THE GRANDISSIMES

BY GEORGE W. CABLE

PART 3/3

CHAPTER XXXVIII

TESTS OF FRIENDSHIP

Frowenfeld turned away from the closing door, caught his head between his hands and tried to comprehend the new wildness of the tumult within. Honoré Grandissime avowedly in love with one of them--*which one*? Doctor Keene visibly in love with one of them--*which one*? And he! What meant this bounding joy that, like one gorgeous moth among innumerable bats, flashed to and fro among the wild distresses and dismays swarming in and out of his distempered imagination? He did not answer the question; he only knew the confusion in his brain was dreadful. Both hands could not hold back the throbbing of his temples; the table did not steady the trembling of his hands; his thoughts went hither and thither, heedless of his call. Sit down as he might, rise up, pace the room, stand, lean his forehead against the wall--nothing could quiet the fearful disorder, until at length he recalled Honoré's neglected advice and resolutely lay down and sought

sleep; and, long before he had hoped to secure it, it came.

In the distant Grandissime mansion, Agricola Fusilier was casting about for ways and means to rid himself of the heaviest heart that ever had throbbed in his bosom. He had risen at sunrise from slumber worse than sleeplessness, in which his dreams had anticipated the duel of to-morrow with Sylvestre. He was trying to get the unwonted quaking out of his hands and the memory of the night's heart-dissolving phantasms from before his inner vision. To do this he had resort to a very familiar, we may say time-honored, prescription--rum. He did not use it after the voudou fashion; the voudous pour it on the ground--Agricola was an anti-voudou. It finally had its effect. By eleven o'clock he seemed, outwardly at least, to be at peace with everything in Louisiana that he considered Louisianian, properly so-called; as to all else he was ready for war, as in peace one should be. While in this mood, and performing at a sideboard the solemn rite of *las onze*, news incidentally reached him, by the mouth of his busy second, Hippolyte, of Frowenfeld's trouble, and despite 'Polyte's protestations against the principal in a pending "affair" appearing on the street, he ordered the carriage and hurried to the apothecary's.

When Frowenfeld awoke, the fingers of his clock were passing the meridan. His fever was gone, his brain was calm, his strength in good measure had returned. There had been dreams in his sleep, too; he had seen Clotilde standing at the foot of his bed. He lay now, for a moment, lost in retrospection.

"There can be no doubt about it," said he, as he rose up, looking back mentally at something in the past.

The sound of carriage-wheels attracted his attention by ceasing before his street door. A moment later the voice of Agricola was heard in the shop greeting Raoul. As the old man lifted the head of his staff to tap on the inner door, Frowenfeld opened it.

"Fusilier to the rescue!" said the great Louisianian, with a grasp of the apothecary's hand and a gaze of brooding admiration.

Joseph gave him a chair, but with magnificent humility he insisted on not taking it until "Professor Frowenfeld" had himself sat down.

The apothecary was very solemn. It seemed to him as if in this little back room his dead good name was lying in state, and these visitors were coming in to take their last look. From time to time he longed for more light, wondering why the gravity of his misadventure should seem so great.

"H-m-h-y dear Professor!" began the old man. Pages of print could not comprise all the meanings of his smile and accent; benevolence, affection, assumed knowledge of the facts, disdain of results, remembrance of his own youth, charity for pranks, patronage--these were but a few. He spoke very slowly and deeply and with this smile of a hundred meanings. "Why did you not send for me, Joseph? Sir, whenever you have occasion to make a list of the friends who will stand by you, *right or wrong*--h-write the name of Citizen Agricola Fusilier at the top! Write it large and repeat it at the bottom! You understand me, Joseph?--and, mark me,--right or wrong!"

"Not wrong," said Frowenfeld, "at least not in defence of wrong; I could not do that; but, I assure you, in this matter I have done--"

"No worse than any one else would have done under the circumstances, my dear boy!--Nay, nay, do not interrupt me; I understand you, I understand you. H-do you imagine there is anything strange to me in this--at my age?"

"But I am--"

"--all right, sir! that is *what* you are. And you are under the wing of Agricola Fusilier, the old eagle; that is *where* you are. And you are one of my brood; that is *who* you are. Professor, listen to your old father. *The--man--makes--the--crime!* The wisdom of mankind never brought forth a maxim of more

gigantic beauty. If the different grades of race and society did not have corresponding moral and civil liberties, varying in degree as they vary--h-why! *this* community, at least, would go to pieces! See here! Professor Frowenfeld is charged with misdemeanor. Very well, who is he? Foreigner or native? Foreigner by sentiment and intention, or only by accident of birth? Of our mental fibre--our aspirations--our delights--our indignations? I answer for you, Joseph, yes!--yes! What then? H-why, then the decision! Reached how? By apologetic reasonings? By instinct, sir! h-h-that guide of the nobly proud! And what is the decision? Not guilty. Professor Frowenfeld, *absolvo te!*"

It was in vain that the apothecary repeatedly tried to interrupt this speech. "Citizen Fusilier, do you know me no better?"--"Citizen Fusilier, if you will but listen!"--such were the fragments of his efforts to explain. The old man was not so confident as he pretended to be that Frowenfeld was that complete proselyte which alone satisfies a Creole; but he saw him in a predicament and cast to him this life-buoy, which if a man should refuse, he would deserve to drown.

Frowenfeld tried again to begin.

"Mr. Fusilier--"

"Citizen Fusilier!"

"Citizen, candor demands that I undeceive--"

"Candor demands--h-my dear Professor, let me tell you exactly what she demands. She demands that in here--within this apartment--we understand each other. That demand is met."

"But--" Frowenfeld frowned impatiently.

"That demand, Joseph, is fully met! I understand the whole matter like an eye-witness! Now there is another demand to be met, the demand of friendship! In here, candor; outside, friendship; in here, one of

our brethren has been adventurous and unfortunate; outside"--the old man smiled a smile of benevolent mendacity--"outside, nothing has happened."

Frowenfeld insisted savagely on speaking; but Agricola raised his voice, and gray hairs prevailed.

"At least, what *has* happened? The most ordinary thing in the world; Professor Frowenfeld lost his footing on a slippery gunwale, fell, cut his head upon a protruding spike, and went into the house of Palmyre to bathe his wound; but finding it worse than he had at first supposed it, immediately hurried out again and came to his store. He left his hat where it had fallen, too muddy to be worth recovery. Hippolyte Brahmin-Mandarin and others, passing at the time, thought he had met with violence in the house of the hair-dresser, and drew some natural inferences, but have since been better informed; and the public will please understand that Professor Frowenfeld is a white man, a gentleman, and a Louisianian, ready to vindicate his honor, and that Citizen Agricola Fusilier is his friend!"

The old man looked around with the air of a bull on a hill-top.

Frowenfeld, vexed beyond degree, restrained himself only for the sake of an object in view, and contented himself with repeating for the fourth or fifth time,--

"I cannot accept any such deliverance."

"Professor Frowenfeld, friendship--society--demands it; our circle must be protected in all its members. You have nothing to do with it. You will leave it with me, Joseph."

"No, no," said Frowenfeld, "I thank you, but--"

"Ah! my dear boy, thank me not; I cannot help these impulses; I belong to a warm-hearted race. But"--he drew back in his chair sidewise and made great pretence of frowning--"you decline the offices of that precious possession, a Creole friend?"

"I only decline to be shielded by a fiction."

"Ah-h!" said Agricola, further nettling his victim by a gaze of stagy admiration. "'*Sans peur et sans reproche*'--and yet you disappoint me. Is it for naught, that I have sallied forth from home, drawing the curtains of my carriage to shield me from the gazing crowd? It was to rescue my friend--my vicar--my coadjutor--my son--from the laughs and finger-points of the vulgar mass. H-I might as well have stayed at home--or better, for my peculiar position to-day rather requires me to keep in--"

"No, citizen," said Frowenfeld, laying his hand upon Agricola's arm, "I trust it is not in vain that you have come out. There *is* a man in trouble whom only you can deliver."

The old man began to swell with complacency.

"H-why, really--"

"*He*, Citizen, is truly of your kind--"

"He must be delivered, Professor Frowenfeld--"

"He is a native Louisianian, not only by accident of birth but by sentiment and intention," said Frowenfeld.

The old man smiled a benign delight, but the apothecary now had the upper hand, and would not hear him speak.

"His aspirations," continued the speaker, "his indignations--mount with his people's. His pulse beats with yours, sir. He is a part of your circle. He is one of your caste."

Agricola could not be silent.

"Ha-a-a-ah! Joseph, h-h-you make my blood tingle! Speak to the point; who--"

"I believe him, moreover, Citizen Fusilier, innocent of the charge laid--"

"H-innocent? H-of course he is innocent, sir! We will *make* him inno--"

"Ah! Citizen, he is already under sentence of death!"

"*What?* A Creole under sentence!" Agricola swore a heathen oath, set his knees apart and grasped his staff by the middle. "Sir, we will liberate him if we have to overturn the government!"

Frowenfeld shook his head.

"You have got to overturn something stronger than government."

"And pray what--"

"A conventionality," said Frowenfeld, holding the old man's eye.

"Ha, ha! my b-hoy, h-you are right. But we will overturn--eh?"

"I say I fear your engagements will prevent. I hear you take part to-morrow morning in--"

Agricola suddenly stiffened.

"Professor Frowenfeld, it strikes me, sir, you are taking something of a liberty."

"For which I ask pardon," exclaimed Frowenfeld. "Then I may not expect--"

The old man melted again.

"But who is this person in mortal peril?"

Frowenfeld hesitated.

"Citizen Fusilier," he said, looking first down at the floor and then up into the inquirer's face, "on my assurance that he is not only a native Creole, but a Grandissime--"

"It is not possible!" exclaimed Agricola.

"--a Grandissime of the purest blood, will you pledge me your aid to liberate him from his danger, 'right or wrong'?"

"*Will* I? H-why, certainly! Who is he?"

"Citizen--it is Sylves--"

Agricola sprang up with a thundering oath.

The apothecary put out a pacifying hand, but it was spurned.

"His head was bowed, a heavy grizzled lock fell down upon his dark, frowning brow, one hand

clenched the top of his staff, the other his knee, and both trembled violently".

"Let me go! How dare you, sir? How dare you, sir?" bellowed Agricola.

He started toward the door, cursing furiously and keeping his eye fixed on Frowenfeld with a look of rage not unmixed with terror.

"Citizen Fusilier," said the apothecary, following him with one palm uplifted, as if that would ward off his abuse, "don't go! I adjure you, don't go! Remember your pledge, Citizen Fusilier!"

Agricola did not pause a moment; but when he had swung the door violently open the way was still obstructed. The painter of "Louisiana refusing to enter the Union" stood before him, his head elevated loftily, one foot set forward and his arm extended like a tragedian's.

"Stan' bag-sah!"

"Let me pass! Let me pass, or I will kill you!"

Mr. Innerarity smote his bosom and tossed his hand aloft.

"Kill me-firse an' pass aftah!"

"Citizen Fusilier," said Frowenfeld, "I beg you to hear me."

"Go away! Go away!"

The old man drew back from the door and stood in the corner against the book-shelves as if all the horrors of the last night's dreams had taken bodily shape in the person of the apothecary. He trembled and stammered:

"Ke--keep off! Keep off! My God! Raoul, he has insulted me!" He made a miserable show of drawing a weapon. "No man may insult me and live! If you

are a man, Professor Frowenfeld, you will defend yourself!"

Frowenfeld lost his temper, but his hasty reply was drowned by Raoul's vehement speech.

"'Tis not de trute!" cried Raoul. "He try to save you from hell-'n'-damnation w'en 'e h-ought to give you a good cuss'n!"--and in the ecstasy of his anger burst into tears.

Frowenfeld, in an agony of annoyance, waved him away and he disappeared, shutting the door.

Agricola, moved far more from within than from without, had sunk into a chair under the shelves. His head was bowed, a heavy grizzled lock fell down upon his dark, frowning brow, one hand clenched the top of his staff, the other his knee, and both trembled violently. As Frowenfeld, with every demonstration of beseeching kindness, began to speak, he lifted his eyes and said, piteously:

"Stop! Stop!"

"Citizen Fusilier, it is you who must stop. Stop before God Almighty stops you, I beg you. I do not presume to rebuke you. I *know* you want a clear record. I know it better to-day than I ever did before. Citizen Fusilier, I honor your intentions--"

Agricola roused a little and looked up with a miserable attempt at his habitual patronizing smile.

"H-my dear boy, I overlook"--but he met in

Frowenfeld's eyes a spirit so superior to his dissimulation that the smile quite broke down and gave way to another of deprecatory and apologetic distress. He reached up an arm.

"I could easily convince you, Professor, of your error"--his eyes quailed and dropped to the floor--"but I--your arm, my dear Joseph; age is creeping upon me." He rose to his feet. "I am feeling really

indisposed to-day--not at all bright; my solicitude for you, my dear b--"

He took two or three steps forward, tottered, clung to the apothecary, moved another step or two, and grasping the edge of the table stumbled into a chair which Frowenfeld thrust under him. He folded his arms on the edge of the board and rested his forehead on them, while Frowenfeld sat down quickly on the opposite side, drew paper and pen across the table and wrote.

"Are you writing something, Professor?" asked the old man, without stirring. His staff tumbled to the floor. The apothecary's answer was a low, preoccupied one. Two or three times over he wrote and rejected what he had written.

Presently he pushed back his chair, came around the table, laid the writing he had made before the bowed head, sat down again and waited.

After a long time the old man looked up, trying in vain to conceal his anguish under a smile.

"I have a sad headache."

He cast his eyes over the table and took mechanically the pen which Frowenfeld extended toward him.

"What can I do for you, Professor? Sign something? There is nothing I would not do for Professor Frowenfeld. What have you written, eh?"

He felt helplessly for his spectacles.

Frowenfeld read:

"*Mr. Sylvestre Grandissime: I spoke in haste*."

He felt himself tremble as he read. Agricola fumbled with the pen, lifted his eyes with one more effort at the old look, said, "My dear boy, I do this purely to please you," and to Frowenfeld's delight and astonishment wrote:

"*Your affectionate uncle, Agricola Fusilier*."

CHAPTER XXXIX

LOUISIANA STATES HER WANTS

"'Sieur Frowenfel'," said Raoul as that person turned in the front door of the shop after watching Agricola's carriage roll away--he had intended to unburden his mind to the apothecary with all his natural impetuosity; but Frowenfeld's gravity as he turned, with the paper in his hand, induced a different manner. Raoul had learned, despite all the impulses of his nature, to look upon Frowenfeld with a sort of enthusiastic awe. He dropped his voice and said--asking like a child a question he was perfectly able to answer--

"What de matta wid Agricole?"

Frowenfeld, for the moment well-nigh oblivious of his own trouble, turned upon his assistant a look in which elation was oddly blended with solemnity, and replied as he walked by:

"Rush of truth to the heart."

Raoul followed a step.

"'Sieur Frowenfel'--"

The apothecary turned once more. Raoul's face bore an expression of earnest practicability that invited confidence.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', Agricola writ'n' to Sylvestre to stop dat dool?"

"Yes."

"You goin' take dat lett' to Sylvestre?"

"Yes."

"'Sieur Frowenfel', dat de wrong g-way. You got to take it to 'Polyte Brahmin-Mandarin, an' 'e got to take it to Valentine Grandissime, an' '*e* got to take it to Sylvestre. You see, you got to know de manner to make. Once 'pon a time I had a diffycultie wid--"

"I see," said Frowenfeld; "where may I find Hippolyte Brahmin-Mandarin at this time of day?"

Raoul shrugged.

"If the pre-parish-ions are not complitted, you will not find 'im; but if they har complitted--you know 'im?"

"By sight."

"Well, you may fine him at Maspero's, or helse in de front of de Veau-qui-tête, or helse at de Café Louis Quatorze--mos' likely in front of de Veau-qui-tête. You know, dat diffycultie I had, dat arise itseff from de discush'n of one of de mil-littery mov'ments of ca-valry; you know, I--"

"Yes," said the apothecary; "here, Raoul, is some money; please go and buy me a good, plain hat."

"All right." Raoul darted behind the counter and got his hat out of a drawer. "Were at you buy your hats?"

"Anywhere."

"I will go at *my* hatter."

As the apothecary moved about his shop awaiting Raoul's return, his own disaster became once more the subject of his anxiety. He noticed that almost every person who passed looked in. "This is the place,"--"That is the man,"--how plainly the glances of passers sometimes speak! The people seemed, moreover, a little nervous. Could even so little a city be stirred about such a petty, private trouble as this of his? No; the city was having tribulations of its own.

New Orleans was in that state of suppressed excitement which, in later days, a frequent need of reassuring the outer world has caused to be described by the phrase "never more peaceable." Raoul perceived it before he had left the shop twenty paces behind. By the time he reached the first corner he was in the swirl of the popular current. He enjoyed it like a strong swimmer. He even drank of it. It was better than wine and music mingled.

"Twelve weeks next Thursday, and no sign of re-cession!" said one of two rapid walkers just in front of him. Their talk was in the French of the province.

"Oh, re-cession!" exclaimed the other angrily. "The cession is a reality. That, at least, we have got to swallow. Incredulity is dead."

The first speaker's feelings could find expression only in profanity.

"The cession--we wash our hands of it!" He turned partly around upon his companion, as they hurried along, and gave his hands a vehement dry washing. "If Incredulity is dead, Non-participation reigns in its stead, and Discontent is prime minister!" He brandished his fist as they turned a corner.

"If we must change, let us be subjects of the First Consul!" said one of another pair whom Raoul met on a crossing.

There was a gathering of boys and vagabonds at the door of a gun-shop. A man inside was buying a gun. That was all.

A group came out of a "coffee-house." The leader turned about upon the rest:

"*Ah, bah! cette* Amayrican libetty!"

"See! see! it is this way!" said another of the number, taking two others by their elbows, to secure an audience, "we shall do nothing ourselves; we are just watching that vile Congress. It is going to tear the country all to bits!"

"Ah, my friend, you haven't got the *inside* news," said still another--Raoul lingered to hear him--"Louisiana is going to state her wants! We have the liberty of free speech and are going to use it!"

His information was correct; Louisiana, no longer incredulous of her Americanization, had laid hold of her new liberties and was beginning to run with them, like a boy dragging his kite over the clods. She was about to state her wants, he said.

"And her don't-wants," volunteered one whose hand Raoul shook heartily. "We warn the world. If Congress doesn't take heed, we will not be responsible for the consequences!"

Raoul's hatter was full of the subject. As Mr. Innerarity entered, he was saying good-day to a customer in his native tongue, English, and so continued:

"Yes, under Spain we had a solid, quiet government--Ah! Mr. Innerarity, overjoyed to see you! We were speaking of these political troubles. I wish we might see the last of them. It's a terrible bad mess; corruption to-day--I tell you what--it will be disruption to-morrow. Well, it is no work of ours; we shall merely stand off and see it."

"Mi-frien'," said Raoul, with mingled pity and superiority, "you haven't got doze *inside* nooz; Louisiana is goin' to state w'at she want."

On his way back toward the shop Mr. Innerarity easily learned Louisiana's wants and don't-wants by heart. She wanted a Creole governor; she did not want Casa Calvo invited to leave the country; she wanted the provisions of the Treaty of Cession hurried up; "as soon as possible," that instrument said; she had waited long enough; she did not want "dat trile bi-ju'y"--execrable trash! she wanted an *unwatched import trade!* she did not want a single additional Américain appointed to office; she wanted the slave trade.

Just in sight of the bareheaded and anxious Frowenfeld, Raoul let himself be stopped by a friend.

The remark was exchanged that the times were exciting.

"And yet," said the friend, "the city was never more peaceable. It is exasperating to see that coward governor looking so diligently after his police and hurrying on the organization of the Américain volunteer militia!" He pointed savagely here and there. "M. Innerarity, I am lost in admiration at the all but craven patience with which our people endure their wrongs! Do my pistols show *too* much through my coat? Well, good-day; I must go home and clean my gun; my dear friend, one don't know how soon he may have to encounter the Recorder and Register of Land-titles."

Raoul finished his errand.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', excuse me--I take dat lett' to 'Polyte for you if you want." There are times when mere shopkeeping--any peaceful routine--is torture.

But the apothecary felt so himself; he declined his assistant's offer and went out toward the Veau-qui-tête.

CHAPTER XL

FROWENFELD FINDS SYLVESTRE

The Veau-qui-tête restaurant occupied the whole ground floor of a small, low, two-story, tile-roofed, brick-and-stucco building which still stands on the corner of Chartres and St. Peter streets, in company with the well-preserved old Cabildo and the young Cathedral, reminding one of the shabby and swarthy Creoles whom we sometimes see helping better-kept kinsmen to murder time on the banquettes of the old French Quarter. It was a favorite rendezvous of the higher classes, convenient to the court-rooms and municipal bureaus. There you found the choicest legal and political gossips, with the best the market afforded of meat and drink.

Frowenfeld found a considerable number of persons there. He had to move about among them to some extent, to make sure he was not overlooking the object of his search.

As he entered the door, a man sitting near it stopped talking, gazed rudely as he passed, and then leaned across the table and smiled and murmured to his companion. The subject of his jest felt their four eyes on his back.

There was a loud buzz of conversation throughout the room, but wherever he went a wake of momentary silence followed him, and once or twice he saw elbows nudged. He perceived that there was something in the state of mind of these good citizens

that made the present sight of him particularly discordant.

Four men, leaning or standing at a small bar, were talking excitedly in the Creole patois. They made frequent anxious, yet amusedly defiant, mention of a certain *Pointe Canadienne*. It was a portion of the Mississippi River "coast" not far above New Orleans, where the merchants of the city met the smugglers who came up from the Gulf by way of Barrataria Bay and Bayou. These four men did not call it by the proper title just given; there were commercial gentlemen in the Creole city, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Yankees, as well as French and Spanish Creoles, who in public indignantly denied, and in private tittered over, their complicity with the pirates of Grand Isle, and who knew their trading rendezvous by the sly nickname of "Little Manchac." As Frowenfeld passed these four men they, too, ceased speaking and looked after him, three with offensive smiles and one with a stare of contempt.

Farther on, some Creoles were talking rapidly to an Américain, in English.

"And why?" one was demanding. "Because money is scarce. Under other governments we had any quantity!"

"Yes," said the venturesome Américain in retort, "such as it was; *assignats*, *liberanzas*, *bons*-- Claiborne will give us better money than that when he starts his bank."

"Hah! his bank, yes! John Law once had a bank, too; ask my old father. What do we want with a bank? Down with banks!" The speaker ceased; he had not finished, but he saw the apothecary. Frowenfeld heard a muttered curse, an inarticulate murmur, and then a loud burst of laughter.

A tall, slender young Creole whom he knew, and who had always been greatly pleased to exchange

salutations, brushed against him without turning his eyes.

"You know," he was saying to a companion, "everybody in Louisiana is to be a citizen, except the negroes and mules; that is the kind of liberty they give us--all eat out of one trough."

"What we want," said a dark, ill-looking, but finely-dressed man, setting his claret down, "and what we have got to have, is"--he was speaking in French, but gave the want in English--"Representesh'n wizout Taxa--" There his eye fell upon Frowenfeld and followed him with a scowl.

"Mah frang," he said to his table companion, "wass you sink of a mane w'at hask-a one neegrow to 'ave-a one shair wiz 'im, eh?--in ze sem room?"

The apothecary found that his fame was far wider and more general than he had supposed. He turned to go out, bowing as he did so, to an Américain merchant with whom he had some acquaintance.

"Sir?" asked the merchant, with severe politeness, "wish to see me? I thought you--As I was saying, gentlemen, what, after all, does it sum up?"

A Creole interrupted him with an answer:

"Leetegash'n, Spoleeash'n, Pahtitsh'n, Disintegrhash'n!"

The voice was like Honoré's. Frowenfeld looked; it was Agamemnon Grandissime.

