

STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF LOUISIANA.

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I. 1888. HOW I GOT THEM.



RUE stories are not often good art. The relations and experiences of real men and women rarely fall in such symmetrical order as to make an artistic whole. Until they have had such treatment as we give stone

in the quarry or gems in the rough they seldom group themselves with that harmony of values and brilliant unity of interest that result when art comes in—not so much to transcend nature as to make nature transcend herself.

Yet I have learned to believe that good stories happen oftener than once I thought they did. Within the last few years there have dropped into my hands by one accident or another a number of these natural crystals, whose charms, never the same in any two, are in each and all enough at least to warn off all tampering of the fictionist. Happily, moreover, without being necessary one to another, they yet have a coherent sequence, and follow one another like the days of a week. They are mine only by right of discovery. From various necessities of the case I am sometimes the story-teller, and sometimes, in the reader's interest, have to abridge; but I add no fact and trim naught of value away. Here are no "restorations," not one. In time, place, circumstance, in every essential feature, I give them as I got them—strange stories that truly happened, all partly, some wholly, in Louisiana.

In the spring of 1883, being one night the guest of my friend Dr. Francis Bacon, in New Haven, Connecticut, and the conversation turning, at the close of the evening, upon wonderful and romantic true happenings, he said:

"You are from New Orleans; did you never hear of Salome Müller?"

"No."

Thereupon he told the story, and a few weeks later sent me by mail, to my home in New Orleans, whither I had returned, a transcription, which he had most generously made, of a brief summary of the case—it would be right to say tragedy instead of case—as printed

in "The Law Reporter" some forty years ago. That transcription lies before me now, beginning, "The Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana has lately been called upon to investigate and decide one of the most interesting cases which has ever come under the cognizance of a judicial tribunal." This episode, which had been the cause of public excitement within the memory of men still living on the scene, a native resident of New Orleans and student of its history stumbled upon for the first time nearly two thousand miles from home.

I mentioned it to a number of lawyers of New Orleans, one after another. None remembered ever having heard of it. I appealed to a former chief-justice of the State, who had a lively personal remembrance of every member of the bench and the bar concerned in the case; but of the case he had no recollection. One of the medical experts called in by the court for evidence upon which the whole merits of the case seemed to hang was still living—the distinguished Creole physician Dr. Armand Mercier. He could not recall the matter until I recounted the story, and then only in the vaguest way. Yet when my friend the former chief-justice kindly took down from his shelves and beat free of dust the right volume of supreme court decisions, there was the terse, cold record, No. 5623. I went to the old newspaper files under the roof of the city hall and had the pleasure speedily to find, under the dates of 1818 and 1844, such passing allusions to the strange facts of which I was in search as one might hope to find in those days when a serious riot was likely to receive no mention, and a steamboat explosion dangerously near the editorial rooms would be recorded in ten lines of colorless statement. I went to the courts, and after following and abandoning several false trails through two days' search, found that the books of record containing the object of my quest had been lost, having unaccountably disappeared in—if I remember aright—1870.

There was one chance left; it was to find the original papers. I employed an intelligent gentleman at so much a day to search till he should find them. In the dusty garret of one of the court buildings—the old Spanish Ca-

bildo that faces Jackson Square—he rummaged for ten days, finding now one desired document and now another, until he had gathered all but one. Several he drew out of a great heap of papers lying in the middle of the floor, as if it were a pile of rubbish; but this one he never found. Yet I was content. Through the perseverance of this gentleman and the intervention of a friend in the legal profession, and by the courtesy of the court, I held in my hand the whole forgotten story of the poor lost and found Salome Müller. How through the courtesy of some of the reportorial staff of the “New Orleans Picayune” I found and conversed with three of Salome’s still surviving relatives and friends, I shall not stop to tell.

WHILE I was still in search of these things the editor of the “New Orleans Times-Democrat” handed me a thick manuscript, asking me to examine and pronounce upon its merits. It was written wholly in French, in a small, cramped, feminine hand. I replied, when I could, that it seemed to me unfit for the purposes of transient newspaper publication, yet if he declined it I should probably buy it myself. He replied that he had already examined it and decided to decline it, and it was only to know whether I, not he, could use it that I had been asked to read it.

I took it to an attorney, and requested him, under certain strict conditions, to obtain it for me with all its rights.

“What is it?”

“It is the minute account, written by one of the travelers, a pretty little Creole maiden of seventeen, of an adventurous journey made in 1795 from New Orleans through the wilds of Louisiana, taking six weeks to complete a tour that could now be made in less than two days.”

“But this is written by some one else; see, it says, ‘Voyage de ma Grand’mère.’”

“Yes, it purports to be a copy. We must have the little grandmother’s original manuscript, written in 1822; that or nothing.”

So a correspondence sprang up with a gentle and refined old Creole lady with whom I later had the honor to become acquainted and now count among my esteemed friends—granddaughter of the grandmother who, after innumerable recountings by word of mouth to mother, sisters, brothers, friends, husband, children, and children’s children through twenty-seven years of advancing life, sat down at last and wrote the oftold tale for her little grandchildren, one of whom, inheriting her literary instinct and herself become an aged grandmother, discovers the manuscript among some old family papers and recognizes its value. The

first exchange of letters disclosed the fact that the “New Orleans Bee” (“L’Abeille”) had bought the right to publish the manuscript in French; but the moment its editors had proper assurance that there was impending another arrangement more profitable to her, they chivalrously yielded all they had bought, on merely being reimbursed.

The condition that required the delivery of the original manuscript, written over sixty years before, was not so easily met. First came the assurance that its spelling was hideous, its writing bad and dimmed by time, and the sheets tattered and torn. Later followed the disclosure that an aged and infirm mother of the grandmother owned it, and that she had some time before compelled its return to the private drawer from which the relic-loving daughter had abstracted it. Still later came a letter saying that since the attorney was so relentlessly exacting, she had written to her mother praying her to part with the manuscript. Then followed another communication,—six large, closely written pages of despair,—inclosing a letter from the mother. The wad of papers, always more and more in the way and always “smelling bad,” had been put into the fire. But a telegram followed on the heels of the mail, crying joy! An old letter had been found and forwarded which would prove that such a manuscript had existed. But it was not in time to intercept the attorney’s letter saying that, the original manuscript being destroyed, there could be no purchase or any need of further correspondence. The old letter came. It was genuine beyond a doubt, had been written by one of the party making the journey, and was itself forty-seven years old. The paper was poor and sallow, and the orthography!—“Ma bien chair niaice je ressoit ta lette ce mattin,” etc. But let us translate:

st. john baptist¹ 10 august 1836

MY VERY DEAR NIECE. I received your letter this morning in which you ask me to tell you what I remember of the journey to Attakapas made in 1795 by papa, M. —, [and] my younger sister Françoise afterward your grandmother. If it were with my tongue I could answer more favorably; but writing is not my forte; I was never calculated for a public writer, as your grandmother was. By the way, she wrote the journey, and very prettily; what have you done with it? It is a pity to lose so pretty a piece of writing. . . . We left New Orleans to go to the Attakapas in the month of May, 1795, and in an old barge [“vieux chaland qui senté le rat mord a plien nez”]. We were Françoise and I Suzanne, pearl of the family, and Papa, who went to buy lands; and

¹ Name of the parish, or county.

one Joseph Charpentier and his dear and pretty little wife Alix [whom] I love so much; 3 Irish, father mother and son [fice]; lastly Mario, whom you knew, with Celeste, formerly lady's maid to Marianne—who is now my sister-in-law. . . . If I knew better how to write I would tell you our adventures the alligators tried to devour us. We barely escaped perishing in Lake Chicot and many other things. . . . At last we arrived at a pretty village St. Martinville called also little Paris and full of barons, marquises, counts and countesses¹ that were an offense to my nose and my stomach. your grandmother was in raptures. it was there we met the beautiful Tonton, your aunt by marriage. I have a bad finger and must stop. . . . Your loving aunty [ta tantine qui temme] Suzanne — née —

The kind of letter to expect from one who as a girl of eighteen could shoot and swim and was called by her father "my son"; the antipode of her sister Françoise. The attorney wrote that the evidence was sufficient.

