotation in office. Would this provisional governor-general himself be able to stand fast? Had not a man better temporize a while, and see what Ex-Governor-general Casa Calvo and Trudeau were going to do? Would not men who sacrificed old prejudices, braved the popular contumely, and came forward and gave in their allegiance to the President's appointee, have to take the chances of losing their official positions at last? Men like Camille Brahmin, for instance, or Charlie Mandarin: suppose Spain or France should get the province back, then where would they be?

"One of the things I pity most in this vain world," drawled Doctor Keene, "is a hive of patriots who don't know where to swarm."

The apothecary was drawn into the discussion--at least he thought he was. Inexperience is apt to think that Truth will be knocked down and murdered unless she comes to the rescue. Somehow, Frowenfeld's really excellent arguments seemed to

give out more heat than light. They were merciless; their principles were not only lofty to dizziness, but precipitous, and their heights unoccupied, and--to the common sight--unattainable. In consequence, they provoked hostility and even resentment. With the kindest, the most honest, and even the most modest, intentions, he found himself--to his bewilderment and surprise--sniffed at by the ungenerous, frowned upon by the impatient, and smiled down by the good-natured in a manner that brought sudden blushes of exasperation to his face, and often made him ashamed to find himself going over these sham battles again in much savageness of spirit, when alone with his books; or, in moments of weakness, casting about for such unworthy weapons as irony and satire. In the present debate, he had just provoked a sneer that made his blood leap and his friends laugh, when Doctor Keene, suddenly rising and beckoning across the street, exclaimed:

"Oh! Agricole! Agricole! *venez ici*; we want you."

A murmur of vexed protest arose from two or three.

"He's coming," said the whittler, who had also beckoned.

"Good evening, Citizen Fusilier," said Doctor Keene. "Citizen Fusilier, allow me to present my friend, Professor Frowenfeld--yes, you are a professor--yes, you are. He is one of your sort, Citizen Fusilier, a man of thorough scientific education. I believe on my soul, sir, he knows nearly as much as you do!"

The person who confronted the apothecary was a large, heavily built, but well-molded and vigorous man, of whom one might say that he was adorned with old age. His brow was dark, and furrowed partly by time and partly by a persistent, ostentatious frown. His eyes were large, black and bold, and the gray locks above them curled short and harsh like the front of a bull. His nose was fine and strong, and if there was any deficiency in mouth or chin, it was

hidden by a beard that swept down over his broad breast like the beard of a prophet. In his dress, which was noticeably soiled, the fashions of three decades were hinted at; he seemed to have donned whatever he thought his friends would most have liked him to leave off.

"Professor," said the old man, extending something like the paw of a lion, and giving Frowenfeld plenty of time to become thoroughly awed, "this is a pleasure as magnificent as unexpected! A scientific man?--in Louisiana?" He looked around upon the doctors as upon a graduating class.

"Professor, I am rejoiced!" He paused again, shaking the apothecary's hand with great ceremony. "I do assure you, sir, I dislike to relinquish your grasp. Do me the honor to allow me to become your friend! I congratulate my downtrodden country on the acquisition of such a citizen! I hope, sir,--at least I might have hoped, had not Louisiana just passed into the hands of the most clap-trap government in the universe, notwithstanding it pretends to be a republic,--I might have hoped that you had come among us to fasten the lie direct upon a late author, who writes of us that 'the air of this region is deadly to the Muses.'"

"He didn't say that?" asked one of the debaters, with pretended indignation.

"He did, sir, after eating our bread!"

"And sucking our sugar-cane, too, no doubt!" said the wag; but the old man took no notice.

Frowenfeld, naturally, was not anxious to reply, and was greatly relieved to be touched on the elbow by a child with a picayune in one hand and a tumbler in the other. He escaped behind the counter and gladly remained there.

"Citizen Fusilier," asked one of the gossips, "what has the new government to do with the health of the Muses?"

"It introduces the English tongue," said the old man, scowling.

"Oh, well," replied the questioner, "the Creoles will soon learn the language."

"English is not a language, sir; it is a jargon! And when this young simpleton, Claiborne, attempts to cram it down the public windpipe in the courts, as I understand he intends, he will fail! Hah! sir, I know men in this city who would rather eat a dog than speak English! I speak it, but I also speak Choctaw."

"The new land titles will be in English."

"They will spurn his rotten titles. And if he attempts to invalidate their old ones, why, let him do it! Napoleon Buonaparte" (Italian pronounciation) "will make good every arpent within the next two years. *Think so?* I know it! *How?* H-I perceive it! H-I hope the yellow fever may spare you to witness it."

A sullen grunt from the circle showed the "citizen" that he had presumed too much upon the license commonly accorded his advanced age, and by way of a diversion he looked around for Frowenfeld to pour new flatteries upon. But Joseph, behind his counter, unaware of either the offense or the resentment, was blushing with pleasure before a visitor who had entered by the side door farthest from the company.

"Gentlemen," said Agricola, "h-my dear friends, you must not expect an old Creole to like anything in comparison with *la belle langue*."

"Which language do you call *la belle?*" asked Doctor Keene, with pretended simplicity.

The old man bent upon him a look of unspeakable contempt, which nobody noticed. The gossips were one by one stealing a glance toward that which ever

was, is and must be an irresistible lodestone to the eyes of all the sons of Adam, to wit, a chaste and graceful complement of--skirts. Then in a lower tone they resumed their desultory conversation.

It was the seeker after basil who stood before the counter, holding in her hand, with her purse, the heavy veil whose folds had before concealed her features.

CHAPTER X

"OO DAD IS, 'SIEUR FROWENFEL'?"

Whether the removal of the veil was because of the milder light of the evening, or the result of accident, or of haste, or both, or whether, by reason of some exciting or absorbing course of thought, the wearer had withdrawn it unconsciously, was a matter that occupied the apothecary as little as did Agricola's continued harangue. As he looked upon the fair face through the light gauze which still overhung but not obscured it, he readily perceived, despite the sprightly smile, something like distress, and as she spoke this became still more evident in her hurried undertone.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', I want you to sell me doze *basilic*."

As she slipped the rings of her purse apart her fingers trembled.

"It is waiting for you," said Frowenfeld; but the lady did not hear him; she was giving her attention to the loud voice of Agricola saying in the course of discussion:

"The Louisiana Creole is the noblest variety of enlightened man!"

"Oo dad is, 'Sieur Frowenfel'?" she asked, softly, but with an excited eye.

"That is Mr. Agricola Fusilier," answered Joseph in the same tone, his heart leaping inexplicably as he met her glance. With an angry flush she looked quickly around, scrutinized the old man in an instantaneous, thorough way, and then glanced back at the apothecary again, as if asking him to fulfil her request the quicker.

He hesitated, in doubt as to her meaning.

"Wrap it yonder," she almost whispered.

He went, and in a moment returned, with the basil only partially hid in a paper covering.

But the lady, muffled again in her manifold veil, had once more lost her eagerness for it; at least, instead of taking it, she moved aside, offering room for a masculine figure just entering. She did not look to see who it might be--plenty of time to do that by accident, by and by. There she made a mistake; for the new-comer, with a silent bow of thanks, declined the place made for him, moved across the shop, and occupied his eyes with the contents of the glass case, his back being turned to the lady and Frowenfeld. The apothecary recognized the Creole whom he had met under the live-oak.

The lady put forth her hand suddenly to receive the package. As she took it and turned to depart, another small hand was laid upon it and it was returned to the counter. Something was said in a low-pitched undertone, and the two sisters--if Frowenfeld's guess was right--confronted each other. For a single instant

only they stood so; an earnest and hurried murmur of French words passed between them, and they turned together, bowed with great suavity, and were gone.

"The Cession is a mere temporary political manoeuvre!" growled M. Fusilier.

Frowenfeld's merchant friend came from his place of waiting, and spoke twice before he attracted the attention of the bewildered apothecary.

"Good-day, Mr. Frowenfeld; I have been told that--"

Joseph gazed after the two ladies crossing the street, and felt uncomfortable that the group of gossips did the same. So did the black attendant who glanced furtively back.

"Good-day, Mr. Frowenfeld; I--"

"Oh! how do you do, sir?" exclaimed the apothecary, with great pleasantness, of face. It seemed the most natural thing that they should resume their late conversation just where they had left off, and that would certainly be pleasant. But the man of more experience showed an unresponsive expression, that was as if he remembered no conversation of any note.

"I have been told that you might be able to replace the glass in this thing out of your private stock."

He presented a small, leather-covered case, evidently containing some optical instrument. "It will give me a pretext for going," he had said to himself, as he put it into his pocket in his counting-room. He was not going to let the apothecary know he had taken such a fancy to him.

"I do not know," replied Frowenfeld, as he touched the spring of the case; "I will see what I have."

He passed into the back room, more than willing to get out of sight till he might better collect himself.

"I do not keep these things for sale," said he as he went.

"Sir?" asked the Creole, as if he had not understood, and followed through the open door.

"Is this what that lady was getting?" he asked, touching the remnant of the basil in the box.

"Yes, sir," said the apothecary, with his face in the drawer of a table.

"They had no carriage with them." The Creole spoke with his back turned, at the same time running his eyes along a shelf of books. Frowenfeld made only the sound of rejecting bits of crystal and taking up others. "I do not know who they are," ventured the merchant.

Joseph still gave no answer, but a moment after approached, with the instrument in his extended hand.

"You had it? I am glad," said the owner, receiving it, but keeping one hand still on the books.

Frowenfeld put up his materials.

"Mr. Frowenfeld, are these your books? I mean do you use these books?"

"Yes, sir."

The Creole stepped back to the door.

"Agricola!"

"*Quoi*!"

"*Vien ici*."

Citizen Fusilier entered, followed by a small volley of retorts from those with whom he had been disputing, and who rose as he did. The stranger said something very sprightly in French, running the back of one finger down the rank of books, and a lively dialogue followed.

"You must be a great scholar," said the unknown by and by, addressing the apothecary.

"He is a professor of chimistry," said the old man.

"I am nothing, as yet, but a student," said Joseph, as the three returned into the shop; "certainly not a scholar, and still less a professor." He spoke with a new quietness of manner that made the younger Creole turn upon him a pleasant look.

"H-my young friend," said the patriarch, turning toward Joseph with a tremendous frown, "when I, Agricola Fusilier, pronounce you a professor, you are a professor. Louisiana will not look to *you* for your credentials; she will look to me!"

He stumbled upon some slight impediment under foot. There were times when it took but little to make Agricola stumble.

Looking to see what it was, Joseph picked up a silken purse. There was a name embroidered on it.

CHAPTER XI

SUDDEN FLASHES OF LIGHT

The day was nearly gone. The company that had been chatting at the front door, and which in warmer weather would have tarried until bedtime, had wandered off; however, by stepping toward the light

the young merchant could decipher the letters on the purse. Citizen Fusilier drew out a pair of spectacles, looked over his junior's shoulder, read aloud, "*Aurore De G. Nanca*--," and uttered an imprecation.

"Do not speak to me!" he thundered; "do not approach me! she did it maliciously!"

"Sir!" began Frowenfeld.

But the old man uttered another tremendous malediction and hurried into the street and away.

"Let him pass," said the other Creole calmly.

"What is the matter with him?" asked Frowenfeld.

"He is getting old." The Creole extended the purse carelessly to the apothecary. "Has it anything inside?"

"But a single pistareen."

"That is why she wanted the *basilic*, eh?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Do you not know what she was going to do with it?"

"With the basil? No sir."

"May be she was going to make a little tisane, eh?" said the Creole, forcing down a smile.

But a portion of the smile would come when Frowenfeld answered, with unnecessary resentment:

"She was going to make some proper use of it, which need not concern me."

"Without doubt."

The Creole quietly walked a step or two forward and back and looked idly into the glass case. "Is this young man in love with her?" he asked himself. He turned around.

"Do you know those ladies, Mr. Frowenfeld? Do you visit them at home?"

He drew out his porte-monnaie.

"No, sir."

"I will pay you for the repair of this instrument; have you change for--"

"I will see," said the apothecary.

As he spoke he laid the purse on a stool, till he should light his shop, and then went to his till without again taking it.

The Creole sauntered across to the counter and nipped the herb which still lay there.

"Mr. Frowenfeld, you know what some very excellent people do with this? They rub it on the sill of the door to make the money come into the house."

Joseph stopped aghast with the drawer half drawn.

"Not persons of intelligence and--"

"All kinds. It is only some of the foolishness which they take from the slaves. Many of your best people consult the voudou horses."

"Horses?"

"Priestesses, you might call them," explained the Creole, "like Momselle Marcelline or 'Zabeth Philosophe."

"Witches!" whispered Frowenfeld.

"Oh no," said the other with a shrug; "that is too hard a name; say fortune-tellers. But Mr. Frowenfeld, I wish you to lend me your good offices. Just supposing the possi*bil*ity that that lady may be in need of money, you know, and will send back or come back for the purse, you know, knowing that she most likely lost it here, I ask you the favor that you will not let her know I have filled it with gold. In fact, if she mentions my name--"

"To confess the truth, sir, I am not acquainted with your name."

The Creole smiled a genuine surprise.

"I thought you knew it." He laughed a little at himself. "We have nevertheless become very good friends--I believe? Well, in fact then, Mr. Frowenfeld, you might say you do not know who put the money in." He extended his open palm with the purse hanging across it. Joseph was about to object to this statement, but the Creole, putting on an expression of anxious desire, said: "I mean, not by name. It is somewhat important to me, Mr. Frowenfeld, that that lady should not know my present action. If you want to do those two ladies a favor, you may rest assured the way to do it is to say you do not know who put this gold." The Creole in his earnestness slipped in his idiom. "You will excuse me if I do not tell you my name; you can find it out at any time from Agricola. Ah! I am glad she did not see me! You must not tell anybody about this little event, eh?"

"No, sir," said Joseph, as he finally accepted the purse. "I shall say nothing to any one else, and only what I cannot avoid saying to the lady and her sister."

"*'Tis not her sister*" responded the Creole, "*'tis her daughter*."

The italics signify, not how the words were said, but how they sounded to Joseph. As if a dark lantern were suddenly turned full upon it, he saw the significance of Citizen Fusilier's transport. The fair strangers were the widow and daughter of the man whom Agricola had killed in duel--the ladies with whom Doctor Keene had desired to make him acquainted.

"Well, good evening, Mr. Frowenfeld." The Creole extended his hand (his people are great hand-shakers). "Ah--" and then, for the first time, he came

to the true object of his visit. "The conversation we had some weeks ago, Mr. Frowenfeld, has started a train of thought in my mind"--he began to smile as if to convey the idea that Joseph would find the subject a trivial one--"which has almost brought me to the--"

A light footfall accompanied with the soft sweep of robes cut short his words. There had been two or three entrances and exits during the time the Creole had tarried, but he had not allowed them to disturb him. Now, however, he had no sooner turned and fixed his glance upon this last comer, than without so much as the invariable Creole leave-taking of "Well, good evening, sir," he hurried out.

CHAPTER XII

THE PHILOSOPHE

The apothecary felt an inward nervous start as there advanced into the light of his hanging lamp and toward the spot where he had halted, just outside the counter, a woman of the quadroon caste, of superb stature and poise, severely handsome features, clear, tawny skin and large, passionate black eyes.