"I must go to Maspero's," thought the apothecary, and he started up the rue Chartres. As he turned into the rue St. Louis, he suddenly found himself one of a crowd standing before a newly-posted placard, and at a glance saw it to be one of the inflammatory publications which were a feature of the times, appearing both daily and nightly on walls and fences.

"One Amerry-can pull' it down, an' Camille Brahmin 'e pas'e it back," said a boy at Frowenfeld's side.

Exchange Alley was once *Passage de la Bourse*, and led down (as it now does to the State House--late St. Louis Hotel) to an establishment which seems to have served for a long term of years as a sort of merchants' and auctioneers' coffee-house, with a minimum of china and a maximum of glass: Maspero's--certainly Maspero's as far back as 1810, and, we believe, Maspero's the day the apothecary entered it, March 9, 1804. It was a livelier spot than the Veau-qui-tête; it was to that what commerce is to litigation, what standing and quaffing is to sitting and sipping. Whenever the public mind approached that sad state of public sentiment in which sanctity signs politicians' memorials and chivalry breaks into the gun-shops, a good place to feel the thump of the machinery was in Maspero's.

The first man Frowenfeld saw as he entered was M. Valentine Grandissime. There was a double semicircle of gazers and listeners in front of him; he was talking, with much show of unconcern, in Creole French.

"Policy? I care little about policy." He waved his hand. "I know my rights--and Louisiana's. We have a right to our opinions. We have"--with a quiet smile and an upward turn of his extended palm--"a right to protect them from the attack of interlopers, even if we have to use gunpowder. I do not propose to abridge the liberties of even this army of fortune-hunters. *Let* them think." He half laughed. "Who cares whether they share our opinions or not? Let them have their own. I had rather they would. But let them hold their tongues. Let them remember they are Yankees. Let them remember they are unbidden guests." All this without the least warmth.

But the answer came aglow with passion, from one of the semicircle, whom two or three seemed disposed to hold in check. It also was in French, but the apothecary was astonished to hear his own name uttered.

"But this fellow Frowenfeld"--the speaker did not see Joseph--"has never held his tongue. He has given us good reason half a dozen times, with his too free speech and his high moral whine, to hang him with the lamppost rope! And now, when we have borne and borne and borne and borne with him, and he shows up, all at once, in all his rottenness, you say let him alone! One would think you were defending Honoré Grandissime!" The back of one of the speaker's hands fluttered in the palm of the other.

Valentine smiled.

"Honoré Grandissime? Boy, you do not know what you are talking about. Not Honoré, ha, ha! A man who, upon his own avowal, is guilty of affiliating with the Yankees. A man whom we have good reason to suspect of meditating his family's dishonor and embarrassment!" Somebody saw the apothecary and laid a cautionary touch on Valentine's arm, but he brushed it off. "As for Professor Frowenfeld, he must defend himself."

"Ha-a-a-ah!"--a general cry of derision from the listeners.

"Defend himself!" exclaimed their spokesman; "shall I tell you again what he is?" In his vehemence, the speaker wagged his chin and held his clenched fists stiffly toward the floor. "He is--he is--he is--"

He paused, breathing like a fighting dog. Frowenfeld, large, white, and immovable, stood close before him.

"Dey 'ad no bizniz led 'im come oud to-day," said a bystander, edging toward a pillar.

The Creole, a small young man not unknown to us, glared upon the apothecary; but Frowenfeld was far above his blushing mood, and was not disconcerted. This exasperated the Creole beyond bound; he made a sudden, angry change of attitude, and demanded:

"Do you interrup' two gen'lemen in dey conve'sition, you Yankee clown? Do you igno' dad you 'ave insult me, off-scow'ing?"

Frowenfeld's first response was a stern gaze. When he spoke, he said:

"Sir, I am not aware that I have ever offered you the slightest injury or affront; if you wish to finish your conversation with this gentleman, I will wait till you are through."

The Creole bowed, as a knight who takes up the gage. He turned to Valentine.

"Valentine, I was sayin' to you dad diz pusson is a cowa'd and a sneak; I repead thad! I repead id! I spurn you! Go f'om yeh!"

The apothecary stood like a cliff.

It was too much for Creole forbearance. His adversary, with a long snarl of oaths, sprang forward and with a great sweep of his arm slapped the apothecary on the cheek. And then--

What a silence!

Frowenfeld had advanced one step; his opponent stood half turned away, but with his face toward the face he had just struck and his eyes glaring up into the eyes of the apothecary. The semicircle was dissolved, and each man stood in neutral isolation, motionless and silent. For one instant objects lost all natural proportion, and to the expectant on-lookers the largest thing in the room was the big, upraised, white fist of Frowenfeld. But in the next--how was this? Could it be that that fist had not descended?

The imperturbable Valentine, with one preventing arm laid across the breast of the expected victim and an open hand held restrainingly up for truce, stood between the two men and said:

"Professor Frowenfeld--one moment--"

Frowenfeld's face was ashen.

"Don't speak, sir!" he exclaimed. "If I attempt to parley I shall break every bone in his body. Don't speak! I can guess your explanation--he is drunk. But take him away."

Valentine, as sensible as cool, assisted by the kinsman who had laid a hand on his arm, shuffled his enraged companion out. Frowenfeld's still swelling anger was so near getting the better of him that he unconsciously followed a quick step or two; but as Valentine looked back and waved him to stop, he again stood still.

"*Professeur*--you know,--" said a stranger, "daz Sylvestre Grandissime."

Frowenfeld rather spoke to himself than answered:

"If I had not known that, I should have--" He checked himself and left the place.

While the apothecary was gathering these experiences, the free spirit of Raoul Innerarity was chafing in the shop like an eagle in a hen-coop. One moment after another brought him straggling evidences, now of one sort, now of another, of the "never more peaceable" state of affairs without. If only some pretext could be conjured up, plausible or flimsy, no matter; if only some man would pass with a gun on his shoulder, were it only a blow-gun; or if his employer were any one but his beloved Frowenfeld, he would clap up the shutters as quickly as he had already done once to-day, and be off to the wars. He was just trying to hear imaginary pistol-shots down toward the Place d'Armes, when the apothecary returned.

"D' you fin' him?"

"I found Sylvestre."

"'E took de lett'?"

"I did not offer it." Frowenfeld, in a few compact sentences, told his adventure.

Raoul was ablaze with indignation.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', gimmy dat lett'!" He extended his pretty hand.

Frowenfeld pondered.

"Gimmy 'er!" persisted the artist; "befo' I lose de sight from dat lett' she goin' to be hanswer by Sylvestre Grandissime, an' 'e goin' to wrat you one appo-logie! Oh! I goin' mek 'im crah fo' shem!"

"If I could know you would do only as I--"

"I do it!" cried Raoul, and sprang for his hat; and in the end Frowenfeld let him have his way.

"I had intended seeing him--" the apothecary said.

"Nevvamine to see; I goin' tell him!" cried Raoul, as he crowded his hat fiercely down over his curls and plunged out.

CHAPTER XLI

TO COME TO THE POINT

It was equally a part of Honoré Grandissime's nature and of his art as a merchant to wear a look of serene

leisure. With this look on his face he reëntered his counting-room after his morning visit to Frowenfeld's shop. He paused a moment outside the rail, gave the weak-eyed gentleman who presided there a quiet glance equivalent to a beckon, and, as that person came near, communicated two or three items of intelligence or instruction concerning office details, by which that invaluable diviner of business meanings understood that he wished to be let alone for an hour. Then M. Grandissime passed on into his private office, and, shutting the door behind him, walked briskly to his desk and sat down.

He dropped his elbows upon a broad paper containing some recently written, unfinished memoranda that included figures in column, cast his eyes quite around the apartment, and then covered his face with his palms--a gesture common enough for a tired man of business in a moment of seclusion; but just as the face disappeared in the hands, the look of serene leisure gave place to one of great mental distress. The paper under his elbows, to the consideration of which he seemed about to return, was in the handwriting of his manager, with additions by his own pen. Earlier in the day he had come to a pause in the making of these additions, and, after one or two vain efforts to proceed, had laid down his pen, taken his hat, and gone to see the unlucky apothecary. Now he took up the broken thread. To come to a decision; that was the task which forced from him his look of distress. He drew his face slowly through his palms, set his lips, cast up his eyes, knit his knuckles, and then opened and struck his palms together, as if to say: "Now, come; let me make up my mind."

There may be men who take every moral height at a dash; but to the most of us there must come moments when our wills can but just rise and walk in their sleep. Those who in such moments wait for clear views find, when the issue is past, that they were only yielding to the devil's chloroform.

Honoré Grandissme bent his eyes upon the paper. But he saw neither its figures nor its words. The interrogation, "Surrender Fausse Rivière?" appeared to hang between his eyes and the paper, and when his resolution tried to answer "Yes," he saw red flags; he heard the auctioneer's drum; he saw his kinsmen handing house-keys to strangers; he saw the old servants of the great family standing in the marketplace; he saw kinswomen pawning their plate; he saw his clerks (Brahmins, Mandarins, Grandissimes) standing idle and shabby in the arcade of the Cabildo and on the banquettes of Maspero's and the Veau-qui-tête; he saw red-eyed young men in the Exchange denouncing a man who, they said, had, ostensibly for conscience's sake, but really for love, forced upon the woman he had hoped to marry a fortune filched from his own kindred. He saw the junto of doctors in Frowenfeld's door charitably deciding him insane; he saw the more vengeful of his family seeking him with half-concealed weapons; he saw himself shot at in the rue Royale, in the rue Toulouse, and in the Place d'Armes: and, worst of all, missed.

But he wiped his forehead, and the writing on the paper became, in a measure, visible. He read:

Total mortgages on the lands of all the Grandissimes $--
Total present value of same, titles at buyers' risk --
Cash, goods, and accounts --
Fausse Rivière Plantation account --

There were other items, but he took up the edge of the paper mechanically, pushed it slowly away from him, leaned back in his chair and again laid his hands upon his face.

"Suppose I retain Fausse Rivière," he said to himself, as if he had not said it many times before.

Then he saw memoranda that were not on any paper before him--such a mortgage to be met on such a date; so much from Fausse Rivière Plantation

account retained to protect that mortgage from foreclosure; such another to be met on such a date--so much more of same account to protect it. He saw Aurora and Clotilde Nancanou, with anguished faces, offering woman's pleadings to deaf constables. He saw the remainder of Aurora's plantation account thrown to the lawyers to keep the question of the Grandissime titles languishing in the courts. He saw the fortunes of his clan rallied meanwhile and coming to the rescue, himself and kindred growing independent of questionable titles, and even Fausse Rivière Plantation account restored, but Aurora and Clotilde nowhere to be found. And then he saw the grave, pale face of Joseph Frowenfeld.

He threw himself forward, drew the paper nervously toward him, and stared at the figures. He began at the first item and went over the whole paper, line by line, testing every extension, proving every addition, noting if possibly any transposition of figures had been made and overlooked, if something was added that should have been subtracted, or subtracted that should have been added. It was like a prisoner trying the bars of his cell.

Was there no way to make things happen differently? Had he not overlooked some expedient? Was not some financial manoeuvre possible which might compass both desired ends? He left his chair and walked up and down, as Joseph at that very moment was doing in the room where he had left him, came back, looked at the paper, and again walked up and down. He murmured now and then to himself: "*Self*-denial--that is not the hard work. Penniless myself--*that* is play," and so on. He turned by and by and stood looking up at that picture of the man in the cuirass which Aurora had once noticed. He looked at it, but he did not see it. He was thinking--"Her rent is due to-morrow. She will never believe I am not her landlord. She will never go to my half-brother." He turned once more and mentally beat his breast as he muttered: "Why do I not decide?"

Somebody touched the doorknob. Honoré stepped forward and opened it. It was a mortgager.

"*Ah! entrez, Monsieur*."

He retained the visitor's hand, leading him in and talking pleasantly in French until both had found chairs. The conversation continued in that tongue through such pointless commercial gossip as this:

"So the brig *Equinox* is aground at the head of the Passes," said M. Grandissime.

"I have just heard she is off again."

"Aha?"

"Yes; the Fort Plaquemine canoe is just up from below. I understand John McDonough has bought the entire cargo of the schooner *Freedom*."

"No, not all; Blanque et Fils bought some twenty boys and women out of the lot. Where is she lying?"

"Right at the head of the Basin."

And much more like this; but by and by the mortgager came to the point with the casual remark:

"The excitement concerning land titles seems to increase rather than subside."

"They must have *something* to be excited about, I suppose," said M. Grandissime, crossing his legs and smiling. It was tradesman's talk.

"Yes," replied the other; "there seems to be an idea current to-day that all holders under Spanish titles are to be immediately dispossessed, without even process of court. I believe a very slight indiscretion on the part of the Governor-General would precipitate a riot."

"He will not commit any," said M. Grandissime with a quiet gravity, changing his manner to that of one who draws upon a reserve of private information. "There will be no outbreak."

"I suppose not. We do not know, really, that the American Congress will throw any question upon titles; but still--"

"What are some of the shrewdest Americans among us doing?" asked M. Grandissime.

"Yes," replied the mortgager, "it is true they are buying these very titles; but they may be making a mistake?"

Unfortunately for the speaker, he allowed his face an expression of argumentative shrewdness as he completed this sentence, and M. Grandissime, the merchant, caught an instantaneous full view of his motive; he wanted to buy. He was a man whose known speculative policy was to "go in" in moments of panic.

M. Grandissime was again face to face with the question of the morning. To commence selling must be to go on selling. This, as a plan, included restitution to Aurora; but it meant also dissolution to the Grandissimes, for should their *sold* titles be pronounced bad, then the titles of other lands would be bad; many an asset among M. Grandissime's memoranda would shrink into nothing, and the meagre proceeds of the Grandissime estates, left to meet the strain without the aid of Aurora's accumulated fortune, would founder in a sea of liabilities; while should these titles, after being parted with, turn out good, his incensed kindred, shutting their eyes to his memoranda and despising his exhibits, would see in him only the family traitor, and he would go about the streets of his town the subject of their implacable denunciation, the community's obloquy, and Aurora's cold evasion. So much, should he sell. On the other hand, to decline to sell was to enter upon that disingenuous scheme of delays which would enable him to avail himself and his people of that favorable wind and tide of fortune which the Cession had brought. Thus the estates would be lost, if lost at all, only when the family

could afford to lose them, and Honoré Grandissime would continue to be Honoré the Magnificent, the admiration of the city and the idol of his clan. But Aurora--and Clotilde--would have to eat the crust of poverty, while their fortunes, even in his hands, must bear all the jeopardy of the scheme. That was all. Retain Fausse Rivière and its wealth, and save the Grandissimes; surrender Fausse Rivière, let the Grandissime estates go, and save the Nancanous. That was the whole dilemma.

"Let me see," said M. Grandissime. "You have a mortgage on one of our Golden Coast plantations. Well, to be frank with you, I was thinking of that when you came in. You know I am partial to prompt transactions--I thought of offering you either to take up that mortgage or to sell you the plantation, as you may prefer. I have ventured to guess that it would suit you to own it."

And the speaker felt within him a secret exultation in the idea that he had succeeded in throwing the issue off upon a Providence that could control this mortgager's choice.

"I would prefer to leave that choice with you," said the coy would-be purchaser; and then the two went coquetting again for another moment.

"I understand that Nicholas Girod is proposing to erect a four-story brick building on the corner of Royale and St. Pierre. Do you think it practicable? Do you think our soil will support such a structure?"

"Pitot thinks it will. Boré says it is perfectly feasible."

So they dallied.

"Well," said the mortgager, presently rising, "you will make up your mind and let me know, will you?"

The chance repetition of those words "make up your mind" touched Honoré Grandissime like a hot iron. He rose with the visitor.

"Well, sir, what would you give us for our title in case we should decide to part with it?"

The two men moved slowly, side by side, toward the door, and in the half-open doorway, after a little further trifling, the title was sold.

"Well, good-day," said M. Grandissime. "M. de Brahmin will arrange the papers for us to-morrow."

He turned back toward his private desk.

"And now," thought he, "I am acting without resolving. No merit; no strength of will; no clearness of purpose; no emphatic decision; nothing but a yielding to temptation."

And M. Grandissime spoke truly; but it is only whole men who so yield--yielding to the temptation to do right.

He passed into the counting-room, to M. De Brahmin, and standing there talked in an inaudible tone, leaning over the upturned spectacles of his manager, for nearly an hour. Then, saying he would go to dinner, he went out. He did not dine at home nor at the Veau-qui-tête, nor at any of the clubs; so much is known; he merely disappeared for two or three hours and was not seen again until late in the afternoon, when two or three Brahmins and Grandissimes, wandering about in search of him, met him on the levee near the head of the rue Bienville, and with an exclamation of wonder and a look of surprise at his dusty shoes, demanded to know where he had hid himself while they had been ransacking the town in search of him.

"We want you to tell us what you will do about our titles."

He smiled pleasantly, the picture of serenity, and replied:

"I have not fully made up my mind yet; as soon as I do so I will let you know."

There was a word or two more exchanged, and then, after a moment of silence, with a gentle "Eh, bien," and a gesture to which they were accustomed, he stepped away backward, they resumed their hurried walk and talk, and he turned into the rue Bienville.

CHAPTER XLII

AN INHERITANCE OF WRONG

"I tell you," Doctor Keene used to say, "that old woman's a thinker." His allusion was to Clemence, the *marchande des calas*. Her mental activity was evinced not more in the cunning aptness of her songs than in the droll wisdom of her sayings. Not the melody only, but the often audacious, epigrammatic philosophy of her tongue as well, sold her *calas* and gingercakes.

But in one direction her wisdom proved scant. She presumed too much on her insignificance. She was a "study," the gossiping circle at Frowenfeld's used to say; and any observant hearer of her odd aphorisms could see that she herself had made a life-study of herself and her conditions; but she little thought that others--some with wits and some with none--young hare-brained Grandissimes, Mandarins and the like--were silently, and for her most unluckily, charging their memories with her knowing speeches; and that of every one of those speeches she would ultimately have to give account.

Doctor Keene, in the old days of his health, used to enjoy an occasional skirmish with her. Once, in the course of chaffering over the price of *calas*, he enounced an old current conviction which is not without holders even to this day; for we may still hear it said by those who will not be decoyed down from the mountain fastnesses of the old Southern doctrines, that their slaves were "the happiest people under the sun." Clemence had made bold to deny this with argumentative indignation, and was courteously informed in retort that she had promulgated a falsehood of magnitude.

"W'y, Mawse Chawlie," she replied, "does you s'pose one po' nigga kin tell a big lie? No, sah! But w'en de whole people tell w'at ain' so--if dey know it, aw if dey don' know it--den dat *is* a big lie!" And she laughed to contortion.

"What is that you say?" he demanded, with mock ferocity. "You charge white people with lying?"

"Oh, sakes, Mawse Chawlie, no! De people don't mek up dat ah; de debble pass it on 'em. Don' you know de debble ah de grett cyount'-feiteh? Ev'y piece o' money he mek he tek an' put some debblemen' on de under side, an' one o' his pootiess lies on top; an' 'e gilt dat lie, and 'e rub dat lie on 'is elbow, an' 'e shine dat lie, an' 'e put 'is bess licks on dat lie; entel ev'ybody say: 'Oh, how pooty!' An' dey tek it fo' good money, yass--and pass it! Dey b'lieb it!"

"Oh," said some one at Doctor Keene's side, disposed to quiz, "you niggers don't know when you are happy."

"Dass so, Mawse--*c'est vrai, oui*!" she answered quickly: "we donno no mo'n white folks!"

The laugh was against him.

"Mawse Chawlie," she said again, "w'a's dis I yeh 'bout dat Eu'ope country? 's dat true de niggas is all free in Eu'ope!"

Doctor Keene replied that something like that was true.

"Well, now, Mawse Chawlie, I gwan t' ass you a riddle. If dat is *so*, den fo' w'y I yeh folks bragg'n 'bout de 'stayt o' s'iety in Eu'ope'?"

The mincing drollery with which she used this fine phrase brought another peal of laughter. Nobody tried to guess.

"I gwan tell you," said the *marchande*; "'t is becyaze dey got a 'fixed wuckin' class.'" She sputtered and giggled with the general ha, ha. "Oh, ole Clemence kin talk proctah, yass!"

She made a gesture for attention.

"D' y' ebber yeh w'at de cya'ge-hoss say w'en 'e see de cyaht-hoss tu'n loose in de sem pawstu'e wid he, an' knowed dat some'ow de cyaht gotteh be haul'? W'y 'e jiz snawt an' kick up 'is heel'"--she suited the action to the word--"an' tah' roun' de fiel' an' prance up to de fence an' say: 'Whoopy! shoo! shoo! dis yeh country gittin' *too* free!'"

"Oh," she resumed, as soon as she could be heard, "white folks is werry kine. Dey wants us to b'lieb we happy--dey *wants to b'lieb* we is. W'y, you know, dey 'bleeged to b'lieb it--fo' dey own cyumfut. 'Tis de sem weh wid de preache's; dey buil' we ow own sep'ate meet'n-houses; dey b'liebs us lak it de bess, an' dey *knows* dey lak it de bess."

The laugh at this was mostly her own. It is not a laughable sight to see the comfortable fractions of Christian communities everywhere striving, with sincere, pious, well-meant, criminal benevolence, to make their poor brethren contented with the ditch. Nor does it become so to see these efforts meet, or seem to meet, some degree of success. Happily man cannot so place his brother that his misery will continue unmitigated. You may dwarf a man to the mere stump of what he ought to be, and yet he will

put out green leaves. "Free from care," we benignly observe of the dwarfed classes of society; but we forget, or have never thought, what a crime we commit when we rob men and women of their cares.

To Clemence the order of society was nothing. No upheaval could reach to the depth to which she was sunk. It is true, she was one of the population. She had certain affections toward people and places; but they were not of a consuming sort.

As for us, our feelings, our sentiments, affections, etc., are fine and keen, delicate and many; what we call refined. Why? Because we get them as we get our old swords and gems and laces--from our grandsires, mothers, and all. Refined they are--after centuries of refining. But the feelings handed down to Clemence had come through ages of African savagery; through fires that do not refine, but that blunt and blast and blacken and char; starvation, gluttony, drunkenness, thirst, drowning, nakedness, dirt, fetichism, debauchery, slaughter, pestilence and the rest--she was their heiress; they left her the cinders of human feelings. She remembered her mother. They had been separated in her childhood, in Virginia when it was a province. She remembered, with pride, the price her mother had brought at auction, and remarked, as an additional interesting item, that she had never seen or heard of her since. She had had children, assorted colors--had one with her now, the black boy that brought the basil to Joseph; the others were here and there, some in the Grandissime households or field-gangs, some elsewhere within occasional sight, some dead, some not accounted for. Husbands--like the Samaritan woman's. We know she was a constant singer and laugher.

And so on that day, when Honoré Grandissime had advised the Governor-General of Louisiana to be very careful to avoid demonstration of any sort if he wished to avert a street war in his little capital, Clemence went up one street and down another,

singing her song and laughing her professional merry laugh. How could it be otherwise? Let events take any possible turn, how could it make any difference to Clemence? What could she hope to gain? What could she fear to lose? She sold some of her goods to Casa Calvo's Spanish guard and sang them a Spanish song; some to Claiborne's soldiers and sang them Yankee Doodle with unclean words of her own inspiration, which evoked true soldiers' laughter; some to a priest at his window, exchanging with him a pious comment or two upon the wickedness of the times generally and their Américain Protestant-poisoned community in particular; and (after going home to dinner and coming out newly furnished) she sold some more of her wares to the excited groups of Creoles to which we have had occasion to allude, and from whom, insensible as she was to ribaldry, she was glad to escape. The day now drawing to a close, she turned her steps toward her wonted crouching-place, the willow avenue on the levee, near the Place d'Armes. But she had hardly defined this decision clearly in her mind, and had but just turned out of the rue St. Louis, when her song attracted an ear in a second-story room under whose window she was passing. As usual, it was fitted to the passing event:

"*Apportez moi mo' sabre,*
Ba boum, ba boum, boum, boum."