His letter had hardly got into the mail-bag when another telegram cried hold! that a few pages of the original manuscript had been found and forwarded by post. They came. They were only nine in all—old, yellow, ragged, torn, leaves of a plantation account-book whose red-ruled columns had long ago faded to a faint brown, one side of two or three of them preoccupied with charges in bad French of yards of cottonade, "mouslin à dames," "jaconad," dozens of soap, pounds of tobacco, pairs of stockings, lace, etc.; but to our great pleasure each page corresponding closely, save in orthography and syntax, with a page of the new manuscript, and the page numbers of the old running higher than those of the new! Here was evidence which one could lay before a skeptical world that the transcriber had not expanded the work of the original memoirist. The manuscript passed into my possession, our Creole lady-correspondent reiterating to the end her inability to divine what could be wanted with "an almost illegible scrawl" (griffonage), full of bad spelling and of rather inelegant diction. But if old manuscript was the object of desire, why, here was something else; the very document alluded to by Françoise in her memoir of travel—the autobiography of the dear little countess, her beloved Alix de Morainville, made fatherless and a widow by the guillotine in the Reign of Terror.

"Was that all?" inquired my agent, craftily, his suspicions aroused by the promptness with which the supply met the demand. "Had she not other old and valuable manuscripts?"

¹ Royalist refugees of '93.

"No, alas! only that one."

Thus reassured, he became its purchaser. It lies before me now, in an inner wrapper of queer old black paper, beside its little tight-fitting bag or case of a kind of bright, large-flowered silken stuff not made in these days, and its outer wrapper of old, discolored brief-paper; a pretty little document of sixty-eight small pages in a refined feminine hand, perfect in its slightly archaic grammar, gracefully composed, and, in spite of its flimsy yellowed paper, as legible as print: "Histoire d'Alix de Morainville écrite à la Louisiane ce 22 Aout 1795. Pour mes chères amies, Suzanne et Françoise Bossier."

One day I told the story to Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard University. He generously offered to see if he could find the name of the Comte de Morainville on any of the lists of persons guillotined during the French Revolution. He made the search, but wrote, "I am sorry to say that I have not been able to find it either in Prudhomme, 'Dictionnaire des Individues envoyés à la Mort judiciairement, 1789-1796,' or in the list given by Wallon in the sixth volume of his very interesting 'Histoire du Tribunal Revolutionnaire de Paris.' Possibly he was not put to death in Paris," etc. And later he kindly wrote again that he had made some hours' further search, but in vain.

Here was distress. I turned to the little manuscript roll of which I had become so fond and searched its pages anew for evidence of either genuineness or its opposite. The wrapper of black paper and the close-fitting silken bag had not been sufficient to keep it from taking on the yellowness of age. It was at least no modern counterfeit. Presently I noticed the total absence of quotation marks from its passages of conversation. But at the close of the last century, as I understand, quotation marks were just beginning to come into use. Their entire absence from a manuscript of sixty-eight pages abounding in conversations meant either age or cunning pretense. But would the pretender carry his or her cunning to the extreme of fortifying the manuscript in every possible way against the sallowing touch of time, lay it away in a trunk of old papers, lie down and die without mentioning it, and leave it for some one in the second or third generation afterward to find? I turned the leaves once more, and lo! one leaf that had had a large corner torn off had lost that much of its text; it had been written upon before it was torn; while on the other torn leaf, for there are two, the writing reads—as you shall see—uninterruptedly around the torn edge; the writing has been done after the corner was torn off. The manuscript is

genuine. Maybe the name De Morainville is not, but was a convenient fiction of Alix herself, well understood as such by Françoise and Suzanne. Everything points that way, as was suggested at once by Madame Sidonie de la Houssaye— There! I have let slip the name of my Creole friend, and can only pray her to forgive me! "Tout porte à le croire," she writes; although she also doubts, with reason, I should say, the exhaustive completeness of those lists of the guillotined. "I recall," she writes in French, "that my husband has often told me the two uncles of his father, or grandfather, were guillotined in the Revolution; but though search was made by an advocate, no trace of them was found in any records."

But to come back to my own attorney.

WHILE his grave negotiations were still going on, there met me one evening at my own gate a lady in black, seeking advice concerning her wish to sell to some publisher a private diary never intended for publication.

"That kind is the best," I said. "Did you write it during the late war?" I added at a guess.

"Yes."

"I suppose, then, it contains a careful record of each day's public events."

"No, I'm sorry to say—"

"Nay, don't be sorry; that lack may save it from the waste-basket." Then my heart spoke. "Ah! madam, if you had only done what no woman seems to have seen the importance of doing—written the women's side of that awful war—"

"That 's just what I have done," she interrupted. "I was a Union woman, in the Confederacy. I could n't talk; I had to write. I was in the siege of Vicksburg from beginning to end."

"Leave your manuscript with me," I said. "If, on examining it, I find I can recommend it to a publisher, I will do so. But remember what I have already told you—the passage of an unknown writer's work through an older author's hands is of no benefit to it whatever. It is a bad sign rather than a good one. Your chances of acceptance will be at least no less if you send this to the publishers yourself."

No, she would like me to intervene.

How my attorney friend and I took a two-days' journey by rail, reading the manuscript to each other in the Pullman car; how a young newly married couple next us across the aisle, pretending not to notice, listened with all their might; how my friend the attorney now and then stopped to choke down tears; and how the young stranger opposite came at last, with apologies, asking where this matter would be published and under what title, I need not tell.

At length I was intercessor for a manuscript that publishers would not likely decline. I bought it for my little museum of true stories, at a price beyond what I believe any magazine would have paid—an amount that must have filled the widow's heart with joy, but as certainly was not beyond its worth to me. I have already contributed a part of this manuscript to *THE CENTURY* as one of its "War papers."¹

JUDGE FARRAR, with whom I enjoyed a slight but valued acquaintance, stopped me one day in Carondelet street, New Orleans, saying, "I have a true story that I want you to tell. You can dress it out—"

I arrested him with a shake of the head. "Dress me no dresses. Story me no stories. There 's not one of a hundred of them that does not lack something essential, for want of which they are good for naught. Keep them for after-dinner chat; but for the novelist they are good to smell, not to eat. And yet—tell me your story. I have a use for it—a cabinet of true things that have never had and shall not have a literary tool lifted up against them; virgin shells from the beach of the sea of human events. It may be I shall find a place for it there." So he told me the true story which I have called "Attalie Brouillard," because, having forgotten the woman's real name, it pleased his fancy to use that name in recounting the tale: "Attalie Brouillard." I repeated the story to a friend, a gentleman of much reading.

His reply dismayed me. "I have a faint impression," he said, "that you will find something very much like that in one of Lever's novels."

But later I thought, "Even so, what then? Good stories repeat themselves." I remembered having twice had experiences in my own life the accounts of which, when given, would have been great successes only that they were old anecdotes—great in their day, but long worn out in the club-rooms and abandoned to clergymen's reunions. The wise thing was not to find out or care whether Lever had somewhere told something like it, but whether the story was ever a real event in New Orleans, and, if so, to add it to my now, to me, priceless collection. Meeting the young judge again, I asked boldly for the story's full authentication. He said promptly that the man who told it of his own knowledge was the late Judge T. Wharton Collins; that the incidents occurred about 1855, and that Judge McCaleb could doubtless give the name of the notary public who had been an actor in the affair. "Let us go to his office right now," said my obliging friend.

¹ See *THE CENTURY* for September, 1885, p. 767.

We went, found him, told our errand. He remembered the story, was confident of its entire verity, and gave a name, which, however, he begged I would submit for verification to an aged notary public in another street, a gentleman of the pure old Creole type. I went to him. He heard the story through in solemn silence. From first to last I mentioned no name, but at the end I asked:

"Now, can you tell me the name of the notary in that case?"

"Yes."

I felt a delicious tingling as I waited for the disclosure. He slowly said:

"Dthere eeze wan troub' 'bout dat. To which case do you riffer? 'Cause, you know, dey got *l'ree*, four case' like dat. An' you better not mention no name, 'cause you don't want git nobody in troub', you know. Now dthere 's dthe case of —. And dthere 's dthe case of —. He had to go away; yes; 'cause when he make dthe dade man make his will, he git *behine* dthe dade man in bade, an' hole 'im up in dthe bade."

I thanked him and departed, with but the one regret that the tale was true so many more times than was necessary.

IN all this collection the story of the so-called haunted house in Royal street is the only one that must ask a place in literature as partly a twice-told tale. The history of the house is known to thousands in the old French quarter, and that portion which antedates the late war was told in brief by Harriet Martineau as far back as when she wrote her book of American travel. In printing it here I fulfill an oft repeated promise; for many a one has asked me if I would not, or, at least, why I did not, tell its dark story.