"*Bon soi', Miché*." [Monsieur.] A rather hard, yet not repellent smile showed her faultless teeth.

Frowenfeld bowed.

"*Mo vien c'erc'er la bourse de Madame*."

She spoke the best French at her command, but it was not understood.

The apothecary could only shake his head.

"*La bourse*" she repeated, softly smiling, but with a scintillation of the eyes in resentment of his scrutiny. "*La bourse*" she reiterated.

"Purse?"

"*Oui, Miché*."

"You are sent for it?"

"*Oui, Miché*."

He drew it from his breast pocket and marked the sudden glisten of her eyes, reflecting the glisten of the gold in the silken mesh.

"*Oui, c'est ça,*" said she, putting her hand out eagerly.

"I am afraid to give you this to-night," said Joseph.

"*Oui*," ventured she, dubiously, the lightning playing deep back in her eyes.

"You might be robbed," said Frowenfeld. "It is very dangerous for you to be out alone. It will not be long, now, until gun-fire." (Eight o'clock P.M.--the gun to warn slaves to be in-doors, under pain of arrest and imprisonment.)

The object of this solicitude shook her head with a smile at its gratuitousness. The smile showed determination also.

"*Mo pas compren*'," she said.

"Tell the lady to send for it to-morrow."

She smiled helplessly and somewhat vexedly, shrugged and again shook her head. As she did so she heard footsteps and voices in the door at her back.

"*C'est ça*" she said again with a hurried attempt at extreme amiability; "Dat it; *oui*;" and lifting her hand with some rapidity made a sudden eager reach for the purse, but failed.

"No!" said Frowenfeld, indignantly.

"Hello!" said Charlie Keene amusedly, as he approached from the door.

The woman turned, and in one or two rapid sentences in the Creole dialect offered her explanation.

"Give her the purse, Joe; I will answer for its being all right."

Frowenfeld handed it to her. She started to pass through the door in the rue Royale by which Doctor Keene had entered; but on seeing on its threshold Agricola frowning upon her, she turned quickly with evident trepidation, and hurried out into the darkness of the other street.

Agricola entered. Doctor Keene looked about the shop.

"I tell you, Agricole, you didn't have it with you; Frowenfeld, you haven't seen a big knotted walking-stick?"

Frowenfeld was sure no walking-stick had been left there.

"Oh, yes, Frowenfeld," said Doctor Keene, with a little laugh, as the three sat down, "I'd a'most as soon trust that woman as if she was white."

The apothecary said nothing.

"How free," said Agricola, beginning with a meditative gaze at the sky without, and ending with a philosopher's smile upon his two companions,--"how free we people are from prejudice against the negro!"

"The white people," said Frowenfeld, half abstractedly, half inquiringly.

"H-my young friend, when we say, 'we people,' we *always* mean we white people. The non-mention of color always implies pure white; and whatever is not pure white is to all intents and purposes pure black. When I say the 'whole community,' I mean the whole white portion; when I speak of the 'undivided public sentiment,' I mean the sentiment of the white population. What else could I mean? Could you suppose, sir, the expression which you may have heard me use--'my downtrodden country'--includes blacks and mulattoes? What is that up yonder in the sky? The moon. The new moon, or the old moon, or the moon in her third quarter, but always the moon! Which part of it? Why, the shining part--the white part, always and only! Not that there is a prejudice against the negro. By no means. Wherever he can be of any service in a strictly menial capacity we kindly and generously tolerate his presence."

Was the immigrant growing wise, or weak, that he remained silent?

Agricola rose as he concluded and said he would go home. Doctor Keene gave him his hand lazily, without rising.

"Frowenfeld," he said, with a smile and in an undertone, as Agricola's footsteps died away, "don't you know who that woman is?"

"No."

"Well, I'll tell you."

He told him.

On that lonely plantation at the Cannes Brulées, where Aurore Nancanou's childhood had been passed without brothers or sisters, there had been given her, according to the well-known custom of plantation life, a little quadroon slave-maid as her constant and only playmate. This maid began early to show herself in many ways remarkable. While yet a child

she grew tall, lithe, agile; her eyes were large and black, and rolled and sparkled if she but turned to answer to her name. Her pale yellow forehead, low and shapely, with the jet hair above it, the heavily pencilled eyebrows and long lashes below, the faint red tinge that blushed with a kind of cold passion through the clear yellow skin of the cheek, the fulness of the red, voluptuous lips and the roundness of her perfect neck, gave her, even at fourteen, a barbaric and magnetic beauty, that startled the beholder like an unexpected drawing out of a jewelled sword. Such a type could have sprung only from high Latin ancestry on the one side and--we might venture--Jaloff African on the other. To these charms of person she added mental acuteness, conversational adroitness, concealed cunning, and noiseless but visible strength of will; and to these, that rarest of gifts in one of her tincture, the purity of true womanhood.

At fourteen a necessity which had been parleyed with for two years or more became imperative, and Aurore's maid was taken from her. Explanation is almost superfluous. Aurore was to become a lady and her playmate a lady's maid; but not *her* maid, because the maid had become, of the two, the ruling spirit. It was a question of grave debate in the mind of M. De Grapion what disposition to make of her.

About this time the Grandissimes and De Grapions, through certain efforts of Honoré's father (since dead) were making some feeble pretences of mutual good feeling, and one of those Kentuckian dealers in corn and tobacco whose flatboat fleets were always drifting down the Mississippi, becoming one day M. De Grapion's transient guest, accidentally mentioned a wish of Agricola Fusilier. Agricola, it appeared, had commissioned him to buy the most beautiful lady's maid that in his extended journeyings he might be able to find; he wanted to make her a gift to his niece, Honoré's sister. The Kentuckian saw the demand met in Aurore's playmate. M. De Grapion

would not sell her. (Trade with a Grandissime? Let them suspect he needed money?) No; but he would ask Agricola to accept the services of the waiting-maid for, say, ten years. The Kentuckian accepted the proposition on the spot and it was by and by carried out. She was never recalled to the Cannes Brulées, but in subsequent years received her freedom from her master, and in New Orleans became Palmyre la Philosophe, as they say in the corrupt French of the old Creoles, or Palmyre Philosophe, noted for her taste and skill as a hair-dresser, for the efficiency of her spells and the sagacity of her divinations, but most of all for the chaste austerity with which she practised the less baleful rites of the voudous.

"That's the woman," said Doctor Keene, rising to go, as he concluded the narrative,--"that's she, Palmyre Philosophe. Now you get a view of the vastness of Agricole's generosity; he tolerates her even though she does not present herself in the 'strictly menial capacity.' Reason why--*he's afraid of her*."

Time passed, if that may be called time which we have to measure with a clock. The apothecary of the rue Royale found better ways of measurement. As quietly as a spider he was spinning information into knowledge and knowledge into what is supposed to be wisdom; whether it was or not we shall see. His unidentified merchant friend who had adjured him to become acclimated as "they all did" had also exhorted him to study the human mass of which he had become a unit; but whether that study, if pursued, was sweetening and ripening, or whether it was corrupting him, that friend did not come to see; it was the busy time of year. Certainly so young a solitary, coming among a people whose conventionalities were so at variance with his own door-yard ethics, was in sad danger of being unduly--as we might say--Timonized. His acquaintances continued to be few in number.

During this fermenting period he chronicled much wet and some cold weather. This may in part account for the uneventfulness of its passage; events do not happen rapidly among the Creoles in bad weather. However, trade was good.

But the weather cleared; and when it was getting well on into the Creole spring and approaching the spring of the almanacs, something did occur that extended Frowenfeld's acquaintance without Doctor Keene's assistance.

CHAPTER XIII

A CALL FROM THE RENT-SPECTRE

It is nearly noon of a balmy morning late in February. Aurore Nancanou and her daughter have only this moment ceased sewing, in the small front room of No. 19 rue Bienville. Number 19 is the right-hand half of a single-story, low-roofed tenement, washed with yellow ochre, which it shares generously with whoever leans against it. It sits as fast on the ground as a toad. There is a kitchen belonging to it somewhere among the weeds in the back yard, and besides this room where the ladies are, there is, directly behind it, a sleeping apartment. Somewhere back of this there is a little nook where in pleasant weather they eat. Their cook and housemaid is the plain person who attends them on the street. Her bedchamber is the kitchen and her bed

the floor. The house's only other protector is a hound, the aim of whose life is to get thrust out of the ladies' apartments every fifteen minutes.

Yet if you hastily picture to yourself a forlorn-looking establishment, you will be moving straight away from the fact. Neatness, order, excellence, are prevalent qualities in all the details of the main house's inward garniture. The furniture is old-fashioned, rich, French, imported. The carpets, if not new, are not cheap, either. Bits of crystal and silver, visible here and there, are as bright as they are antiquated; and one or two portraits, and the picture of Our Lady of Many Sorrows, are passably good productions. The brass work, of which there is much, is brilliantly burnished, and the front room is bright and cheery.

At the street door of this room somebody has just knocked. Aurore has risen from her seat. The other still sits on a low chair with her hands and sewing dropped into her lap, looking up steadfastly into her mother's face with a mingled expression of fondness and dismayed expectation. Aurore hesitates beside her chair, desirous of resuming her seat, even lifts her sewing from it; but tarries a moment, her alert suspense showing in her eyes. Her daughter still looks up into them. It is not strange that the dwellers round about dispute as to which is the fairer, nor that in the six months during which the two have occupied Number 19 the neighbors have reached no conclusion on this subject. If some young enthusiast compares the daughter--in her eighteenth year--to a bursting blush rosebud full of promise, some older one immediately retorts that the other--in her thirty-fifth--is the red, red, full-blown, faultless joy of the garden. If one says the maiden has the dew of youth,--"But!" cry two or three mothers in a breath, "that other one, child, will never grow old. With her it will always be morning. That woman is going to last forever; ha-a-a-a!--even longer!"

There was one direction in which the widow evidently had the advantage; you could see from the street or the opposite windows that she was a wise householder. On the day they moved into Number 19 she had been seen to enter in advance of all her other movables, carrying into the empty house a new broom, a looking-glass, and a silver coin. Every morning since, a little watching would have discovered her at the hour of sunrise sprinkling water from her side casement, and her opposite neighbors often had occasion to notice that, sitting at her sewing by the front window, she never pricked her finger but she quickly ran it up behind her ear, and then went on with her work. Would anybody but Joseph Frowenfeld ever have lived in and moved away from the two-story brick next them on the right and not have known of the existence of such a marvel?

"Ha!" they said, "she knows how to keep off bad luck, that Madame yonder. And the younger one seems not to like it. Girls think themselves so smart these days."

Ah, there was the knock again, right there on the street-door, as loud as if it had been given with a joint of sugar-cane!

The daughter's hand, which had just resumed the needle, stood still in mid-course with the white thread half-drawn. Aurore tiptoed slowly over the carpeted floor. There came a shuffling sound, and the corner of a folded white paper commenced appearing and disappearing under the door. She mounted a chair and peeped through that odd little *jalousie* which formerly was in almost all New Orleans street-doors; but the missive had meantime found its way across the sill, and she saw only the unpicturesque back of a departing errand-boy. But that was well. She had a pride, to maintain which--and a poverty, to conceal which--she felt to be necessary to her self-respect; and this made her of necessity a trifle unsocial in her own castle. Do you

suppose she was going to put on the face of having been born or married to this degraded condition of things?

Who knows?--the knock might have been from 'Sieur Frowenfel'--ha, ha! He might be just silly enough to call so early; or it might have been from that *polisson* of a Grandissime,--which one didn't matter, they were all detestable,--coming to collect the rent. That was her original fear; or, worse still, it might have been, had it been softer, the knock of some possible lady visitor. She had no intention of admitting any feminine eyes to detect this carefully covered up indigence. Besides, it was Monday. There is no sense in trifling with bad luck. The reception of Monday callers is a source of misfortune never known to fail, save in rare cases when good luck has already been secured by smearing the front walk or the banquette with Venetian red.

Before the daughter could dart up and disengage herself from her work her mother had pounced upon the paper. She was standing and reading, her rich black lashes curtaining their downcast eyes, her infant waist and round, close-fitted, childish arms harmonizing prettily with her mock frown of infantile perplexity, and her long, limp robe heightening the grace of her posture, when the younger started from her seat with the air of determining not to be left at a disadvantage.

But what is that on the dark eyelash? With a sudden additional energy the daughter dashes the sewing and chair to right and left, bounds up, and in a moment has Aurore weeping in her embrace and has snatched the note from her hand.

"*Ah! maman! Ah! ma chère mère*!"

The mother forced a laugh. She was not to be mothered by her daughter; so she made a dash at Clotilde's uplifted hand to recover the note, which was unavailing. Immediately there arose in colonial

French the loveliest of contentions, the issue of which was that the pair sat down side by side, like two sisters over one love-letter, and undertook to decipher the paper. It read as follows:

"NEW ORLEANS, 20 Feb're, 1804.

"MADAME NANCANOU: I muss oblige to ass you for rent of that house whare you living, it is at number 19 Bienville street whare I do not received thos rent from you not since tree mons and I demand you this is mabe thirteen time. And I give to you notice of 19 das writen in Anglish as the new law requi. That witch the law make necessare only for 15 das, and when you not pay me those rent in 19 das till the tense of Marh I will rekes you to move out. That witch make me to be verry sorry. I have the honor to remain, Madam,

"Your humble servant,
"H. Grandissime.
"*per* Z.F."

There was a short French postscript on the opposite page signed only by M. Zénon François, explaining that he, who had allowed them in the past to address him as their landlord and by his name, was but the landlord's agent; that the landlord was a far better-dressed man than he could afford to be; that the writing opposite was a notice for them to quit the premises they had rented (not leased), or pay up; that it gave the writer great pain to send it, although it was but the necessary legal form and he only an irresponsible drawer of an inadequate salary, with thirteen children to support; and that he implored them to tear off and burn up this postscript immediately they had read it.

"Ah, the miserable!" was all the comment made upon it as the two ladies addressed their energies to the previous English. They had never suspected him of being M. Grandissime.

Their eyes dragged slowly and ineffectually along the lines to the signature.

"H. Grandissime! Loog ad 'im!" cried the widow, with a sudden short laugh, that brought the tears after it like a wind-gust in a rose-tree. She held the letter out before them as if she was lifting something alive by the back of the neck, and to intensify her scorn spoke in the hated tongue prescribed by the new courts. "Loog ad 'im! dad ridge gen'leman oo give so mudge money to de 'ozpill!"

"Bud, *maman*," said the daughter, laying her hand appeasingly upon her mother's knee, "*ee* do nod know 'ow we is poor."

"Ah!" retorted Aurore, "*par example! Non?* Ee thingue we is ridge, eh? Ligue his oncle, eh? Ee thing so, too, eh?" She cast upon her daughter the look of burning scorn intended for Agricola Fusilier. "You wan' to tague the pard of dose Grandissime'?"

The daughter returned a look of agony.

"No," she said, "bud a man wad godd some 'ouses to rend, muz ee nod boun' to ged 'is rend?"

"Boun' to ged--ah! yez ee muz do 'is possible to ged 'is rend. Oh! certain*lee*. Ee is ridge, bud ee need a lill money, bad, bad. Fo' w'at?" The excited speaker rose to her feet under a sudden inspiration. "*Tenez, Mademoiselle!*" She began to make great show of unfastening her dress.