"Run, fetch that girl here," said Dr. Keene to the slave woman who had just entered his room with a pitcher of water.

"Well, old eavesdropper," he said, as Clemence came, "what is the scandal to-day?"

Clemence laughed.

"You know, Mawse Chawlie, I dunno noth'n' 'tall 'bout nobody. I'se a nigga w'at mine my own business."

"Sit down there on that stool, and tell me what is going on outside."

"I d' no noth'n' 'bout no goin's on; got no time fo' sit down, me; got sell my cakes. I don't goin' git mix' in wid no white folks's doin's."

"Hush, you old hypocrite; I will buy all your cakes. Put them out there on the table."

The invalid, sitting up in bed, drew a purse from behind his pillow and tossed her a large price. She tittered, courtesied and received the money.

"Well, well, Mawse Chawlie, 'f you ain' de funni'st gen'leman I knows, to be sho!"

"Have you seen Joseph Frowenfeld to-day?" he asked.

"He, he, he! W'at I got do wid Mawse Frowenfel'? I goes on de off side o' sich folks--folks w'at cann' 'have deyself no bette'n dat--he, he, he! At de same time I did happen, jis chancin' by accident, to see 'im."

"How is he?"

Dr. Keene made plain by his manner that any sensational account would receive his instantaneous contempt, and she answered within bounds.

"Well, now, tellin' the simple trufe, he ain' much hurt."

The doctor turned slowly and cautiously in bed.

"Have you seen Honoré Grandissime?"

"W'y--das funny you ass me dat. I jis now see 'im dis werry minnit."

"Where?"

"Jis gwine into de house wah dat laydy live w'at 'e runned over dat ah time."

"Now, you old hag," cried the sick man, his weak, husky voice trembling with passion, "you know you're telling me a lie."

"No, Mawse Chawlie," she protested with a coward's frown, "I swah I tellin' you de God's trufe!"

"Hand me my clothes off that chair."

"Oh! but, Mawse Chawlie--"

The little doctor cursed her. She did as she was bid, and made as if to leave the room.

"Don't you go away."

"But Mawse Chawlie, you' undress'--he, he!"

She was really abashed and half frightened.

"I know that; and you have got to help me put my clothes on."

"You gwan kill yo'se'f, Mawse Chawlie," she said, handling a garment.

"Hold your black tongue."

She dressed him hastily, and he went down the stairs of his lodging-house and out into the street. Clemence went in search of her master.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE EAGLE VISITS THE DOVES IN THEIR NEST

Alphonsina--only living property of Aurora and Clotilde--was called upon to light a fire in the little parlor. Elsewhere, although the day was declining, few persons felt such a need; but in No. 19 rue Bienville there were two chilling influences combined requiring an artificial offset. One was the ground under the floor, which was only three inches distant, and permanently saturated with water; the other was despair.

Before this fire the two ladies sat down together like watchers, in that silence and vacuity of mind which come after an exhaustive struggle ending in the recognition of the inevitable; a torpor of thought, a stupefaction of feeling, a purely negative state of joylessness sequent to the positive state of anguish. They were now both hungry, but in want of some present friend acquainted with the motions of mental distress who could guess this fact and press them to eat. By their eyes it was plain they had been weeping much; by the subdued tone, too, of their short and infrequent speeches.

Alphonsina, having made the fire, went out with a bundle. It was Aurora's last good dress. She was going to try to sell it.

"It ought not to be so hard," began Clotilde, in a quiet manner of contemplating some one else's difficulty, but paused with the saying uncompleted, and sighed under her breath.

"But it *is* so hard," responded Aurora.

"No, it ought not to be so hard--"

"How, not so hard?"

"It is not so hard to live," said Clotilde; "but it is hard to be ladies. You understand--" she knit her fingers, dropped them into her lap and turned her eyes toward Aurora, who responded with the same motions, adding the crossing of her silk-stockinged ankles before the fire.

"No," said Aurora, with a scintillation of irrepressible mischief in her eyes.

"After all," pursued Clotilde, "what troubles us is not how to make a living, but how to get a living without making it."

"Ah! that would be magnificent!" said Aurora, and then added, more soberly; "but we are compelled to make a living."

"No."

"No-o? Ah! what do you mean with your 'no'?"

"I mean it is just the contrary; we are compelled not to make a living. Look at me: I can cook, but I must not cook; I am skillful with the needle, but I must not take in sewing; I could keep accounts; I could nurse the sick; but I must not. I could be a confectioner, a milliner, a dressmaker, a vest-maker, a cleaner of gloves and laces, a dyer, a bird-seller, a mattress-maker, an upholsterer, a dancing-teacher, a florist--"

"Oh!" softly exclaimed Aurora, in English, "you could be--you know w'ad?--an egcellen' drug-cl'--ah, ha, ha!"

"Now--"

But the threatened irruption was averted by a look of tender apology from Aurora, in reply to one of martyrdom from Clotilde.

"My angel daughter," said Aurora, "if society has decreed that ladies must be ladies, then that is our first duty; our second is to live. Do you not see why it is that this practical world does not permit ladies to make a living? Because if they could, none of them would ever consent to be married. Ha! women talk about marrying for love; but society is too sharp to trust them, yet! It makes it *necessary* to marry. I will tell you the honest truth; some days when I get very, very hungry, and we have nothing but rice--all because we are ladies without male protectors--I

think society could drive even me to marriage!--for your sake, though, darling; of course, only for your sake!"

"Never!" replied Clotilde; "for my sake, never; for your own sake if you choose. I should not care. I should be glad to see you do so if it would make you happy; but never for my sake and never for hunger's sake; but for love's sake, yes; and God bless thee, pretty maman."

"Clotilde, dear," said the unconscionable widow, "let me assure you, once for all,--starvation is preferable. I mean for me, you understand, simply for me; that is my feeling on the subject."

Clotilde turned her saddened eyes with a steady scrutiny upon her deceiver, who gazed upward in apparently unconscious reverie, and sighed softly as she laid her head upon the high chair-back and stretched out her feet.

"I wish Alphonsina would come back," she said. "Ah!" she added, hearing a footfall on the step outside the street door, "there she is."

She arose and drew the bolt. Unseen to her, the person whose footsteps she had heard stood upon the doorstep with a hand lifted to knock, but pausing to "makeup his mind." He heard the bolt shoot back, recognized the nature of the mistake, and, feeling that here again he was robbed of volition, rapped.

"That is not Alphonsina!"

The two ladies looked at each other and turned pale.

"But you must open it," whispered Clotilde, half rising.

Aurora opened the door, and changed from white to crimson. Clotilde rose up quickly. The gentleman lifted his hat.

"Madame Nancanou."

"M. Grandissime?"

"Oui, Madame."

For once, Aurora was in an uncontrollable flutter. She stammered, lost her breath, and even spoke worse French than she needed to have done.

"Be pl--pleased, sir--to enter. Clotilde, my daughter--Monsieur Grandissime. P-please be seated, sir. Monsieur Grandissime,"--she dropped into a chair with an air of vivacity pitiful to behold,--"I suppose you have come for the rent." She blushed even more violently than before, and her hand stole upward upon her heart to stay its violent beating. "Clotilde, dear, I should be glad if you would put the fire before the screen; it is so much too warm." She pushed her chair back and shaded her face with her hand. "I think the warmer is growing weather outside, is it--is it not?"

The struggles of a wounded bird could not have been more piteous. Monsieur Grandissime sought to speak. Clotilde, too, nerved by the sight of her mother's embarrassment, came to her support, and she and the visitor spoke in one breath.

"Maman, if Monsieur--pardon--"

"Madame Nancanou, the--pardon, Mademoiselle--"

"I have presumed to call upon you," resumed M. Grandissime, addressing himself now to both ladies at once, "to see if I may enlist you in a purely benevolent undertaking in the interest of one who has been unfortunate--a common acquaintance--"

"Common acquaint--" interrupted Aurora, with a hostile lighting of her eyes.

"I believe so--Professor Frowenfeld." M. Grandissme saw Clotilde start, and in her turn falsely accuse the fire by shading her face: but it was no time to stop. "Ladies," he continued, "please allow me, for the

sake of the good it may effect, to speak plainly and to the point."

The ladies expressed acquiescence by settling themselves to hear.

"Professor Frowenfeld had the extraordinary misfortune this morning to incur the suspicion of having entered a house for the purpose of--at least, for a bad design--"

"He is innocent!" came from Clotilde, against her intention; Aurora covertly put out a hand, and Clotilde clutched it nervously.

"As, for example, robbery," said the self-recovered Aurora, ignoring Clotilde's look of protestation.

"Call it so," responded M. Grandissime. "Have you heard at whose house this was?"

"No, sir."

"It was at the house of Palmyre Philosophe."

"Palmyre Philosophe!" exclaimed Aurora, in low astonishment. Clotilde let slip, in a tone of indignant incredulity, a soft "Ah!" Aurora turned, and with some hope that M. Grandissime would not understand, ventured to say in Spanish, quietly:

"Come, come, this will never do."

And Clotilde replied in the same tongue:

"I know it, but he is innocent."

"Let us understand each other," said their visitor. "There is not the faintest idea in the mind of one of us that Professor Frowenfeld is guilty of even an intention of wrong; otherwise I should not be here. He is a man simply incapable of anything ignoble."

Clotilde was silent. Aurora answered promptly, with the air of one not to be excelled in generosity:

"Certainly, he is very incapabl'."

"Still," resumed the visitor, turning especially to Clotilde, "the known facts are these, according to his own statement: he was in the house of Palmyre on some legitimate business which, unhappily, he considers himself on some account bound not to disclose, and by some mistake of Palmyre's old Congo woman, was set upon by her and wounded, barely escaping with a whole skull into the street, an object of public scandal. Laying aside the consideration of his feelings, his reputation is at stake and likely to be ruined unless the affair can be explained clearly and satisfactorily, and at once, by his friends."

"And you undertake--" began Aurora.

"Madame Nancanou," said Honoré Grandissime, leaning toward her earnestly, "you know--I must beg leave to appeal to your candor and confidence--you know everything concerning Palmyre that I know. You know me, and who I am; you know it is not for me to undertake to confer with Palmyre. I know, too, her old affection for you; she lives but a little way down this street upon which you live; there is still daylight enough at your disposal; if you will, you can go to see her, and get from her a full and complete exoneration of this young man. She cannot come to you; she is not fit to leave her room."

"Cannot leave her room?"

"I am, possibly, violating confidence in this disclosure, but it is unavoidable--you have to know: she is not fully recovered from a pistol-shot wound received between two and three weeks ago."

"Pistol-shot wound!"

Both ladies started forward with open lips and exclamations of amazement.

"Received from a third person--not myself and not Professor Frowenfeld--in a desperate attempt made by her to avenge the wrongs which she has suffered,

as you, Madam, as well as I, are aware, at the hands of--"

Aurora rose up with a majestic motion for the speaker to desist.

"If it is to mention the person of whom your allusion reminds me, that you have honored us with a call this evening, Monsieur--"

Her eyes were flashing as he had seen them flash in front of the Place d'Armes.

"I beg you not to suspect me of meanness," he answered, gently, and with a remonstrative smile. "I have been trying all day, in a way unnecessary to explain, to be generous."

"I suppose you are incapabl'," said Aurora, following her double meaning with that combination of mischievous eyes and unsmiling face of which she was master. She resumed her seat, adding: "It is generous for you to admit that Palmyre has suffered wrongs."

"It *would* be," he replied, "to attempt to repair them, seeing that I am not responsible for them, but this I cannot claim yet to have done. I have asked of you, Madam, a generous act. I might ask another of you both jointly. It is to permit me to say without offence, that there is one man, at least, of the name of Grandissime who views with regret and mortification the yet deeper wrongs which you are even now suffering."

"Oh!" exclaimed Aurora, inwardly ready for fierce tears, but with no outward betrayal save a trifle too much grace and an over-bright smile, "Monsieur is much mistaken; we are quite comfortable and happy, wanting nothing, eh, Clotilde?--not even our rights, ha, ha!"

She rose and let Alphonsina in. The bundle was still in the negress's arms. She passed through the room and disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

"Oh! no, sir, not at all," repeated Aurora, as she once more sat down.

"You ought to want your rights," said M. Grandissime. "You ought to have them."

"You think so?"

Aurora was really finding it hard to conceal her growing excitement, and turned, with a faint hope of relief, toward Clotilde.

Clotilde, looking only at their visitor, but feeling her mother's glance, with a tremulous and half-choked voice, said eagerly:

"Then why do you not give them to us?"

"Ah!" interposed Aurora, "we shall get them to-morrow, when the sheriff comes."

And, thereupon what did Clotilde do but sit bolt upright, with her hands in her lap, and let the tears roll, tear after tear, down her cheeks.

"Yes, Monsieur," said Aurora, smiling still, "those that you see are really tears. Ha, ha, ha! excuse me, I really have to laugh; for I just happened to remember our meeting at the masked ball last September. We had such a pleasant evening and were so much indebted to you for our enjoyment,--particularly myself,--little thinking, you know, that you were one of that great family which believes we ought to have our rights, you know. There are many people who ought to have their rights. There was Bras-Coupé; indeed, he got them--found them in the swamp. Maybe Clotilde and I shall find ours in the street. When we unmasked in the theatre, you know, I did not know you were my landlord, and you did not know that I could not pay a few picayunes of rent. But you must excuse those tears; Clotilde is generally a brave little woman, and would not be so rude as to weep before a stranger; but she is weak to-day--we are both weak to-day, from the fact that we have eaten nothing since early morning, although we

have abundance of food--for want of appetite, you understand. You must sometimes be affected the same way, having the care of so much wealth *of all sorts*."

Honoré Grandissime had risen to his feet and was standing with one hand on the edge of the lofty mantel, his hat in the other dropped at his side and his eye fixed upon Aurora's beautiful face, whence her small nervous hand kept dashing aside the tears through which she defiantly talked and smiled. Clotilde sat with clenched hands buried in her lap, looking at Aurora and still weeping.

And M. Grandissime was saying to himself:

"If I do this thing now--if I do it here--I do it on an impulse; I do it under constraint of woman's tears; I do it because I love this woman; I do it to get out of a corner; I do it in weakness, not in strength; I do it without having made up my mind whether or not it is the best thing to do."

And then, without intention, with scarcely more consciousness of movement than belongs to the undermined tree which settles, roots and all, into the swollen stream, he turned and moved toward the door.

Clotilde rose.

"Monsieur Grandissime."

He stopped and looked back.

"We will see Palmyre at once, according to your request."

He turned his eyes toward Aurora.

"Yes," said she, and she buried her face in her handkerchief and sobbed aloud.

She heard his footstep again; it reached the door; the door opened--closed; she heard his footstep again; was he gone?

He was gone.

The two women threw themselves into each other's arms and wept. Presently Clotilde left the room. She came back in a moment from the rear apartment, with a bonnet and veil in her hands.

"No," said Aurora, rising quickly, "I must do it."

"There is no time to lose," said Clotilde. "It will soon be dark."

It was hardly a minute before Aurora was ready to start. A kiss, a sorrowful look of love exchanged, the veil dropped over the swollen eyes, and Aurora was gone.

A minute passed, hardly more, and--what was this?--the soft patter of Aurora's knuckles on the door.

"Just here at the corner I saw Palmyre leaving her house and walking down the rue Royale. We must wait until morn--"

Again a footfall on the doorstep, and the door, which was standing ajar, was pushed slightly by the force of the masculine knock which followed.

"Allow me," said the voice of Honoré Grandissime, as Aurora bowed at the door. "I should have handed you this; good-day."

She received a missive. It was long, like an official document; it bore evidence of having been carried for some hours in a coat-pocket, and was folded in one of those old, troublesome ways in use before the days of envelopes. Aurora pulled it open.

"It is all figures; light a candle."

The candle was lighted by Clotilde and held over Aurora's shoulder; they saw a heading and footing more conspicuous than the rest of the writing.

The heading read:

"*Aurora and Clotilde Nancanou, owners of Fausse Rivière Plantation, in account with Honoré Grandissime*."

The footing read:

"*Balance at credit, subject to order of Aurora and Clotilde Nancanou, $105,000.00*."

The date followed:

"*March* 9, 1804."

and the signature:

"*H. Grandissime*."

A small piece of torn white paper slipped from the account to the floor. Clotilde's eye followed it, but Aurora, without acknowledgement of having seen it, covered it with her foot.

In the morning Aurora awoke first. She drew from under her pillow this slip of paper. She had not dared look at it until now. The writing on it had been roughly scratched down with a pencil. It read:

"*Not for love of woman, but in the name of justice and the fear of God*."

"And I was so cruel," she whispered.

Ah! Honoré Grandissime, she was kind to that little writing! She did not put it back under her pillow; she *kept it warm*, Honoré Grandissime, from that time forth.

CHAPTER XLIV

BAD FOR CHARLIE KEENE

On the same evening of which we have been telling, about the time that Aurora and Clotilde were dropping their last tear of joy over the document of restitution, a noticeable figure stood alone at the corner of the rue du Canal and the rue Chartres. He had reached there and paused, just as the brighter glare of the set sun was growing dim above the tops of the cypresses. After walking with some rapidity of step, he had stopped aimlessly, and laid his hand with an air of weariness upon a rotting China-tree that leaned over the ditch at the edge of the unpaved walk.

"Setting in cypress," he murmured. We need not concern ourselves as to his meaning.

One could think aloud there with impunity. In 1804, Canal street was the upper boundary of New Orleans. Beyond it, to southward, the open plain was dotted with country-houses, brick-kilns, clumps of live-oak and groves of pecan. At the hour mentioned the outlines of these objects were already darkening. At one or two points the sky was reflected from marshy ponds. Out to westward rose conspicuously the old house and willow-copse of Jean Poquelin. Down the empty street or road, which stretched with arrow-like straightness toward the northwest, the draining-canal that gave it its name tapered away between occasional overhanging willows and beside broken ranks of rotting palisades, its foul, crawling waters blushing, gilding and purpling under the swiftly waning light, and ending suddenly in the black shadow of the swamp. The observer of this dismal prospect leaned heavily on his arm, and cast his glance out along the beautified corruption of the canal. His eye seemed quickened to detect the smallest repellant details of the scene; every cypress stump that stood in, or overhung, the slimy water; every ruined indigo-vat or blasted tree, every broken thing, every bleached bone of ox or horse--and they were many--for roods around. As his eye passed them slowly over and swept back again around the

dreary view, he sighed heavily and said: "Dissolution," and then again--"Dissolution! order of the day--"

A secret overhearer might have followed, by these occasional exclamatory utterances, the course of a devouring trouble prowling up and down through his thoughts, as one's eye tracks the shark by the occasional cutting of his fin above the water.

He spoke again:

"It is in such moods as this that fools drown themselves."

His speech was French. He straightened up, smote the tree softly with his palm, and breathed a long, deep sigh--such a sigh, if the very truth be told, as belongs by right to a lover. And yet his mind did not dwell on love.

He turned and left the place; but the trouble that was plowing hither and thither through the deep of his meditations went with him. As he turned into the rue Chartres it showed itself thus:

"Right; it is but right;" he shook his head slowly--"it is but right."

In the rue Douane he spoke again:

"Ah! Frowenfeld"--and smiled unpleasantly, with his head down.

And as he made yet another turn, and took his meditative way down the city's front, along the blacksmith's shops in the street afterward called Old Levee, he resumed, in English, and with a distinctness that made a staggering sailor halt and look after him:

"There are but two steps to civilization, the first easy, the second difficult; to construct--to reconstruct--ah! there it is! the tearing down! The tear'--"

He was still, but repeated the thought by a gesture of distress turned into a slow stroke of the forehead.

"Monsieur Honoré Grandissime," said a voice just ahead.

"*Eh, bien*?"

At the mouth of an alley, in the dim light of the streep lamp, stood the dark figure of Honoré Grandissime, f.m.c., holding up the loosely hanging form of a small man, the whole front of whose clothing was saturated with blood.

"Why, Charlie Keene! Let him down again, quickly--quickly; do not hold him so!"

"Hands off," came in a ghastly whisper from the shape.

"Oh, Chahlie, my boy--"

"Go and finish your courtship," whispered the doctor.

"Oh Charlie, I have just made it forever impossible!"

"Then help me back to my bed; I don't care to die in the street."

CHAPTER XLV

MORE REPARATION

"That is all," said the fairer Honoré, outside Doctor Keene's sick-room about ten o'clock at night. He was speaking to the black son of Clemence, who had been serving as errand-boy for some hours. He spoke in a low tone just without the half-open door, folding again a paper which the lad had lately borne to the apothecary of the rue Royale, and had now brought back with Joseph's answer written under Honoré's inquiry.

"That is all," said the other Honoré, standing partly behind the first, as the eyes of his little menial turned upon him that deprecatory glance of inquiry so common to slave children. The lad went a little way down the corridor, curled up upon the floor against the wall, and was soon asleep. The fairer Honoré handed the darker the slip of paper; it was received and returned in silence. The question was:

"*Can you state anything positive concerning the duel*?"

And the reply:

"*Positively there will be none. Sylvestre my sworn friend for life*."

The half-brothers sat down under a dim hanging lamp in the corridor, and except that every now and then one or the other stepped noiselessly to the door to look in upon the sleeping sick man, or in the opposite direction to moderate by a push with the foot the snoring of Clemence's "boy," they sat the whole night through in whispered counsel.

The one, at the request of the other, explained how he had come to be with the little doctor in such extremity.

It seems that Clemence, seeing and understanding the doctor's imprudence, had sallied out with the resolve to set some person on his track. We have said that she went in search of her master. Him she met, and though she could not really count him one of the doctor's friends, yet, rightly believing in his

humanity, she told him the matter. He set off in what was for him a quick pace in search of the rash invalid, was misdirected by a too confident child and had given up the hope of finding him, when a faint sound of distress just at hand drew him into an alley, where, close down against a wall, with his face to the earth, lay Doctor Keene. The f.m.c. had just raised him and borne him out of the alley when Honoré came up.

"And you say that, when you would have inquired for him at Frowenfeld's, you saw Palmyre there, standing and talking with Frowenfeld? Tell me more exactly."

And the other, with that grave and gentle economy of words which made his speech so unique, recounted what we amplify:

Palmyre had needed no pleading to induce her to exonerate Joseph. The doctors were present at Frowenfeld's in more than usual number. There was unusualness, too, in their manner and their talk. They were not entirely free from the excitement of the day, and as they talked--with an air of superiority, of Creole inflammability, and with some contempt--concerning Camille Brahmin's and Charlie Mandarin's efforts to precipitate a war, they were yet visibly in a state of expectation. Frowenfeld, they softly said, had in his odd way been indiscreet among these inflammables at Maspero's just when he could least afford to be so, and there was no telling what they might take the notion to do to him before bedtime. All that over and above the independent, unexplained scandal of the early morning. So Joseph and his friends this evening, like Aurora and Clotilde in the morning, were, as we nowadays say of buyers and sellers, "apart," when suddenly and unannounced, Palmyre presented herself among them. When the f.m.c. saw her, she had already handed Joseph his hat and with much sober grace was apologizing for her slave's mistake. All evidence of her being wounded was concealed. The

extraordinary excitement of the morning had not hurt her, and she seemed in perfect health. The doctors sat or stood around and gave rapt attention to her patois, one or two translating it for Joseph, and he blushing to the hair, but standing erect and receiving it at second hand with silent bows. The f.m.c. had gazed on her for a moment, and then forced himself away. He was among the few who had not heard the morning scandal, and he did not comprehend the evening scene. He now asked Honoré concerning it, and quietly showed great relief when it was explained.

Then Honoré, breaking a silence, called the attention of the f.m.c. to the fact that the latter had two tenants at Number 19 rue Bienville. Honoré became the narrator now and told all, finally stating that the die was cast--restitution made.

And then the darker Honoré made a proposition to the other, which, it is little to say, was startling. They discussed it for hours.

"So just a condition," said the merchant, raising his whisper so much that the rentier laid a hand in his elbow,--"such mere justice," he said, more softly, "ought to be an easy condition. God knows"--he lifted his glance reverently--"my very right to exist comes after yours. You are the elder."