So I have inventoried my entire exhibit—save one small matter. It turned out after all that the dear old Creole lady who had sold us the ancient manuscript, finding old paper commanding so much more per ton than it ever had commanded before, raked together three or four more leaves—stray chips of her lovely little ancestress Françoise's workshop, or rather the shakings of her basket of cherished records,—to wit, three Creole African songs, which I have used elsewhere; one or two other scraps, of no value; and, finally, a long letter telling its writer's own short story—a story so tragic and so sad that I can only say pass it, if you will. It stands first because it antedates the rest. As you will see, its time is something more than a hundred years ago. The writing was very difficult to read, owing entirely to the badness—mainly the

softness—of the paper. I have tried in vain to find exactly where Fort Latourette was situated. All along the Gulf shore the sites and remains of the small forts once held by the Spaniards are known traditionally and indiscriminately as "Spanish Fort." When John Law, author of that famed Mississippi Bubble,—which was in Paris what the South Sea Bubble was in London,—failed in his efforts at colonization on the Arkansas, his Arkansas settlers came down the Mississippi to within some sixty miles of New Orleans and established themselves in a colony at first called the *Côte Allemande* (German Coast), and later, owing to its prosperity, the *Côte d'Or*, or Golden Coast. Thus the banks of the Mississippi became known on the Rhine, a goodly part of our Louisiana Creoles received a German tincture, and the father and the aunt of Suzanne and Françoise were not the only Alsatians we shall meet in these wild stories of wild times in Louisiana.

II. 1782. THE YOUNG AUNT WITH WHITE HAIR.

THE date of this letter—I hold it in one hand as I write, and for the first time notice that it has never in its hundred years been sealed or folded, but only doubled once, lightly, and rolled in the hand, just as the young Spanish officer might have carried it when he rode so hard to bear it to its destination—its date is the last year but one of our American Revolution. France, Spain, and the thirteen colonies were at war with Great Britain, and the Indians were on both sides.

Galvez, the heroic young governor of Louisiana, had just been decorated by his king and made a count for taking the forts at Manchac, Baton Rouge, Natchez, and Mobile, and besieging and capturing the stronghold of Pensacola, thus winning all west Florida, from the Mississippi to the Appalachicola, for Spain. But this vast wilderness was not made safe; Fort Panmure (Natchez) changed hands twice, and the land was full of Indians, partly hireling friends and partly enemies. The waters about the Bahamas and the Greater and Lesser Antilles were fields for the movements of hostile fleets, corsairs, and privateers. Yet the writer of this letter was tempted to run the gauntlet of these perils, expecting, if all went well, to arrive in Louisiana in midsummer.

"How many times," says the memorandum of her brother's now aged great-granddaughter,— "How many times during my childhood has been told me the story of my aunt Louise. It was not until several years after the death of my grandmother that, on examining the contents of the basket which she had given me, I

found at the bottom of a little black-silk bag the letter written by my grand-aunt to her brother, my own ancestor. Frankly, I doubt that my grandmother had intended to give it to me, so highly did she prize it, though it was very difficult to read. The orthography is perfect; the difficulty is all owing to the paper and, moreover, to the situation of the poor wounded sufferer." It is in French:

*To my brother mister Pierre Bossier.
In the parish¹ of St. James.*

FORT LATOURETTE,
The 5 August, 1782.

MY GOOD DEAR BROTHER: Ah! how shall I tell you the frightful position in which I am placed! I would that I were dead! I seem to be the prey of a horrible nightmare! O Pierre! my brother! hasten with all speed to me. When you left Germany, your little sister was a blooming girl, very beautiful in your eyes, very happy! and to-day! ah! to-day, my brother, come see for yourself.

After having received your letter, not only my husband and I decided to leave our village and go to join you, but twelve of our friends united with us, and the 10 May, 1782, we quitted Strasbourg on the little vessel *North Star* [Étoile du Nord],² which set sail for New Orleans, where you had promised to come to meet us. Let me tell you the names of my fellow-travelers. O brother! what courage I need to write this account: first my husband, Leonard Cheval, and my son Pierre, poor little angel who was not yet two years old! Fritz Newman, his wife Nina, and their three children; Irwin Vizey; William Hugo, his wife, and their little daughter; Jacques Lewis, his daughter, and his son Henry. We were full of hope: we hoped to find fortune in this new country of which you spoke with so much enthusiasm. How in that moment did I bless my parents, and you my brother, for the education you had procured me. You know how good a musician my Leonard was, and our intention was on arriving to open a boarding-school in New Orleans; in your last letter you encouraged the project—all of us, movables with us, all our savings, everything we owned in this world.

This paper is very bad, brother, but the captain of the fort says it is all he has; and I write lying down, I am so uncomfortable.

The earlier days of the voyage passed without accident, without disturbance, but often Leonard spoke to me of his fears. The vessel was old, small, and very poorly supplied. The captain was a drunkard [here the writer attempted to turn the sheet and write on the back of it], who often incapacitated himself with his first officers [word badly blotted]; and

then the management of the vessel fell to the mate, who was densely ignorant. Moreover, we knew that the seas were infested with pirates. I must stop, the paper is too bad.

The captain has brought me another sheet.

Our uneasiness was great. Often we emigrants assembled on deck and told each other our anxieties. Living on the frontier of France, we spoke German and French equally well; and when the sailors heard us, they, who spoke only English, swore at us, accused us of plotting against them, and called us Saurkrouts. At such times I pressed my child to my heart and drew nearer to Leonard, more dead than alive. A whole month passed in this constant anguish. At its close, fevers broke out among us, and we discovered, to our horror, there was not a drop of medicine on board. We had them lightly, some of us, but only a few; and [bad blot] Newman's son and William Hugo's little daughter died, . . . and the poor mother soon followed her child. My God! but it was sad. And the provisions ran low, and the captain refused to turn back to get more.

One evening, when the captain, his lieutenant, and two other officers were shut in their cabin drinking, the mate, of whom I had always such fear, presented himself before us surrounded by six sailors armed, like himself, to the teeth, and ordered us to surrender all the money we had. To resist would have been madness; we had to yield. They searched our trunks and took away all that we possessed: they left us nothing, absolutely nothing. Ah! why am I not dead? Profiting by the absence of their chiefs they seized the [or some—the word is blotted] boats and abandoned us to our fate. When, the next day, the captain appeared on deck quite sober, and saw the cruelty of our plight, he told us, to console us, that we were very near the mouth of the Mississippi, and that within two days we should be at New Orleans. Alas! all that day passed without seeing any land,³ but towards evening the vessel, after incredible efforts, had just come to a stop—at what I supposed should be the mouth of the river. We were so happy to have arrived that we begged Captain Andrieux to sail all night. He replied that our men, who had worked all day in place of the sailors, were tired and did not understand at all sufficiently the handling of a vessel to sail by night. He wanted to get drunk again. As in fact our men were worn out, we went, all of us, to bed. O great God! give me strength to go on. All at

¹ County.

² If this was an English ship,—for her crew was English and her master's name seems to have been Andrews,—she was probably not under British colors.

³ The treeless marshes of the Delta would be very slow coming into view.

once we were wakened by horrible cries, not human sounds: we thought ourselves surrounded by ferocious beasts. We poor women clasped our children to our breasts, while our husbands armed themselves with whatever came to hand and dashed forward to meet the danger. My God! my God! we saw ourselves hemmed in by a multitude of savages yelling and lifting over us their horrible arms, grasping hatchets, knives, and tomahawks. The first to fall was my husband, my dear Leonard; all, except Irwin Vizey, who had the fortune to jump into the water unseen, all were massacred by the monsters. One Indian tore my child from me while another fastened my arms behind my back. In response to my cries, to my prayers, the monster who held my son took him by one foot and, swinging him several times around, shattered his head against the wall. And I live to write these horrors! . . . I fainted, without doubt, for on opening my eyes I found I was on land [blot], firmly fastened to a stake. Nina Newman and Kate Lewis were fastened as I was: the latter was covered with blood and appeared to be dangerously wounded. About daylight three Indians came looking for them and took them God knows where! Alas! I have never since heard of either of them or their children.