"*Mais, comment?*" demanded the suffering daughter.

"Yez!" continued Aurore, keeping up the demonstration, "you wand 'im to 'ave 'is rend so bad! An' I godd honely my cloze; so you juz tague diz to you' fine gen'lemen, 'Sieur Honoré Grandissime."

"Ah-h-h-h!" cried the martyr.

"An' you is righd," persisted the tormentor, still unfastening; but the daughter's tears gushed forth, and the repentant tease threw herself upon her knees,

drew her child's head into her bosom and wept afresh.

Half an hour was passed in council; at the end of which they stood beneath their lofty mantelshelf, each with a foot on a brazen fire-dog, and no conclusion reached.

"Ah, my child!"--they had come to themselves now and were speaking in their peculiar French--"if we had here in these hands but the tenth part of what your papa often played away in one night without once getting angry! But we have not. Ah! but your father was a fine fellow; if he could have lived for you to know him! So accomplished! Ha, ha, ha! I can never avoid laughing, when I remember him teaching me to speak English; I used to enrage him so!"

The daughter brought the conversation back to the subject of discussion. There were nineteen days yet allowed them. God knows--by the expiration of that time they might be able to pay. With the two music scholars whom she then had and three more whom she had some hope to get, she made bold to say they could pay the rent.

"Ah, Clotilde, my child," exclaimed Aurore, with sudden brightness, "you don't need a mask and costume to resemble your great-grandmother, the casket-girl!" Aurore felt sure, on her part, that with the one embroidery scholar then under her tutelage, and the three others who had declined to take lessons, they could easily pay the rent--and how kind it was of Monsieur, the aged father of that one embroidery scholar, to procure those invitations to the ball! The dear old man! He said he must see one more ball before he should die.

Aurore looked so pretty in the reverie into which she fell that her daughter was content to admire her silently.

"Clotilde," said the mother, presently looking up, "do you remember the evening you treated me so ill?"

The daughter smiled at the preposterous charge.

"I did not treat you ill."

"Yes, don't you know--the evening you made me lose my purse?"

"Certainly, I know!" The daughter took her foot from the andiron; her eyes lighted up aggressively. "For losing your purse blame yourself. For the way you found it again--which was far worse--thank Palmyre. If you had not asked her to find it and shared the gold with her we could have returned with it to 'Sieur Frowenfel'; but now we are ashamed to let him see us. I do not doubt he filled the purse."

"He? He never knew it was empty. It was Nobody who filled it. Palmyre says that Papa Lébat--"

"Ha!" exclaimed Clotilde at this superstitious mention.

The mother tossed her head and turned her back, swallowing the unendurable bitterness of being rebuked by her daughter. But the cloud hung over but a moment.

"Clotilde," she said, a minute after, turning with a look of sun-bright resolve, "I am going to see him."

"To see whom?" asked the other, looking back from the window, whither she had gone to recover from a reactionary trembling.

"To whom, my child? Why--"

"You do not expect mercy from Honoré Grandissime? You would not ask it?"

"No. There is no mercy in the Grandissime blood; but cannot I demand justice? Ha! it is justice that I shall demand!"

"And you will really go and see him?"

"You will see, Mademoiselle," replied Aurore, dropping a broom with which she had begun to sweep up some spilled buttons.

"And I with you?"

"No! To a counting-room? To the presence of the chief of that detestable race? No!"

"But you don't know where his office is."

"Anybody can tell me."

Preparation began at once. By and by--

"Clotilde."

Clotilde was stooping behind her mother, with a ribbon between her lips, arranging a flounce.

"M-m-m."

"You must not watch me go out of sight; do you hear? ... But it *is* dangerous. I knew of a gentleman who watched his wife go out of his sight and she never came back!"

"Hold still!" said Clotilde.

"But when my hand itches," retorted Aurore in a high key, "haven't I got to put it instantly into my pocket if I want the money to come there? Well, then!"

The daughter proposed to go to the kitchen and tell Alphonsina to put on her shoes.

"My child," cried Aurore, "you are crazy! Do you want Alphonsina to be seized for the rent?"

"But you cannot go alone--and on foot!"

"I must go alone; and--can you lend me your carriage? Ah, you have none? Certainly I must go alone and on foot if I am to say I cannot pay the rent. It is no indiscretion of mine. If anything happens to me it is M. Grandissime who is responsible."

Now she is ready for the adventurous errand. She darts to the mirror. The high-water marks are gone from her eyes. She wheels half around and looks over her shoulder. The flaring bonnet and loose ribbons gave her a more girlish look than ever.

"Now which is the older, little old woman?" she chirrups, and smites her daughter's cheek softly with her palm.

"And you are not afraid to go alone?"

"No; but remember! look at that dog!"

The brute sinks apologetically to the floor. Clotilde opens the street door, hands Aurore the note, Aurore lays a frantic kiss upon her lips, pressing it on tight so as to get it again when she comes back, and--while Clotilde calls the cook to gather up the buttons and take away the broom, and while the cook, to make one trip of it, gathers the hound into her bosom and carries broom and dog out together--Aurore sallies forth, leaving Clotilde to resume her sewing and await the coming of a guitar scholar.

"It will keep her fully an hour," thought the girl, far from imagining that Aurore had set about a little private business which she proposed to herself to accomplish before she even started in the direction of M. Grandissime's counting-rooms.

CHAPTER XIV

BEFORE SUNSET

In old times, most of the sidewalks of New Orleans not in the heart of town were only a rough, rank turf, lined on the side next the ditch with the gunwales of broken-up flatboats--ugly, narrow, slippery objects. As Aurora--it sounds so much pleasanter to anglicize her name--as Aurora gained a corner where two of these gunwales met, she stopped and looked back to make sure that Clotilde was not watching her. That others had noticed her here and there she did not care; that was something beauty would have to endure, and it only made her smile to herself.

"Everybody sees I am from the country--walking on the street without a waiting-maid."

A boy passed, hushing his whistle, and gazing at the lone lady until his turning neck could twist no farther. She was so dewy fresh! After he had got across the street he turned to look again. Where could she have disappeared?

The only object to be seen on the corner from which she had vanished was a small, yellow-washed house much like the one Aurora occupied, as it was like hundreds that then characterized and still characterize the town, only that now they are of brick instead of adobe. They showed in those days, even more than now, the wide contrast between their homely exteriors and the often elegant apartments within. However, in this house the front room was merely neat. The furniture was of rude, heavy pattern, Creole-made, and the walls were unadorned; the day of cheap pictures had not come. The lofty bedstead which filled one corner was spread and hung with a blue stuff showing through a web of white needlework. The brazen feet of the chairs were brightly burnished, as were the brass mountings of the bedstead and the brass globes on the cold andirons. Curtains of blue and white hung at the single window. The floor, from habitual scrubbing with the common weed which politeness has to

call *Helenium autumnale*, was stained a bright, clean yellow. On it were, here and there in places, white mats woven of bleached palmetto-leaf. Such were the room's appointments; there was but one thing more, a singular bit of fantastic carving,--a small table of dark mahogany supported on the upward-writhing images of three scaly serpents.

Aurora sat down beside this table. A dwarf Congo woman, as black as soot, had ushered her in, and, having barred the door, had disappeared, and now the mistress of the house entered.

February though it was, she was dressed--and looked comfortable--in white. That barbaric beauty which had begun to bud twenty years before was now in perfect bloom. The united grace and pride of her movement was inspiring but--what shall we say?--feline? It was a femininity without humanity,--something that made her, with all her superbness, a creature that one would want to find chained. It was the woman who had received the gold from Frowenfeld--Palmyre Philosophe.

The moment her eyes fell upon Aurora her whole appearance changed. A girlish smile lighted up her face, and as Aurora rose up reflecting it back, they simultaneously clapped hands, laughed and advanced joyously toward each other, talking rapidly without regard to each other's words.

"Sit down," said Palmyre, in the plantation French of their childhood, as they shook hands.

They took chairs and drew up face to face as close as they could come, then sighed and smiled a moment, and then looked grave and were silent. For in the nature of things, and notwithstanding the amusing familiarity common between Creole ladies and the menial class, the unprotected little widow should have had a very serious errand to bring her to the voudou's house.

"Palmyre," began the lady, in a sad tone.

"Momselle Aurore."

"I want you to help me." The former mistress not only cast her hands into her lap, lifted her eyes supplicatingly and dropped them again, but actually locked her fingers to keep them from trembling.

"Momselle Aurore--" began Palmyre, solemnly.

"Now, I know what you are going to say--but it is of no use to say it; do this much for me this one time and then I will let voudou alone as much as you wish--forever!"

"You have not lost your purse *again?*"

"Ah! foolishness, no."

Both laughed a little, the philosophe feebly, and Aurora with an excited tremor.

"Well?" demanded the quadroon, looking grave again.

Aurora did not answer.

"Do you wish me to work a spell for you?"

The widow nodded, with her eyes cast down.

Both sat quite still for some time; then the philosophe gently drew the landlord's letter from between Aurora's hands.

"What is this?" She could not read in any language.

"I must pay my rent within nineteen days."

"Have you not paid it?"

The delinquent shook her head.

"Where is the gold that came into your purse? All gone?"

"For rice and potatoes," said Aurora, and for the first time she uttered a genuine laugh, under that condition of mind which Latins usually substitute for fortitude. Palmyre laughed too, very properly.

Another silence followed. The lady could not return the quadroon's searching gaze.

"Momselle Aurore," suddenly said Palmyre, "you want me to work a spell for something else."

Aurora started, looked up for an instant in a frightened way, and then dropped her eyes and let her head droop, murmuring:

"No, I do not."

Palmyre fixed a long look upon her former mistress. She saw that though Aurora might be distressed about the rent, there was something else,--a deeper feeling,--impelling her upon a course the very thought of which drove the color from her lips and made her tremble.

"You are wearing red," said the philosophe.

Aurora's hand went nervously to the red ribbon about her neck.

"It is an accident; I had nothing else convenient."

"Miché Agoussou loves red," persisted Palmyre. (Monsieur Agoussou is the demon upon whom the voudous call in matters of love.)

The color that came into Aurora's cheek ought to have suited Monsieur precisely.

"It is an accident," she feebly insisted.

"Well," presently said Palmyre, with a pretence of abandoning her impression, "then you want me to work you a spell for money, do you?"

Aurora nodded, while she still avoided the quadroon's glance.

"I know better," thought the philosophe. "You shall have the sort you want."

The widow stole an upward glance.

"Oh!" said Palmyre, with the manner of one making a decided digression, "I have been wanting to ask you something. That evening at the pharmacy--was there a tall, handsome gentleman standing by the counter?"

"He was standing on the other side."

"Did you see his face?"

"No; his back was turned."

"Momselle Aurore," said Palmyre, dropping her elbows upon her knees and taking the lady's hand as if the better to secure the truth, "was that the gentleman you met at the ball?"

"My faith!" said Aurora, stretching her eyebrows upward. "I did not think to look. Who was it?"

But Palmyre Philosophe was not going to give more than she got, even to her old-time Momselle; she merely straightened back into her chair with an amiable face.

"Who do you think he is?" persisted Aurora, after a pause, smiling downward and toying with her rings.

The quadroon shrugged.

They both sat in reverie for a moment--a long moment for such sprightly natures--and Palmyre's mien took on a professional gravity. She presently pushed the landlord's letter under the lady's hands as they lay clasped in her lap, and a moment after drew Aurora's glance with her large, strong eyes and asked:

"What shall we do?"

The lady immediately looked startled and alarmed and again dropped her eyes in silence. The quadroon had to speak again.

"We will burn a candle."

Aurora trembled.

"No," she succeeded in saying.

"Yes," said Palmyre, "you must get your rent money." But the charm which she was meditating had no reference to rent money. "She knows that," thought the voudou.

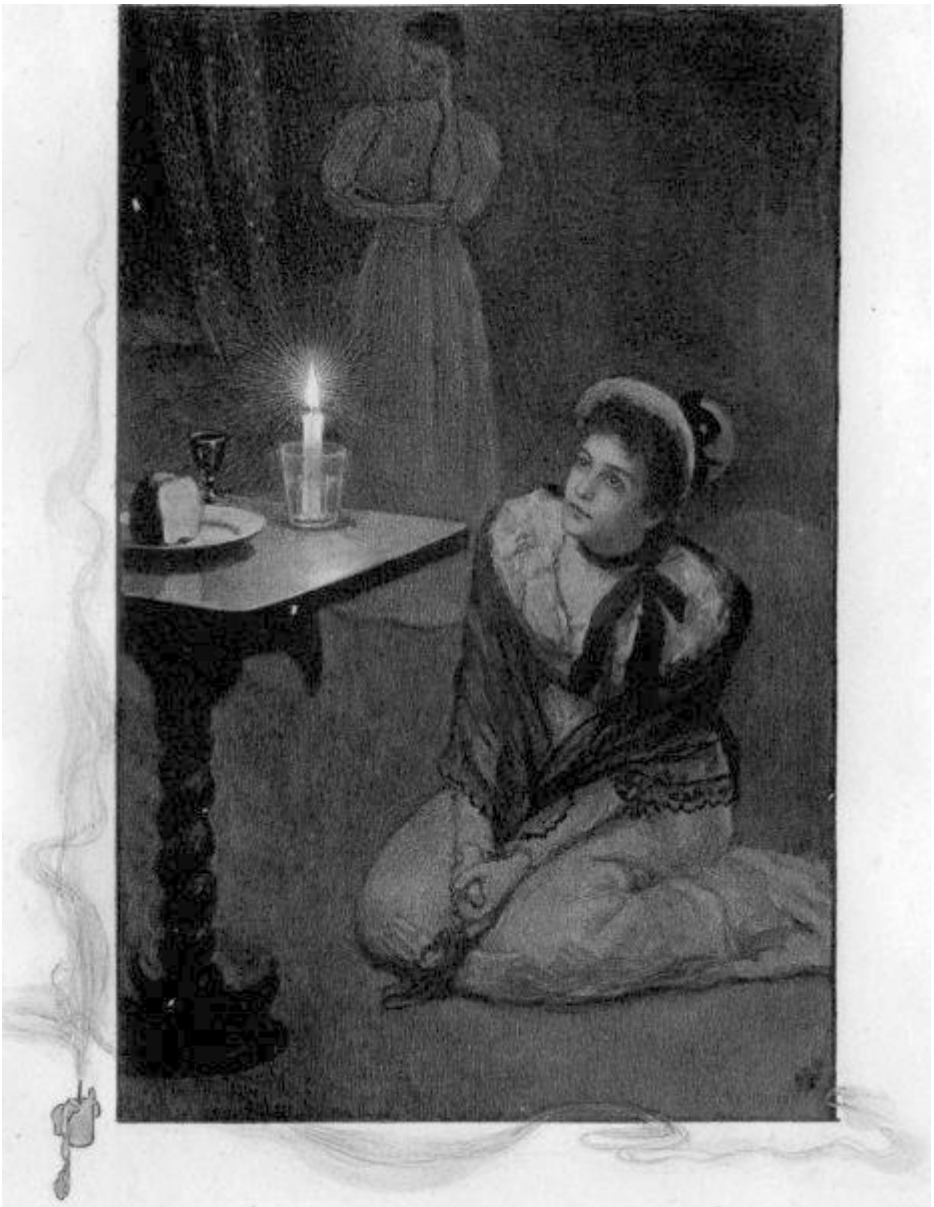
As she rose and called her Congo slave-woman, Aurora made as if to protest further; but utterance failed her. She clenched her hands and prayed to fate for Clotilde to come and lead her away as she had done at the apothecary's. And well she might.