The solemn man offered no disclaimer.

What could the proposition be which involved so grave an issue, and to which M. Grandissime's final answer was "I will do it"?

It was that Honoré f.m.c. should become a member of the mercantile house of H. Grandissime, enlisting in its capital all his wealth. And the one condition was that the new style should be *Grandissime Brothers*.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE PIQUE-EN-TERRE LOSES ONE OF HER CREW

Ask the average resident of New Orleans if his town is on an island, and he will tell you no. He will also wonder how any one could have got that notion,--so completely has Orleans Island, whose name at the beginning of the present century was in everybody's mouth, been forgotten. It was once a question of national policy, a point of difference between Republican and Federalist, whether the United States ought to buy this little strip of semi-submerged land, or whether it would not be more righteous to steal it. The Kentuckians kept the question at a red heat by threatening to become an empire by themselves if one course or the other was not taken; but when the First Consul offered to sell all Louisiana, our commissioners were quite robbed of breath. They had approached to ask a hair from the elephant's tail, and were offered the elephant.

For Orleans Island--island it certainly was until General Jackson closed Bayou Manchac--is a narrow, irregular, flat tract of forest, swamp, city, prairie and sea-marsh, lying east and west, with the Mississippi, trending southeastward, for its southern boundary, and for its northern, a parallel and contiguous chain of alternate lakes and bayous, opening into the river through Bayou Manchac, and into the Gulf through the passes of the Malheureuse Islands. On the narrowest part of it stands New

Orleans. Turning and looking back over the rear of the town, one may easily see from her steeples Lake Pontchartrain glistening away to the northern horizon, and in his fancy extend the picture to right and left till Pontchartrain is linked in the west by Pass Manchac to Lake Maurepas, and in the east by the Rigolets and Chef Menteur to Lake Borgne.

An oddity of the Mississippi Delta is the habit the little streams have of running away from the big ones. The river makes its own bed and its own banks, and continuing season after season, through ages of alternate overflow and subsidence, to elevate those banks, creates a ridge which thus becomes a natural elevated aqueduct. Other slightly elevated ridges mark the present or former courses of minor outlets, by which the waters of the Mississippi have found the sea. Between these ridges lie the cypress swamps, through whose profound shades the clear, dark, deep bayous creep noiselessly away into the tall grasses of the shaking prairies. The original New Orleans was built on the Mississippi ridge, with one of these forest-and-water-covered basins stretching back behind her to westward and northward, closed in by Metairie Ridge and Lake Pontchartrain. Local engineers preserve the tradition that the Bayou Sauvage once had its rise, so to speak, in Toulouse street. Though depleted by the city's present drainage system and most likely poisoned by it as well, its waters still move seaward in a course almost due easterly, and empty into Chef Menteur, one of the watery threads of a tangled skein of "passes" between the lakes and the open Gulf. Three-quarters of a century ago this Bayou Sauvage (or Gentilly--corruption of Chantilly) was a navigable stream of wild and sombre beauty.

On a certain morning in August, 1804, and consequently some five months after the events last mentioned, there emerged from the darkness of Bayou Sauvage into the prairie-bordered waters of Chef Menteur, while the morning star was still

luminous in the sky above and in the water below, and only the practised eye could detect the first glimmer of day, a small, stanch, single-masted, broad and very light-draught boat, whose innocent character, primarily indicated in its coat of many colors,--the hull being yellow below the water line and white above, with tasteful stripings of blue and red,--was further accentuated by the peaceful name of *Pique-en-terre* (the Sandpiper).

She seemed, too, as she entered the Chef Menteur, as if she would have liked to turn southward; but the wind did not permit this, and in a moment more the water was rippling after her swift rudder, as she glided away in the direction of Pointe Aux Herbes. But when she had left behind her the mouth of the passage, she changed her course and, leaving the Pointe on her left, bore down toward Petites Coquilles, obviously bent upon passing through the Rigolets.

We know not how to describe the joyousness of the effect when at length one leaves behind him the shadow and gloom of the swamp, and there bursts upon his sight the widespread, flower-decked, bird-haunted prairies of Lake Catharine. The inside and outside of a prison scarcely furnish a greater contrast; and on this fair August morning the contrast was at its strongest. The day broke across a glad expanse of cool and fragrant green, silver-laced with a network of crisp salt pools and passes, lakes, bayous and lagoons, that gave a good smell, the inspiring odor of interclasped sea and shore, and both beautified and perfumed the happy earth, laid bare to the rising sun. Waving marshes of wild oats, drooping like sated youth from too much pleasure; watery acres hid under crisp-growing greenth starred with pond-lilies and rippled by water-fowl; broad stretches of high grass, with thousands of ecstatic wings palpitating above them; hundreds of thousands of white and pink mallows clapping their hands in voiceless rapture, and that amazon queen of the wild flowers, the

morning-glory, stretching her myriad lines, lifting up the trumpet and waving her colors, white, azure and pink, with lacings of spider's web, heavy with pearls and diamonds--the gifts of the summer night. The crew of the *Pique-en-terre* saw all these and felt them; for, whatever they may have been or failed to be, they were men whose heartstrings responded to the touches of nature. One alone of their company, and he the one who should have felt them most, showed insensibility, sighed laughingly and then laughed sighingly, in the face of his fellows and of all this beauty, and profanely confessed that his heart's desire was to get back to his wife. He had been absent from her now for nine hours!

But the sun is getting high; Petites Coquilles has been passed and left astern, the eastern end of Las Conchas is on the after-larboard-quarter, the briny waters of Lake Borgne flash far and wide their dazzling white and blue, and, as the little boat issues from the deep channel of the Rigolets, the white-armed waves catch her and toss her like a merry babe. A triumph for the helmsman--he it is who sighs, at intervals of tiresome frequency, for his wife. He had, from the very starting-place in the upper waters of Bayou Sauvage, declared in favor of the Rigolets as--wind and tide considered--the most practicable of all the passes. Now that they were out, he forgot for a moment the self-amusing plaint of conjugal separation to flaunt his triumph. Would any one hereafter dispute with him on the subject of Louisiana sea-coast navigation? He knew every pass and piece of water like A, B, C, and could tell, faster, much faster than he could repeat the multiplication table (upon which he was a little slow and doubtful), the amount of water in each at ebb tide--Pass Jean or Petit Pass, Unknown Pass, Petit Rigolet, Chef Menteur,--

Out on the far southern horizon, in the Gulf--the Gulf of Mexico--there appears a speck of white. It is known to those on board the *Pique-en-terre*, the

moment it is descried, as the canvas of a large schooner. The opinion, first expressed by the youthful husband, who still reclines with the tiller held firmly under his arm, and then by another member of the company who sits on the centreboard-well, is unanimously adopted, that she is making for the Rigolets, will pass Petites Coquilles by eleven o'clock, and will tie up at the little port of St. Jean, on the bayou of the same name, before sundown, if the wind holds anywise as it is.

On the other hand, the master of the distant schooner shuts his glass, and says to the single passenger whom he has aboard that the little sail just visible toward the Rigolets is a sloop with a half-deck, well filled with men, in all probability a pleasure party bound to the Chandeleurs on a fishing and gunning excursion, and passes into comments on the superior skill of landsmen over seamen in the handling of small sailing craft.

By and by the two vessels near each other. They approach within hailing distance, and are announcing each to each their identity, when the young man at the tiller jerks himself to a squatting posture, and, from under a broad-brimmed and slouched straw hat, cries to the schooner's one passenger:

"Hello, Challie Keene."

And the passenger more quietly answers back:

"Hello, Raoul, is that you?"

M. Innerarity replied, with a profane parenthesis, that it was he.

"You kin hask Sylvestre!" he concluded.

The doctor's eye passed around a semicircle of some eight men, the most of whom were quite young, but one or two of whom were gray, sitting with their arms thrown out upon the wash-board, in the dark négligé of amateur fishermen and with that exultant

look of expectant deviltry in their handsome faces which characterizes the Creole with his collar off.

The mettlesome little doctor felt the odds against him in the exchange of greetings.

"Ola, Dawctah!"

"*Hé*, Doctah, *que-ce qui t'après fé?*"

"*Ho, ho, compère Noyo!*"

"*Comment va*, Docta?"

A light peppering of profanity accompanied each salute.

The doctor put on defensively a smile of superiority to the juniors and of courtesy to the others, and responsively spoke their names:

"'Polyte--Sylvestre--Achille--Émile--ah! Agamemnon."

The Doctor and Agamemnon raised their hats.

As Agamemnon was about to speak, a general expostulatory outcry drowned his voice. The *Pique-en-terre* was going about close abreast of the schooner, and angry questions and orders were flying at Raoul's head like a volley of eggs.

"Messieurs," said Raoul, partially rising but still stooping over the tiller, and taking his hat off his bright curls with mock courtesy, "I am going back to New Orleans. I would not give *that* for all the fish in the sea; I want to see my wife. I am going back to New Orleans to see my wife--and to congratulate the city upon your absence." Incredulity, expostulation, reproach, taunt, malediction--he smiled unmoved upon them all.

"Messieurs, I *must* go and see my wife."

Amid redoubled outcries he gave the helm to Camille Brahmin, and fighting his way with his pretty feet against half-real efforts to throw him overboard,

clambered forward to the mast, whence a moment later, with the help of the schooner-master's hand, he reached the deck of the larger vessel. The *Pique-en-terre* turned, and with a little flutter spread her smooth wing and skimmed away.

"Doctah Keene, look yeh!" M. Innerarity held up a hand whose third finger wore the conventional ring of the Creole bridegroom. "W'at you got to say to dat?"

The little doctor felt a faintness run through his veins, and a thrill of anger follow it. The poor man could not imagine a love affair that did not include Clotilde Nancanou.

"Whom have you married?"

"De pritties' gal in de citty."

The questioner controlled himself.

"M-hum," he responded, with a contraction of the eyes.

Raoul waited an instant for some kindlier comment, and finding the hope vain, suddenly assumed a look of delighted admiration.

"Hi, yi, yi! Doctah, 'ow you har lookingue fine."

The true look of the doctor was that he had not much longer to live. A smile of bitter humor passed over his face, and he looked for a near seat, saying:

"How's Frowenfeld?"

Raoul struck an ecstatic attitude and stretched forth his hand as if the doctor could not fail to grasp it. The invalid's heart sank like lead.

"Frowenfeld has got her," he thought.

"Well?" said he with a frown of impatience and restraint; and Raoul cried:

"I sole my pigshoe!"

The doctor could not help but laugh.

"Shades of the masters!"

"No; 'Louizyanna rif-using to hantre de h-Union.'"

The doctor stood corrected.

The two walked across the deck, following the shadow of the swinging sail. The doctor lay down in a low-swung hammock, and Raoul sat upon the deck *à la Turque*.

"Come, come, Raoul, tell me, what is the news?"

"News? Oh, I donno. You 'eard concernin' the dool?"

"You don't mean to say--"

"Yesseh!"

"Agricola and Sylvestre?"

"W'at de dev'! No! Burr an' 'Ammiltong; in Noo-Juzzy-las-June. Collonnel Burr, 'e--"

"Oh, fudge! yes. How is Frowenfeld?"

"'E's well. Guess 'ow much I sole my pigshoe."

"Well, how much?"

"Two 'ondred fifty." He laid himself out at length, his elbow on the deck, his head in his hand. "I believe I'm sorry I sole 'er."

"I don't wonder. How's Honoré? Tell me what has happened. Remember, I've been away five months."

"No; I am verrie glad dat I sole 'er. What? Ha! I should think so! If it have not had been fo' dat I would not be married to-day. You think I would get married on dat sal'rie w'at Proffis-or Frowenfel' was payin' me? Twenty-five dolla' de mont'? Docta Keene, no gen'leman h-ought to git married if 'e 'ave not anny'ow fifty dolla' de mont'! If I wasn' a h-artiz I wouldn' git married; I gie you my word!"

"Yes," said the little doctor, "you are right. Now tell me the news."

"Well, dat Cong-ress gone an' make--"

"Raoul, stop. I know that Congress has divided the province into two territories; I know you Creoles think all your liberties are lost; I know the people are in a great stew because they are not allowed to elect their own officers and legislatures, and that in Opelousas and Attakapas they are as wild as their cattle about it--"

"We 'ad two big mitting' about it," interrupted Raoul; "my bro'r-in-law speak at both of them!"

"Who?"

"Chahlie Mandarin."

"Glad to hear it," said Doctor Keene,--which was the truth. "Besides that, I know Laussat has gone to Martinique; that the Américains have a newspaper, and that cotton is two-bits a pound. Now what I want to know is, how are my friends? What has Honoré done? What has Frowenfeld done? And Palmyre,--and Agricole? They hustled me away from here as if I had been caught trying to cut my throat. Tell me everything."

And Raoul sank the artist and bridegroom in the historian, and told him.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE NEWS

"My cousin Honoré,--well, you kin jus' say 'e bitray' 'is 'ole fam'ly."

"How so?" asked Doctor Keene, with a handkerchief over his face to shield his eyes from the sun.

"Well,--ce't'nly 'e did! Di'n' 'e gave dat money to Aurora De Grapion?--one 'undred five t'ousan' dolla'? Jis' as if to say, 'Yeh's de money my h-uncle stole from you' 'usban'.' Hah! w'en I will swear on a stack of Bible' as 'igh as yo' head, dat Agricole win dat 'abitation fair!--If I see it? No, sir; I don't 'ave to see it! I'll swear to it! Hah!"

"And have she and her daughter actually got the money?"

"She--an'--heh--daughtah--ac--shilly--got-'at-money-sir! W'at? Dey livin' in de rue Royale in mag-*niff*ycen' style on top de drug-sto' of Proffis-or Frowenfel'."

"But how, over Frowenfeld's, when Frowenfeld's is a one-story--"

"My dear frien'! Proffis-or Frowenfel' is *moove!* You rickleck dat big new t'ree-story buildin' w'at jus' finished in de rue Royale, a lill mo' farther up town from his old shop? Well, we open dare *a big sto'!* An' listen! You think Honoré di'n' bitrayed' 'is family? Madame Nancanou an' heh daughtah livin' upstair an' rissy-ving de finess soci'ty in de Province!--an' *me?*--downstair' meckin' pill! You call dat justice?"

But Doctor Keene, without waiting for this question, had asked one:

"Does Frowenfeld board with them?"

"Psh-sh-sh! Board! Dey woon board de Marquis of Casa Calvo! I don't b'lieve dey would board Honoré

Grandissime! All de king' an' queen' in de worl' couldn' board dare! No, sir!--'Owever, you know, I think dey are splendid ladies. Me an' my wife, we know them well. An' Honoré--I think my cousin Honoré's a splendid gen'leman, too." After a moment's pause he resumed, with a happy sigh, "Well, I don' care, I'm married. A man w'at's married, 'e don' care.

"But I di'n' t'ink Honoré could ever do lak dat odder t'ing."

"Do he and Joe Frowenfeld visit there?"

"Doctah Keene," demanded Raoul, ignoring the question, "I hask you now, plain, don' you find dat mighty disgressful to do dat way, lak Honoré?"

"What way?"

"W'at? You dunno? You don' yeh 'ow 'e gone partner' wid a nigga?"

"What do you mean?"

Doctor Keene drew the handkerchief off his face and half lifted his feeble head.

"Yesseh! 'e gone partner' wid dat quadroon w'at call 'imself Honoré Grandissime, seh!"

The doctor dropped his head again and laid the handkerchief back on his face.

"What do the family say to that?"

"But w'at *can* dey say? It save dem from ruin! At de sem time, me, I think it is a disgress. Not dat he h-use de money, but it is dat name w'at 'e give de h-establishmen'--Grandissime Frères! H-only for 'is money we would 'ave catch' dat quadroon gen'leman an' put some tar and fedder. Grandissime Frères! Agricole don' spik to my cousin Honoré no mo'. But I t'ink dass wrong. W'at you t'ink, Doctah?"

That evening, at candle-light, Raoul got the right arm of his slender, laughing wife about his neck; but Doctor Keene tarried all night in suburb St. Jean. He hardly felt the moral courage to face the results of the last five months. Let us understand them better ourselves.

CHAPTER XLVIII

AN INDIGNANT FAMILY AND A SMASHED SHOP

It was indeed a fierce storm that had passed over the head of Honoré Grandissime. Taken up and carried by it, as it seemed to him, without volition, he had felt himself thrown here and there, wrenched, torn, gasping for moral breath, speaking the right word as if in delirium, doing the right deed as if by helpless instinct, and seeing himself in every case, at every turn, tricked by circumstance out of every vestige of merit. So it seemed to him. The long contemplated restitution was accomplished. On the morning when Aurora and Clotilde had expected to be turned shelterless into the open air, they had called upon him in his private office and presented the account of which he had put them in possession the evening before. He had honored it on the spot. To the two ladies who felt their own hearts stirred almost to tears of gratitude, he was--as he sat before them calm, unmoved, handling keen-edged facts with the easy rapidity of one accustomed to use them, smiling

courteously and collectedly, parrying their expressions of appreciation--to them, we say, at least to one of them, he was "the prince of gentlemen." But, at the same time, there was within him, unseen, a surge of emotions, leaping, lashing, whirling, yet ever hurrying onward along the hidden, rugged bed of his honest intention.

The other restitution, which even twenty-four hours earlier might have seemed a pure self-sacrifice, became a self-rescue. The f.m.c. was the elder brother. A remark of Honoré made the night they watched in the corridor by Doctor Keene's door, about the younger's "right to exist," was but the echo of a conversation they had once had together in Europe. There they had practised a familiarity of intercourse which Louisiana would not have endured, and once, when speaking upon the subject of their common fatherhood, the f.m.c., prone to melancholy speech, had said:

"You are the lawful son of Numa Grandissime; I had no right to be born."

But Honoré quickly answered:

"By the laws of men, it may be; but by the law of God's justice, you are the lawful son, and it is I who should not have been born."

But, returned to Louisiana, accepting with the amiable, old-fashioned philosophy of conservatism the sins of the community, he had forgotten the unchampioned rights of his passive half-brother. Contact with Frowenfeld had robbed him of his pleasant mental drowsiness, and the oft-encountered apparition of the dark sharer of his name had become a slow-stepping, silent embodiment of reproach. The turn of events had brought him face to face with the problem of restitution, and he had solved it. But where had he come out? He had come out the beneficiary of this restitution, extricated from bankruptcy by an agreement which gave the f.m.c.

only a public recognition of kinship which had always been his due. Bitter cup of humiliation!

Such was the stress within. Then there was the storm without. The Grandissimes were in a high state of excitement. The news had reached them all that Honoré had met the question of titles by selling one of their largest estates. It was received with wincing frowns, indrawn breath, and lifted feet, but without protest, and presently with a smile of returning confidence.

"Honoré knew; Honoré was informed; they had all authorized Honoré; and Honoré, though he might have his odd ways and notions, picked up during that unfortunate stay abroad, might safely be trusted to stand by the interests of his people."

After the first shock some of them even raised a laugh:

"Ha, ha, ha! Honoré would show those Yankees!"

They went to his counting-room and elsewhere, in search of him, to smite their hands into the hands of their far-seeing young champion. But, as we have seen, they did not find him; none dreamed of looking for him in an enemy's camp (19 Bienville) or on the lonely suburban commons, talking to himself in the ghostly twilight; and the next morning, while Aurora and Clotilde were seated before him in his private office, looking first at the face and then at the back of two mighty drafts of equal amount on Philadelphia, the cry of treason flew forth to these astounded Grandissimes, followed by the word that the sacred fire was gone out in the Grandissime temple (counting-room), that Delilahs in duplicate were carrying off the holy treasures, and that the uncircumcised and unclean--even an f.m.c.--was about to be inducted into the Grandissime priesthood.

Aurora and Clotilde were still there, when the various members of the family began to arrive and display their outlines in impatient shadow-play upon

the glass door of the private office; now one, and now another, dallied with the doorknob and by and by obtruded their lifted hats and urgent, anxious faces half into the apartment; but Honoré would only glance toward them, and with a smile equally courteous, authoritative and fleeting, say:

"Good-morning, Camille" (or Charlie--or Agamemnon, as the case might be); "I will see you later; let me trouble you to close the door."

To add yet another strain, the two ladies, like frightened, rescued children, would cling to their deliverer. They wished him to become the custodian and investor of their wealth. Ah, woman! who is a tempter like thee? But Honoré said no, and showed them the danger of such a course.

"Suppose I should die suddenly. You might have trouble with my executors."

The two beauties assented pensively; but in Aurora's bosom a great throb secretly responded that as for her, in that case, she should have no use for money--in a nunnery.

"Would not Monsieur at least consent to be their financial adviser?"

He hemmed, commenced a sentence twice, and finally said:

"You will need an agent; some one to take full charge of your affairs; some person on whose sagacity and integrity you can place the fullest dependence."

"Who, for instance?" asked Aurora.

"I should say, without hesitation, Professor Frowenfeld, the apothecary. You know his trouble of yesterday is quite cleared up. You had not heard? Yes. He is not what we call an enterprising man, but--so much the better. Take him all in all, I would choose him above all others; if you--"

Aurora interrupted him. There was an ill-concealed wildness in her eye and a slight tremor in her voice, as she spoke, which she had not expected to betray. The quick, though quiet eye of Honoré Grandissime saw it, and it thrilled him through.

"'Sieur Grandissime, I take the risk; I wish you to take care of my money."

"But, Maman," said Clotilde, turning with a timid look to her mother, "If Monsieur Grandissime would rather not--"

Aurora, feeling alarmed at what she had said, rose up. Clotilde and Honoré did the same, and he said:

"With Professor Frowenfeld in charge of your affairs, I shall feel them not entirely removed from my care also. We are very good friends."

Clotilde looked at her mother. The three exchanged glances. The ladies signified their assent and turned to go, but M. Grandissime stopped them.

"By your leave, I will send for him. If you will be seated again--"

They thanked him and resumed their seats; he excused himself, passed into the counting-room, and sent a messenger for the apothecary.

M. Grandissime's meeting with his kinsmen was a stormy one. Aurora and Clotilde heard the strife begin, increase, subside, rise again and decrease. They heard men stride heavily to and fro, they heard hands smite together, palms fall upon tables and fists upon desks, heard half-understood statement and unintelligible counter-statement and derisive laughter; and, in the midst of all, like the voice of a man who rules himself, the clear-noted, unimpassioned speech of Honoré, sounding so loftily beautiful in the ear of Aurora that when Clotilde looked at her, sitting motionless with her rapt eyes lifted up, those eyes came down to her own with a sparkle of enthusiasm, and she softly said:

"It sounds like St. Gabriel!" and then blushed.

Clotilde answered with a happy, meaning look, which intensified the blush, and then leaning affectionately forward and holding the maman's eyes with her own, she said:

"You have my consent."

"Saucy!" said Aurora. "Wait till I get my own."

Some of his kinsmen Honoré pacified; some he silenced. He invited all to withdraw their lands and moneys from his charge, and some accepted the invitation. They spurned his parting advice to sell, and the policy they then adopted, and never afterward modified, was that "all or nothing" attitude which, as years rolled by, bled them to penury in those famous cupping-leeching-and-bleeding establishments, the courts of Louisiana. You may see their grandchildren, to-day, anywhere within the angle of the old rues Esplanade and Rampart, holding up their heads in unspeakable poverty, their nobility kept green by unflinching self-respect, and their poetic and pathetic pride revelling in ancestral, perennial rebellion against common sense.

"That is Agricola," whispered Aurora, with lifted head and eyes dilated and askance, as one deep-chested voice roared above all others.

Agricola stormed.

"Uncle," Aurora by and by heard Honoré say, "shall I leave my own counting-room?"

At that moment Joseph Frowenfeld entered, pausing with one hand on the outer rail. No one noticed him but Honoré, who was watching for him, and who, by a silent motion, directed him into the private office.

"H-whe shake its dust from our feet!" said Agricola, gathering some young retainers by a sweep of his glance and going out down the stair in the arched

way, unmoved by the fragrance of warm bread. On the banquette he harangued his followers.