I remained fastened to the stake in a state of delirium, which saved me doubtless from the horrors of my situation. I recall one thing: that is, having seen those savages eat human flesh, the members of a child — at least it seemed so. Ah! you see plainly I must have been mad to have seen all that without dying! They had stripped me of my clothing and I remained exposed, half naked, to a July sun and to clouds of mosquitoes. An Indian who spoke French informed me that, as I was young and fat, they were reserving me for the dinner of the chief, who was to arrive next day. In a moment I was dead with terror; in that instant I lost all feeling. I had become indifferent to all. I saw nothing, I heard nothing. Towards evening one of the sub-chiefs approached and gave me some water in a gourd. I drank without knowing what I did; thereupon he set himself to examine me as the butcher examines the lamb that he is about to kill; he seemed to find me worthy to be served on the table of the head-chief, but as he was hungry and did not wish to wait [blot], he drew from its sheath the knife that he carried at his belt and before I had had time to guess what he intended to do [Enough to say, in place of literal translation, that the savage, from the outside of her right thigh, flayed off a large piece of her flesh.] It must be sup-

posed that I again lost consciousness. When I came to myself, I was lying some paces away from the stake of torture on a heap of cloaks, and a soldier was kneeling beside me, while I was surrounded by about a hundred others. The ground was strewed with dead Indians. I learned later that Vizey had reached the woods and by chance had stumbled into Fort Latourette, full of troops. Without loss of time, the brave soldiers set out, and arrived just in time to save me. A physician dressed my wound, they put me into an ambulance and brought me away to Fort Latourette, where I still am. A fierce fever took possession of me. My generous protectors did not know to whom to write; they watched over me and showed every care imaginable.

Now that I am better, I write you, my brother, and close with these words: I await you! Make all haste!

Your sister, LOUISA CHEVAL.

"My grandmother," resumes the memorandum of the Creole great-grandniece, "had often read this letter, and had recounted to me the incidents that followed its reception. She was then but three years old, but as her aunt lived three years in her (*i. e.*, the aunt's) brother's family, my grandmother had known her, and described her to me as a young woman with white hair and walking with a staff. It was with difficulty that she used her right leg. My great-grandfather used to tell his children that his sister Louise had been blooming and gay, and spoke especially of her beautiful blonde hair. A few hours had sufficed to change it to snow, and on the once charming countenance of the poor invalid to stamp an expression of grief and despair.

"It was Lieutenant Rosello, a young Spaniard, who came on horseback from Fort Latourette to carry to my great-grandfather his sister's letter. . . . Not to lose a moment, he [the brother] began, like Lieutenant Rosello, the journey on horseback, procuring a large ambulance as he passed through New Orleans. . . . He did all he could to lighten the despair of his poor sister. . . . All the members of the family lavished upon her every possible care and attention; but alas! the blow she had received was too terrible. She lingered three years, and at the end of that time passed peaceably away in the arms of her brother, the last words on her lips being 'Leonard! — my child!'"

So we make way for the bright and happy story of how Françoise made Evangeline's journey through the dark wilds of Atchafalaya.

George W. Cable.

STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF LOUISIANA. II.

FRANÇOISE IN LOUISIANA.

BY GEORGE W. CABLE,

Author of "The Grandissimes," "Bonaventure," etc.



YEARS passed by. Our war of the Revolution was over. The Indians of Louisiana and Florida were all greedy, smiling gift-takers of his Catholic Majesty. So were some others not Indians; and the Spanish governors of Louisiana, scheming with them for the acquisition of Kentucky and the regions intervening, had allowed an interprovincial commerce to spring up. Flatboats and barges came floating down the Mississippi past the plantation home where little Suzanne and Françoise were growing up to womanhood. Many of the immigrants who now came to Louisiana were the royalist *noblesse* flying from the horrors of the French Revolution. Governor Carondelet was strengthening his fortifications around New Orleans; for Creole revolutionists had slipped away to Kentucky and were there plotting an armed descent in flatboats upon his little capital, where the rabble were singing the terrible songs of bloody Paris. Agents of the Revolution had come from France and so "contaminated," as he says, "the greater part of the province" that he kept order only "at the cost of sleepless nights, by frightening some, punishing others, and driving several out of the colony." It looks as though Suzanne had caught a touch of disrelish for *les aristocrates*, whose necks the songs of the day were promising to the lampposts. To add to all these commotions, a hideous revolution had swept over San Domingo; the slaves in Louisiana had heard of it, insurrection was feared, and at length, in 1794, when Suzanne was seventeen and Françoise fifteen, it broke out on the Mississippi no great matter over a day's ride from their own home, and twenty-three blacks were gibbeted singly at intervals all the way down by their father's plantation and on to New Orleans, and were left swinging in the weather to insure the peace and felicity of the land. Two other matters are all we need notice for the ready comprehension of Françoise's story. Immigration was knocking at every gate of the province, and citizen Étienne de Bore had just made himself forever famous in the history of

Louisiana by producing merchantable sugar; land was going to be valuable, even back on the wild prairies of Opelousas and Attakapas, where, twenty years before, the Acadians,—the cousins of Evangeline,—wandering from far Nova Scotia, had settled. Such was the region and such were the times when it began to be the year 1795.

By good fortune one of the undestroyed fragments of Françoise's own manuscript is its first page. She was already a grandmother forty-three years old when in 1822 she wrote the tale she had so often told. Part of the dedication to her only daughter and namesake—one line, possibly two—has been torn off, leaving only the words, "ma fille unique a la grasse [meaning 'grace'] de dieu [sic], over her signature and the date, "14 Julet [sic], 1822."

INTRODUCTION.

IT is to give pleasure to my dear daughter Fannie and to her children that I write this journey. I shall be well satisfied if I can succeed in giving them this pleasure: by the grace of God, Amen.

Papa, Mr. Pierre Bossier, planter of St. James parish, had been fifteen days gone to the city (New Orleans) in his skiff with two rowers, Louis and Baptiste, when, returning, he embraced us all, gave us some caramels which he had in his pockets, and announced that he counted on leaving us again in four or five days to go to Attakapas. He had long been speaking of going there. Papa and mamma were German, and papa loved to travel. When he first came to Louisiana it was with no expectation of staying. But here he saw mamma; he loved her, married her, and bought a very fine plantation, where he cultivated indigo. You know they blue clothes with that drug, and dye cottonade and other things. There we, their eight children, were born. . . .

When my father used to go to New Orleans he went in his skiff, with a canopy over his head to keep off the sun, and two rowers, who sang as they rowed. Sometimes papa took me with him, and it was very entertaining. We would pass the nights of our voyage at the houses of

papa's friends [des zami de papa]. Sometimes mamma would come, and Suzanne always — always. She was the daughter next older than I. She barely missed being a boy. She was eighteen years of age, went hunting with our father, was skillful with a gun, and swam like a fish. Papa called her "my son." You must understand the two boys were respectively but two years and three months old, and papa, who greatly desired a son, had easily made one of Suzanne. My father had brought a few books with him to Louisiana, and among them, you may well suppose, were several volumes of travel. For myself, I rarely touched them; but they were the only books that Suzanne read. And you may well think, too, that my father had no sooner spoken of his intention than Suzanne cried :

"I am going with you, am I not, papa?"

"Naturally," replied my father; "and Françoise shall go also."

Françoise — that was I; poor child of sixteen, who had but six months before quitted the school-bench, and totally unlike my sister — blonde, where Suzanne was dark; timid, even cowardly, while she had the hardihood and courage of a young lioness; ready to cry at sight of a wounded bird, while she, gun in hand, brought down as much game as the most skillful hunter.

I exclaimed at my father's speech. I had heard there were many Indians in Attakapas; the name means man-eaters. I have a foolish terror of Indians, and a more reasonable one for man-eaters. But papa and Suzanne mocked at my fears; and as, after all, I burned with desire for the journey, it was decided that I should go with them.

Necessarily we wanted to know how we were to go — whether we should travel by skiff, and how many negroes and negresses would go with us. For you see, my daughter, young people in 1795 were exactly what they are in 1822; they could do nothing by themselves, but must have a domestic to dress and undress them. Especially in traveling, where one had to take clothes out of trunks and put them back again, assistance became an absolute necessity. Think, then, of our astonishment, of our vexation, when papa assured us that he would not take a single slave; that my sister and I would be compelled to help each other, and that the skiff would remain behind, tied up at the landing where it then lay.

"But explain yourself, Papa, I beg of you," cried Suzanne, with her habitual petulance.

"That is what I am trying to do," said he. "If you will listen in silence, I will give you all the explanation you want."

Here, my daughter, to save time, I will borrow my father's speech and tell of the trip he

had made to New Orleans; how he had there found means to put into execution his journey to Attakapas, and the companions that were to accompany him.

CHAPTER I.

MAKING UP THE EXPEDITION.

IN 1795 New Orleans was nothing but a mere market town. The cathedral, the convent of the Ursulines, five or six cafés, and about a hundred houses were all of it.¹ Can you believe, there were but two dry-goods stores! And what fabulous prices we had to pay! Pins twenty dollars a paper. Poor people and children had to make shift with thorns of orange and *amourette* [honey locust?]. A needle cost fifty cents, very indifferent stockings five dollars a pair, and other things accordingly.