The articles brought in by the servant were simply a little pound-cake and cordial, a tumbler half-filled with the *sirop naturelle* of the sugar-cane, and a small piece of candle of the kind made from the fragrant green wax of the candleberry myrtle. These were set upon the small table, the bit of candle standing, lighted, in the tumbler of sirup, the cake on a plate, the cordial in a wine-glass. This feeble child's play was all; except that as Palmyre closed out all daylight from the room and received the offering of silver that "paid the floor" and averted *guillons* (interferences of outside imps), Aurora,--alas! alas!--went down upon her knees with her gaze fixed upon the candle's flame, and silently called on Assonquer (the imp of good fortune) to cast his snare in her behalf around the mind and heart of--she knew not whom.

By and by her lips, which had moved at first, were still and she only watched the burning wax. When the flame rose clear and long it was a sign that Assonquer was enlisted in the coveted endeavor. When the wick sputtered, the devotee trembled in fear of failure. Its charred end curled down and twisted away from her and her heart sank; but the tall figure of Palmyre for a moment came between, the wick was snuffed, the flame tapered up again, and for a long time burned, a bright, tremulous cone. Again the wick turned down, but this time toward

her,--a propitious omen,--and suddenly fell through the expended wax and went out in the sirup.

The daylight, as Palmyre let it once more into the apartment, showed Aurora sadly agitated. In evidence of the innocence of her fluttering heart, guilt, at least for the moment, lay on it, an appalling burden.



"Aurora,--alas! alas!--went down upon her knees with her gaze fixed upon the candle's flame".

"That is all, Palmyre, is it not? I am sure that is all--it must be all. I cannot stay any longer. I wish I was with Clotilde; I have stayed too long."

"Yes; all for the present," replied the quadroon. "Here, here is some charmed basil; hold it between your lips as you walk--"

"But I am going to my landlord's office!"

"Office? Nobody is at his office now; it is too late. You would find that your landlord had gone to dinner. I will tell you, though, where you *must* go. First go home; eat your dinner; and this evening [the Creoles never say afternoon], about a half-hour before sunset, walk down Royale to the lower corner of the Place d'Armes, pass entirely around the square and return up Royale. Never look behind until you get into your house again."

Aurora blushed with shame.

"Alone?" she exclaimed, quite unnerved and tremulous.

"You will seem to be alone; but I will follow behind you when you pass here. Nothing shall hurt you. If you do that, the charm will certainly work; if you do not--"

The quadroon's intentions were good. She was determined to see who it was that could so infatuate her dear little Momselle; and, as on such an evening as the present afternoon promised to merge into all New Orleans promenaded on the Place d'Armes and the levee, her charm was a very practical one.

"And that will bring the money, will it?" asked Aurora.

"It will bring anything you want."

"Possible?"

"These things that *you* want, Momselle Aurore, are easy to bring. You have no charms working against you. But, oh, I wish to God I could work the *curse* I want to work!" The woman's eyes blazed, her bosom heaved, she lifted her clenched hand above her head and looked upward, crying: "I would give this right hand off at the wrist to catch Agricola Fusilier where I could work him a curse! But I shall; I shall some day be revenged!" She pitched her voice still higher. "I cannot die till I have been! There is nothing that could kill me, I want my revenge so bad!" As suddenly as she had broken out, she hushed, unbarred the door, and with a stern farewell smile saw Aurora turn homeward.

"Give me something to eat, *chérie*," cried the exhausted lady, dropping into Clotilde's chair and trying to die.

"Ah! *maman*, what makes you look so sick?"

Aurora waved her hand contemptuously and gasped.

"Did you see him? What kept you so long--so long?"

"Ask me nothing; I am so enraged with disappointment. He was gone to dinner!"

"Ah! my poor mother!"

"And I must go back as soon as I can take a little *sieste*. I am determined to see him this very day."

"Ah! my poor mother!"

CHAPTER XV

ROLLED IN THE DUST

"No, Frowenfeld," said little Doctor Keene, speaking for the after-dinner loungers, "you must take a little human advice. Go, get the air on the Plaza. We will keep shop for you. Stay as long as you like and come home in any condition you think best." And Joseph, tormented into this course, put on his hat and went out.

"Hard to move as a cow in the moonlight," continued Doctor Keene, "and knows just about as much of the world. He wasn't aware, until I told him to-day, that there are two Honoré Grandissimes." [Laughter.]

"Why did you tell him?"

"I didn't give him anything but the bare fact. I want to see how long it will take him to find out the rest."

The Place d'Armes offered amusement to every one else rather than to the immigrant. The family relation, the most noticeable feature of its' well-pleased groups, was to him too painful a reminder of his late losses, and, after an honest endeavor to flutter out of the inner twilight of himself into the outer glare of a moving world, he had given up the effort and had passed beyond the square and seated himself upon a rude bench which encircled the trunk of a willow on the levee.

The negress, who, resting near by with a tray of cakes before her, has been for some time contemplating the three-quarter face of her unconscious neighbor, drops her head at last with a small, Ethiopian, feminine laugh. It is a self-confession that, pleasant as the study of his

countenance is, to resolve that study into knowledge is beyond her powers; and very pardonably so it is, she being but a *marchande des gâteaux* (an itinerant cake-vender), and he, she concludes, a man of parts. There is a purpose, too, as well as an admission, in the laugh. She would like to engage him in conversation. But he does not notice. Little supposing he is the object of even a cake-merchant's attention, he is lost in idle meditation.

One would guess his age to be as much as twenty-six. His face is beardless, of course, like almost everybody's around him, and of a German kind of seriousness. A certain diffidence in his look may tend to render him unattractive to careless eyes, the more so since he has a slight appearance of self-neglect. On a second glance, his refinement shows out more distinctly, and one also sees that he is not shabby. The little that seems lacking is woman's care, the brush of attentive fingers here and there, the turning of a fold in the high-collared coat, and a mere touch on the neckerchief and shirt-frill. He has a decidedly good forehead. His blue eyes, while they are both strong and modest, are noticeable, too, as betraying fatigue, and the shade of gravity in them is deepened by a certain worn look of excess--in books; a most unusual look in New Orleans in those days, and pointedly out of keeping with the scene which was absorbing his attention.

You might mistake the time for mid-May. Before the view lies the Place d'Armes in its green-breasted uniform of new spring grass crossed diagonally with white shell walks for facings, and dotted with the *élite* of the city for decorations. Over the line of shade-trees which marks its farther boundary, the white-topped twin turrets of St. Louis Cathedral look across it and beyond the bared site of the removed battery (built by the busy Carondelet to protect Louisiana from herself and Kentucky, and razed by his immediate successors) and out upon the Mississippi, the color of whose surface is beginning

to change with the changing sky of this beautiful and now departing day. A breeze, which is almost early June, and which has been hovering over the bosom of the great river and above the turf-covered levee, ceases, as if it sank exhausted under its burden of spring odors, and in the profound calm the cathedral bell strikes the sunset hour. From its neighboring garden, the convent of the Ursulines responds in a tone of devoutness, while from the parapet of the less pious little Fort St. Charles, the evening gun sends a solemn ejaculation rumbling down the "coast;" a drum rolls, the air rises again from the water like a flock of birds, and many in the square and on the levee's crown turn and accept its gentle blowing. Rising over the levee willows, and sinking into the streets,--which are lower than the water,--it flutters among the balconies and in and out of dim Spanish arcades, and finally drifts away toward that part of the sky where the sun is sinking behind the low, unbroken line of forest. There is such seduction in the evening air, such sweetness of flowers on its every motion, such lack of cold, or heat, or dust, or wet, that the people have no heart to stay in-doors; nor is there any reason why they should. The levee road is dotted with horsemen, and the willow avenue on the levee's crown, the whole short mile between Terre aux Boeufs gate on the right and Tchoupitoulas gate on the left, is bright with promenaders, although the hour is brief and there will be no twilight; for, so far from being May, it is merely that same nineteenth of which we have already spoken,--the nineteenth of Louisiana's delicious February.

Among the throng were many whose names were going to be written large in history. There was Casa Calvo,--Sebastian de Casa Calvo de la Puerta y O'Farril, Marquis of Casa Calvo,--a man then at the fine age of fifty-three, elegant, fascinating, perfect in Spanish courtesy and Spanish diplomacy, rolling by in a showy equipage surrounded by a clanking body-guard of the Catholic king's cavalry. There was young Daniel Clark, already beginning to amass

those riches which an age of litigation has not to this day consumed; it was he whom the French colonial prefect, Laussat, in a late letter to France, had extolled as a man whose "talents for intrigue were carried to a rare degree of excellence." There was Laussat himself, in the flower of his years, sour with pride, conscious of great official insignificance and full of petty spites--he yet tarried in a land where his beautiful wife was the "model of taste." There was that convivial old fox, Wilkinson, who had plotted for years with Miro and did not sell himself and his country to Spain because--as we now say--"he found he could do better;" who modestly confessed himself in a traitor's letter to the Spanish king as a man "whose head may err, but whose heart cannot deceive!" and who brought Governor Gayoso to an early death-bed by simply out-drinking him. There also was Edward Livingston, attorney-at-law, inseparably joined to the mention of the famous Batture cases--though that was later. There also was that terror of colonial peculators, the old ex-Intendant Morales, who, having quarrelled with every governor of Louisiana he ever saw, was now snarling at Casa Calvo from force of habit.

And the Creoles--the Knickerbockers of Louisiana--but time would fail us. The Villeres and Destrehans--patriots and patriots' sons; the De La Chaise family in mourning for young Auguste La Chaise of Kentuckian-Louisianian-San Domingan history; the Livaudaises, *père et fils*, of Haunted House fame, descendants of the first pilot of the Belize; the pirate brothers Lafitte, moving among the best; Marigny de Mandeville, afterwards the marquis member of Congress; the Davezacs, the Mossys, the Boulignys, the Labatuts, the Bringiers, the De Trudeaus, the De Macartys, the De la Houssayes, the De Lavilleboeuvres, the Grandprés, the Forstalls; and the proselyted Creoles: Étienne de Boré (he was the father of all such as handle the sugar-kettle); old man Pitot, who became mayor; Madame Pontalba and her unsuccessful suitor, John McDonough; the three

Girods, the two Graviers, or the lone Julian Poydras, godfather of orphan girls. Besides these, and among them as shining fractions of the community, the numerous representatives of the not only noble, but noticeable and ubiquitous, family of Grandissime: Grandissimes simple and Grandissimes compound; Brahmins, Mandarins and Fusiliers. One, 'Polyte by name, a light, gay fellow, with classic features, hair turning gray, is standing and conversing with this group here by the mock-cannon inclosure of the grounds. Another, his cousin, Charlie Mandarin, a tall, very slender, bronzed gentleman in a flannel hunting-shirt and buckskin leggings, is walking, in moccasins, with a sweet lady in whose tasteful attire feminine scrutiny, but such only, might detect economy, but whose marked beauty of yesterday is retreating and reappearing in the flock of children who are noisily running round and round them, nominally in the care of three fat and venerable black nurses. Another, yonder, Théophile Grandissime, is whipping his stockings with his cane, a lithe youngster in the height of the fashion (be it understood the fashion in New Orleans was five years or so behind Paris), with a joyous, noble face, a merry tongue and giddy laugh, and a confession of experiences which these pages, fortunately for their moral tone, need not recount. All these were there and many others.

This throng, shifting like the fragments of colored glass in the kaleidoscope, had its far-away interest to the contemplative Joseph. To them he was of little interest, or none. Of the many passers, scarcely an occasional one greeted him, and such only with an extremely polite and silent dignity which seemed to him like saying something of this sort: "Most noble alien, give you good-day--stay where you are. Profoundly yours--"

Two men came through the Place d'Armes on conspicuously fine horses. One it is not necessary to describe. The other, a man of perhaps thirty-three or

thirty-four years of age, was extremely handsome and well dressed, the martial fashion of the day showing his tall and finely knit figure to much advantage. He sat his horse with an uncommon grace, and, as he rode beside his companion, spoke and gave ear by turns with an easy dignity sufficient of itself to have attracted popular observation. It was the apothecary's unknown friend. Frowenfeld noticed them while they were yet in the middle of the grounds. He could hardly have failed to do so, for some one close beside his bench in undoubted allusion to one of the approaching figures exclaimed:

"Here comes Honoré Grandissime."

Moreover, at that moment there was a slight unwonted stir on the Place d'Armes. It began at the farther corner of the square, hard by the Principal, and spread so quickly through the groups near about, that in a minute the entire company were quietly made aware of something going notably wrong in their immediate presence. There was no running to see it. There seemed to be not so much as any verbal communication of the matter from mouth to mouth. Rather a consciousness appeared to catch noiselessly from one to another as the knowledge of human intrusion comes to groups of deer in a park. There was the same elevating of the head here and there, the same rounding of beautiful eyes. Some stared, others slowly approached, while others turned and moved away; but a common indignation was in the breast of that thing dreadful everywhere, but terrible in Louisiana, the Majority. For there, in the presence of those good citizens, before the eyes of the proudest and fairest mothers and daughters of New Orleans, glaringly, on the open Plaza, the Creole whom Joseph had met by the graves in the field, Honoré Grandissime, the uttermost flower on the topmost branch of the tallest family tree ever transplanted from France to Louisiana, Honoré,--the worshiped, the magnificent,--in the broad light of the

sun's going down, rode side by side with the Yankee governor and was not ashamed!

Joseph, on his bench, sat contemplating the two parties to this scandal as they came toward him. Their horses' flanks were damp from some pleasant gallop, but their present gait was the soft, mettlesome movement of animals who will even submit to walk if their masters insist. As they wheeled out of the broad diagonal path that crossed the square, and turned toward him in the highway, he fancied that the Creole observed him. He was not mistaken. As they seemed about to pass the spot where he sat, M. Grandissime interrupted the governor with a word and, turning his horse's head, rode up to the bench, lifting his hat as he came.

"Good-evening, Mr. Frowenfeld."

Joseph, looking brighter than when he sat unaccosted, rose and blushed.

"Mr. Frowenfeld, you know my uncle very well, I believe--Agricole Fusilier--long beard?"

"Oh! yes, sir, certainly."

"Well, Mr. Frowenfeld, I shall be much obliged if you will tell him--that is, should you meet him this evening--that I wish to see him. If you will be so kind?"

"Oh! yes, sir, certainly."

Frowenfeld's diffidence made itself evident in this reiterated phrase.

"I do not know that you will see him, but if you should, you know--"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

The two paused a single instant, exchanging a smile of amiable reminder from the horseman and of bashful but pleased acknowledgment from the one who saw his precepts being reduced to practice.

"Well, good-evening, Mr. Frowenfeld."