He said that in such times as these every lover of liberty should go armed; that the age of trickery had come; that by trickery Louisianians had been sold, like cattle, to a nation of parvenues, to be dragged before juries for asserting the human right of free trade or ridding the earth of sneaks in the pay of the government; that laws, so-called, had been forged into thumbscrews, and a Congress which had bound itself to give them all the rights of American citizens--sorry boon!--was preparing to slip their birthright acres from under their feet, and leave them hanging, a bait to the vultures of the Américain immigration. Yes; the age of trickery! Its apostles, he said, were even then at work among their fellow-citizens, warping, distorting, blasting, corrupting, poisoning the noble, unsuspecting, confiding Creole mind. For months the devilish work had been allowed, by a patient, peace-loving people, to go on. But shall it go on forever? (Cries of "No!" "No!") The smell of white blood comes on the south breeze. Dessalines and Christophe had recommenced their hellish work. Virginia, too, trembles for the safety of her fair mothers and daughters. We know not what is being plotted in the canebrakes of Louisiana. But we know that in the face of these things the prelates of trickery are sitting in Washington allowing throats to go unthrottled that talked tenderly about the "negro slave;" we know worse: we know that mixed blood has asked for equal rights from a son of the Louisiana noblesse, and that those sacred rights have been treacherously, pusillanimously surrendered into its possession. Why did we not rise yesterday, when the public heart was stirred? The forbearance of this people would be absurd if it were not saintly. But the time has, come when Louisiana must protect herself! If there is one here who will not strike for his lands, his rights and the purity of his race, let him speak! (Cries of "We will rise now!" "Give us a leader!" "Lead the way!")

"Kinsmen, friends," continued Agricola, "meet me at nightfall before the house of this too-long-spared mulatto. Come armed. Bring a few feet of stout rope. By morning the gentlemen of color will know their places better than they do to-day; h-whe shall understand each other! H-whe shall set the negrophiles to meditating."

He waved them away.

With a huzza the accumulated crowd moved off. Chance carried them up the rue Royale; they sang a song; they came to Frowenfeld's. It was an Américain establishment; that was against it. It was a gossiping place of Américain evening loungers; that was against it. It was a sorcerer's den--(we are on an ascending scale); its proprietor had refused employment to some there present, had refused credit to others, was an impudent condemner of the most approved Creole sins, had been beaten over the head only the day before; all these were against it. But, worse still, the building was owned by the f.m.c., and unluckiest of all, Raoul stood in the door and some of his kinsmen in the crowd stopped to have a word with him. The crowd stopped. A nameless fellow in the throng--he was still singing--said: "Here's the place," and dropped two bricks through the glass of the show-window. Raoul, with a cry of retaliative rage, drew and lifted a pistol; but a kinsman jerked it from him and three others quickly pinioned him and bore him off struggling, pleased to get him away unhurt. In ten minutes, Frowenfeld's was a broken-windowed, open-doored house, full of unrecognizable rubbish that had escaped the torch only through a chance rumor that the Governor's police were coming, and the consequent stampede of the mob.

Joseph was sitting in M. Grandissime's private office, in council with him and the ladies, and Aurora was just saying:

"Well, anny'ow, 'Sieur Frowenfel', ad laz you consen'!" and gathering her veil from her lap, when Raoul burst in, all sweat and rage.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', we ruin'! Ow pharmacie knock all in pieces! My pigshoe is los'!"

He dropped into a chair and burst into tears.

Shall we never learn to withhold our tears until we are sure of our trouble? Raoul little knew the joy in store for him. 'Polyte, it transpired the next day, had rushed in after the first volley of missiles, and while others were gleefully making off with jars of asafoetida and decanters of distilled water, lifted in his arms and bore away unharmed "Louisiana" firmly refusing to the last to enter the Union. It may not be premature to add that about four weeks later Honoré Grandissime, upon Raoul's announcement that he was "betrothed," purchased this painting and presented it to a club of *natural connoisseurs*.

CHAPTER XLIX

OVER THE NEW STORE

The accident of the ladies Nancanou making their new home over Frowenfeld's drug-store occurred in the following rather amusing way. It chanced that the building was about completed at the time that the apothecary's stock in trade was destroyed; Frowenfeld leased the lower floor. Honoré

Grandissime f.m.c. was the owner. He being concealed from his enemies, Joseph treated with that person's inadequately remunerated employé. In those days, as still in the old French Quarter, it was not uncommon for persons, even of wealth, to make their homes over stores, and buildings were constructed with a view to their partition in this way. Hence, in Chartres and Decatur streets, to-day--and in the cross-streets between--so many store-buildings with balconies, dormer windows, and sometimes even belvideres. This new building caught the eye and fancy of Aurora and Clotilde. The apartments for the store were entirely isolated. Through a large *porte-cochère*, opening upon the banquette immediately beside and abreast of the store-front, one entered a high, covered carriage-way with a tessellated pavement and green plastered walls, and reached,--just where this way (corridor, the Creoles always called it) opened into a sunny court surrounded with narrow parterres,--a broad stairway leading to a hall over the "corridor" and to the drawing-rooms over the store. They liked it! Aurora would find out at once what sort of an establishment was likely to be opened below, and if that proved unexceptionable she would lease the upper part without more ado.

Next day she said:

"Clotilde, thou beautiful, I have signed the lease!"

"Then the store below is to be occupied by a--what?"

"Guess!"

"Ah!"

"Guess a pharmacien!"

Clotilde's lips parted, she was going to smile, when her thought changed and she blushed offendedly.

"Not--"

"'Sieur Frowenf--ah, ha, ha, ha!--*ha, ha, ha*!"

Clotilde burst into tears.

Still they moved in--it was written in the bond; and so did the apothecary; and probably two sensible young lovers never before nor since behaved with such abject fear of each other--for a time. Later, and after much oft-repeated good advice given to each separately and to both together, Honoré Grandissime persuaded them that Clotilde could make excellent use of a portion of her means by reenforcing Frowenfeld's very slender stock and well filling his rather empty-looking store, and so they signed regular articles of copartnership, blushing frightfully.

Frowenfeld became a visitor, Honoré not; once Honoré had seen the ladies' moneys satisfactorily invested, he kept aloof. It is pleasant here to remark that neither Aurora nor Clotilde made any waste of their sudden acquisitions; they furnished their rooms with much beauty at moderate cost, and their *salon* with artistic, not extravagant, elegance, and, for the sake of greater propriety, employed a decayed lady as housekeeper; but, being discreet in all other directions, they agreed upon one bold outlay--a volante.

Almost any afternoon you might have seen this vehicle on the Terre aux Boeuf, or Bayou, or Tchoupitoulas Road; and because of the brilliant beauty of its occupants it became known from all other volantes as the "meteor."

Frowenfeld's visits were not infrequent; he insisted on Clotdlde's knowing just what was being done with her money. Without indulging ourselves in the pleasure of contemplating his continued mental unfolding, we may say that his growth became more rapid in this season of universal expansion; love had entered into his still compacted soul like a cupid into a rose, and was crowding it wide open. However, as yet, it had not made him brave. Aurora used to slip out of the drawing-room, and in some secluded nook of the hall throw up her clasped hands and go through all the motions of screaming merriment.

"The little fool!"--it was of her own daughter she whispered this complimentary remark--"the little fool is afraid of the fish!"

"You!" she said to Clotilde, one evening after Joseph had gone, "you call yourself a Creole girl!"

But she expected too much. Nothing so terrorizes a blushing girl as a blushing man. And then--though they did sometimes digress--Clotilde and her partner met to talk "business" in a purely literal sense.

Aurora, after a time, had taken her money into her own keeping.

"You mighd gid robb' ag'in, you know, 'Sieur Frowenfel'," she said.

But when he mentioned Clotilde's fortune as subject to the same contingency, Aurora replied:

"Ah! bud Clotilde mighd gid robb'!"

But for all the exuberance of Aurora's spirits, there was a cloud in her sky. Indeed, we know it is only when clouds are in the sky that we get the rosiest tints; and so it was with Aurora. One night, when she had heard the wicket in the *porte-cochère* shut behind three evening callers, one of whom she had rejected a week before, another of whom she expected to dispose of similarly, and the last of whom was Joseph Frowenfeld, she began such a merry raillery at Clotilde and such a hilarious ridicule of the "Professor" that Clotilde would have wept again had not Aurora, all at once, in the midst of a laugh, dropped her face in her hands and run from the room in tears. It is one of the penalties we pay for being joyous, that nobody thinks us capable of care or the victim of trouble until, in some moment of extraordinary expansion, our bubble of gayety bursts. Aurora had been crying of nights. Even that same night, Clotilde awoke, opened her eyes and beheld her mother risen from the pillow and sitting upright in the bed beside her; the moon,

shining brightly through the mosquito-bar revealed with distinctness her head slightly drooped, her face again in her hands and the dark folds of her hair falling about her shoulders, half-concealing the richly embroidered bosom of her snowy gown, and coiling in continuous abundance about her waist and on the slight summer covering of the bed. Before her on the sheet lay a white paper. Clotilde did not try to decipher the writing on it; she knew, at sight, the slip that had fallen from the statement of account on the evening of the ninth of March. Aurora withdrew her hands from her face--Clotilde shut her eyes; she heard Aurora put the paper in her bosom.

"Clotilde," she said, very softly.

"Maman," the daughter replied, opening her eyes, reached up her arms and drew the dear head down.

"Clotilde, once upon a time I woke this way, and, while you were asleep, left the bed and made a vow to Monsieur Danny. Oh! it was a sin! but I cannot do those things now; I have been frightened ever since. I shall never do so any more. I shall never commit another sin as long as I live!"

Their lips met fervently.

"My sweet sweet," whispered Clotilde, "you looked so beautiful sitting up with the moonlight all around you!"

"Clotilde, my beautiful daughter," said Aurora, pushing her bedmate from her and pretending to repress a smile, "I tell you now, because you don't know, and it is my duty as your mother to tell you--the meanest wickedness a woman can do in all this bad, bad world is to look ugly in bed!"

Clotilde answered nothing, and Aurora dropped her outstretched arms, turned away with an involuntary, tremulous sigh, and after two or three hours of patient wakefulness, fell asleep.

But at daybreak next morning, he that wrote the paper had not closed his eyes.

CHAPTER L

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

There was always some flutter among Frowenfeld's employés when he was asked for, and this time it was the more pronounced because he was sought by a housemaid from the upper floor. It was hard for these two or three young Ariels to keep their Creole feet to the ground when it was presently revealed to their sharp ears that the "prof-fis-or" was requested to come upstairs.

The new store was an extremely neat, bright, and well-ordered establishment; yet to ascend into the drawing-rooms seemed to the apothecary like going from the hold of one of those smart old packet-ships of his day into the cabin. Aurora came forward, with the slippers of a Cinderella twinkling at the edge of her robe. It seemed unfit that the floor under them should not be clouds.

"Proffis-or Frowenfel', good-day! Teg a cha'." She laughed. It was the pure joy of existence. "You's well? You lookin' verrie well! Halways bizzie? You fine dad agriz wid you' healt', 'Sieur Frowenfel'? Yes? Ha, ha, ha!" She suddenly leaned toward him across the arm of her chair, with an earnest face.

"'Sieur Frowenfel', Palmyre wand see you. You don' wan' come ad 'er 'ouse, eh?--an' you don' wan' her to come ad yo' bureau. You know, 'Sieur Frowenfel', she drez the hair of Clotilde an' mieself. So w'en she tell me dad, I juz say, 'Palmyre, I will sen' for Proffis-or Frowenfel' to come yeh; but I don' thing 'e comin'.' You know, I din' wan' you to 'ave dad troub'; but Clotilde--ha, ha, ha! Clotilde is sudge a foolish--she nevva thing of dad troub' to you--she say she thing you was too kine-'arted to call dad troub'--ha, ha, ha! So anny'ow we sen' for you, eh!"

Frowenfeld said he was glad they had done so, whereupon Aurora rose lightly, saying:

"I go an' sen' her." She started away, but turned back to add: "You know, 'Sieur Frowenfel', she say she cann' truz nobody bud y'u." She ended with a low, melodious laugh, bending her joyous eyes upon the apothecary with her head dropped to one side in a way to move a heart of flint.

She turned and passed through a door, and by the same way Palmyre entered. The philosophe came forward noiselessly and with a subdued expression, different from any Frowenfeld had ever before seen. At the first sight of her a thrill of disrelish ran through him of which he was instantly ashamed; as she came nearer he met her with a deferential bow and the silent tender of a chair. She sat down, and, after a moment's pause, handed him a sealed letter.

He turned it over twice, recognized the handwriting, felt the disrelish return, and said:

"This is addressed to yourself."

She bowed.

"Do you know who wrote it?" he asked.

She bowed again.

"*Oui, Miché*."

"You wish me to open it? I cannot read French."

She seemed to have some explanation to offer, but could not command the necessary English; however, with the aid of Frowenfeld's limited guessing powers, she made him understand that the bearer of the letter to her had brought word from the writer that it was written in English purposely that M. Frowenfeld--the only person he was willing should see it--might read it. Frowenfeld broke the seal and ran his eye over the writing, but remained silent.

The woman stirred, as if to say "Well?" But he hesitated.

"Palmyre," he suddenly said, with a slight, dissuasive smile, "it would be a profanation for me to read this."

She bowed to signify that she caught his meaning, then raised her elbows with an expression of dubiety, and said:

"'E hask you--"

"Yes," murmured the apothecary. He shook his head as if to protest to himself, and read in a low but audible voice:

"Star of my soul, I approach to die. It is not for me possible to live without Palmyre. Long time have I so done, but now, cut off from to see thee, by imprisonment, as it may be called, love is starving to death. Oh, have pity on the faithful heart which, since ten years, change not, but forget heaven and earth for you. Now in the peril of the life, hidden away, that absence from the sight of you make his seclusion the more worse than death. Halas! I pine! Not other ten years of despair can I commence. Accept this love. If so I will live for you, but if to the contraire, I must die for you. Is there anything at all what I will not give or even do if Palmyre will be my wife? Ah, no, far otherwise, there is nothing!" ...

Frowenfeld looked over the top of the letter. Palmyre sat with her eyes cast down, slowly shaking her head. He returned his glance to the page, coloring

somewhat with annoyance at being made a proposing medium.

"The English is very faulty here," he said, without looking up. "He mentions Bras-Coupé." Palmyre started and turned toward him; but he went on without lifting his eyes. "He speaks of your old pride and affection toward him as one who with your aid might have been a leader and deliverer of his people." Frowenfeld looked up. "Do you under--"

"*Allez, Miché*" said she, leaning forward, her great eyes fixed on the apothecary and her face full of distress. "*Mo comprend bien*."

"He asks you to let him be to you in the place of Bras-Coupé."

The eyes of the philosophe, probably for the first time since the death of the giant, lost their pride. They gazed upon Frowenfeld almost with piteousness; but she compressed her lips and again slowly shook her head.

"You see," said Frowenfeld, suddenly feeling a new interest, "he understands their wants. He knows their wrongs. He is acquainted with laws and men. He could speak for them. It would not be insurrection--it would be advocacy. He would give his time, his pen, his speech, his means, to get them justice--to get them their rights."

She hushed the over-zealous advocate with a sad and bitter smile and essayed to speak, studied as if for English words, and, suddenly abandoning that attempt, said, with ill-concealed scorn and in the Creole patois:

"The tall figure of Palmyre rose slowly and silently from her chair, her eyes lifted up and her lips moving noiselessly. She seemed to have lost all knowledge of place or of human presence".

"What is all that? What I want is vengeance!"

"I will finish reading," said Frowenfeld, quickly, not caring to understand the passionate speech.

"Ah, Palmyre! Palmyre! What you love and hope to love you because his heart keep itself free, he is loving another!"

"Qui ci ça, Miché?"

Frowenfeld was loth to repeat. She had understood, as her face showed; but she dared not believe. He made it shorter:

"He means that Honoré Grandissime loves another woman."

"'Tis a lie!" she exclaimed, a better command of English coming with the momentary loss of restraint.

The apothecary thought a moment and then decided to speak.

"I do not think so," he quietly said.

"'Ow you know dat?"

She, too, spoke quietly, but under a fearful strain. She had thrown herself forward, but, as she spoke, forced herself back into her seat.

"He told me so himself."

The tall figure of Palmyre rose slowly and silently from her chair, her eyes lifted up and her lips moving noiselessly. She seemed to have lost all knowledge of place or of human presence. She walked down the drawing-room quite to its curtained windows and there stopped, her face turned away and her hand laid with a visible tension on the back of a chair. She remained so long that Frowenfeld had begun to think of leaving her so, when she turned and came back. Her form was erect, her step firm and nerved, her lips set together and her hands dropped easily at her side; but when she came close up before the apothecary she was trembling. For a moment she seemed speechless, and then, while her eyes gleamed with passion, she said, in a cold, clear tone, and in her native patois:

"Very well: if I cannot love I can have my revenge." She took the letter from him and bowed her thanks, still adding, in the same tongue, "There is now no longer anything to prevent."

The apothecary understood the dark speech. She meant that, with no hope of Honoré's love, there was no restraining motive to withhold her from wreaking what vengeance she could upon Agricola. But he saw the folly of a debate.

"That is all I can do?" asked he.

"*Oui, merci, Miché*" she said; then she added, in perfect English, "but that is not all *I* can do," and then--laughed.

The apothecary had already turned to go, and the laugh was a low one; but it chilled his blood. He was glad to get back to his employments.

CHAPTER LI

BUSINESS CHANGES

We have now recorded some of the events which characterized the five months during which Doctor Keene had been vainly seeking to recover his health in the West Indies.

"Is Mr. Frowenfeld in?" he asked, walking very slowly, and with a cane, into the new drug-store on the morning of his return to the city.

"If Professo' Frowenfel' 's in?" replied a young man in shirt-sleeves, speaking rapidly, slapping a paper

package which he had just tied, and sliding it smartly down the counter. "No, seh."

A quick step behind the doctor caused him to turn; Raoul was just entering, with a bright look of business on his face, taking his coat off as he came.

"Docta Keene! *Teck* a chair. 'Ow you like de noo sto'? See? Fo' counters! T'ree clerk'! De whole interieure paint undre mie h-own direction! If dat is not a beautiful! eh? Look at dat sign."

He pointed to some lettering in harmonious colors near the ceiling at the farther end of the house. The doctor looked and read:

MANDARIN, AG'T, APOTHECARY.

"Why not Frowenfeld?" he asked.

Raoul shrugged.

"'Tis better dis way."

That was his explanation.

"Not the De Brahmin Mandarin who was Honoré's manager?"

"Yes. Honoré was n' able to kip 'im no long-er. Honoré is n' so rich lak befo'."

"And Mandarin is really in charge here?"

"Oh, yes. Profess-or Frowenfel' all de time at de ole corner, w'ere 'e *con*tinue to keep 'is private room and h-use de ole shop fo' ware'ouse. 'E h-only come yeh w'en Mandarin cann' git 'long widout 'im."

"What does he do there? *He's* not rich."

Raoul bent down toward the doctor's chair and whispered the dark secret:

"Studyin'!"

Doctor Keene went out.

Everything seemed changed to the returned wanderer. Poor man! The changes were very slight save in their altered relation to him. To one broken in health, and still more to one with a broken heart, old scenes fall upon the sight in broken rays. A sort of vague alienation seemed to the little doctor to come like a film over the long-familiar vistas of the town where he had once walked in the vigor and complacency of strength and distinction. This was not the same New Orleans. The people he met on the street were more or less familiar to his memory, but many that should have recognized him failed to do so, and others were made to notice him rather by his cough than by his face. Some did not know he had been away. It made him cross.

He had walked slowly down beyond the old Frowenfeld corner and had just crossed the street to avoid the dust of a building which was being torn down to make place for a new one, when he saw coming toward him, unconscious of his proximity, Joseph Frowenfeld.

"Doctor Keene!" said Frowenfeld, with almost the enthusiasm of Raoul.

The doctor was very much quieter.

"Hello, Joe."

They went back to the new drug-store, sat down in a pleasant little rear corner enclosed by a railing and curtains, and talked.

"And did the trip prove of no advantage to you?"

"You see. But never mind me; tell me about Honoré; how does that row with his family progress?"

"It still continues; the most of his people hold ideas of justice and prerogative that run parallel with family and party lines, lines of caste, of custom and the like they have imparted their bad feeling against him to the community at large; very easy to do just now, for the election for President of the States

comes on in the fall, and though we in Louisiana have little or nothing to do with it, the people are feverish."

"The country's chill-day," said Doctor Keene; "dumb chill, hot fever."

"The excitement is intense," said Frowenfeld. "It seems we are not to be granted suffrage yet; but the Creoles have a way of casting votes in their mind. For example, they have voted Honoré Grandissime a traitor; they have voted me an encumbrance; I hear one of them casting that vote now."

Some one near the front of the store was talking excitedly with Raoul:

"An'--an'--an' w'at are the consequence? The consequence are that we smash his shop for him an' 'e 'ave to make a noo-start with a Creole partner's money an' put 'is sto' in charge of Creole'! If I know he is yo' frien'? Yesseh! Valuable citizen? An' w'at we care for valuable citizen? Let him be valuable if he want; it keep' him from gettin' the neck broke; but--he mus'-tek-kyeh--'ow--he--talk'! He-mus'-tek-kyeh 'ow he stir the 'ot blood of Louisyanna!"

"He is perfectly right," said the little doctor, in his husky undertone; "neither you nor Honoré is a bit sound, and I shouldn't wonder if they would hang you both, yet; and as for that darkey who has had the impudence to try to make a commercial white gentleman of himself--it may not be I that ought to say it, but--he will get his deserts--sure!"

"There are a great many Americans that think as you do," said Frowenfeld, quietly.

"But," said the little doctor, "what did that fellow mean by your Creole partner? Mandarin is in charge of your store,

but he is not your partner, is he? Have you one?"

"A silent one," said the apothecary

"So silent as to be none of my business?"

"No."

"Well, who is it, then?"

"It is Mademoiselle Nancanou."

"Your partner in business?"

"Yes."

"Well, Joseph Frowenfeld,--"

The insinuation conveyed in the doctor's manner was very trying, but Joseph merely reddened.

"Purely business, I suppose," presently said the doctor, with a ghastly ironical smile. "Does the arrangem'--" his utterance failed him--"does it end there?"

"It ends there."

"And you don't see that it ought either not to have begun, or else ought not to have ended there?"

Frowenfeld blushed angrily. The doctor asked:

"And who takes care of Aurora's money?"

"Herself."

"Exclusively?"

They both smiled more good-naturedly.

"Exclusively."

"She's a coon;" and the little doctor rose up and crawled away, ostensibly to see another friend, but really to drag himself into his bedchamber and lock himself in. The next day--the yellow fever was bad again--he resumed the practice of his profession.

"'Twill be a sort of decent suicide without the element of pusillanimity," he thought to himself.

CHAPTER LII

LOVE LIES A-BLEEDING

When Honoré Grandissime heard that Doctor Keene had returned to the city in a very feeble state of health, he rose at once from the desk where he was sitting and went to see him; but it was on that morning when the doctor was sitting and talking with Joseph, and Honoré found his chamber door locked. Doctor Keene called twice, within the following two days, upon Honoré at his counting-room; but on both occasions Honoré's chair was empty. So it was several days before they met. But one hot morning in the latter part of August,--the

August days were hotter before the cypress forest was cut down between the city and the lake than they are now,--as Doctor Keene stood in the middle of his room breathing distressedly after a sad fit of coughing, and looking toward one of his windows whose closed sash he longed to see opened, Honoré knocked at the door.

"Well, come in!" said the fretful invalid. "Why, Honoré,--well, it serves you right for stopping to knock. Sit down."

Each took a hasty, scrutinizing glance at the other; and, after a pause, Doctor Keene said:

"Honoré, you are pretty badly stove."