On the levee was a little pothouse of the lowest sort; yet from that unclean and smoky hole was destined to come one of the finest fortunes in Louisiana. They called the proprietor "Père la Chaise." He was a little old marten-faced man, always busy and smiling, who every year laid aside immense profits. Along the crazy walls extended a few rough shelves covered with bottles and decanters. Three planks placed on boards formed the counter, with Père la Chaise always behind it. There were two or three small tables, as many chairs, and one big wooden bench. Here gathered the city's working-class, and often among them one might find a goodly number of the city's élite; for the wine and the beer of the old *cabaretier* were famous, and one could be sure in entering there to hear all the news told and discussed.

By day the place was quiet, but with evening it became tumultuous. Père la Chaise, happily, did not lose his head; he found means to satisfy all, to smooth down quarrels without calling in the police, to get rid of drunkards, and to make delinquents pay up.

My father knew the place, and never failed to pay it a visit when he went to New Orleans. Poor, dear father! he loved to talk as much as to travel. Père la Chaise was acquainted with him. One evening papa entered, sat down at one of the little tables, and bade Père la Chaise bring a bottle of his best wine. The place was already full of people, drinking, talking, and singing. A young man of twenty-six or twenty-seven entered almost timidly and sat down at the table where my father was — for he saw that all the other places were occupied — and ordered a half-bottle of cider. He was a

¹ An extreme underestimate, easy for a girl to make of a scattered town hidden among gardens and groves.—TRANSLATOR.

Norman gardener. My father knew him by sight; he had met him here several times without speaking to him. You recognized the peasant at once; and yet his exquisite neatness, the gentleness of his face, distinguished him from his kind. Joseph Carpentier was dressed¹ in a very ordinary gray woolen coat; but his coarse shirt was very white, and his hair, when he took off his broad-brimmed hat, was well combed and glossy.

As Carpentier was opening his bottle a second frequenter entered the *cabaret*. This was a man of thirty or thirty-five, with strong features and the frame of a Hercules. An expression of frankness and gayety overspread his sunburnt face. Cottonade pantaloons, stuffed into a pair of dirty boots, and a *vareuse* of the same stuff made up his dress. His *vareuse*, unbuttoned, showed his breast, brown and hairy; and a horrid cap with long hair covered, without concealing, a mass of red locks that a comb had never gone through. A long whip, the stock of which he held in his hand, was coiled about his left arm. He advanced to the counter and asked for a glass of brandy. He was a drayman named John Gordon—an Irishman.

But, strange, John Gordon, glass in hand, did not drink; Carpentier, with his fingers round the neck of the bottle, failed to pour his cider; and my father himself, his eyes attracted to another part of the room, forgot his wine. Every one was looking at an individual gesticulating and haranguing in the middle of the place, to the great amusement of all. My father recognized him at first sight. He was an Italian about the age of Gordon; short, thick-set, powerful, swarthy, with the neck of a bull and hair as black as ebony. He was telling rapidly, with strong gestures, in an almost incomprehensible mixture of Spanish, English, French, and Italian, the story of a hunting party that he had made up five years before. This was Mario Carlo. A Neapolitan by birth, he had for several years worked as a blacksmith on the plantation of one of our neighbors, M. Alphonse Perret. Often papa had heard him tell of this hunt, for nothing could be more amusing than to listen to Carlo. Six young men, with Carlo as sailor and cook, had gone on a two-months' expedition into the country of the Attakapas.

"Yes," said the Italian, in conclusion, "game never failed us; deer, turkeys, ducks, snipe, two or three bears a week. But the sublimest thing was the rich land. Ah! one must see it to believe it. Plains and forests full of animals, lakes and bayous full of fish. Ah! fortune is there. For five years I have dreamed, I have worked, with but one object in view;

¹ In all likelihood described here as seen by the writer herself later, on the journey.

and to-day the end is reached. I am ready to go. I want only two companions to aid me in the long journey, and those I have come to look for here."

John Gordon stepped forward, laid a hand upon the speaker's shoulder, and said:

"My friend, I am your man."

Mario Carlo seized the hand and shook it with all his force.

"You will not repent the step. But"—turning again to the crowd—"we want one more."

Joseph Carpentier rose slowly and advanced to the two men. "Comrades, I will be your companion if you will accept me."

Before separating, the three drank together and appointed to meet the next day at the house of Gordon, the Irishman.

When my father saw Gordon and Carpentier leave the place, he placed his hand on Mario's shoulder and said in Italian, "My boy, I want to talk with you."

At that time, as now, parents were very scrupulous as to the society into which they introduced their children, especially their daughters; and papa knew of a certain circumstance in Carlo's life to which my mother might greatly object. But he knew the man had an honest and noble heart. He passed his arm into the Italian's and drew him to the inn where my father was stopping, and to his room. Here he learned from Mario that he had bought one of those great barges that bring down provisions from the West, and which, when unloaded, the owners count themselves lucky to sell at any reasonable price. When my father proposed to Mario to be taken as a passenger the poor devil's joy knew no bounds; but it disappeared when papa added that he should take his two daughters with him.

The trouble was this: Mario was taking with him in his flatboat his wife and his four children; and wife and four children were simply—mulattoes. However, then as now, we hardly noticed those things, and the idea never entered our minds to inquire into the conduct of our slaves. Suzanne and I had known Celeste, Mario's wife, very well before her husband bought her. She had been the maid of Marianne Perret, and on great occasions Marianne had sent her to us to dress our hair and to prepare our toilets. We were therefore enchanted to learn that she would be with us on board the flatboat, and that papa had engaged her services in place of the attendants we had to leave behind.

It was agreed that for one hundred dollars Mario Carlo would receive all three of us as passengers, that he would furnish a room simply but comfortably, that papa would share this room with us, that Mario would supply

our table, and that his wife would serve as maid and laundress. It remained to be seen now whether our other fellow-travelers were married, and, if so, what sort of creatures their wives were.

[THE next day the four intended travelers met at Gordon's house. Gordon had a wife, Maggie, and a son, Patrick, aged twelve, as unlovely in outward aspect as were his parents. Carpentier, who showed himself even more plainly than on the previous night a man of native refinement, confessed to a young wife without offspring. Mario told his story of love and alliance with one as fair of face as he, and whom only cruel law forbade him to call wife and compelled him to buy his children; and told the story so well that at its close the father of Françoise silently grasped the narrator's hand, and Carpentier, reaching across the table where they sat, gave his, saying:

"You are an honest man, Monsieur Carlo."

"Will your wife think so?" asked the Italian.

"My wife comes from a country where there are no prejudices of race."

Françoise takes the pains to say of this part of the story that it was not told her and Suzanne at this time, but years afterward, when they were themselves wives and mothers. When, on the third day, her father saw Carpentier's wife at the Norman peasant's lodgings, he was greatly surprised at her appearance and manner, and so captivated by them that he proposed that their two parties should make one at table during the projected voyage—a proposition gratefully accepted. Then he left New Orleans for his plantation home, intending to return immediately, leaving his daughters in St. James to prepare for the journey and await the arrival of the flatboat, which must pass their home on its way to the distant wilds of Attakapas.]

CHAPTER II.

THE EMBARKATION.

You see, my dear child, at that time one post-office served for three parishes: St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Charles. It was very far from us, at the extremity of St. John the Baptist, and the mail came there on the first of each month.

We had to pay—though the price was no object—fifty cents postage on a letter. My father received several journals, mostly European. There was only one paper, French and Spanish, published in New Orleans—"The Gazette."¹ To send to the post-office was an affair

¹ Another error easy to make. For "Gazette" read "Moniteur"; "The Gazette" appeared a little later.

of state. Our father, you see, had not time to write us; he was obliged to come to us himself. But such journeys were a matter of course in those days.

"And above all things, my children," said my father, "don't have too much baggage."

I should not have thought of rebelling; but Suzanne raised loud cries, saying it was an absolute necessity that we go with papa to New Orleans, so as not to find ourselves on our journey without traveling-dresses, new neckerchiefs, and a number of things. In vain did poor papa endeavor to explain that we were going into a desert worse than Arabia; Suzanne put her two hands to her ears and would hear nothing, until, weary of strife, poor papa yielded.