M. Grandissime lifted his hat and turned. Frowenfeld sat down.

"*Bou zou, Miché Honoré!*" called the *marchande*.

"*Comment to yé, Clemence?*"

The merchant waved his hand as he rode away with his companion.

"*Beau Miché, là*," said the *marchande,* catching Joseph's eye.

He smiled his ignorance and shook his head.

"Dass one fine gen'leman," she repeated. "*Mo pa'lé Anglé*," she added with a chuckle.

"You know him?"

"Oh! yass, sah; Mawse Honoré knows me, yass. All de gen'lemens knows me. I sell de *calas;* mawnin's sell *calas*, evenin's sell zinzer-cake. *You* know me" (a fact which Joseph had all along been aware of). "Dat me w'at pass in rue Royale ev'y mawnin' holl'in' '*Bé calas touts chauds*,' an' singin'; don't you know?"

The enthusiasm of an artist overcame any timidity she might have been supposed to possess, and, waiving the formality of an invitation, she began, to Frowenfeld's consternation, to sing, in a loud, nasal voice.

But the performance, long familiar, attracted no public attention, and he for whose special delight it was intended had taken an attitude of disclaimer and was again contemplating the quiet groups of the Place d'Armes and the pleasant hurry of the levee road.

"Don't you know?" persisted the woman. "Yass, sah, dass me; I's Clemence."

But Frowenfeld was looking another way.

"You know my boy," suddenly said she.

Frowenfeld looked at her.

"Yass, sah. Dat boy w'at bring you de box of *basilic* lass Chrismus; dass my boy."

She straightened her cakes on the tray and made some changes in their arrangement that possibly were important.

"I learned to speak English in Fijinny. Bawn dah."

She looked steadily into the apothecary's absorbed countenance for a full minute, then let her eyes wander down the highway. The human tide was turning cityward. Presently she spoke again.

"Folks comin' home a'ready, yass."

Her hearer looked down the road.

Suddenly a voice that, once heard, was always known,--deep and pompous, as if a lion roared,--sounded so close behind him as to startle him half from his seat.

"Is this a corporeal man, or must I doubt my eyes? Hah! Professor Frowenfeld!" it said.

"Mr. Fusilier!" exclaimed Frowenfeld in a subdued voice, while he blushed again and looked at the new-comer with that sort of awe which children experience in a menagerie.

"*Citizen* Fusilier," said the lion.

Agricola indulged to excess the grim hypocrisy of brandishing the catchwords of new-fangled reforms; they served to spice a breath that was strong with the praise of the "superior liberties of Europe,"--those old, cast-iron tyrannies to get rid of which America was settled.

Frowenfeld smiled amusedly and apologetically at the same moment.

"I am glad to meet you. I--"

He was going on to give Honoré Grandissime's message, but was interrupted.

"My young friend," rumbled the old man in his deepest key, smiling emotionally and holding and solemning continuing to shake Joseph's hand, "I am sure you are. You ought to thank God that you have my acquaintance."

Frowenfeld colored to the temples.

"I must acknowledge--" he began.

"Ah!" growled the lion, "your beautiful modesty leads you to misconstrue me, sir. You pay my judgment no compliment. I know your worth, sir; I merely meant, sir, that in me--poor, humble me--you have secured a sympathizer in your tastes and plans. Agricola Fusilier, sir, is not a cock on a dunghill, to find a jewel and then scratch it aside."

The smile of diffidence, but not the flush, passed from the young man's face, and he sat down forcibly.

"You jest," he said.

The reply was a majestic growl.

"I *never* jest!" The speaker half sat down, then straightened up again. "Ah, the Marquis of Caso Calvo!--I must bow to him, though an honest man's bow is more than he deserves."

"More than he deserves?" was Frowenfeld's query.

"More than he deserves!" was the response.

"What has he done? I have never heard----"

The denunciator turned upon Frowenfeld his most royal frown, and retorted with a question which still grows wild in Louisiana:

"What"--he seemed to shake his mane--"what has he *not* done, sir?" and then he withdrew his frown

slowly, as if to add, "You'll be careful next time how you cast doubt upon a public official's guilt."

The marquis's cavalcade came briskly jingling by. Frowenfeld saw within the carriage two men, one in citizen's dress, the other in a brilliant uniform. The latter leaned forward, and, with a cordiality which struck the young spectator as delightful, bowed. The immigrant glanced at Citizen Fusilier, expecting to see the greeting returned with great haughtiness; instead of which that person uncovered his leonine head, and, with a solemn sweep of his cocked hat, bowed half his length. Nay, he more than bowed, he bowed down--so that the action hurt Frowenfeld from head to foot.

"What large gentlemen was that sitting on the other side?" asked the young man, as his companion sat down with the air of having finished an oration.

"No gentleman at all!" thundered the citizen. "That fellow" (beetling frown), "that *fellow* is Edward Livingston."

"The great lawyer?"

"The great villain!"

Frowenfeld himself frowned.

The old man laid a hand upon his junior's shoulder and growled benignantly:

"My young friend, your displeasure delights me!"

The patience with which Frowenfeld was bearing all this forced a chuckle and shake of the head from the *marchande*.

Citizen Fusilier went on speaking in a manner that might be construed either as address or soliloquy, gesticulating much and occasionally letting out a fervent word that made passers look around and Joseph inwardly wince. With eyes closed and hands folded on the top of the knotted staff which he carried but never used, he delivered an apostrophe to

the "spotless soul of youth," enticed by the "spirit of adventure" to "launch away upon the unploughed sea of the future!" He lifted one hand and smote the back of the other solemnly, once, twice, and again, nodding his head faintly several times without opening his eyes, as who should say, "Very impressive; go on," and so resumed; spoke of this spotless soul of youth searching under unknown latitudes for the "sunken treasures of experience"; indulged, as the reporters of our day would say, in "many beautiful nights of rhetoric," and finally depicted the loathing with which the spotless soul of youth "recoils!"--suiting the action to the word so emphatically as to make a pretty little boy who stood gaping at him start back--"on encountering in the holy chambers of public office the vultures hatched in the nests of ambition and avarice!"

Three or four persons lingered carelessly near by with ears wide open. Frowenfeld felt that he must bring this to an end, and, like any young person who has learned neither deceit nor disrespect to seniors, he attempted to reason it down.

"You do not think many of our public men are dishonest!"

"Sir!" replied the rhetorician, with a patronizing smile, "h-you must be thinking of France!"

"No, sir; of Louisiana."

"Louisiana! Dishonest? All, sir, all. They are all as corrupt as Olympus, sir!"

"Well," said Frowenfeld, with more feeling than was called for, "there is one who, I feel sure, is pure. I know it by his face!"

The old man gave a look of stern interrogation.

"Governor Claiborne."

"Ye-e-e g-hods! Claiborne! *Claiborne!* Why, he is a Yankee!"

The lion glowered over the lamb like a thundercloud.

"He is a Virginian," said Frowenfeld.

"He is an American, and no American can be honest."

"You are prejudiced," exclaimed the young man.

Citizen Fusilier made himself larger.

"What is prejudice? I do not know."

"I am an American myself," said Frowenfeld, rising up with his face burning.

The citizen rose up also, but unruffled.

"My beloved young friend," laying his hand heavily upon the other's shoulder, "you are not. You were merely born in America."

But Frowenfeld was not appeased.

"Hear me through," persisted the flatterer. "You were merely born in America. I, too, was born in America--but will any man responsible for his opinion mistake me--Agricola Fusilier--for an American?"

He clutched his cane in the middle and glared around, but no person seemed to be making the mistake to which he so scornfully alluded, and he was about to speak again when an outcry of alarm coming simultaneously from Joseph and the *marchande* directed his attention to a lady in danger.

The scene, as afterward recalled to the mind of the un-American citizen, included the figures of his nephew and the new governor returning up the road at a canter; but, at the time, he knew only that a lady of unmistakable gentility, her back toward him, had just gathered her robes and started to cross the road, when there was a general cry of warning, and the *marchande* cried, "*Garde choual!*" while the lady

leaped directly into the danger and his nephew's horse knocked her to the earth!

Though there was a rush to the rescue from every direction, she was on her feet before any one could reach her, her lips compressed, nostrils dilated, cheek burning, and eyes flashing a lady's wrath upon a dismounted horseman. It was the governor. As the crowd had rushed in, the startled horses, from whom the two riders had instantly leaped, drew violently back, jerking their masters with them and leaving only the governor in range of the lady's angry eye.

"Mademoiselle!" he cried, striving to reach her.

She pointed him in gasping indignation to his empty saddle, and, as the crowd farther separated them, waved away all permission to apologize and turned her back.

"Hah!" cried the crowd, echoing her humor.

"Lady," interposed the governor, "do not drive us to the rudeness of leaving--"

"*Animal, vous!*" cried half a dozen, and the lady gave him such a look of scorn that he did not finish his sentence.

"Open the way, there," called a voice in French.

It was Honoré Grandissime. But just then he saw that the lady had found the best of protectors, and the two horsemen, having no choice, remounted and rode away. As they did so, M. Grandissime called something hurriedly to Frowenfeld, on whose arm the lady hung, concerning the care of her; but his words were lost in the short yell of derision sent after himself and his companion by the crowd.

Old Agricola, meanwhile, was having a trouble of his own. He had followed Joseph's wake as he pushed through the throng; but as the lady turned her face he wheeled abruptly away. This brought again into view the bench he had just left, whereupon he, in turn,

cried out, and, dashing through all obstructions, rushed back to it, lifting his ugly staff as he went and flourishing it in the face of Palmyre Philosophe.

She stood beside the seat with the smile of one foiled and intensely conscious of peril, but neither frightened nor suppliant, holding back with her eyes the execution of Agricola's threat against her life.

Presently she drew a short step backward, then another, then a third, and then turned and moved away down the avenue of willows, followed for a few steps by the lion and by the laughing comment of the *marchande*, who stood looking after them with her tray balanced on her head.

"*Ya, ya! ye connais voudou bien!*[1]"

[1] "They're up in the voudou arts."

The old man turned to rejoin his companion. The day was rapidly giving place to night and the people were withdrawing to their homes. He crossed the levee, passed through the Place d'Armes and on into the city without meeting the object of his search. For Joseph and the lady had hurried off together.

As the populace floated away in knots of three, four and five, those who had witnessed mademoiselle's (?) mishap told it to those who had not; explaining that it was the accursed Yankee governor who had designedly driven his horse at his utmost speed against the fair victim (some of them butted against their hearers by way of illustration); that the fiend had then maliciously laughed; that this was all the Yankees came to New Orleans for, and that there was an understanding among them--"Understanding, indeed!" exclaimed one, "They have instructions from the President!"--that unprotected ladies should be run down wherever overtaken. If you didn't believe it you could ask the tyrant, Claiborne, himself; he made no secret of it. One or two--but they were considered by others extravagant--testified that, as the lady fell, they had seen his face distorted

with a horrid delight, and had heard him cry: "Daz de way to knog them!"

"But how came a lady to be out on the levee, at sunset, on foot and alone?" asked a citizen, and another replied--both using the French of the late province:

"As for being on foot"--a shrug. "But she was not alone; she had a *milatraisse* behind her."

"Ah! so; that was well."

"But--ha, ha!--the *milatraisse*, seeing her mistress out of danger, takes the opportunity to try to bring the curse upon Agricola Fusilier by sitting down where he had just risen up, and had to get away from him as quickly as possible to save her own skull."

"And left the lady?"

"Yes; and who took her to her home at last, but Frowenfeld, the apothecary!"

"Ho, ho! the astrologer! We ought to hang that fellow."

"With his books tied to his feet," suggested a third citizen. "It is no more than we owe to the community to go and smash his show-window. He had better behave himself. Come, gentlemen, a little *taffia* will do us good. When shall we ever get through these exciting times?"

CHAPTER XVI

STARLIGHT IN THE RUE CHARTRES

"Oh! M'sieur Frowenfel', tague me ad home!"

It was Aurora, who caught the apothecary's arm vehemently in both her hands with a look of beautiful terror. And whatever Joseph's astronomy might have previously taught him to the contrary, he knew by his senses that the earth thereupon turned entirely over three times in two seconds.

His confused response, though unintelligible, answered all purposes, as the lady found herself the next moment hurrying across the Place d'Armes close to his side, and as they by-and-by passed its farther limits she began to be conscious that she was clinging to her protector as though she would climb up and hide under his elbow. As they turned up the rue Chartres she broke the silence.

"Oh!-h!"--breathlessly,--"'h!--M'sieur Frowenf'--you walkin' so faz!"

"Oh!" echoed Frowenfeld, "I did not know what I was doing."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the lady, "me, too, juz de sem lag you! *attendez*; wait."

They halted; a moment's deft manipulation of a veil turned it into a wrapping for her neck.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', oo dad man was? You know 'im?"

She returned her hand to Frowenfeld's arm and they moved on.

"The one who spoke to you, or--you know the one who got near enough to apologize is not the one whose horse struck you!"

"I din know. But oo dad odder one? I saw h-only 'is back, bud I thing it is de sem--"

She identified it with the back that was turned to her during her last visit to Frowenfeld's shop; but finding herself about to mention a matter so nearly connected with the purse of gold, she checked herself; but Frowenfeld, eager to say a good word for his acquaintance, ventured to extol his character while he concealed his name.

"While I have never been introduced to him, I have some acquaintance with him, and esteem him a noble gentleman."

"W'ere you meet him?"

"I met him first," he said, "at the graves of my parents and sisters."

There was a kind of hush after the mention, and the lady made no reply.

"It was some weeks after my loss," resumed Frowenfeld.

"In wad *cimetière* dad was?"

"In no cemetery--being Protestants, you know--"

"Ah, yes, sir?" with a gentle sigh.

"The physician who attended me procured permission to bury them on some private land below the city."

"Not in de groun'[2]?"

[2] Only Jews and paupers are buried in the ground in New Orleans.

"Yes; that was my father's expressed wish when he died."

"You 'ad de fivver? Oo nurse you w'en you was sick?"

"An old hired negress."

"Dad was all?"

"Yes."

"Hm-m-m!" she said piteously, and laughed in her sleeve.

Who could hope to catch and reproduce the continuous lively thrill which traversed the frame of the escaped book-worm as every moment there was repeated to his consciousness the knowledge that he was walking across the vault of heaven with the evening star on his arm--at least, that he was, at her instigation, killing time along the dim, ill-lighted *trottoirs* of the rue Chartres, with Aurora listening sympathetically at his side. But let it go; also the sweet broken English with which she now and then interrupted him; also the inward, hidden sparkle of her dancing Gallic blood; her low, merry laugh; the roguish mental reservation that lurked behind her graver speeches; the droll bravados she uttered against the powers that be, as with timid fingers he brushed from her shoulder a little remaining dust of the late encounter--these things, we say, we let go,--as we let butterflies go rather than pin them to paper.

They had turned into the rue Bienville, and were walking toward the river, Frowenfeld in the midst of a long sentence, when a low cry of tearful delight sounded in front of them, some one in long robes glided forward, and he found his arm relieved of its burden and that burden transferred to the bosom and passionate embrace of another--we had almost said a fairer--Creole, amid a bewildering interchange of kisses and a pelting shower of Creole French.