M. Grandissime smiled.

"Do you think so, Doctor? I will be more complimentary to you; you might look more sick."

"Oh, I have resumed my trade," replied Doctor Keene.

"So I have heard; but, Charlie, that is all in favor of the people who want a skilful and advanced physician and do not mind killing him; I should advise you not to do it."

"You mean" (the incorrigible little doctor smiled cynically) "if I should ask your advice. I am going to get well, Honoré."

His visitor shrugged.

"So much the better. I do confess I am tempted to make use of you in your official capacity, right now. Do you

feel strong enough to go with me in your gig a little way?"

"A professional call?"

"Yes, and a difficult case; also a confidential one."

"Ah! confidential!" said the little man, in his painful, husky irony. "You want to get me into the sort of scrape I got our 'professor' into, eh?"

"Possibly a worse one," replied the amiable Creole.

"And I must be mum, eh?"

"I would prefer."

"Shall I need any instruments? No?"--with a shade of disappointment on his face.

He pulled a bell-rope and ordered his gig to the street door.

"How are affairs about town?" he asked, as he made some slight preparation for the street.

"Excitement continues. Just as I came along, a private difficulty between a Creole and an Américain drew instantly half the street together to take sides strictly according to belongings and without asking a question. My-de'-seh, we are having, as Frowenfeld says, a war of human acids and alkalies."

They descended and drove away. At the first corner the lad who drove turned, by Honoré's direction, toward the rue Dauphine, entered it, passed down it to the rue Dumaine, turned into this toward the river again and entered the rue Condé. The

route was circuitous. They stopped at the carriage-door of a large brick house. The wicket was opened by Clemence. They alighted without driving in.

"Hey, old witch," said the doctor, with mock severity; "not hung yet?"

The houses of any pretension to comfortable spaciousness in the closely built parts of the town were all of the one, general, Spanish-American plan. Honoré led the doctor through the cool, high, tessellated carriage-hall, on one side of which were the drawing-rooms, closed and darkened. They turned at the bottom, ascended a broad, iron-railed staircase to the floor above, and halted before the open half of a glazed double door with a clumsy iron latch. It was the entrance to two spacious chambers, which were thrown into one by folded doors.

The doctor made a low, indrawn whistle and raised his eyebrows--the rooms were so sumptuously furnished; immovable largeness and heaviness, lofty sobriety, abundance of finely wrought brass mounting, motionless richness of upholstery, much silent twinkle of pendulous crystal, a soft semi-obscurity--such were the characteristics. The long windows of the farther apartment could be seen to open over the street, and the air from behind, coming in over a green mass of fig-trees that stood in the paved court below, moved through the rooms, making them cool and cavernous.

"You don't call this a hiding place, do you--in his own bedchamber?" the doctor whispered.

"It is necessary, now, only to keep out of sight," softly answered Honoré. "Agricole and some others ransacked this house one night last March--the day I announced the new firm; but of course, then, he was not here."

They entered, and the figure of Honoré Grandissime, f.m.c., came into view in the centre of the farther room, reclining in an attitude of extreme languor on a low couch, whither he had come from the high bed near by, as the impression of his form among its pillows showed. He turned upon the two visitors his slow, melancholy eyes, and, without an attempt to rise or speak, indicated, by a feeble motion of the hand, an invitation to be seated.

"Good morning," said Doctor Keene, selecting a light chair and drawing it close to the side of the couch.

The patient before him was emaciated. The limp and bloodless hand, which had not responded to the doctor's friendly pressure but sank idly back upon the edge of the couch, was cool and moist, and its nails slightly blue.

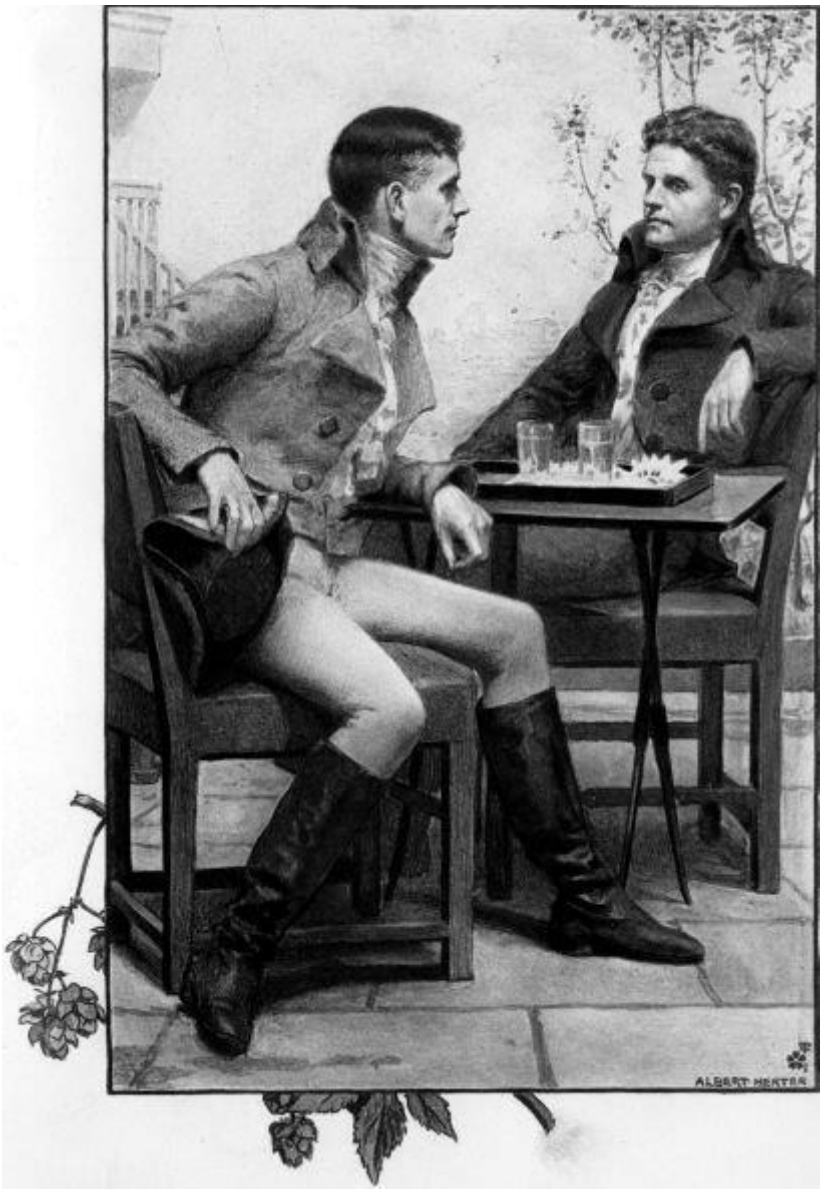
"Lie still," said the doctor, reassuringly, as the rentier began to lift the one knee and slippered foot which was drawn up on the couch and the hand which hung out of sight across a large, linen-covered cushion.

By pleasant talk that seemed all chat, the physician soon acquainted himself with the case before him. It was a very plain one. By and by he rubbed his face and red curls and suddenly said:

"You will not take my prescription."

The f.m.c. did not say yes or no.

"Still,"--the doctor turned sideways in his chair, as was his wont, and, as he spoke, allowed the corners of his mouth to take that little satirical downward pull which his friends disliked, "I'll do my duty. I'll give Honoré the details as to diet; no physic; but my prescription to you is, Get up and get out. Never mind the risk of rough handling; they can but kill you, and you will die anyhow if you stay here." He rose. "I'll send you a chalybeate tonic; or--I will leave it at Frowenfeld's to-morrow morning, and you can call there and get it. It will give you an object for going out."



"They turned in a direction opposite to the entrance and took chairs in a cool nook of the paved court, at a small table where the hospitality of Clemence had placed glasses of lemonade".

The two visitors presently said adieu and retired together. Reaching the bottom of the stairs in the carriage "corridor," they turned in a direction

opposite to the entrance and took chairs in a cool nook of the paved court, at a small table where the hospitality of Clemence had placed glasses of lemonade.

"No," said the doctor, as they sat down, "there is, as yet, no incurable organic derangement; a little heart trouble easily removed; still your--your patient--"

"My half-brother," said Honoré.

"Your patient," said Doctor Keene, "is an emphatic 'yes' to the question the girls sometimes ask us doctors--Does love ever kill?' It will kill him *soon*, if you do not get him to rouse up. There is absolutely nothing the matter with him but his unrequited love."

"Fortunately, the most of us," said Honoré, with something of the doctor's smile, "do not love hard enough to be killed by it."

"Very few." The doctor paused, and his blue eyes, distended in reverie, gazed upon the glass which he was slowly turning around with his attenuated fingers as it stood on the board, while he added: "However, one *may* love as hopelessly and harder than that man upstairs, and yet not die."

"There is comfort in that--to those who must live," said Honoré with gentle gravity.

"Yes," said the other, still toying with his glass.

He slowly lifted his glance, and the eyes of the two men met and remained steadfastly fixed each upon each.

"You've got it bad," said Doctor Keene, mechanically.

"And you?" retorted the Creole.

"It isn't going to kill me."

"It has not killed me. And," added M. Grandissime, as they passed through the carriage-way toward the street, "while I keep in mind the numberless other sorrows of life, the burials of wives and sons and daughters, the agonies and desolations, I shall never die of love, my-de'-seh, for very shame's sake."

This was much sentiment to risk within Doctor Keene's reach; but he took no advantage of it.

"Honoré," said he, as they joined hands on the banquette beside the doctor's gig, to say good-day, "if you think there's a chance for you, why stickle upon such fine-drawn points as I reckon you are making? Why, sir, as I understand it, this is the only weak spot your action has shown; you have taken an inoculation of Quixotic conscience from our transcendental apothecary and perpetrated a lot of heroic behavior that would have done honor to four-and-twenty Brutuses; and now that you have a chance to do something easy and human, you shiver and shrink at the 'looks o' the thing.' Why, what do you care--"

"Hush!" said Honoré; "do you suppose I have not temptation enough already?"

He began to move away.

"Honoré," said the doctor, following him a step, "I couldn't have made

a mistake--It's the little Monk,--it's Aurora, isn't it?"

Honoré nodded, then faced his friend more directly, with a sudden new thought.

"But, Doctor, why not take your own advice? I know not how you are prevented; you have as good a right as Frowenfeld."

"It wouldn't be honest," said the doctor; "it wouldn't be the straight up and down manly thing."

"Why not?"

The doctor stepped into his gig--

"Not till I feel all right *here*." (In his chest.)

CHAPTER LIII

FROWENFELD AT THE GRANDISSIME MANSION

One afternoon--it seems to have been some time in June, and consequently earlier than Doctor Keene's return--the Grandissimes were set all a-tremble with vexation by the discovery that another of their number had, to use Agricola's

expression, "gone over to the enemy,"--a phrase first applied by him to Honoré.

"What do you intend to convey by that term?" Frowenfeld had asked on that earlier occasion.

"Gone over to the enemy means, my son, gone over to the enemy!" replied Agricola. "It implies affiliation with Américains in matters of business and of government! It implies the exchange of social amenities with a race of upstarts! It implies a craven consent to submit the sacredest prejudices of our fathers to the new-fangled measuring-rods of pert, imported theories upon moral and political progress! It implies a listening to, and reasoning with, the condemners of some of our most time-honored and respectable practices! Reasoning with? N-a-hay! but Honoré has positively sat down and eaten with them! What?--and h-walked out into the stre-heet with them, arm in arm! It implies in his case an act--two separate and distinct acts--so base that--that--I simply do not understand them! *H-you* know, Professor Frowenfeld, what he has done! You know how ignominiously he has surrendered the key of a moral position which for the honor of the Grandissime-Fusilier name we have felt it necessary to hold against our hereditary enemies! And--you--know--" here Agricola actually dropped all artificiality and spoke from the depths of his feelings, without figure--"h-h-he has joined himself in business h-with a man of negro blood! What can we do? What can we say? It is Honoré Grandissime. We can only say, 'Farewell! He is gone over to the enemy.'"

The new cause of exasperation was the defection of Raoul Innerarity. Raoul had, somewhat from a distance, contemplated such part as he could understand of Joseph Frowenfeld's character with ever-broadening admiration. We know how devoted he became to the interests and fame of "Frowenfeld's." It was in April he had married. Not to divide his generous heart he took rooms opposite the drug-store, resolved that "Frowenfeld's" should be not only the latest closed but the earliest opened of all the pharmacies in New Orleans.

This, it is true, was allowable. Not many weeks afterward his bride fell suddenly and seriously ill. The overflowing souls of Aurora and Clotilde could not be so near to trouble and not know it, and before Raoul was nearly enough recovered from the shock of this peril to remember that he was a Grandissime, these last two of the De Grapions had hastened across the street to the small, white-walled sick-room and filled it as full of universal human love as the cup of a magnolia is full of perfume. Madame Innerarity recovered. A warm affection was all she and her husband could pay such ministration in, and this they paid bountifully; the four became friends. The little madame found herself drawn most toward Clotilde; to her she opened her heart--and her wardrobe, and showed her all her beautiful new underclothing. Raoul found Clotilde to be, for him, rather--what shall we say?--starry; starrily inaccessible; but Aurora was emphatically after his liking; he was delighted with Aurora. He told her in confidence that "Profess-or Frowenfel'" was the best man in the world; but she boldly said, taking pains to speak with a tear-and-a-half of genuine gratitude,--

"Egcep' Monsieur Honoré Grandissime," and he assented, at first with hesitation and then with ardor. The four formed a group of their own; and it is not certain that this was not the very first specimen ever produced in the Crescent City of that social variety of New Orleans life now distinguished as Uptown Creoles.

Almost the first thing acquired by Raoul in the camp of the enemy was a certain Aurorean audacity; and on the afternoon to which we allude, having told Frowenfeld a rousing fib to the effect that the multitudinous inmates of the maternal Grandissime mansion had insisted on his bringing his esteemed employer to see them, he and his bride had the hardihood to present him on the front veranda.

The straightforward Frowenfeld was much pleased with his reception. It was not possible for such as he to guess the ire with which his presence was secretly regarded. New Orleans, let us say once more, was small, and the apothecary of the rue Royale locally famed; and what with curiosity and that innate politeness which it is the Creole's boast that he cannot mortify, the veranda, about the top of the great front stair, was well crowded with people of both sexes and all ages. It would be most pleasant to tarry once more in description of this gathering of nobility and beauty; to recount the points of Creole loveliness in midsummer dress; to tell in particular of one and another eye-kindling face, form, manner, wit; to define the subtle qualities of Creole air and sky and scene, or the yet more delicate graces that characterize the music of Creole voice and speech and the light of Creole eyes; to set forth the

gracious, unaccentuated dignity of the matrons and the ravishing archness of their daughters. To Frowenfeld the experience seemed all unreal. Nor was this unreality removed by conversation on grave subjects; for few among either the maturer or the younger beauty could do aught but listen to his foreign tongue like unearthly strangers in the old fairy tales. They came, however, in the course of their talk to the subject of love and marriage. It is not certain that they entered deeper into the great question than a comparison of its attendant Anglo-American and Franco-American conventionalities; but sure it is that somehow--let those young souls divine the method who can--every unearthly stranger on that veranda contrived to understand Frowenfeld's English. Suddenly the conversation began to move over the ground of inter-marriage between hostile families. Then what eyes and ears! A certain suspicion had already found lodgement in the universal Grandissime breast, and every one knew in a moment that, to all intents and purposes, they were about to argue the case of Honoré and Aurora.

The conversation became discussion, Frowenfeld, Raoul and Raoul's little seraph against the whole host, chariots, horse and archery. Ah! such strokes as the apothecary dealt! And if Raoul and "Madame Raoul" played parts most closely resembling the blowing of horns and breaking of pitchers, still they bore themselves gallantly. The engagement was short; we need not say that nobody surrendered; nobody ever gives up the ship in parlor or veranda debate: and yet--as is generally the case in such affairs--truth and justice made some unacknowledged

headway. If anybody on either side came out wounded--this to the credit of the Creoles as a people--the sufferer had the heroic good manners not to say so. But the results were more marked than this; indeed, in more than one or two candid young hearts and impressible minds the wrongs and rights of sovereign true love began there on the spot to be more generously conceded and allowed. "My-de'-seh," Honoré had once on a time said to Frowenfeld, meaning that to prevail in conversational debate one should never follow up a faltering opponent, "you mus' *crack* the egg, not smash it!" And Joseph, on rising to take his leave, could the more amiably overlook the feebleness of the invitation to call again, since he rejoiced, for Honoré's sake, in the conviction that the egg was cracked.

Agricola, the Grandissimes told the apothecary, was ill in his room, and Madame de Grandissime, his sister--Honoré's mother--begged to be excused that she might keep him company. The Fusiliers were a very close order; or one might say they garrisoned the citadel.

But Joseph's rising to go was not immediately upon the close of the discussion; those courtly people would not let even an unwelcome guest go with the faintest feeling of disrelish for them. They were casting about in their minds for some momentary diversion with which to add a finishing touch to their guest's entertainment, when Clemence appeared in the front garden walk and was quickly surrounded by bounding children, alternately begging and demanding a song. Many of even the younger adults remembered well when she had been "one

of the hands on the place," and a passionate lover of the African dance. In the same instant half a dozen voices proposed that for Joseph's amusement Clemence should put her cakes off her head, come up on the veranda and show a few of her best steps.

"But who will sing?"

"Raoul!"

"Very well; and what shall it be?"

"'Madame Gaba.'"

No, Clemence objected.

"Well, well, stand back--something better than 'Madame Gaba.'"

Raoul began to sing and Clemence instantly to pace and turn, posture, bow, respond to the song, start, swing, straighten, stamp, wheel, lift her hand, stoop, twist, walk, whirl, tiptoe with crossed ankles, smite her palms, march, circle, leap,--an endless improvisation of rhythmic motion to this modulated responsive chant:

Raoul. "*Mo pas l'aimein ça*."

Clemence. "*Miché Igenne, oap! oap! oap!*"

He. "*Yé donné vingt cinq sous pou' manzé poulé*."

She. "*Miché Igenne, dit--dit--dit--*"

He. "*Mo pas l'aimein ça!*"

She. "*Miché Igenne, oap! oap! oap!*"

He. "*Mo pas l'aimein ça!*"

She. "*Miché Igenne, oap! oap! oap!*"

Frowenfeld was not so greatly amused as the ladies thought he should have been, and was told that this was not a fair indication of what he would see if there were ten dancers instead of one.

How much less was it an indication of what he would have seen in that mansion early the next morning, when there was found just outside of Agricola's bedroom door a fresh egg, not cracked, according to Honoré's maxim, but smashed, according to the lore of the voudous. Who could have got in in the night? And did the intruder get in by magic, by outside lock-picking, or by inside collusion? Later in the morning, the children playing in the basement found--it had evidently been accidentally dropped, since the true use of its contents required them to be scattered in some person's path--a small cloth bag, containing a quantity of dogs' and cats' hair, cut fine and mixed with salt and pepper.

"Clemence?"

"Pooh! Clemence. No! But as sure as the sun turns around the world--Palmyre Philosophe!"

CHAPTER LIV

"CAULDRON BUBBLE"

The excitement and alarm produced by the practical threat of voudou curses upon Agricola was one thing, Creole lethargy was quite another; and when, three mornings later, a full quartette of voudou charms was found in the four corners of Agricola's pillow, the great Grandissime family were ignorant of how they could have come there. Let us examine these terrible engines of mischief. In one corner was an acorn drilled through with two holes at right angles to each other, a small feather run through each hole; in the second a joint of cornstalk with a cavity scooped from the middle, the pith left intact at the ends, and the space filled with parings from that small callous spot near the knee of the horse, called the "nail;" in the third corner a bunch of parti-colored feathers; something equally meaningless in the fourth. No thread was used in any of them. All fastening was done with the gum of trees. It was no easy task for his kindred to prevent Agricola, beside himself with rage and fright, from going straight to Palmyre's house and shooting her down in open day.

"We shall have to watch our house by night," said a gentleman of the household, when they had at length restored the Citizen to a condition of mind which enabled them to hold him in a chair.

"Watch this house?" cried a chorus. "You don't suppose she comes near here, do you? She does it all from a distance. No, no; watch *her* house."

Did Agricola believe in the supernatural potency of these gimcracks? No, and yes. Not to be foolhardy, he quietly slipped down every day to the levee, had a slave-boy row him across the river in a skiff, landed, re-embarked, and in the middle of the stream surreptitiously cast a picayune over his shoulder into the river. Monsieur D'Embarras, the imp of death thus placated, must have been a sort of spiritual Cheap John.

Several more nights passed. The house of Palmyre, closely watched, revealed nothing. No one came out, no one went in, no light was seen. They should have watched in broad daylight. At last, one midnight, 'Polyte Grandissime stepped cautiously up to one of the batten doors with an auger, and succeeded, without arousing any one, in boring a hole. He discovered a lighted candle standing in a glass of water.

"Nothing but a bedroom light," said one.

"Ah, bah!" whispered the other; "it is to make the spell work strong."

"We will not tell Agricola first; we had better tell Honoré," said Sylvestre.

"You forget," said 'Polyte, "that I no longer have any acquaintance with Monsieur Honoré Grandissime."

They told Agamemnon; and it would have gone hard with the "*milatraise*" but for the additional fact that suspicion had

fastened upon another person; but now this person in turn had to be identified. It was decided not to report progress to old Agricola, but to wait and seek further developments. Agricola, having lost all ability to sleep in the mansion, moved into a small cottage in a grove near the house. But the very next morning, he turned cold with horror to find on his doorstep a small black-coffined doll, with pins run through the heart, a burned-out candle at the head and another at the feet.

"You know it is Palmyre, do you?" asked Agamemnon, seizing the old man as he was going at a headlong pace through the garden gate. "What if I should tell you that by watching the Congo dancing-ground at midnight to-night, you will see the real author of this mischief--eh?"

"And why to-night?"

"Because the moon rises at midnight."

There was firing that night in the deserted Congo dancing-grounds under the ruins of Fort St. Joseph, or, as we would say now, in Congo Square, from three pistols--Agricola's, 'Polyte's, and the weapon of an ill-defined, retreating figure answering the description of the person who had stabbed Agricola the preceding February. "And yet," said 'Polyte, "I would have sworn that it was Palmyre doing this work."

Through Raoul these events came to the ear of Frowenfield. It was about the time that Raoul's fishing party, after a few days' mishaps, had returned home.

Palmyre, on several later dates, had craved further audiences and shown other letters from the hidden f.m.c. She had heard them calmly, and steadfastly preserved the one attitude of refusal. But it could not escape Frowenfeld's notice that she encouraged the sending of additional letters. He easily guessed the courier to be Clemence; and now, as he came to ponder these revelations of Raoul, he found that within twenty-four hours after every visit of Clemence to the house of Palmyre, Agricola suffered a visitation.

CHAPTER LV

CAUGHT

The fig-tree, in Louisiana, sometimes sheds its leaves while it is yet summer. In the rear of the Grandissme mansion, about two hundred yards northwest of it and fifty northeast of the cottage in which Agricola had made his new abode, on the edge of the grove of which we have spoken, stood one of these trees, whose leaves were beginning to lie thickly upon the ground beneath it. An ancient and luxuriant hedge of Cherokee-rose started from this tree and stretched toward the

northwest across the level country, until it merged into the green confusion of gardened homes in the vicinity of Bayou St. Jean, or, by night, into the common obscurity of a starlit perspective. When an unclouded moon shone upon it, it cast a shadow as black as velvet.

Under this fig-tree, some three hours later than that at which Honoré bade Joseph good-night, a man was stooping down and covering something with the broad, fallen leaves.

"The moon will rise about three o'clock," thought he. "That, the hour of universal slumber, will be, by all odds, the time most likely to bring developments."