Our departure being decided upon, he wished to start even the very next day; and while we were instructing our sisters Elinore and Marie concerning some trunks that we should leave behind us, and which they must pack and have ready for the flatboat, papa recommended to mamma a great slaughter of fowls, etc., and especially to have ready for embarkation two of our best cows. Ah! in those times if the planter wished to live well he had to raise everything himself, and the poultry yard and the dairy were something curious to see. Dozens of slaves were kept busy in them constantly. When my mother had raised two thousand chickens, besides turkeys, ducks, geese, guinea-fowls, and pea-fowls, she said she had lost her crop.² And the quantity of butter and cheese! And all this without counting the sauces, the jellies, the preserves, the gherkins, the syrups, the brandied fruits. And not a ham, not a chicken, not a pound of butter was sold; all was served on the master's table, or, very often, given to those who stood in need of them. Where, now, can you find such profusion? Ah! commerce has destroyed industry.

The next day, after kissing mamma and the children, we got into the large skiff with papa, and three days later stepped ashore in New Orleans. We remained there a little over a week, preparing our traveling-dresses. Despite the admonitions of papa, we went to the fashionable modiste of the day, Madame Cinthelia Lefranc, and ordered for each a suit that cost one hundred and fifty dollars. The costume was composed of a petticoat of *camayeu*, very short, caught up in puffs on the side by a profusion of ribbons; and a very long-pointed black velvet jacket (*casaguin*), laced in the back with gold and trimmed on the front with several rows of gilt buttons. The sleeves stopped at the elbows and were trimmed with lace.

² The translator feels constrained to say that he was not on the spot.

Now, my daughter, do you know what camayeu was? You now sometimes see an imitation of it in door and window curtains. It was a stuff of great fineness, yet resembling not a little the unbleached cotton of to-day, and over which were spread very brilliant designs of prodigious size. For example, Suzanne's petticoat showed bunches of great radishes — not the short kind — surrounded by long, green leaves and tied with a yellow cord; while on mine were roses as big as a baby's head, interlaced with leaves and buds and gathered into bouquets graced with a blue ribbon. It was ten dollars an ell; but, as the petticoats were very short, six ells was enough for each. At that time real hats were unknown. For driving or for evening they placed on top of the high, powdered hair what they called a *catogan*, a little bonnet of gauze or lace trimmed with ribbons; and during the day a sunbonnet of silk or velvet. You can guess that neither Suzanne nor I, in spite of papa's instructions, forgot these.

Our traveling-dresses were gray *cirsacas*, — the skirt all one, short, without puffs; the jacket coming up high and with long sleeves, — a sunbonnet of *cirsacas*, blue stockings, embroidered handkerchief or blue cravat about the neck, and high-heeled shoes.

As soon as Celeste heard of our arrival in New Orleans she hastened to us. She was a good creature; humble, respectful, and always ready to serve. She was an excellent cook and washer, and, what we still more prized, a lady's maid and hairdresser of the first order. My sister and I were glad to see her, and overwhelmed her with questions about Carlo, their children, their plans, and our traveling companions.

"Ah! Mamzelle Suzanne, the little Madame Carpentier seems to me a fine lady, ever so genteel; but the Irishwoman! Ah! *grand Dieu!* she puts me in mind of a soldier. I'm afraid of her. She smokes — she swears — she carries a pistol, like a man."

At last the 15th of May came, and papa took us on board the flatboat and helped us to find the way to our apartment. If my father had allowed Carlo, he would have ruined himself in furnishing our room; but papa stopped him and directed it himself. The flatboat had been divided into four chambers. These were covered by a slightly arching deck, on which the boat was managed by the moving of immense sweeps that sent her forward. The room in the stern, surrounded by a sort of balcony, which Monsieur Carpentier himself had made, belonged to him and his wife; then came ours, then that of Celeste and her family, and the one at the bow was the Irishwoman's. Carlo and Gordon had crammed the provisions, tools, carts, and plows into the corners of their respective apartments. In the room which our

father was to share with us he had had Mario make two wooden frames mounted on feet. These were our beds, but they were supplied with good bedding and very white sheets. A large cypress table, on which we saw a pile of books and our workboxes; a washstand, also of cypress, but well furnished and surmounted with a mirror; our trunks in a corner; three rocking-chairs — this was all our furniture. There was neither carpet nor curtain.

All were on board except the Carpentier couple. Suzanne was all anxiety to see the Irishwoman. Poor Suzanne! how distressed she was not to be able to speak English! So, while I was taking off my *capotte* — as the sunbonnet of that day was called — and smoothing my hair at the glass, she had already tossed her capotte upon papa's bed and sprung up the ladder that led to the deck. (Each room had one.) I followed a little later and had the satisfaction of seeing Madame Margaretto Gordon, commonly called "Maggie" by her husband and "Maw" by her son Patrick. She was seated on a coil of rope, her son on the boards at her feet. An enormous dog crouched beside them, with his head against Maggie's knee. The mother and son were surprisingly clean. Maggie had on a simple brown calico dress and an apron of blue ticking. A big red kerchief was crossed on her breast and its twin brother covered her well combed and greased black hair. On her feet were blue stockings and heavy leather shoes. The blue ticking shirt and pantaloons and waistcoat of Master Pat were so clean that they shone; his black cap covered his hair — as well combed as his mother's; but he was barefooted. Gordon, Mario, and Celeste's eldest son, aged thirteen, were busy about the deck; and papa, his cigar in his mouth and his hands in his pockets, stood looking out on the levee. I sat down on one of the rough benches that had been placed here and there, and presently my sister came and sat beside me.

"Madame Carpentier seems to be a laggard," she said. She was burning to see the arrival of her whom we had formed the habit of calling "the little French peasant."

[PRESENTLY Suzanne begins shooting bonbons at little Patrick, watching the effect out of the corners of her eyes, and by and by gives that smile, all her own, — to which, says Françoise, all flesh invariably surrendered, — and so became dumbly acquainted; while Carlo was beginning to swear "fit to raise the dead," writes the memoirist, at the tardiness of the Norman pair. But just then —]

A CARRIAGE drove up to within a few feet of our *chaland* and Joseph Carpentier alighted,

paid the driver, and lifted from it one so delicate, pretty, and small that you might take her at first glance for a child of ten years. Suzanne and I had risen quickly and came and leaned over the balustrade. To my mortification my sister had passed one arm around the waist of the little Irishman and held one of his hands in hers. Suzanne uttered a cry of astonishment. "Look, look, Françoise!" But I was looking, with eyes wide with astonishment.

The gardener's wife had alighted, and with her little gloved hand shook out and re-arranged her toilet. That toilet, very simple to the eyes of Madame Carpentier, was what petrified us with astonishment. I am going to describe it to you, my daughter.

We could not see her face, for her hood of blue silk, trimmed with a light white fur, was covered with a veil of white lace that entirely concealed her features. Her traveling-dress, like ours, was of cirsacas, but ours was cotton, while hers was silk, in broad rays of gray and blue; and as the weather was a little cool that morning, she had exchanged the unfailing casaquin for a sort of *camail* to match the dress, and trimmed, like the *capotte*, with a line of white fur. Her petticoat was very short, lightly puffed on the sides, and ornamented only with two very long pockets trimmed like the *camail*. Below the folds of the robe were two Cinderella feet in blue silk stockings and black velvet slippers. It was not only the material of this toilet that astonished us, but the way in which it was made.

"Maybe she is a modiste. Who knows?" whispered Suzanne.

Another thing: Madame Carpentier wore a veil and gloves, two things of which we had heard but which we had never seen. Madame Ferrand had mentioned them, but said that they sold for their weight in gold in Paris and she had not dared import them, for fear she could not sell them in Louisiana. And here was the wife of a laboring gardener, who avowed himself possessor of but two thousand francs, dressed like a duchess and with veil and gloves!

I could but notice with what touching care Joseph assisted his wife on board. He led her straight to her room, and quickly rejoined us on deck to put himself at the disposition of his associates. He explained to Mario his delay, caused by the difficulty of finding a carriage; at which Carlo lifted his shoulders and grimaced. Joseph added that madame—I noticed that he rarely called her Alix—was rather tired, and would keep her room until dinner time. Presently our heavy craft was under way.

Pressing against the long sweeps, which it required a herculean strength to move, were seen

on one side Carlo and his son Celestino, or "Tino, and on the other Joseph and Gordon. It moved slowly; so slowly that it gave the effect of a great tortoise.

CHAPTER III.

ALIX CARPENTIER.

TOWARDS noon we saw Celeste come on deck with her second son, both carrying baskets full of plates, dishes, covers, and a tablecloth. You remember I have often told you of an awning stretched at the stern of the flatboat? We found that in fine weather our dining-room was to be under this. There was no table; the cloth was simply spread on the deck, and those who ate had to sit *à la Turque* or take their plates on their knees. The Irish family ate in their room. Just as we were drawing around our repast Madame Carpentier, on her husband's arm, came up on deck.