A moment after, Frowenfeld found himself introduced to "my dotter, Clotilde," who all at once ceased her demonstrations of affection and bowed to him with a majestic sweetness, that seemed one instant grateful and the next, distant.

"I can hardly understand that you are not sisters," said Frowenfeld, a little awkwardly.

"Ah! *ecoutez!*" exclaimed the younger.

"Ah! *par exemple!*" cried the elder, and they laughed down each other's throats, while the immigrant blushed.

This encounter was presently followed by a silent surprise when they stopped and turned before the door of Number 19, and Frowenfeld contrasted the women with their painfully humble dwelling. But therein is where your true Creole was, and still continues to be, properly, yea, delightfully un-American; the outside of his house may be as rough as the outside of a bird's nest; it is the inside that is for the birds; and the front room of this house, when the daughter presently threw open the batten shutters of its single street door, looked as bright and happy, with its candelabra glittering on the mantel, and its curtains of snowy lace, as its bright-eyed tenants.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', if you pliz to come in," said Aurora, and the timid apothecary would have bravely accepted the invitation, but for a quick look which he saw the daughter give the mother; whereupon he asked, instead, permission to call at some future day, and received the cordial leave of Aurora and another bow from Clotilde.

CHAPTER XVII

THAT NIGHT

Do we not fail to accord to our nights their true value? We are ever giving to our days the credit and blame of all we do and mis-do, forgetting those silent, glimmering hours when plans--and sometimes plots--are laid; when resolutions are formed or changed; when heaven, and sometimes heaven's enemies, are invoked; when anger and evil thoughts are recalled, and sometimes hate made to inflame and fester; when problems are solved, riddles guessed, and things made apparent in the dark, which day refused to reveal. Our nights are the keys to our days. They explain them. They are also the day's correctors. Night's leisure untangles the mistakes of day's haste. We should not attempt to comprise our pasts in the phrase, "in those days;" we should rather say "in those days and nights."

That night was a long-remembered one to the apothecary of the rue Royale. But it was after he had closed his shop, and in his back room sat pondering the unusual experiences of the evening, that it began to be, in a higher degree, a night of events to most of those persons who had a part in its earlier incidents.

That Honoré Grandissime whom Frowenfeld had only this day learned to know as *the* Honoré Grandissime and the young governor-general were closeted together.

"What can you expect, my-de'-seh?" the Creole was asking, as they confronted each other in the smoke of their choice tobacco. "Remember, they are citizens by compulsion. You say your best and wisest law is that one prohibiting the slave-trade; my-de'-seh, I assure you, privately, I agree with you; but they abhor your law!

"Your principal danger--at least, I mean difficulty--is this: that the Louisianais themselves, some in pure lawlessness, some through loss of office, some in a vague hope of preserving the old condition of things, will not only hold off from all participation in your government, but will make all sympathy with it, all

advocacy of its principles, and especially all office-holding under it, odious--disreputable--infamous. You may find yourself constrained to fill your offices with men who can face down the contumely of a whole people. You know what such men generally are. One out of a hundred may be a moral hero--the ninety-nine will be scamps; and the moral hero will most likely get his brains blown out early in the day.

"Count O'Reilly, when he established the Spanish power here thirty-five years ago, cut a similar knot with the executioner's sword; but, my-de'-seh, you are here to establish a *free* government; and how can you make it freer than the people wish it? There is your riddle! They hold off and say, 'Make your government as free as you can, but do not ask us to help you;' and before you know it you have no retainers but a gang of shameless mercenaries, who will desert you whenever the indignation of this people overbalances their indolence; and you will fall the victim of what you may call our mutinous patriotism."

The governor made a very quiet, unappreciative remark about a "patriotism that lets its government get choked up with corruption and then blows it out with gunpowder!"

The Creole shrugged.

"And repeats the operation indefinitely," he said.

The governor said something often heard, before and since, to the effect that communities will not sacrifice themselves for mere ideas.

"My-de'-seh," replied the Creole, "you speak like a true Anglo-Saxon; but, sir! how many communities have *committed* suicide. And this one?--why, it is *just* the kind to do it!"

"Well," said the governor, smilingly, "you have pointed out what you consider to be the breakers, now can you point out the channel?"

"Channel? There is none! And you, nor I, cannot dig one. Two great forces *may* ultimately do it, Religion and Education--as I was telling you I said to my young friend, the apothecary,--but still I am free to say what would be my first and principal step, if I was in your place--as I thank God I am not."

The listener asked him what that was.

"Wherever I could find a Creole that I could venture to trust, my-de'-seh, I would put him in office. Never mind a little political heterodoxy, you know; almost any man can be trusted to shoot away from the uniform he has on. And then--"

"But," said the other, "I have offered you--"

"Oh!" replied the Creole, like a true merchant, "me, I am too busy; it is impossible! But, I say, I would *compel*, my-de'-seh, this people to govern themselves!"

"And pray, how would you give a people a free government and then compel them to administer it?"

"My-de'-seh, you should not give one poor Creole the puzzle which belongs to your whole Congress; but you may depend on this, that the worst thing for all parties--and I say it only because it is worst for all--would be a feeble and dilatory punishment of bad faith."

When this interview finally drew to a close the governor had made a memorandum of some fifteen or twenty Grandissimes, scattered through different cantons of Louisiana, who, their kinsman Honoré thought, would not decline appointments.

Certain of the Muses were abroad that night. Faintly audible to the apothecary of the rue Royale through that deserted stillness which is yet the marked peculiarity of New Orleans streets by night, came from a neighboring slave-yard the monotonous chant

and machine-like tune-beat of an African dance. There our lately met *marchande* (albeit she was but a guest, fortified against the street-watch with her master's written "pass") led the ancient Calinda dance with that well-known song of derision, in whose ever multiplying stanzas the helpless satire of a feeble race still continues to celebrate the personal failings of each newly prominent figure among the dominant caste. There was a new distich to the song to-night, signifying that the pride of the Grandissimes must find his friends now among the Yankees:

"Miché Hon'ré, allé! h-allé!
Trouvé to zamis parmi les Yankis.
Dancé calinda, bou-joum! bou-joum!
Dancé calinda, bou-joum! bou-joum!

Frowenfeld, as we have already said, had closed his shop, and was sitting in the room behind it with one arm on his table and the other on his celestial globe, watching the flicker of his small fire and musing upon the unusual experiences of the evening. Upon every side there seemed to start away from his turning glance the multiplied shadows of something wrong. The melancholy face of that Honoré Grandissime, his landlord, at whose mention Dr. Keene had thought it fair to laugh without explaining; the tall, bright-eyed *milatraisse*; old Agricola; the lady of the basil; the newly identified merchant friend, now the more satisfactory Honoré,--they all came before him in his meditation, provoking among themselves a certain discord, faint but persistent, to which he strove to close his ear. For he was brain-weary. Even in the bright recollection of the lady and her talk he became involved among shadows, and going from bad to worse, seemed at length almost to gasp in an atmosphere of hints, allusions, faint unspoken admissions, ill-concealed antipathies, unfinished speeches, mistaken identities and whisperings of hidden strife. The cathedral clock

struck twelve and was answered again from the convent belfry; and as the notes died away he suddenly became aware that the weird, drowsy throb of the African song and dance had been swinging drowsily in his brain for an unknown lapse of time.

The apothecary nodded once or twice, and thereupon rose up and prepared for bed, thinking to sleep till morning.

Aurora and her daughter had long ago put out their chamber light. Early in the evening the younger had made favorable mention of retiring, to which the elder replied by asking to be left awhile to her own thoughts. Clotilde, after some tender protestations, consented, and passed through the open door that showed, beyond it, their couch. The air had grown just cool and humid enough to make the warmth of one small brand on the hearth acceptable, and before this the fair widow settled herself to gaze beyond her tiny, slippered feet into its wavering flame, and think. Her thoughts were such as to bestow upon her face that enhancement of beauty that comes of pleasant reverie, and to make it certain that that little city afforded no fairer sight,--unless, indeed, it was the figure of Clotilde just beyond the open door, as in her white nightdress, enriched with the work of a diligent needle, she knelt upon the low *prie-Dieu* before the little family altar, and committed her pure soul to the Divine keeping.

Clotilde could not have been many minutes asleep when Aurora changed her mind and decided to follow. The shade upon her face had deepened for a moment into a look of trouble; but a bright philosophy, which was part of her paternal birthright, quickly chased it away, and she passed to her room, disrobed, lay softly down beside the beauty already there and smiled herself to sleep,--

"Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again."

But she also wakened again, and lay beside her unconscious bedmate, occupied with the company of her own thoughts. "Why should these little concealments ruffle my bosom? Does not even Nature herself practise wiles? Look at the innocent birds; do they build where everybody can count their eggs? And shall a poor human creature try to be better than a bird? Didn't I say my prayers under the blanket just now?"

Her companion stirred in her sleep, and she rose upon one elbow to bend upon the sleeper a gaze of ardent admiration. "Ah, beautiful little chick! how guileless! indeed, how deficient in that respect!" She sat up in the bed and hearkened; the bell struck for midnight. Was that the hour? The fates were smiling! Surely M. Assonquer himself must have wakened her to so choice an opportunity. She ought not to despise it. Now, by the application of another and easily wrought charm, that darkened hour lately spent with Palmyre would have, as it were, its colors set.

The night had grown much cooler. Stealthily, by degrees, she rose and left the couch. The openings of the room were a window and two doors, and these, with much caution, she contrived to open without noise. None of them exposed her to the possibility of public view. One door looked into the dim front room; the window let in only a flood of moonlight over the top of a high house which was without openings on that side; the other door revealed a weed-grown back yard, and that invaluable protector, the cook's hound, lying fast asleep.

In her night-clothes as she was, she stood a moment in the centre of the chamber, then sank upon one knee, rapped the floor gently but audibly thrice, rose, drew a step backward, sank upon the other knee, rapped thrice, rose again, stepped backward, knelt the third time, the third time rapped, and then, rising,

murmured a vow to pour upon the ground next day an oblation of champagne--then closed the doors and window and crept back to bed. Then she knew how cold she had become. It seemed as though her very marrow was frozen. She was seized with such an uncontrollable shivering that Clotilde presently opened her eyes, threw her arm about her mother's neck, and said:

"Ah! my sweet mother, are you so cold?"

"The blanket was all off of me," said the mother, returning the embrace, and the two sank into unconsciousness together.

Into slumber sank almost at the same moment Joseph Frowenfeld. He awoke, not a great while later, to find himself standing in the middle of the floor. Three or four men had shouted at once, and three pistol-shots, almost in one instant, had resounded just outside his shop. He had barely time to throw himself into half his garments when the knocker sounded on his street door, and when he opened it Agricola Fusilier entered, supported by his nephew Honoré on one side and Doctor Keene on the other. The latter's right hand was pressed hard against a bloody place in Agricola's side.

"Give us plenty of light, Frowenfeld," said the doctor, "and a chair and some lint, and some Castile soap, and some towels and sticking-plaster, and anything else you can think of. Agricola's about scared to death--"

"Professor Frowenfeld," groaned the aged citizen, "I am basely and mortally stabbed!"

"Right on, Frowenfeld," continued the doctor, "right on into the back room. Fasten that front door. Here, Agricola, sit down here. That's right, Frow., stir up a little fire. Give me--never mind, I'll just cut the cloth open."

There was a moment of silent suspense while the wound was being reached, and then the doctor spoke again.

"Just as I thought; only a safe and comfortable gash that will keep you in-doors a while with your arm in a sling. You are more scared than hurt, I think, old gentleman."

"You think an infernal falsehood, sir!"

"See here, sir," said the doctor, without ceasing to ply his dexterous hands in his art, "I'll jab these scissors into your back if you say that again."

"I suppose," growled the "citizen," "it is just the thing your professional researches have qualified you for, sir!"

"Just stand here, Mr. Frowenfeld," said the little doctor, settling down to a professional tone, "and hand me things as I ask for them. Honoré, please hold this arm; so." And so, after a moderate lapse of time, the treatment that medical science of those days dictated was applied--whatever that was. Let those who do not know give thanks.

M. Grandissime explained to Frowenfeld what had occurred.

"You see, I succeeded in meeting my uncle, and we went together to my office. My uncle keeps his accounts with me. Sometimes we look them over. We stayed until midnight; I dismissed my carriage. As we walked homeward we met some friends coming out of the rooms of the Bagatelle Club; five or six of my uncles and cousins, and also Doctor Keene. We all fell a-talking of my grandfather's *fête de grandpère* of next month, and went to have some coffee. When we separated, and my uncle and my cousin Achille Grandissime and Doctor Keene and myself came down Royal street, out from that dark alley behind your shop jumped a little man and stuck

my uncle with a knife. If I had not caught his arm he would have killed my uncle."

"And he escaped," said the apothecary.

"No, sir!" said Agricola, with his back turned.

"I think he did. I do not think he was struck."

"And Mr.----, your cousin?"

"Achille? I have sent him for a carriage."

"Why, Agricola," said the doctor, snipping the loose ravellings from his patient's bandages, "an old man like you should not have enemies."

"I am *not* an old man, sir!"

"I said *young* man."

"I am not a *young* man, sir!"

"I wonder who the fellow was," continued Doctor Keene, as he readjusted the ripped sleeve.

"That is *my* affair, sir; I know who it was."

"And yet she insists," M. Grandissime was asking Frowenfeld, standing with his leg thrown across the celestial globe, "that I knocked her down intentionally?"

Frowenfeld, about to answer, was interrupted by a rap on the door.

"That is my cousin, with the carriage," said M. Grandissime, following the apothecary into the shop.

Frowenfeld opened to a young man,--a rather poor specimen of the Grandissime type, deficient in stature but not in stage manner.

"*Est il mort*?" he cried at the threshold.

"Mr. Frowenfeld, let me make you acquainted with my cousin, Achille Grandissime."

Mr. Achille Grandissime gave Frowenfeld such a bow as we see now only in pictures.

"Ve'y 'appe to meck, yo' acquaintenz!"

Agricola entered, followed by the doctor, and demanded in indignant thunder-tones, as he entered:

"Who--ordered--that--carriage?"

"I did," said Honoré. "Will you please get into it at once."

"Ah! dear Honoré!" exclaimed the old man, "always too kind! I go in it purely to please you."

Good-night was exchanged; Honoré entered the vehicle and Agricola was helped in. Achille touched his hat, bowed and waved his hand to Joseph, and shook hands with the doctor, and saying, "Well, good-night. Doctor Keene," he shut himself out of the shop with another low bow. "Think I am going to shake hands with an apothecary?" thought M. Achille.

Doctor Keene had refused Honoré's invitation to go with them.

"Frowenfeld," he said, as he stood in the middle of the shop wiping a ring with a towel and looking at his delicate, freckled hand, "I propose, before going to bed with you, to eat some of your bread and cheese. Aren't you glad?"

"I shall be, Doctor," replied the apothecary, "if you will tell me what all this means."

"Indeed I will not,--that is, not to-night. What? Why, it would take until breakfast to tell what 'all this means,'--the story of that pestiferous darky Bras Coupé, with the rest? Oh, no, sir. I would sooner not have any bread and cheese. What on earth has waked your curiosity so suddenly, anyhow?"

"Have you any idea who stabbed Citizen Fusilier?" was Joseph's response.