He was the same person who had spent the most of the day in a blacksmith's shop in St. Louis street, superintending a piece of smithing. Now that he seemed to have got the thing well hid, he turned to the base of the tree and tried the security of some attachment. Yes, it was firmly chained. He was not a robber; he was not an assassin; he was not an officer of police; and what is more notable, seeing he was a Louisianian, he was not a soldier nor even an ex-soldier; and this although, under his clothing, he was encased from head to foot in a complete suit of mail. Of steel? No. Of brass? No. It was all one piece--*a white skin*; and on his head he wore an invisible helmet--the name of Grandissime. As he straightened up and withdrew into the grove, you would have recognized at once--by his thick-set, powerful frame, clothed seemingly in black, but really, as you might guess, in blue cottonade, by his black beard and the general look of a seafarer--a frequent visitor

at the Grandissime mansion, a country member of that great family, one whom we saw at the *fête de grandpère*.

Capitain Jean-Baptiste Grandissime was a man of few words, no sentiments, short methods; materialistic, we might say; quietly ferocious; indifferent as to means, positive as to ends, quick of perception, sure in matters of saltpetre, a stranger at the custom-house, and altogether--*take him right*--very much of a gentleman. He had been, for a whole day, beset with the idea that the way to catch a voudou was--to catch him; and as he had caught numbers of them on both sides of the tropical and semi-tropical Atlantic, he decided to try his skill privately on the one who--his experience told him--was likely to visit Agricola's doorstep to-night. All things being now prepared, he sat down at the root of a tree in the grove, where the shadow was very dark, and seemed quite comfortable. He did not strike at the mosquitoes; they appeared to understand that he did not wish to trifle. Neither did his thoughts or feelings trouble him; he sat and sharpened a small penknife on his boot.

His mind--his occasional transient meditation--was the more comfortable because he was one of those few who had coolly and unsentimentally allowed Honoré Grandissime to sell their lands. It continued to grow plainer every day that the grants with which theirs were classed--grants of old French or Spanish under-officials--were bad. Their sagacious cousin seemed to have struck the right standard, and while those titles which he still held on to remained unimpeached, those that he had parted with to purchasers--

as, for instance, the grant held by this Capitain Jean-Baptiste Grandissime--could be bought back now for half what he had got for it. Certainly, as to that, the Capitain might well have that quietude of mind which enabled him to find occupation in perfecting the edge of his penknife and trimming his nails in the dark.

By and by he put up the little tool and sat looking out upon the prospect. The time of greatest probability had not come, but the voudou might choose not to wait for that; and so he kept watch. There was a great stillness. The cocks had finished a round and were silent. No dog barked. A few tiny crickets made the quiet land seem the more deserted. Its beauties were not entirely overlooked--the innumerable host of stars above, the twinkle of myriad fireflies on the dark earth below. Between a quarter and a half-mile away, almost in a line with the Cherokee hedge, was a faint rise of ground, and on it a wide-spreading live-oak. There the keen, seaman's eye of the Capitain came to a stop, fixed upon a spot which he had not noticed before. He kept his eye on it, and waited for the stronger light of the moon.

Presently behind the grove at his back she rose; and almost the first beam that passed over the tops of the trees, and stretched across the plain, struck the object of his scrutiny. What was it? The ground, he knew; the tree, he knew; he knew there ought to be a white paling enclosure about the trunk of the tree: for there were buried--ah!--he came as near laughing at himself as ever he did in his life; the apothecary of the rue Royale had lately erected some marble headstones there, and--

"Oh! my God!"

While Capitain Jean-Baptiste had been trying to guess what the tombstones were, a woman had been coming toward him in the shadow of the hedge. She was not expecting to meet him; she did not know that he was there; she knew she had risks to run, but was ignorant of what they were; she did not know there was anything under the fig-tree which she so nearly and noiselessly approached. One moment her foot was lifted above the spot where the unknown object lay with wide-stretched jaws under the leaves, and the next, she uttered that cry of agony and consternation which interrupted the watcher's meditation. She was caught in a huge steel-trap.

Capitain Jean-Baptiste Grandissime remained perfectly still. She fell, a snarling, struggling, groaning heap, to the ground, wild with pain and fright, and began the hopeless effort to draw the jaws of the trap apart with her fingers.

"*Ah! bon Dieu, bon Dieu!* Quit a-*bi-i-i-i-tin' me*! Oh! Lawd 'a' mussy! Ow-ow-ow! lemme go! Dey go'n' to kyetch an' hang me! Oh! an' I hain' done nutt'n' 'gainst *no*body! Ah! *bon Dieu! ein pov' vié négresse*! Oh! Jemimy! I cyan' gid dis yeh t'ing loose--oh! m-m-m-m! An' dey'll tra to mek out't I voudou' Mich-Agricole! An' I did n' had nutt'n' do wid it! Oh Lawd, oh *Lawd*, you'll be mighty good ef you lemme loose! I'm a po' nigga! Oh! dey had n' ought to mek it so *pow*'ful!"

Hands, teeth, the free foot, the writhing body, every combination of available forces failed to spread the savage

jaws, though she strove until hands and mouth were bleeding.

Suddenly she became silent; a thought of precaution came to her; she lifted from the earth a burden she had dropped there, struggled to a half-standing posture, and, with her foot still in the trap, was endeavoring to approach the end of the hedge near by, to thrust this burden under it, when she opened her throat in a speechless ecstasy of fright on feeling her arm grasped by her captor.

"O-o-o-h! Lawd! o-o-oh! Lawd!" she cried, in a frantic, husky whisper, going down upon her knees, "*Oh, Miché! pou' l'amou' du bon Dieu! Pou' l'amou du bon Dieu ayez pitié d'ein pov' négresse! Pov' négresse, Miché,* w'at nevva done nutt'n' to nobody on'y jis sell *calas*! I iss comin' 'long an' step inteh dis-yeh bah-trap by acci*dent*! Ah! *Miché, Miché,* ple-e-ease be good! *Ah! mon Dieu*!--an' de Lawd'll reward you--'deed 'E will, *Miché*!"

"*Qui ci ça?*" asked the Capitain, sternly, stooping and grasping her burden, which she had been trying to conceal under herself.

"Oh, Miché, don' trouble dat! Please jes tek dis yeh trap offen me--da's all! Oh, don't, mawstah, ple-e-ease don' spill all my wash'n' t'ings! 'Tain't nutt'n' but my old dress roll' up into a ball. Oh, please--now, you see? nutt'n' but a po' nigga's dr--*oh! fo' de love o' God, Miché Jean-Baptiste, don' open dat ah box! Y'en a rien du tout la-dans, Miché Jean-Baptiste; du tout, du tout*! Oh, my God! *Miché,* on'y jis teck dis-yeh t'ing off'n my laig, ef yo' *please*, it's bit'n' me lak a *dawg*!--if you *please, Miché*! Oh! you git

kill' if you open dat ah box, Mawse Jean-Baptiste! *Mo' parole d'honneur le plus sacre*--I'll kiss de cross! Oh, *sweet Miché Jean, laisse moi aller*! Nutt'n' but some dutty close *la-dans*." She repeated this again and again, even after Capitain Jean-Baptiste had disengaged a small black coffin from the old dress in which it was wrapped. "*Rien du tout, Miché*; nutt'n' but some wash'n' fo' one o' de boys."

He removed the lid and saw within, resting on the cushioned bottom, the image, in myrtle-wax, moulded and painted with some rude skill, of a negro's bloody arm cut off near the shoulder--a *bras coupé*--with a dirk grasped in its hand.

The old woman lifted her eyes to heaven; her teeth chattered; she gasped twice before she could recover utterance. "*Oh, Miché* Jean-Baptiste, I di' n' mek dat ah! *Mo' té pas fé ça*! I swea' befo' God! Oh, no, no, no! 'Tain' nutt'n' nohow but a lill play-toy, *Miché*. Oh, sweet *Miché Jean*, you not gwan to kill me? I di' n' mek it! It was--ef you lemme go, I tell you who mek it! Sho's I live I tell you, *Miché Jean*--ef you lemme go! Sho's God's good to me--ef you lemme go! Oh, God A'mighty, *Miché Jean*, sho's God's good to me."

She was becoming incoherent.

Then Capitain Jean-Baptiste Grandissime for the first time spoke at length:

"Do you see this?" he spoke the French of the Atchafalaya. He put his long flintlock pistol close to her face. "I shall take the trap off; you will walk three feet in front of me; if you make it four I blow your

brains out; we shall go to Agricole. But right here, just now, before I count ten, you will tell me who sent you here; at the word ten, if I reach it, I pull the trigger. One--two--three--"

"Oh, *Miché,* she gwan to gib me to de devil wid *houdou* ef I tell you--Oh, good *Lawdy*!"

But he did not pause.

"Four--five--six--seven--eight--"

"Palmyre!" gasped the negress, and grovelled on the ground.

The trap was loosened from her bleeding leg, the burden placed in her arms, and they disappeared in the direction of the mansion.

A black shape, a boy, the lad who had carried the basil to Frowenfeld, rose up from where he had all this time lain, close against the hedge, and glided off down its black shadow to warn the philosophe.

When Clemence was searched, there was found on her person an old table-knife with its end ground to a point.

CHAPTER LVI

BLOOD FOR A BLOW

It seems to be one of the self-punitive characteristics of tyranny, whether the tyrant be a man, a community, or a caste, to have a pusillanimous fear of its victim. It was not when Clemence lay in irons, it is barely now, that our South is casting off a certain apprehensive tremor, generally latent, but at the slightest provocation active, and now and then violent, concerning her "blacks." This fear, like others similar elsewhere in the world, has always been met by the same one antidote--terrific cruelty to the tyrant's victim. So we shall presently see the Grandissime ladies, deeming themselves compassionate, urging their kinsmen to "give the poor wretch a sound whipping and let her go." Ah! what atrocities are we unconsciously perpetrating North and South now, in the name of mercy or defence, which the advancing light of progressive thought will presently show out in their enormity?

Agricola slept late. He had gone to his room the evening before much incensed at the presumption of some younger Grandissimes who had brought up the subject, and spoken in defence, of their cousin Honoré. He had retired, however, not to rest, but to construct an engine of offensive warfare which would revenge him a hundred-fold upon the miserable school of imported thought which had sent its revolting influences to the very Grandissime hearthstone; he wrote a "*Phillipique Générale contre la Conduite du Gouvernement de la Louisiane*" and a short

but vigorous chapter in English on "The Insanity of Educating the Masses." This accomplished, he had gone to bed in a condition of peaceful elation, eager for the next day to come that he might take these mighty productions to Joseph Frowenfeld, and make him a present of them for insertion in his book of tables.

Jean-Baptiste felt no need of his advice, that he should rouse him; and, for a long time before the old man awoke, his younger kinsmen were stirring about unwontedly, going and coming through the hall of the mansion, along its verandas and up and down its outer flight of stairs. Gates were opening and shutting, errands were being carried by negro boys on bareback horses, Charlie Mandarin of St. Bernard parish and an Armand Fusilier from Faubourg Ste. Marie had on some account come--as they told the ladies--"to take breakfast;" and the ladies, not yet informed, amusedly wondering at all this trampling and stage whispering, were up a trifle early. In those days Creole society was a ship, in which the fair sex were all passengers and the ruder sex the crew. The ladies of the Grandissime mansion this morning asked passengers' questions, got sailors' answers, retorted wittily and more or less satirically, and laughed often, feeling their constrained insignificance. However, in a house so full of bright-eyed children, with mothers and sisters of all ages as their confederates, the secret was soon out, and before Agricola had left his little cottage in the grove the topic of all tongues was the abysmal treachery and *ingratitude* of negro slaves. The whole tribe of Grandissime believed, this morning, in the doctrine of total depravity--of the negro.

And right in the face of this belief, the ladies put forth the generously intentioned prayer for mercy. They were answered that they little knew what frightful perils they were thus inviting upon themselves.

The male Grandissimes were not surprised at this exhibition of weak clemency in their lovely women; they were proud of it; it showed the magnanimity that was natural to the universal Grandissime heart, when not restrained and repressed by the stern necessities of the hour. But Agricola disappointed them. Why should he weaken and hesitate, and suggest delays and middle courses, and stammer over their proposed measures as "extreme"? In very truth, it seemed as though that drivelling, woman-beaten Deutsch apotheke--ha! ha! ha!--in the rue Royale had bewitched Agricola as well as Honoré. The fact was, Agricola had never got over the interview which had saved Sylvestre his life.

"Here, Agricole," his kinsmen at length said, "you see you are too old for this sort of thing; besides, it would be bad taste for you, who might be presumed to harbor feelings of revenge, to have a voice in this council." And then they added to one another: "We will wait until 'Polyte reports whether or not they have caught Palmyre; much will depend on that."

Agricola, thus ruled out, did a thing he did not fully understand; he rolled up the "*Philippique Générale*" and "The Insanity of Educating the Masses," and, with these in one hand and his staff in the other, set out for Frowenfeld's, not merely smarting but trembling under the humiliation of having been sent, for the first

time in his life, to the rear as a non-combatant.

He found the apothecary among his clerks, preparing with his own hands the "chalybeate tonic" for which the f.m.c. was expected to call. Raoul Innerarity stood at his elbow, looking on with an amiable air of having been superseded for the moment by his master.

"Ha-ah! Professor Frowenfeld!"

The old man nourished his scroll.

Frowenfeld said good-morning, and they shook hands across the counter; but the old man's grasp was so tremulous that the apothecary looked at him again.

"Does my hand tremble, Joseph? It is not strange; I have had much to excite me this morning."

"Wat's de mattah?" demanded Raoul, quickly.

"My life--which I admit, Professor Frowenfeld, is of little value compared with such a one as yours--has been--if not attempted, at least threatened."

"How?" cried Raoul.

"H-really, Professor, we must agree that a trifle like that ought not to make old Agricola Fusilier nervous. But I find it painful, sir, very painful. I can lift up this right hand, Joseph, and swear I never gave a slave--man or woman--a blow in my life but according to my notion of justice. And now to find my life attempted by former slaves of my own household, and taunted with the righteous hamstringing of a dangerous

runaway! But they have apprehended the miscreants; one is actually in hand, and justice will take its course; trust the Grandissimes for that--though, really, Joseph, I assure you, I counselled leniency."

"Do you say they have caught her?" Frowenfeld's question was sudden and excited; but the next moment he had controlled himself.

"H-h-my son, I did not say it was a 'her'!"

"Was it not Clemence? Have they caught her?"

"H-yes--"

The apothecary turned to Raoul.

"Go tell Honoré Grandissime."

"But, Professor Frowenfeld--" began Agricola.

Frowenfeld turned to repeat his instruction, but Raoul was already leaving the store.

Agricola straightened up angrily.

"Pro-hofessor Frowenfeld, by what right do you interfere?"

"No matter," said the apothecary, turning half-way and pouring the tonic into a vial.

"Sir," thundered the old lion, "h-I demand of you to answer! How dare you insinuate that my kinsmen may deal otherwise than justly?"

"Will they treat her exactly as if she were white, and had threatened the life

of a slave?" asked Frowenfeld from behind the desk at the end of the counter.

The old man concentrated all the indignation of his nature in the reply.

"No-ho, sir!"

As he spoke, a shadow approaching from the door caused him to turn. The tall, dark, finely clad form of the f.m.c, in its old soft-stepping dignity and its sad emaciation, came silently toward the spot where he stood.

Frowenfeld saw this, and hurried forward inside the counter with the preparation in his hand.

"Professor Frowenfeld," said Agricola, pointing with his ugly staff, "I demand of you, as a keeper of a white man's pharmacy, to turn that negro out."

"Citizen Fusilier!" exclaimed the apothecary; "Mister Grandis--"

He felt as though no price would be too dear at that moment to pay for the presence of the other Honoré. He had to go clear to the end of the counter and come down the outside again to reach the two men. They did not wait for him. Agricola turned upon the f.m.c.

"Take off your hat!"

A sudden activity seized every one connected with the establishment as the quadroon let his thin right hand slowly into his bosom, and answered in French, in his soft, low voice:

"I wear my hat on my head."

Frowenfeld was hurrying toward them; others stepped forward, and from two or three there came half-uttered exclamations of protest; but unfortunately nothing had been done or said to provoke any one to rush upon them, when Agricola suddenly advanced a step and struck the f.m.c. on the head with his staff. Then the general outcry and forward rush came too late; the two crashed together and fell, Agricola above, the f.m.c. below, and a long knife lifted up from underneath sank to its hilt, once--twice--thrice,--in the old man's back.

The two men rose, one in the arms of his friends, the other upon his own feet. While every one's attention was directed toward the wounded man, his antagonist restored his dagger to its sheath, took up his hat and walked away unmolested. When Frowenfeld, with Agricola still in his arms, looked around for the quadroon, he was gone.

Doctor Keene, sent for instantly, was soon at Agricola's side.

"Take him upstairs; he can't be moved any further."

Frowenfeld turned and began to instruct some one to run upstairs and ask permission, but the little doctor stopped him.

"Joe, for shame! you don't know those women better than that? Take the old man right up!"

CHAPTER LVII

VOUDOU CURED

"Honoré," said Agricola, faintly, "where is Honoré!"

"He has been sent for," said Doctor Keene and the two ladies in a breath.

Raoul, bearing the word concerning Clemence, and the later messenger summoning him to Agricola's bedside, reached Honoré within a minute of each other. His instructions were quickly given, for Raoul to take his horse and ride down to the family mansion, to break gently to his mother the news of Agricola's disaster, and to say to his kinsmen with imperative emphasis, not to touch the *marchande des calas* till he should come. Then he hurried to the rue Royale.

But when Raoul arrived at the mansion he saw at a glance that the news had outrun him. The family carriage was already coming round the bottom of the front stairs for three Mesdames Grandissime and Madame Martinez. The children on all sides had dropped their play, and stood about, hushed and staring. The servants moved with quiet rapidity. In the hall he was stopped by two beautiful girls.

"Raoul! Oh, Raoul, how is he now? Oh! Raoul, if you could only stop them! They have taken old Clemence down into the swamp--as soon as they heard about Agricole--Oh, Raoul, surely that would be cruel! She nursed me--and me--when we were babies!"

"Where is Agamemnon?"

"Gone to the city."

"What did he say about it?"

"He said they were doing wrong, that he did not approve their action, and that they would get themselves into trouble: that he washed his hands of it."

"Ah-h-h!" exclaimed Raoul, "wash his hands! Oh, yes, wash his hands? Suppose we all wash our hands? But where is Valentine? Where is Charlie Mandarin?"

"Ah! Valentine is gone with Agamemnon, saying the same thing, and Charlie Mandarin is down in the swamp, the worst of all of them!"

"But why did you let Agamemnon and Valentine go off that way, you?"

"Ah! listen to Raoul! What can a woman do?"

"What can a woman--Well, even if I was a woman, I would do something!"

He hurried from the house, leaped into the saddle and galloped across the fields toward the forest.

Some rods within the edge of the swamp, which, at this season, was quite dry in many places, on a spot where the

fallen dead bodies of trees overlay one another and a dense growth of willows and vines and dwarf palmetto shut out the light of the open fields, the younger and some of the harsher senior members of the Grandissime family were sitting or standing about, in an irregular circle whose centre was a big and singularly misshapen water-willow. At the base of this tree sat Clemence, motionless and silent, a wan, sickly color in her face, and that vacant look in her large, white-balled, brown-veined eyes, with which hope-forsaken cowardice waits for death. Somewhat apart from the rest, on an old cypress stump, half-stood, half-sat, in whispered consultation, Jean-Baptiste Grandissime and Charlie Mandarin.

"*Eh bien*, old woman," said Mandarin, turning, without rising, and speaking sharply in the negro French, "have you any reason to give why you should not be hung to that limb over your head?"

She lifted her eyes slowly to his, and made a feeble gesture of deprecation.

"*Mo té pas fé cette bras*, Mawse Challie--I di'n't mek dat ahm; no 'ndeed I di'n', Mawse Challie. I ain' wuth hangin', gen'lemen; you'd oughteh jis gimme fawty an' lemme go. I--I--I--I di'n' 'ten' no hawm to Mawse-Agricole; I wa'n't gwan to hu't nobody in God's worl'; 'ndeed I wasn'. I done tote dat old case-knife fo' twenty year'--*mo po'te ça dipi vingt ans*. I'm a po' ole *marchande des calas; mo courri* 'mongs' de sojer boys to sell my cakes, you know, and da's de onyest reason why I cyah dat ah ole fool knife." She seemed to take some hope from the silence with which they heard her. Her eye brightened and her voice took a tone of excitement. "You'd oughteh tek me

and put me in calaboose, an' let de law tek 'is co'se. You's all nice gen'lemen--werry nice gen'lemen, an' you sorter owes it to yo'sev's fo' to not do no sich nasty wuck as hangin' a po' ole nigga wench; 'deed you does. 'Tain' no use to hang me; you gwan to kyetch Palmyre yit; *li courri dans marais;* she is in de swamp yeh, sum'ers; but as concernin' me, you'd oughteh jis gimme fawty an lemme go. You mus'n't b'lieve all dis-yeh nonsense 'bout insurrectionin'; all fool-nigga talk. W'at we want to be insurrectionin' faw? We de happies' people in de God's worl'!" She gave a start, and cast a furtive glance of alarm behind her. "Yes, we is; you jis' oughteh gimme fawty an' lemme go! Please, gen'lemen! God'll be good to you, you nice, sweet gen'lemen!"

Charlie Mandarin made a sign to one who stood at her back, who responded by dropping a rawhide noose over her head. She bounded up with a cry of terror; it may be that she had all along hoped that all was make-believe. She caught the noose wildly with both hands and tried to lift it over her head.

"Ah! no, mawsteh, you cyan' do dat! It's ag'in' de law! I's 'bleeged to have my trial, yit. Oh, no, no! Oh, good God, no! Even if I is a nigga! You cyan' jis' murdeh me hyeh in de woods! *Mo dis la zize*! I tell de judge on you! You ain' got no mo' biznis to do me so 'an if I was a white 'oman! You dassent tek a white 'oman out'n de Pa'sh Pris'n an' do 'er so! Oh, sweet mawsteh, fo' de love o' God! Oh, Mawse Challie, *pou' l'amou' du bon Dieu n'fé pas ça*! Oh, Mawse 'Polyte, is you gwan to let 'em kill ole Clemence? Oh, fo' de mussy o' Jesus Christ,

Mawse 'Polyte, leas' of all, *you*! You dassent help to kill me, Mawse 'Polyte! You knows why! Oh God, Mawse 'Polyte, you knows why! Leas' of all you, Mawse 'Polyte! Oh, God 'a' mussy on my wicked ole soul! I aint fitt'n to die! Oh, gen'lemen, I kyan' look God in de face! *Oh, Michés, ayez pitié de moin! Oh, God A'mighty ha' mussy on my soul*! Oh, gen'lemen, dough yo' kinfolks kyvvah up yo' tricks now, dey'll dwap f'um undeh you some day! *Solé levé là, li couché là*! Yo' tu'n will come! Oh, God A'mighty! de God o' de po' nigga wench! Look down, oh God, look down an' stop dis yeh foolishness! Oh, God, fo' de love o' Jesus! *Oh, Michés, y'en a ein zizement*! Oh, yes, deh's a judgmen' day! Den it wont be a bit o' use to you to be white! Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, fo', fo', fo', de, de, *love 0' God! Oh*!"

They drew her up.

Raoul was not far off. He heard the woman's last cry, and came threshing through the bushes on foot. He saw Sylvestre, unconscious of any approach, spring forward, jerk away the hands that had drawn the thong over the branch, let the strangling woman down and loosen the noose. Her eyes, starting out with horror, turned to him; she fell on her knees and clasped her hands. The tears were rolling down Sylvestre's face.

"My friends, we must not do this! You *shall* not do it!"

He hurled away, with twice his natural strength, one who put out a hand.

"No, sirs!" cried Raoul, "you shall not do it! I come from Honoré! Touch her who dares!"

He drew a weapon.

"Monsieur Innerarity," said 'Polyte, "*who is* Monsieur Honoré Grandissime? There are two of the name, you know,--partners--brothers. Which of--but it makes no difference; before either of them sees this assassin she is going to be a lump of nothing!"

The next word astonished every one. It was Charlie Mandarin who spoke.