Dear little Alix! I see you yet as I saw you then. And here, twenty-seven years after our parting, I have before me the medallion you gave me, and look tenderly on your dear features, my friend!

She had not changed her dress; only she had replaced her *camail* with a scarf of blue silk about her neck and shoulders and had removed her gloves and *capuche*. Her rich chestnut hair, unpowdered, was combed back *à la Chinoise*, and the long locks that descended upon her shoulders were tied by a broad blue ribbon forming a rosette on the forepart of her head. She wore no jewelry except a pearl at each ear and her wedding ring. Suzanne, who always saw everything, remarked afterward that Madame Carpentier wore two.

"As for her earrings," she added, "they are nothing great. Marianne has some as fine, that cost, I think, ten dollars."

Poor Suzanne, a judge of jewelry! Madame Carpentier's earrings were two great pearls, worth at least two hundred dollars. Never have I met another so charming, so lovely, as Alix Carpentier. Her every movement was grace. She moved, spoke, smiled, and in all things acted differently from all the women I had ever met until then. She made one think she had lived in a world all unlike ours; and withal she was simple, sweet, good, and to love her seemed the most natural thing on earth. There was nothing extraordinary in her beauty; the charm was in her intelligence and her goodness.

Maggie, the Irishwoman, was very taciturn. She never mingled with us, nor spoke to any one except Suzanne, and to her in monosyllables only when addressed. You would see her sometimes sitting alone at the bow of the boat, sewing, knitting, or saying her beads. During this last occupation her eyes never quitted

Alix. One would say it was to her she addressed her prayers; and one day, when she saw my regard fixed upon Alix, she said to me:

"It does me good to look at her; she must look like the Virgin Mary."

Her little form, so graceful and delicate, had, however, one slight defect; but this was hidden under the folds of her robe or of the scarf that she knew how to arrange with such grace. One shoulder was a trifle higher than the other.

After having greeted my father, whom she already knew, she turned to us, hesitated a moment, and then, her two little hands extended, and with the most charming smile, she advanced, first to me and then to Suzanne, and embraced us both as if we had been old acquaintances. And from that moment we were good friends.

It had been decided that the boat should not travel by night, notwithstanding the assurance of Carlo, who had a map of Attakapas. But in the Mississippi there was no danger; and as papa was pressed to reach our plantation, we traveled all that first night.

The next day Alix—she required us to call her by that name—invited us to visit her in her room. Suzanne and I could not withhold a cry of surprise as we entered the little chamber. (Remember one thing: papa took nothing from home, not knowing even by what means we should return; but the Carpentiers were going for good and taking everything.) Joseph had had the rough walls whitewashed. A cheap carpet—but high-priced in those times—of bright colors covered the floor; a very low French bed occupied one corner, and from a sort of dais escaped the folds of an embroidered bobbinet mosquito-bar. It was the first mosquito-bar of that kind we had ever seen. Alix explained that she had made it from the curtains of the same bed, and that both bed and curtains she had brought with her from England. New mystery!

Beside the bed a walnut dressing-table and mirror, opposite to it a washstand, at the bed's

foot a *priedieu*, a center-table, three chairs—these were all the furniture; but [an enumeration follows of all manner of pretty feminine belongings, in crystal, silver, gold, with a picture of the crucifixion and another of the Virgin]. On the shelves were a rich box of colors, several books, and some portfolios of music. From a small peg hung a guitar.

But Suzanne was not satisfied. Her gaze never left an object of unknown form enveloped in green serge. Alix noticed, laughed, rose, and, lifting the covering, said:

"This is my harp, Suzanne; later I will play it for you."

The second evening and those that followed, papa, despite Carlo's representation and the magnificent moonlight, opposed the continuation of the journey by night; and it was not until the morning of the fifth day that we reached St. James.

You can fancy the joy with which we were received at the plantation. We had but begun our voyage, and already my mother and sisters ran to us with extended arms as though they had not seen us for years. Needless to say, they were charmed with Alix; and when after dinner we had to say a last adieu to the loved ones left behind, we boarded the flatboat and left the plantation amid huzzas,¹ waving handkerchiefs, and kisses thrown from finger-tips. No one wept, but in saying good-bye to my father my mother asked:

"Pierre, how are you going to return?"

"Dear wife, by the mercy of God all things are possible to the man with his pocket full of money."

During the few days that we passed on the Mississippi each day was like the one before. We sat on the deck and watched the slow swinging of the long sweeps, or read, or embroidered, or in the chamber of Alix listened to her harp or guitar; and at the end of another week we arrived at Plaquemine.

¹ According to a common habit of the Southern slaves.

(To be continued.)

George W. Cable.

ATTRACTION.

WHY should I still love thee, dear,
When thou lov'st me not?
Why should I remember thee,
When thou hast forgot?

The fiery sun absorbs the dew,
Though the dew wills it not;
The pale stream glides to the ocean blue,
Escaping never its lot.

Shining sun and dew are one,
Gliding stream and sea —
Love or love me not, my love,
I am one with thee!

Elyot Weld.

STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF LOUISIANA. III.

FRANÇOISE IN LOUISIANA.

BY GEORGE W. CABLE,

Author of "The Grandissimes," "Bonaventure," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

DOWN BAYOU PLAQUEMINE — THE FIGHT WITH WILD NATURE.



PLAQUEMINE was composed of a church, two stores, as many drinking-shops, and about fifty cabins, one of which was the court-house. Here lived a multitude of Catalans, Acadians, negroes, and Indians. When Suzanne and Maggie, accompanied by my father and John Gordon, went ashore, I declined to follow, preferring to stay aboard with Joseph and Alix. It was at Plaquemine that we bade adieu to the old Mississippi. Here our flatboat made a détour and entered Bayou Plaquemine.¹

Hardly had we started when our men saw and were frightened by the force of the current. The enormous flatboat, that Suzanne had likened to a giant tortoise, darted now like an arrow, dragged by the current. The people of Plaquemine had forewarned our men and recommended the greatest prudence. "Do everything possible to hold back your boat, for if you strike any of those tree-trunks of which the bayou is full it would easily sink you." Think how reassuring all this was, and the more when they informed us that this was the first time a flatboat had ventured into bayou!

Mario, swearing in all the known languages, sought to reassure us, and, aided by his two associates, changed the manœuvring, and with watchful eye found ways to avoid the great uprooted trees in which the lakes and bayous of Attakapas abound. But how clouded was Carpentier's brow! And my father? Ah! he repented enough. Then he realized that gold is not always the vanquisher of every obstacle. At last, thanks to Heaven, our flatboat came off victor over the snags, and after some hours we arrived at the Indian village of which you have heard me tell.

If I was afraid at sight of a dozen savages among the Spaniards of Plaquemine, what was

¹ Flowing, not into, but out of, the Mississippi, and, like it, towards the Gulf.—TRANSLATOR.

to become of me now? The bank was entirely covered with men, their faces painted, their heads full of feathers, moccasins on their feet, and bows on shoulder—Indians indeed, with women simply wrapped in blankets, and children without the shadow of a garment. And all these Indians running, calling to one another, making signs to us, and addressing us in incomprehensible language. Suzanne, standing up on the bow of the flatboat, replied to their signs and called with all the force of her lungs every Indian word that—God knows where—she had learned:

"Chacounam finnan! O Choctaw! Conno Popperso!" And the Indians clapped their hands, laughing with pleasure and increasing yet more their gestures and cries.

The village, about fifty huts, lay along the edge of the water. The unfortunates were not timid. Presently several came close to the flatboat and showed us two deer and some wild turkeys and ducks, the spoils of their hunting. Then came the women laden with sacks made of bark and full of blackberries, vegetables, and a great quantity of baskets; showing all, motioning us to come down, and repeating in French and Spanish, "Money, money!"

It was decided that Mario and Gordon should stay on board and that all the rest of the joyous band should go ashore. My father, M. Carpentier, and Tino loaded their pistols and put them into their belts. Suzanne did likewise, while Maggie called Tom, her bulldog, to follow her. Celeste declined to go, because of her children. As to Alix and me, a terrible contest was raging in us between fright and curiosity, but the latter conquered. Suzanne and papa laughed so at our fears that Alix, less cowardly than I, yielded first, and joined the others. This was too much. Grasping my father's arm and begging him not to leave me for an instant, I let him conduct me, while Alix followed me, taking her husband's arm in both her hands. In front marched Tino, his gun on his shoulder; after him went Maggie, followed by Tom; and then Suzanne and little Patrick, inseparable friends.