"Why, at first I thought it was the other Honoré Grandissime; but when I saw how small the fellow was, I was at a loss, completely. But, whoever it is, he has my bullet in him, whatever Honoré may think."

"Will Mr. Fusilier's wound give him much trouble?" asked Joseph, as they sat down to a luncheon at the fire.

"Hardly; he has too much of the blood of Lufki-Humma in him. But I need not say that; for the Grandissime blood is just as strong. A wonderful family, those Grandissimes! They are an old, illustrious line, and the strength that was once in the intellect and will is going down into the muscles. I have an idea that their greatness began, hundreds of years ago, in ponderosity of arm,--of frame, say,--and developed from generation to generation, in a rising scale, first into fineness of sinew, then, we will say, into force of will, then into power of mind, then into subtleties of genius. Now they are going back down the incline. Look at Honoré; he is high up on the scale, intellectual and sagacious. But look at him physically, too. What an exquisite mold! What compact strength! I should not wonder if he gets that from the Indian Queen. What endurance he has! He will probably go to his business by and by and not see his bed for seventeen or eighteen hours. He is the flower of the family, and possibly the last one. Now, old Agricola shows the downward grade better. Seventy-five, if he is a day, with, maybe, one-fourth the attainments he pretends to have, and still less good sense; but strong--as an orang-outang. Shall we go to bed?"

CHAPTER XVIII

NEW LIGHT UPON DARK PLACES

When the long, wakeful night was over, and the doctor gone, Frowenfeld seated himself to record his usual observations of the weather; but his mind was elsewhere--here, there, yonder. There are understandings that expand, not imperceptibly hour by hour, but as certain flowers do, by little explosive ruptures, with periods of quiescence between. After this night of experiences it was natural that Frowenfeld should find the circumference of his perceptions consciously enlarged. The daylight shone, not into his shop alone, but into his heart as well. The face of Aurora, which had been the dawn to him before, was now a perfect sunrise, while in pleasant timeliness had come in this Apollo of a Honoré Grandissime. The young immigrant was dazzled. He felt a longing to rise up and run forward in this flood of beams. He was unconscious of fatigue, or nearly so--would, have been wholly so but for the return by and by of that same dim shadow, or shadows, still rising and darting across every motion of the fancy that grouped again the actors in last night's scenes; not such shadows as naturally go with sunlight to make it seem brighter, but a something which qualified the light's perfection and the air's freshness.

Wherefore, resolved: that he would compound his life, from this time forward, by a new formula: books, so much; observation, so much; social intercourse, so much; love--as to that, time enough for that in the future (if he was in love with anybody, he certainly did not know it); of love, therefore, amount not yet necessary to state, but probably (when it should be introduced), in the generous proportion in which physicians prescribe *aqua*. Resolved, in other words, without ceasing to be

Frowenfeld the studious, to begin at once the perusal of this newly found book, the Community of New Orleans. True, he knew he should find it a difficult task--not only that much of it was in a strange tongue, but that it was a volume whose displaced leaves would have to be lifted tenderly, blown free of much dust, re-arranged, some torn fragments laid together again with much painstaking, and even the purport of some pages guessed out. Obviously, the place to commence at was that brightly illuminated title-page, the ladies Nancanou.

As the sun rose and diffused its beams in an atmosphere whose temperature had just been recorded as 50° F., the apothecary stepped half out of his shop-door to face the bracing air that came blowing upon his tired forehead from the north. As he did so, he said to himself:

"How are these two Honoré Grandissimes related to each other, and why should one be thought capable of attempting the life of Agricola?"

The answer was on its way to him.

There is left to our eyes but a poor vestige of the picturesque view presented to those who looked down the rue Royale before the garish day that changed the rue Enghien into Ingine street, and dropped the 'e' from Royale. It was a long, narrowing perspective of arcades, lattices, balconies, *zaguans*, dormer windows, and blue sky--of low, tiled roofs, red and wrinkled, huddled down into their own shadows; of canvas awnings with fluttering borders, and of grimy lamp-posts twenty feet in height, each reaching out a gaunt iron arm over the narrow street and dangling a lamp from its end. The human life which dotted the view displayed a variety of tints and costumes such as a painter would be glad to take just as he found them: the gayly feathered Indian, the slashed and tinselled Mexican, the leather-breeched raftsmen, the blue-or yellow-turbaned *négresse*, the sugar-planter in white flannel and moccasins, the

average townsman in the last suit of clothes of the lately deceased century, and now and then a fashionable man in that costume whose union of tight-buttoned martial severity, swathed throat, and effeminate superabundance of fine linen seemed to offer a sort of state's evidence against the pompous tyrannies and frivolities of the times.

The *marchande des calas* was out. She came toward Joseph's shop, singing in a high-pitched nasal tone this new song:

"Dé'tit zozos--yé té assis--
Dé'tit zozos--si la barrier.
Dé'tit zozos, qui zabotté;
Qui ça yé di' mo pas conné.

"Manzeur-poulet vini simin,
Croupé si yé et croqué yé;
Personn' pli' 'tend' yé zabotté--
Dé'tit zozos si la barrier."

"You lak dat song?" she asked, with a chuckle, as she let down from her turbaned head a flat Indian basket of warm rice cakes.

"What does it mean?"

She laughed again--more than the questioner could see occasion for.

"Dat mean--two lill birds; dey was sittin' on de fence an' gabblin' togeddah, you know, lak you see two young gals sometime', an' you can't mek out w'at dey sayin', even ef dey know demself? H-ya! Chicken-hawk come 'long dat road an' jes' set down an' munch 'em, an' nobody can't no mo' hea' deir lill gabblin' on de fence, you know."

Here she laughed again.

Joseph looked at her with severe suspicion, but she found refuge in benevolence.

"Honey, you ought to be asleep dis werry minit; look lak folks been a-worr'in' you. I's gwine to pick out de werry bes' *calas* I's got for you."

As she delivered them she courtesied, first to Joseph and then, lower and with hushed gravity, to a person who passed into the shop behind him, bowing and murmuring politely as he passed. She followed the new-comer with her eyes, hastily accepted the price of the cakes, whispered, "Dat's my mawstah," lifted her basket to her head and went away. Her master was Frowenfeld's landlord.

Frowenfeld entered after him, calas in hand, and with a grave "Good-morning, sir."

"--m'sieu'," responded the landlord, with a low bow.

Frowenfeld waited in silence.

The landlord hesitated, looked around him, seemed about to speak, smiled, and said, in his soft, solemn voice, feeling his way word by word through the unfamiliar language:

"Ah lag to teg you apar'."

"See me alone?"

The landlord recognized his error by a fleeting smile.

"Alone," said he.

"Shall we go into my room?"

"*S'il vous plait, m'sieu'*."

Frowenfeld's breakfast, furnished by contract from a neighboring kitchen, stood on the table. It was a frugal one, but more comfortable than formerly, and included coffee, that subject of just pride in Creole cookery. Joseph deposited his *calas* with these things and made haste to produce a chair, which his visitor, as usual, declined.

"Idd you' bregfuz, m'sieu'."

"I can do that afterward," said Frowenfeld; but the landlord insisted and turned away from him to look up at the books on the wall, precisely as that other of the same name had done a few weeks before.

Frowenfeld, as he broke his loaf, noticed this, and, as the landlord turned his face to speak, wondered that he had not before seen the common likeness.

"Dez stog," said the sombre man.

"What, sir? Oh!--dead stock? But how can the materials of an education be dead stock?"

The landlord shrugged. He would not argue the point. One American trait which the Creole is never entirely ready to encounter is this gratuitous Yankee way of going straight to the root of things.

"Dead stock in a mercantile sense, you mean," continued the apothecary; "but are men right in measuring such things only by their present market value?"

The landlord had no reply. It was little to him, his manner intimated; his contemplation dwelt on deeper flaws in human right and wrong; yet--but it was needless to discuss it. However, he did speak.

"Ah was elevade in Pariz."

"Educated in Paris," exclaimed Joseph, admiringly. "Then you certainly cannot find your education dead stock."

The grave, not amused, smile which was the landlord's only rejoinder, though perfectly courteous, intimated that his tenant was sailing over depths of the question that he was little aware of. But the smile in a moment gave way for the look of one who was engrossed with another subject.

"M'sieu'," he began; but just then Joseph made an apologetic gesture and went forward to wait upon an inquirer after "Godfrey's Cordial;" for that comforter was known to be obtainable at "Frowenfeld's." The

business of the American drug-store was daily increasing. When Frowenfeld returned his landlord stood ready to address him, with the air of having decided to make short of a matter.

"M'sieu'----"

"Have a seat, sir," urged the apothecary.

His visitor again declined, with his uniform melancholy grace. He drew close to Frowenfeld.

"Ah wand you mague me one *ouangan*," he said.

Joseph shook his head. He remembered Doctor Keene's expressed suspicion concerning the assault of the night before.

"I do not understand you, sir; what is that?"

"You know."

The landlord offered a heavy, persuading smile.

"An unguent? Is that what you mean--an ointment?"

"M'sieu'," said the applicant, with a not-to-be-deceived expression, "*vous êtes astrologue--magicien*--"

"God forbid!"

The landlord was grossly incredulous.

"You godd one 'P'tit Albert.'"

He dropped his forefinger upon an iron-clasped book on the table, whose title much use had effaced.

"That is the Bible. I do not know what the Tee Albare is!"

Frowenfeld darted an aroused glance into the ever-courteous eyes of his visitor, who said without a motion:

"You di'n't gave Agricola Fusilier *une ouangan, la nuit passé*?"

"Sir?"

"Ee was yeh?--laz nighd?"

"Mr. Fusilier was here last night--yes. He had been attacked by an assassin and slightly wounded. He was accompanied by his nephew, who, I suppose, is your cousin: he has the same name."

Frowenfeld, hoping he had changed the subject, concluded with a propitiatory smile, which, however, was not reflected.

"Ma bruzzah," said the visitor.

"Your brother!"

"Ma whide bruzzah; ah ham nod whide, m'sieu'."

Joseph said nothing. He was too much awed to speak; the ejaculation that started toward his lips turned back and rushed into his heart, and it was the quadroon who, after a moment, broke the silence:

"Ah ham de holdez son of Numa Grandissime."

"Yes--yes," said Frowenfeld, as if he would wave away something terrible.

"Nod sell me--*ouangan*?" asked the landlord, again.

"Sir," exclaimed Frowenfeld, taking a step backward, "pardon me if I offend you; that mixture of blood which draws upon you the scorn of this community is to me nothing--nothing! And every invidious distinction made against you on that account I despise! But, sir, whatever may be either your private wrongs, or the wrongs you suffer in common with your class, if you have it in your mind to employ any manner of secret art against the interests or person of any one--"

The landlord was making silent protestations, and his tenant, lost in a wilderness of indignant emotions, stopped.

"M'sieu'," began the quadroon, but ceased and stood with an expression of annoyance every moment deepening on his face, until he finally shook his head slowly, and said with a baffled smile: "Ah can nod spig Engliss."

"Write it," said Frowenfeld, lifting forward a chair.

The landlord, for the first time in their acquaintance, accepted a seat, bowing low as he did so, with a demonstration of profound gratitude that just perceptibly heightened his even dignity. Paper, quills, and ink were handed down from a shelf and Joseph retired into the shop.

Honoré Grandissime, f.m.c. (these initials could hardly have come into use until some months later, but the convenience covers the sin of the slight anachronism), Honoré Grandissime, free man of color, entered from the rear room so silently that Joseph was first made aware of his presence by feeling him at his elbow. He handed the apothecary--but a few words in time, lest we misjudge.

The father of the two Honorés was that Numa Grandissime--that mere child--whom the Grand Marquis, to the great chagrin of the De Grapions, had so early cadetted. The commission seems not to have been thrown away. While the province was still in first hands, Numa's was a shining name in the annals of Kerlerec's unsatisfactory Indian wars; and in 1768 (when the colonists, ill-informed, inflammable, and long ill-governed, resisted the transfer of Louisiana to Spain), at a time of life when most young men absorb all the political extravagances of their day, he had stood by the side of law and government, though the popular cry was a frenzied one for "liberty." Moreover, he had held back his whole chafing and stamping tribe from a precipice of disaster, and had secured valuable recognition of their office-holding capacities from that really good governor and

princely Irishman whose one act of summary vengeance upon a few insurgent office-coveters has branded him in history as Cruel O'Reilly. But the experience of those days turned Numa gray, and withal he was not satisfied with their outcome. In the midst of the struggle he had weakened in one manly resolve--against his will he married. The lady was a Fusilier, Agricola's sister, a person of rare intelligence and beauty, whom, from early childhood, the secret counsels of his seniors had assigned to him. Despite this, he had said he would never marry; he made, he said, no pretensions to severe conscientiousness, or to being better than others, but--as between his Maker and himself--he had forfeited the right to wed, they all knew how. But the Fusiliers had become very angry and Numa, finding strife about to ensue just when without unity he could not bring an undivided clan through the torrent of the revolution, had "nobly sacrificed a little sentimental feeling," as his family defined it, by breaking faith with the mother of the man now standing at Joseph Frowenfeld's elbow, and who was then a little toddling boy. It was necessary to save the party--nay, that was a slip; we should say, to save the family; this is not a parable. Yet Numa loved his wife. She bore him a boy and a girl, twins; and as her son grew in physical, intellectual, and moral symmetry, he indulged the hope that--the ambition and pride of all the various Grandissimes now centering in this lawful son, and all strife being lulled--he should yet see this Honoré right the wrongs which he had not quite dared to uproot. And Honoré inherited the hope and began to make it an intention and aim even before his departure (with his half-brother the other Honoré) for school in Paris, at the early age of fifteen. Numa soon after died, and Honoré, after various fortunes in Paris, London, and elsewhere, in the care, or at least company, of a pious uncle in holy orders, returned to the ancestral mansion. The father's will--by the law they might have set it aside, but that was not their way--left the

darker Honoré the bulk of his fortune, the younger a competency. The latter--instead of taking office, as an ancient Grandissime should have done--to the dismay and mortification of his kindred, established himself in a prosperous commercial business. The elder bought houses and became a *rentier*.

The landlord handed the apothecary the following writing:

MR. JOSEPH FROWENFELD:

Think not that anybody is to be either poisoned by me nor yet to be made a sufferer by the exercise of anything by me of the character of what is generally known as grigri, otherwise magique. This, sir, I do beg your permission to offer my assurance to you of the same. Ah, no! it is not for that! I am the victim of another entirely and a far differente and dissimilar passion, *i.e.*, Love. Esteemed sir, speaking or writing to you as unto the only man of exclusively white blood whom I believe is in Louisiana willing to do my dumb, suffering race the real justice, I love Palmyre la Philosophe with a madness which is by the human lips or tongues not possible to be exclaimed (as, I may add, that I have in the same like manner since exactley nine years and seven months and some days). Alas! heavens! I can't help it in the least particles at all! What, what shall I do, for ah! it is pitiful! She loves me not at all, but, on the other hand, is (if I suspicion not wrongfully) wrapped up head and ears in devotion of one who does not love her, either, so cold and incapable of appreciation is he. I allude to Honoré Grandissime.