"Let her go!"

"Let her go!" said Jean-Baptiste Grandissime; "give her a run for life. Old woman, rise up. We propose to let you go. Can you run? Never mind, we shall see. Achille, put her upon her feet. Now, old woman, run!"

She walked rapidly, but with unsteady feet, toward the fields.

"Run! If you don't run I will shoot you this minute!"

She ran.

"Faster!"

She ran faster.

"Run!"

"Run!"

"Run, Clemence! Ha, ha, ha!" It was so funny to see her scuttling and tripping and stumbling. "*Courri! courri, Clemence! c'est pou to' vie!* ha, ha, ha--"

A pistol-shot rang out close behind Raoul's ear; it was never told who fired it. The negress leaped into the air and fell at full length to the ground, stone dead.

CHAPTER LVIII

DYING WORDS

Drivers of vehicles in the rue Royale turned aside before two slight barriers spanning the way, one at the corner below, the other at that above, the house where the aged high-priest of a doomed civilization lay bleeding to death. The floor of the store below, the pavement of the corridor where stood the idle volante, were covered with straw, and servants came and went by the beckoning of the hand.

"This way," whispered a guide of the four ladies from the Grandissime mansion. As Honoré's mother turned the angle half-way up the muffled stair, she saw at the landing above, standing as if about to part, yet in grave council, a man and a woman, the fairest--she noted it even in this moment of extreme distress--she had ever looked upon. He had already set one foot down upon the stair, but at sight of the ascending group drew back and said:

"It is my mother;" then turned to his mother and took her hand; they had been for months estranged, but now they silently kissed.

"He is sleeping," said Honoré. "Maman, Madame Nancanou."

The ladies bowed--the one looking very large and splendid, the other very sweet and small. There was a single instant of silence, and Aurora burst into tears.

For a moment Madame Grandissime assumed a frown that was almost a reminder of her brother's, and then the very pride of the Fusiliers broke down. She uttered an inaudible exclamation, drew the weeper firmly into her bosom, and with streaming eyes and choking voice, but yet with majesty, whispered, laying her hand on Aurora's head:

"Never mind, my child; never mind; never mind."

And Honoré's sister, when she was presently introduced, kissed Aurora and murmured:

"The good God bless thee! It is He who has brought us together."

"Who is with him just now?" whispered the two other ladies, while Honoré and his mother stood a moment aside in hurried consultation.

"My daughter," said Aurora, "and--"

"Agamemnon," suggested Madame Martinez.

"I believe so," said Aurora.

Valentine appeared from the direction of the sick-room and beckoned to Honoré. Doctor Keene did the same and continued to advance.

"Awake?" asked Honoré.

"Yes."

"Alas! my brother!" said Madame Grandissime, and started forward, followed by the other women.

"Wait," said Honoré, and they paused. "Charlie," he said, as the little doctor persistently pushed by him at the head of the stair.

"Oh, there's no chance, Honoré, you'd as well all go in there."

They gathered into the room and about the bed. Madame Grandissime bent over it.

"Ah! sister," said the dying man, "is that you? I had the sweetest dream just now--just for a minute." He sighed. "I feel very weak. Where is Charlie Keene?"

He had spoken in French; he repeated his question in English. He thought he saw the doctor.

"Charlie, if I must meet the worst I hope you will tell me so; I am fully prepared. Ah! excuse--I thought it was--

"My eyes seem dim this evening. *Est-ce-vous*, Honoré? Ah, Honoré, you went over to the enemy, did you?--Well,--the Fusilier blood would al--ways--do as it pleased. Here's your old uncle's hand, Honoré. I forgive you, Honoré--my noble-hearted, foolish--boy." He spoke feebly, and with great nervousness.

"Water."

It was given him by Aurora. He looked in her face; they could not be sure

whether he recognized her or not. He sank back, closed his eyes, and said, more softly and dreamily, as if to himself, "I forgive everybody. A man must die--I forgive--even the enemies--of Louisiana."

He lay still a few moments, and then revived excitedly. "Honoré! tell Professor Frowenfeld to take care of that *Philippique Générale*. 'Tis a grand thing, Honoré, on a grand theme! I wrote it myself in one evening. Your Yankee Government is a failure, Honoré, a drivelling failure. It may live a year or two, not longer. Truth will triumph. The old Louisiana will rise again. She will get back her trampled rights. When she does, remem'--" His voice failed, but he held up one finger firmly by way of accentuation.

There was a stir among the kindred. Surely this was a turn for the better. The doctor ought to be brought back. A little while ago he was not nearly so strong. "Ask Honoré if the doctor should not come." But Honoré shook his head. The old man began again.

"Honoré! Where is Honoré? Stand by me, here, Honoré; and sister?--on this other side. My eyes are very poor to-day. Why do I perspire so? Give me a drink. You see--I am better now; I have ceased--to throw up blood. Nay, let me talk." He sighed, closed his eyes, and opened them again suddenly. "Oh, Honoré, you and the Yankees--you and--all--going wrong--education--masses--weaken--caste--indiscr'--quarrels settl'--by affidav'--Oh! Honoré."

"If he would only forget," said one, in an agonized whisper, "that *philippique générale*!"

Aurora whispered earnestly and tearfully to Madame Grandissime. Surely they were not going to let him go thus! A priest could at least do no harm. But when the proposition was made to him by his sister, he said:

"No;--no priest. You have my will, Honoré,--in your iron box. Professor Frowenfeld,"--he changed his speech to English,--"I have written you an article on--" his words died on his lips.

"Joseph, son, I do not see you. Beware, my son, of the doctrine of equal rights--a bottomless iniquity. Master and man--arch and pier--arch above--pier below." He tried to suit the gesture to the words, but both hands and feet were growing uncontrollably restless.

"Society, Professor,"--he addressed himself to a weeping girl,--"society has pyramids to build which make menials a necessity, and Nature furnishes the menials all in dark uniform. She--I cannot tell you--you will find--all in the *Philippique Générale*. Ah! Honoré, is it--"

He suddenly ceased.

"I have lost my glasses."

Beads of sweat stood out upon his face. He grew frightfully pale. There was a general dismayed haste, and they gave him a stimulant.

"Brother," said the sister, tenderly.

He did not notice her.

"Agamemnon! Go and tell Jean-Baptiste--" his eyes drooped and flashed again wildly.

"I am here, Agricole," said the voice of Jean-Baptiste, close beside the bed.

"I told you to let--that negress--"

"Yes, we have let her go. We have let all of them go."

"All of them," echoed the dying man, feebly, with wandering eyes. Suddenly he brightened again and tossed his arms. "Why, there you were wrong, Jean-Baptiste; the community must be protected." His voice sank to a murmur. "He would not take off--'you must remem'--" He was silent. "You must remem'--those people are--are not--white people." He ceased a moment. "Where am I going?" He began evidently to look, or try to look, for some person; but they could not divine his wish until, with piteous feebleness, he called:

"Aurore De Grapion!"

So he had known her all the time.

Honoré's mother had dropped on her knees beside the bed, dragging Aurora down with her.

They rose together.

The old man groped distressfully with one hand. She laid her own in it.

"Honoré!

"What could he want?" wondered the tearful family. He was feeling about with the other hand.

"Hon'--Honoré"--his weak clutch could scarcely close upon his nephew's hand.

"Put them--put--put them--"

What could it mean? The four hands clasped.

"Ah!" said one, with fresh tears, "he is trying to speak and cannot."

But he did.

"Aurora De Gra--I pledge'--pledge'--pledged--this union--to your fa'--father--twenty--years--ago."

The family looked at each other in dejected amazement. They had never known it.

"He is going," said Agamemnon; and indeed it seemed as though he was gone; but he rallied.

"Agamemnon! Valentine! Honoré! patriots! protect the race! Beware of the"--that sentence escaped him. He seemed to fancy himself haranguing a crowd; made another struggle for intelligence, tried once, twice, to speak, and the third time succeeded:

"Louis'--Louisian'--a--for--ever!" and lay still.

They put those two words on his tomb.

CHAPTER LIX

WHERE SOME CREOLE MONEY GOES

And yet the family committee that ordered the inscription, the mason who cut it in the marble--himself a sort of half-Grandissime, half-nobody--and even the fair women who each eve of All-Saints came, attended by flower-laden slave girls, to lay coronals upon the old man's tomb, felt, feebly at first, and more and more distinctly as years went by, that Forever was a trifle long for one to confine one's patriotic affection to a small fraction of a great country.

"And you say your family decline to accept the assistance of the police in their endeavors to bring the killer of your uncle to justice?" asked some *Américain* or other of 'Polyte Grandissime.

"'Sir, mie fam'lie do not want to fetch him to justice!--neither Palmyre! We are goin' to fetch the justice to them! And sir, when we cannot do that, sir, by ourselves, sir,--no, sir! no police!"

So Clemence was the only victim of the family wrath; for the other two were never taken; and it helps our good feeling for the Grandissimes to know that in later times, under the gentler influences of a higher civilization, their old Spanish-

colonial ferocity was gradually absorbed by the growth of better traits. To-day almost all the savagery that can justly be charged against Louisiana must--strange to say--be laid at the door of the *Américain*. The Creole character has been diluted and sweetened.

One morning early in September, some two weeks after the death of Agricola, the same brig which something less than a year before had brought the Frowenfelds to New Orleans crossed, outward bound, the sharp line dividing the sometimes tawny waters of Mobile Bay from the deep blue Gulf, and bent her way toward Europe.

She had two passengers; a tall, dark, wasted yet handsome man of thirty-seven or thirty-eight years of age, and a woman seemingly some three years younger, of beautiful though severe countenance; "very elegant-looking people and evidently rich," so the brig-master described them,--"had much the look of some of the Mississippi River 'Lower Coast' aristocracy." Their appearance was the more interesting for a look of mental distress evident on the face of each. Brother and sister they called themselves; but, if so, she was the most severely reserved and distant sister the master of the vessel had ever seen.

They landed, if the account comes down to us right, at Bordeaux. The captain, a fellow of the peeping sort, found pastime in keeping them in sight after they had passed out of his care ashore. They went to different hotels!

The vessel was detained some weeks in this harbor, and her master continued to enjoy himself in the way in which he had begun. He saw his late passengers meet often, in a certain quiet path under the trees of the Quinconce. Their conversations were low; in the patois they used they could have afforded to speak louder; their faces were always grave and almost always troubled. The interviews seemed to give neither of them any pleasure. The monsieur grew thinner than ever, and sadly feeble.

"He wants to charter her," the seaman concluded, "but she doesn't like his rates."

One day, the last that he saw them together, they seemed to be, each in a way different from the other, under a great strain. He was haggard, woebegone, nervous; she high-strung, resolute,--with "eyes that shone like lamps," as said the observer.

"She's a-sendin' him 'way to lew-ard," thought he. Finally the Monsieur handed her--or rather placed upon the seat near which she stood, what she would not receive--a folded and sealed document, seized her hand, kissed it and hurried away. She sank down upon the seat, weak and pale, and rose to go, leaving the document behind. The mariner picked it up; it was directed to *M. Honoré Grandissime, Nouvelle Orléans, États Unis, Amérique*. She turned suddenly, as if remembering, or possibly reconsidering, and received it from him.

"It looked like a last will and testament," the seaman used to say, in telling the story.

The next morning, being at the water's edge and seeing a number of persons gathering about something not far away, he sauntered down toward it to see how small a thing was required to draw a crowd of these Frenchmen. It was the drowned body of the f.m.c.

Did the brig-master never see the woman again? He always waited for this question to be asked him, in order to state the more impressively that he did. His brig became a regular Bordeaux packet, and he saw the Madame twice or thrice, apparently living at great ease, but solitary, in the rue--. He was free to relate that he tried to scrape acquaintance with her, but failed ignominiously.

The rents of Number 19 rue Bienville and of numerous other places, including the new drug-store in the rue Royale, were collected regularly by H. Grandissime, successor to Grandissime Frères. Rumor said, and tradition repeats, that neither for the advancement of a friendless people, nor even for the repair of the properties' wear and tear, did one dollar of it ever remain in New Orleans; but

that once a year Honoré, "as instructed," remitted to Madame--say Madame Inconnue--of Bordeaux, the equivalent, in francs, of fifty thousand dollars. It is averred he did this without interruption for twenty years. "Let us see: fifty times twenty--one million dollars. That is only a *part* of the *pecuniary* loss which this sort of thing costs Louisiana."

But we have wandered.

CHAPTER LX

"ALL RIGHT"

The sun is once more setting upon the Place d'Armes. Once more the shadows of cathedral and town-hall lie athwart the pleasant grounds where again the city's fashion and beauty sit about in the sedate Spanish way, or stand or slowly move in and out among the old willows and along the white walks. Children are again playing on the sward; some, you may observe, are in black, for Agricola. You see, too, a more peaceful river, a nearer-seeming and greener opposite shore, and many other evidences of the drowsy summer's unwillingness to leave the embrace of this seductive land; the dreamy quietude of birds; the spreading, folding, re-expanding and slow pulsating of the all-prevailing fan (how like the unfolding of an angel's wing is ofttimes the broadening of that little instrument!); the oft-drawn handkerchief; the pale, cool colors of summer costume; the swallow, circling and twittering overhead or darting across the sight; the languid movement of foot and

hand; the reeking flanks and foaming bits of horses; the ear-piercing note of the cicada; the dancing butterfly; the dog, dropping upon the grass and looking up to his master with roping jaw and lolling tongue; the air sweetened with the merchandise of the flower *marchandes*.

On the levee road, bridles and saddles, whips, gigs, and carriages,--what a merry coming and going! We look, perforce, toward the old bench where, six months ago, sat Joseph Frowenfeld. There is somebody there--a small, thin, weary-looking man, who leans his bared head slightly back against the tree, his thin fingers knit together in his lap, and his chapeau-bras pressed under his arm. You note his extreme neatness of dress, the bright, unhealthy restlessness of his eye, and--as a beam from the sun strikes them--the fineness of his short red curls. It is Doctor Keene.

He lifts his head and looks forward. Honoré and Frowenfeld are walking arm-in-arm under the furthermost row of willows. Honoré is speaking. How gracefully, in correspondence with his words, his free arm or hand--sometimes his head or even his lithe form--moves in quiet gesture, while the grave, receptive apothecary takes into his meditative mind, as into a large, cool cistern, the valued rain-fall of his friend's communications. They are near enough for the little doctor easily to call them; but he is silent. The unhappy feel so far away from the happy. Yet--"Take care!" comes suddenly to his lips, and is almost spoken; for the two, about to cross toward the Place d'Armes at the very spot where Aurora had once made her narrow escape, draw suddenly back, while the black driver of a volante reins up the horse he bestrides, and the animal himself swerves and stops.

The two friends, though startled apart, hasten with lifted hats to the side of the volante, profoundly convinced that one, at least, of its two occupants is heartily sorry that they were not rolled in the dust. Ah, ah! with what a wicked, ill-stifled merriment those two ethereal women bend forward in the faintly perfumed clouds of their ravishing summer-evening garb, to express their equivocal mortification and regret.

"Oh! I'm so sawry, oh! Almoze runned o'--ah, ha, ha, ha!"

Aurora could keep the laugh back no longer.

"An' righd yeh befo' haivry *boddie*! Ah, ha, ha! 'Sieur Grandissime, 'tis *me-e-e* w'ad know 'ow dad is bad, ha, ha, ha! Oh! I assu' you, gen'lemen, id is hawful!"

And so on.

By and by Honoré seemed urging them to do something, the thought of which made them laugh, yet was entertained as not entirely absurd. It may have been that to which they presently seemed to consent; they alighted from the volante, dismissed it, and walked each at a partner's side down the grassy avenue of the levee. It was as Clotilde with one hand swept her light robes into perfect adjustment for the walk, and turned to take the first step with Frowenfeld, that she raised her eyes for the merest instant to his, and there passed between them an exchange of glance which made the heart of the little doctor suddenly burn like a ball of fire.

"Now we're all right," he murmured bitterly to himself, as, without having seen him, she took the arm of the apothecary, and they moved away.

Yes, if his irony was meant for this pair, he divined correctly. Their hearts had found utterance across the lips, and the future stood waiting for them on the threshold of a new existence, to usher them into a perpetual copartnership in all its joys and sorrows, its disappointments, its imperishable hopes, its aims, its conflicts, its rewards; and the true--the great--the everlasting God of love was with them. Yes, it had been "all right," now, for nearly twenty-four hours--an age of bliss. And now, as they walked beneath the willows where so many lovers had walked before them, they had whole histories to tell of the tremors, the dismays, the misconstructions and longings through which their hearts had come to this bliss; how at such a time, thus and so; and after such and such a meeting, so and so; no part of which was heard by alien ears, except a fragment of Clotilde's speech caught by a small boy in unintentioned ambush.

"--Evva sinze de firze nighd w'en I big-in to nurze you wid de fivver."

She was telling him, with that new, sweet boldness so wonderful to a lately accepted lover, how long she had loved him.

Later on they parted at the *porte-cochère*. Honoré and Aurora had got there before them, and were passing on up the stairs. Clotilde, catching, a moment before, a glimpse of her face, had seen that there was something wrong; weather-wise as to its indications she perceived an impending shower of tears. A faint shade of anxiety rested an instant on her own face. Frowenfeld could not go in. They paused a little within the obscurity of the corridor, and just to reassure themselves that everything *was* "all right," they--

God be praised for love's young dream!

The slippered feet of the happy girl, as she slowly mounted the stair alone, overburdened with the weight of her blissful reverie, made no sound. As she turned its mid-angle she remembered Aurora. She could guess pretty well the source of her trouble; Honoré was trying to treat that hand-clasping at the bedside of Agricola as a binding compact; "which, of course, was not fair." She supposed they would have gone into the front drawing-room; she would go into the back. But she miscalculated; as she silently entered the door she saw Aurora standing a little way beyond her, close before Honoré, her eyes cast down, and the trembling fan hanging from her two hands like a broken pinion. He seemed to be reiterating, in a tender undertone, some question intended to bring her to a decision. She lifted up her eyes toward his with a mute, frightened glance.

The intruder, with an involuntary murmur of apology, drew back; but, as she turned, she was suddenly and unspeakably saddened to see Aurora drop her glance, and, with a solemn slowness whose momentous significance was not to be mistaken, silently shake her head.

"Alas!" cried the tender heart of Clotilde. "Alas! M. Grandissime!"

CHAPTER LXI

"NO!"

If M. Grandissime had believed that he was prepared for the supreme bitterness of that moment, he had sadly erred. He could not speak. He extended his hand in a dumb farewell, when, all unsanctioned by his will, the voice of despair escaped him in a low groan. At the same moment, a tinkling sound drew near, and the room, which had grown dark with the fall of night, began to brighten with the softly widening light of an evening lamp, as a servant approached to place it in the front drawing-room.

Aurora gave her hand and withdrew it. In the act the two somewhat changed position, and the rays of the lamp, as the maid passed the door, falling upon Aurora's face, betrayed the again upturned eyes.

"'Sieur Grandissime--"

They fell.

The lover paused.

"You thing I'm crool."

She was the statue of meekness.

"Hope has been cruel to me," replied M. Grandissime, "not you; that I cannot say. Adieu."

He was turning.

"'Sieur Grandissime--"

She seemed to tremble.

He stood still.

"'Sieur Grandissime,"--her voice was very tender,--"wad you' horry?"

There was a great silence.

"'Sieur Grandissime, you know--teg a chair."

He hesitated a moment and then both sat down. The servant repassed the door; yet when Aurora broke the silence, she spoke in English--having such hazardous things to say. It would conceal possible stammerings.

"'Sieur Grandissime--you know dad riz'n I--"

She slightly opened her fan, looking down upon it, and was still.

"I have no right to ask the reason," said M. Grandissime. "It is yours--not mine."

Her head went lower.

"Well, you know,"--she drooped it meditatively to one side, with her eyes on the floor,--"'tis bick-ause--'tis bick-ause I thing in a few days I'm goin' to die."

M. Grandissime said never a word. He was not alarmed.

She looked up suddenly and took a quick breath, as if to resume, but her eyes fell before his, and she said, in a tone of half-soliloquy:

"I 'ave so mudge troub' wit dad hawt."

She lifted one little hand feebly to the cardiac region, and sighed softly, with a dying languor.

M. Grandissime gave no response. A vehicle rumbled by in the street below, and passed away. At the bottom of the room, where a gilded Mars was driving into battle, a soft note told the half-hour. The lady spoke again.

"Id mague"--she sighed once more--"so strange,--sometime' I thing I'm git'n' crezzy."

Still he to whom these fearful disclosures were being made remained as silent and motionless as an Indian captive, and, after another pause, with its painful accompaniment of small sounds, the fair speaker resumed with more energy, as befitting the approach to an incredible climax:

"Some day', 'Sieur Grandissime,--id mague me fo'gid my hage! I thing I'm young!"

She lifted her eyes with the evident determination to meet his own squarely, but it was too much; they fell as before; yet she went on speaking:

"An' w'en someboddie git'n' ti'ed livin' wid 'imsev an' big'n' to fill ole, an' wan' someboddie to teg de care of 'im an' wan' me to gid marri'd wid 'im--I thing 'e's in love to me." Her fingers kept up a little shuffling with the fan. "I thing I'm crezzy. I thing I muz be go'n' to die torecklie." She looked up to the ceiling with large eyes, and then again at the fan in her lap, which continued its spreading and shutting. "An' daz de riz'n, 'Sieur Grandissime." She waited until it was certain he was about to answer, and then interrupted him nervously: "You know, 'Sieur Grandissime, id woon be righd! Id woon be de juztiz to *you!* An' you de bez man I evva know in my life, 'Sieur Grandissime!" Her hands shook. "A man w'at nevva wan' to gid marri'd wid noboddie in 'is life, and now trine to gid marri'd juz only to rip-ose de soul of 'is oncl'--"

M. Grandissime uttered an exclamation of protest, and she ceased.

"I asked you," continued he, with low-toned emphasis, "for the single and only reason that I want you for my wife."

"Yez," she quickly replied; "daz all. Daz wad I thing. An' I thing daz de rad weh to say, 'Sieur Grandissime. Bick-ause, you know, you an' me is too hole to talg aboud dad *lovin',* you know. An' you godd dad grade *rizpeg* fo'

me, an' me I godd dad 'ighez rispeg fo' you; bud--" she clutched the fan and her face sank lower still--"bud--" she swallowed--shook her head--"bud--" She bit her lip; she could not go on.

"Aurora," said her lover, bending forward and taking one of her hands. "I *do* love you with all my soul."

She made a poor attempt to withdraw her hand, abandoned the effort, and looked up savagely through a pair of overflowing eyes, demanding:

"*Mais*, fo' w'y you di' n' wan' to sesso?"

M. Grandissime smiled argumentatively.

"I have said so a hundred times, in every way but in words."

She lifted her head proudly, and bowed like a queen.

"*Mais*, you see 'Sieur Grandissime, you bin meg one mizteg."

"Bud 'tis corrected in time," exclaimed he, with suppressed but eager joyousness.

"'Sieur Grandissime," she said, with a tremendous solemnity, "I'm verrie sawrie; *mais*--you spogue too lade."

"No, no!" he cried, "the correction comes in time. Say that, lady; say that!"

His ardent gaze beat hers once more down; but she shook her head. He ignored the motion.

"And you will correct your answer; ah! say that, too!" he insisted, covering the captive hand with both his own, and leaning forward from his seat.

"*Mais*, 'Sieur Grandissime, you know, dad is so verrie unegspeg'."

"Oh! unexpected!"

"*Mais*, I was thing all dad time id was Clotilde wad you--"

She turned her face away and buried her mouth in her handkerchief.

"Ah!" he cried, "mock me no more, Aurore Nancanou!"

He rose erect and held the hand firmly which she strove to draw away:

"Say the word, sweet lady; say the word!"

She turned upon him suddenly, rose to her feet, was speechless an instant while her eyes flashed into his, and crying out:

"No!" burst into tears, laughed through them, and let him clasp her to his bosom.