Ah! well do I remember the day when we returned--he and me--from the France. She was there when we landed on that levee, she was among that throng of kindreds and domestiques, she shind like the evening star as she stood there (it was the first time I saw her, but she was known to him when at fifteen he left his home, but I resided not under my own white father's roof--not at all--far from that). She cried

out "A la fin to vini!" and leap herself with both resplendant arm around his neck and kist him twice on the one cheek and the other, and her resplendant eyes shining with a so great beauty.

If you will give me a *poudre d'amour* such as I doubt not your great knowledge enable you to make of a power that cannot to be resist, while still at the same time of a harmless character toward the life or the health of such that I shall succeed in its use to gain the affections of that emperice of my soul, I hesitate not to give you such price as it may please you to nominate up as high as to $l,000--nay, more. Sir, will you do that?

I have the honor to remain, sir,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. Grandissime.

Frowenfeld slowly transferred his gaze from the paper to his landlord's face. Dejection and hope struggled with each other in the gaze that was returned; but when Joseph said, with a countenance full of pity, "I have no power to help you," the disappointed lover merely looked fixedly for a moment in the direction of the street, then lifted his hat toward his head, bowed, and departed.

CHAPTER XIX

ART AND COMMERCE

It was some two or three days after the interview just related that the apothecary of the rue Royale found it necessary to ask a friend to sit in the shop a few minutes while he should go on a short errand. He was kept away somewhat longer than he had intended to stay, for, as they were coming out of the cathedral, he met Aurora and Clotilde. Both the ladies greeted him with a cordiality which was almost inebriating, Aurora even extending her hand. He stood but a moment, responding blushingly to two or three trivial questions from her; yet even in so short a time, and although Clotilde gave ear with the sweetest smiles and loveliest changes of countenance, he experienced a lively renewal of a conviction that this young lady was most unjustly harboring toward him a vague disrelish, if not a positive distrust. That she had some mental reservation was certain.

"'Sieur Frowenfel'," said Aurora, as he raised his hat for good-day, "you din come home yet."

He did not understand until he had crimsoned and answered he knew not what--something about having intended every day. He felt lifted he knew not where, Paradise opened, there was a flood of glory, and then he was alone; the ladies, leaving adieus sweeter than the perfume they carried away with them, floated into the south and were gone. Why was it that the elder, though plainly regarded by the younger with admiration, dependence, and overflowing affection, seemed sometimes to be, one might almost say, watched by her? He liked Aurora the better.

On his return to the shop his friend remarked that if he received many such visitors as the one who had called during his absence, he might be permitted to be vain. It was Honoré Grandissime, and he had left no message.

"Frowenfeld," said his friend, "it would pay you to employ a regular assistant."

Joseph was in an abstracted mood.

"I have some thought of doing so."

Unlucky slip! As he pushed open his door next morning, what was his dismay to find himself confronted by some forty men. Five of them leaped up from the door-sill, and some thirty-five from the edge of the *trottoir*, brushed that part of their wearing-apparel which always fits with great neatness on a Creole, and trooped into the shop. The apothecary fell behind his defences, that is to say, his prescription desk, and explained to them in a short and spirited address that he did not wish to employ any of them on any terms. Nine-tenths of them understood not a word of English; but his gesture was unmistakable. They bowed gratefully, and said good-day.

Now Frowenfeld did these young men an injustice; and though they were far from letting him know it, some of them felt it and interchanged expressions of feeling reproachful to him as they stopped on the next corner to watch a man painting a sign. He had treated them as if they all wanted situations. Was this so? Far from it. Only twenty men were applicants; the other twenty were friends who had come to see them get the place. And again, though, as the apothecary had said, none of them knew anything about the drug business--no, nor about any other business under the heavens--they were all willing that he should teach them--except one. A young man of patrician softness and costly apparel tarried a moment after the general exodus, and quickly concluded that on Frowenfeld's account it was probably as well that he could not qualify, since he was expecting from France an important government appointment as soon as these troubles should be settled and Louisiana restored to her former happy condition. But he had a friend--a cousin--whom he

would recommend, just the man for the position; a splendid fellow; popular, accomplished--what? the best trainer of dogs that M. Frowenfeld might ever hope to look upon; a "so good fisherman as I never saw! "--the marvel of the ball-room--could handle a partner of twice his weight; the speaker had seen him take a lady so tall that his head hardly came up to her bosom, whirl her in the waltz from right to left--this way! and then, as quick as lightning, turn and whirl her this way, from left to right--"so grezful ligue a peajohn! He could read and write, and knew more comig song!"--the speaker would hasten to secure him before he should take some other situation.

The wonderful waltzer never appeared upon the scene; yet Joseph made shift to get along, and by and by found a man who partially met his requirements. The way of it was this: With his forefinger in a book which he had been reading, he was one day pacing his shop floor in deep thought. There were two loose threads hanging from the web of incident weaving around him which ought to connect somewhere; but where? They were the two visits made to his shop by the young merchant, Honoré Grandissime. He stopped still to think; what "train of thought" could he have started in the mind of such a man?

He was about to resume his walk, when there came in, or more strictly speaking, there shot in, a young, auburn-curled, blue-eyed man, whose adolescent buoyancy, as much as his delicate, silver-buckled feet and clothes of perfect fit, pronounced him all-pure Creole. His name, when it was presently heard, accounted for the blond type by revealing a Franco-Celtic origin.

"'Sieur Frowenfel'," he said, advancing like a boy coming in after recess, "I 'ave somet'ing beauteeful to place into yo' window."

He wheeled half around as he spoke and seized from a naked black boy, who at that instant entered, a rectangular object enveloped in paper.

Frowenfeld's window was fast growing to be a place of art exposition. A pair of statuettes, a golden tobacco-box, a costly jewel-casket, or a pair of richly gemmed horse-pistols--the property of some ancient gentleman or dame of emaciated fortune, and which must be sold to keep up the bravery of good clothes and pomade that hid slow starvation--went into the shop-window of the ever-obliging apothecary, to be disposed of by *tombola*. And it is worthy of note in passing, concerning the moral education of one who proposed to make no conscious compromise with any sort of evil, that in this drivelling species of gambling he saw nothing hurtful or improper. But "in Frowenfeld's window" appeared also articles for simple sale or mere transient exhibition; as, for instance, the wonderful tapestries of a blind widow of ninety; tremulous little bunches of flowers, proudly stated to have been made entirely of the bones of the ordinary catfish; others, large and spreading, the sight of which would make any botanist fall down "and die as mad as the wild waves be," whose ticketed merit was that they were composed exclusively of materials produced upon Creole soil; a picture of the Ursulines' convent and chapel, done in forty-five minutes by a child of ten years, the daughter of the widow Felicie Grandissime; and the siege of Troy, in ordinary ink, done entirely with the pen, the labor of twenty years, by "a citizen of New Orleans." It was natural that these things should come to "Frowenfeld's corner," for there, oftener than elsewhere, the critics were gathered together. Ah! wonderful men, those critics; and, fortunately, we have a few still left.

The young man with auburn curls rested the edge of his burden upon the counter, tore away its wrappings and disclosed a painting.

He said nothing--with his mouth; but stood at arm's length balancing the painting and casting now upon it and now upon Joseph Frowenfeld a look more

replete with triumph than Caesar's three-worded dispatch.

The apothecary fixed upon it long and silently the gaze of a somnambulist. At length he spoke:

"What is it?"

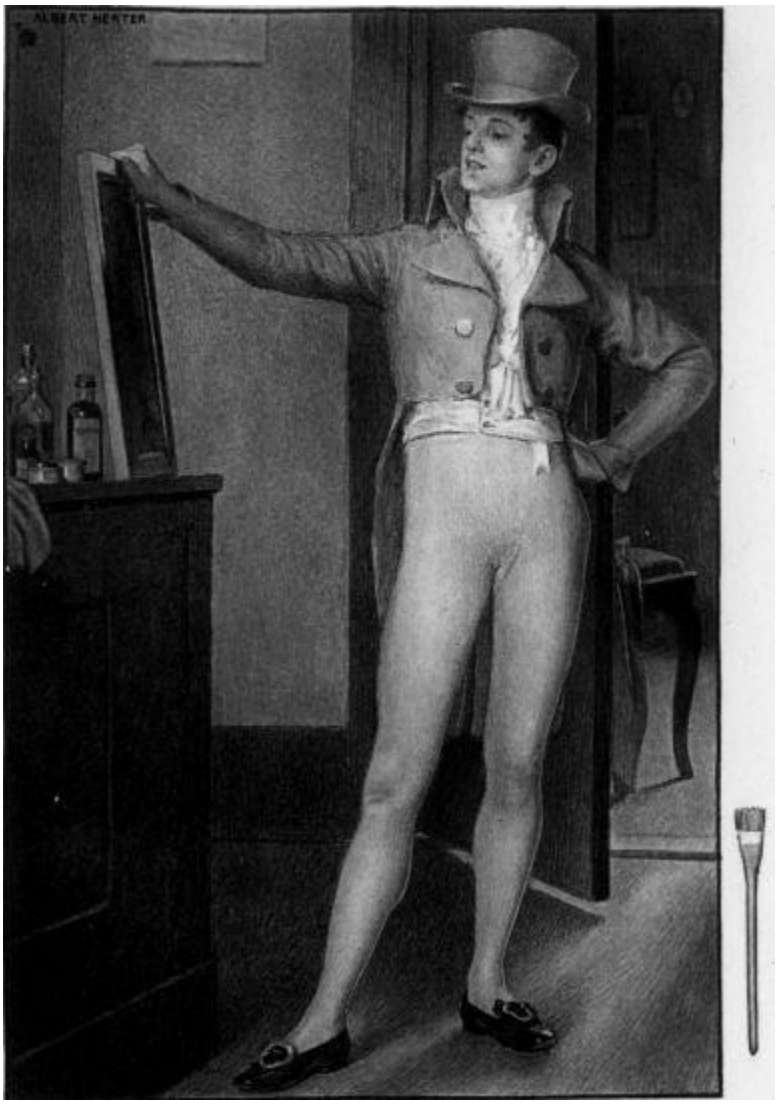
"Louisiana rif-using to hanter de h-Union!" replied the Creole, with an ecstasy that threatened to burst forth in hip-hurrahs.

Joseph said nothing, but silently wondered at Louisiana's anatomy.

"Gran' subjec'!" said the Creole.

"Allegorical," replied the hard-pressed apothecary.

"Allegoricon? No, sir! Allegoricon never saw dat pigshoe. If you insist to know who make dat pigshoe--de hartis' stan' bif-ore you!"



"The young man with auburn curls rested the edge of his burden upon the counter, tore away its wrappings and disclosed a painting".

"It is your work?"

"'Tis de work of me, Raoul Innerarity, cousin to de disting-wish Honoré Grandissime. I swear to you, sir, on stack of Bible' as 'igh as yo' head!"

He smote his breast.

"Do you wish to put it in the window?"

"Yes, seh."

"For sale?"

M. Raoul Innerarity hesitated a moment before replying:

"'Sieur Frowenfel', I think it is a foolishness to be too proud, eh? I want you to say, 'My frien', 'Sieur Innerarity, never care to sell anything; 'tis for egs-hibby-shun'; *mais*--when somebody look at it, so," the artist cast upon his work a look of languishing covetousness, "'you say, *foudre tonnerre!* what de dev'!--I take dat ris-pon-sibble-ty--you can have her for two hun'red fifty dollah!' Better not be too proud, eh, 'Sieur Frowenfel'?"

"No, sir," said Joseph, proceeding to place it in the window, his new friend following him about spanielwise; "but you had better let me say plainly that it is for sale."

"Oh--I don't care--*mais*--my rillation' will never forgive me! *Mais*--go-ahead-I-don't-care! 'T is for sale."

"'Sieur Frowenfel'," he resumed, as they came away from the window, "one week ago"--he held up one finger--"what I was doing? Makin' bill of ladin', my faith!--for my cousin Honoré! an' now, I ham a hartis'! So soon I foun' dat, I say, 'Cousin Honoré,'"--the eloquent speaker lifted his foot and administered to the empty air a soft, polite kick--"I never goin' to do anoder lick o' work so long I live; adieu!"

He lifted a kiss from his lips and wafted it in the direction of his cousin's office.

"Mr. Innerarity," exclaimed the apothecary, "I fear you are making a great mistake."

"You tink I hass too much?"

"Well, sir, to be candid, I do; but that is not your greatest mistake."

"What she's worse?"

The apothecary simultaneously smiled and blushed.

"I would rather not say; it is a passably good example of Creole art; there is but one way by which it can ever be worth what you ask for it."

"What dat is?"

The smile faded and the blush deepened as Frowenfeld replied:

"If it could become the means of reminding this community that crude ability counts next to nothing in art, and that nothing else in this world ought to work so hard as genius, it would be worth thousands of dollars!"

"You tink she is worse a t'ousand dollah?" asked the Creole, shadow and sunshine chasing each other across his face.

"No, sir."

The unwilling critic strove unnecessarily against his smile.

"Ow much you tink?"

"Mr. Innerarity, as an exercise it is worth whatever truth or skill it has taught you; to a judge of paintings it is ten dollars' worth of paint thrown away; but as an article of sale it is worth what it will bring without misrepresentation."

"Two--hun-rade an'--fifty--dollahs or--not'in'!" said the indignant Creole, clenching one fist, and with the other hand lifting his hat by the front corner and slapping it down upon the counter. "Ha, ha, ha! a pase of waint--a wase of paint! 'Sieur Frowenfel', you don' know not'in' 'bout it! You har a jedge of painting?" he added cautiously.

"No, sir."

"*Eh, bien! foudre tonnerre*!--look yeh! you know? 'Sieur Frowenfel'? Dat de way de publique halways talk about a hartis's firs' pigshoe. But, I hass you to pardon me, Monsieur Frowenfel', if I 'ave speak a lill too warm."

"Then you must forgive me if, in my desire to set you right, I have spoken with too much liberty. I probably should have said only what I first intended to say, that unless you are a person of independent means--"

"You t'ink I would make bill of ladin'? Ah! Hm-m!"

"--that you had made a mistake in throwing up your means of support--"

"But 'e 'as fill de place an' don' want me no mo'. You want a clerk?--one what can speak fo' lang-widge--French, Eng-lish, Spanish, *an'* Italienne? Come! I work for you in de mawnin' an' paint in de evenin'; come!"

Joseph was taken unaware. He smiled, frowned, passed his hand across his brow, noticed, for the first time since his delivery of the picture, the naked little boy standing against the edge of a door, said, "Why--," and smiled again.

"I riffer you to my cousin Honoré," said Innerarity.

"Have you any knowledge of this business?"

"I 'ave.'

"Can you keep shop in the forenoon or afternoon indifferently, as I may require?"

"Eh? Forenoon--afternoon?" was the reply.

"Can you paint sometimes in the morning and keep shop in the evening?"

"Yes, seh."

Minor details were arranged on the spot. Raoul dismissed the black boy, took off his coat and fell to

work decanting something, with the understanding that his salary, a microscopic one, should begin from date if his cousin should recommend him.

"'Sieur Frowenfel'," he called from under the counter, later in the day, "you t'ink it would be hanny disgrace to paint de pigshoe of a niggah?"

"Certainly not."

"Ah, my soul! what a pigshoe I could paint of Bras-Coupé!"

We have the afflatus in Louisiana, if nothing else.