Hardly had we gone a few steps when we were surrounded by a human wall, and I real-

ized with a shiver how easy it would be for these savages to get rid of us and take all our possessions. But the poor devils certainly never thought of it: they showed us their game, of which papa bought the greater part, as well as several sacks of berries, and also vegetables.

But the baskets! They were veritable wonders. As several of those that I bought that day are still in your possession, I will not lose much time telling of them. How those half-savage people could make things so well contrived and ornamented with such brilliant colors is still a problem to us. Papa bought for mamma thirty-two little baskets fitting into one another, the largest about as tall as a child of five years, and the smallest just large enough to receive a thimble. When he asked the price I expected to hear the seller say at least thirty dollars, but his humble reply was five dollars. For a deer he asked one dollar; for a wild turkey, twenty-five cents. Despite the advice of papa, who asked us how we were going to carry our purchases home, Suzanne and I bought, between us, more than forty baskets, great and small. To papa's question, Suzanne replied with an arch smile:

"God will provide."

Maggie and Alix also bought several; and Alix, who never forgot any one, bought two charming little baskets that she carried to Celeste. Each of us, even Maggie, secured a broad parti-colored mat to use on the deck as a couch *à la Turque*. Our last purchases were two Indian bows painted red and blue and adorned with feathers; the first bought by Celestino Carlo, and the other by Suzanne for her chevalier, Patrick Gordon.

An Indian woman who spoke a little French asked if we would not like to visit the queen. We assented, and in a few moments she led us into a hut thatched with palmetto leaves and in all respects like the others. Its interior was disgustingly unclean. The queen was a woman quite or nearly a hundred years old. She sat on a mat upon the earth, her arms crossed on her breast, her eyes half closed, and muttering between her teeth something resembling a prayer. She paid no attention to us, and after a moment we went out. We entered two or three other huts and found the same poverty and squalor. The men did not follow us about, but the women—the whole tribe, I think—marched step by step behind us, touching our dresses, our *capuches*, our jewelry, and asking for everything; and I felt well content when, standing on our deck, I could make them our last signs of adieu.

Our flatboat moved ever onward. Day by day, hour by hour, every minute it advanced—slowly it is true, in the diminished

current, but it advanced. I no longer knew where I was. We came at times where I thought we were lost; and then I thought of mamma and my dear sisters and my two pretty little brothers, whom I might never see again, and I was swallowed up. Then Suzanne would make fun of me and Alix would caress me, and that did me good. There were many bayous,—a labyrinth, as papa said,—and Mario had his map at hand showing the way. Sometimes it seemed impracticable, and it was only by great efforts of our men ["no zomme," says the original] that we could pass on. One thing is sure—those who traverse those same lakes and bayous to-day have not the faintest idea of what they were [il zété] in 1795.

Great vines hung down from lofty trees that shaded the banks and crossed one another a hundred—a thousand—ways to prevent the boat's passage and retard its progress, as if the devil himself was mixed in it; and, frankly, I believe that he had something to do with us in that cavern. Often our emigrants were forced to take their axes and hatchets in hand to open a road. At other times tree-trunks, heaped upon one another, completely closed a bayou. Then think what trouble there was to unbar that gate and pass through. And, to make all complete, troops of hungry alligators clambered upon the sides of our flatboat with jaws open to devour us. There was much outcry; I fled, Alix fled with me, Suzanne laughed. But our men were always ready for them with their guns.

CHAPTER V.

THE TWICE-MARRIED COUNTESS.

BUT with all the sluggishness of the flatboat, the toils, the anxieties, and the frights, what happy times, what gay moments, we passed together on the rough deck of our rude vessel, or in the little cells that we called our bedrooms.

It was in these rooms, when the sun was hot on deck, that my sister and I would join Alix to learn from her a new stitch in embroidery, or some of the charming songs she had brought from France and which she accompanied with harp or guitar.

Often she read to us, and when she grew tired put the book into my hands or Suzanne's, and gave us precious lessons in reading, as she had in singing and in embroidery. At times, in these moments of intimacy, she made certain half-disclosures that astonished us more and more. One day Suzanne took between her own two hands that hand so small and delicate and cried out all at once:

"How comes it, Alix, that you wear two wedding rings?"

"Because," she sweetly answered, "if it gives you pleasure to know, I have been twice married."

We both exclaimed with surprise.

"Ah!" she said, "no doubt you think me younger [*bocou plus jeune*] than I really am. What do you suppose is my age?"

Suzanne replied: "You look younger than Françoise, and she is sixteen."

"I am twenty-three," replied Alix, laughing again and again.

Another time my sister took a book, haphazard, from the shelves. Ordinarily [*audinairement*] Alix herself chose our reading, but she was busy embroidering. Suzanne sat down and began to read aloud a romance entitled "Two Destinies."

"Ah!" cried my sister, "these two girls must be Françoise and I."

"Oh no, no!" exclaimed Alix, with a heavy sigh, and Suzanne began her reading. It told of two sisters of noble family. The elder had been married to a count, handsome, noble, and rich; and the other, against her parents' wish, to a poor workingman who had taken her to a distant country, where she died of regret and misery. Alix and I listened attentively; but before Suzanne had finished, Alix softly took the book from her hands and replaced it on the shelf.

"I would not have chosen that book for you; it is full of exaggerations and falsehoods."

"And yet," said Suzanne, "see with what truth the lot of the countess is described! How happy she was in her emblazoned coach, and her jewels, her laces, her dresses of velvet and brocade! Ah, Françoise! of the two destinies I choose that one."

Alix looked at her for a moment and then dropped her head in silence. Suzanne went on in her giddy way:

"And the other: how she was punished for her plebeian tastes!"

"So, my dear Suzanne," responded Alix, "you would not marry—"

"A man not my equal—a workman? Ah! certainly not."

Madame Carpentier turned slightly pale. I looked at Suzanne with eyes full of reproach; and Suzanne remembering the gardener, at that moment in his shirt sleeves pushing one of the boat's long sweeps, bit her lip and turned to hide her tears. But Alix—the dear little creature!—rose, threw her arms about my sister's neck, kissed her, and said:

"I know very well that you had no wish to give me pain, dear Suzanne. You have only called up some dreadful things that I am trying to forget. I am the daughter of a count. My childhood and youth were passed in châteaux and palaces, surrounded by every pleasure

that an immense fortune could supply. As the wife of a viscount I have been received at court; I have been the companion of princesses. To-day all that is a dreadful dream. Before me I have a future the most modest and humble. I am the wife of Joseph the gardener; but poor and humble as is my present lot, I would not exchange it for the brilliant past, hidden from me by a veil of blood and tears. Some day I will write and send you my history; for I want to make it plain to you, Suzanne, that titles and riches do not make happiness, but that the poorest fate illumined by the fires of love is very often radiant with pleasure."

We remained mute. I took Alix's hand in mine and silently pressed it. Even Suzanne, the inquisitive Suzanne, spoke not a word. She was content to kiss Alix and wipe away her tears.

If the day had its pleasures, it was in the evenings, when we were all reunited on deck, that the moments of gayety began. When we had brilliant moonlight the flatboat would continue its course to a late hour. Then, in those calm, cool moments, when the movement of our vessel was so slight that it seemed to slide on the water, amid the odorous breezes of evening the instruments of music were brought upon deck and our concerts began. My father played the flute delightfully; Carlo, by ear, played the violin pleasantly; and there, on the deck of that old flatboat, before an indulgent audience, our improvised instruments waked the sleeping creatures of the centuries-old forest and called around us the wondering fishes and alligators. My father and Alix played admirable duos on flute and harp, and sometimes Carlo added the notes of his violin or played for us cotillons and Spanish dances. Finally Suzanne and I, to please papa, sang together Spanish songs, or songs of the negroes, that made our auditors nearly die a-laughing; or French ballads, in which Alix would mingle her sweet voice. Then Carlo, with gestures that always frightened Patrick, made the air resound with Italian refrains, to which almost always succeeded the Irish ballads of the Gordons.

But when it happened that the flatboat made an early stop to let our men rest, the programme was changed. Celeste and Maggie went ashore to cook the two suppers there. Their children gathered wood and lighted the fires. Mario and Gordon, or Gordon and 'Tino, went into the forest with their guns. Sometimes my father went along, or sat down by M. Carpentier, who was the fisherman. Alix, too, generally sat near her husband, her sketch-book on her knee, and copied the surrounding scene. Often, tired of fishing, we gathered flowers and wild fruits. I

generally staid near Alix and her husband, letting Suzanne run ahead with Patrick and Tom. It was a strange thing, the friendship between my sister and this little Irish boy. Never during the journey did he address one word to me; he never answered a question from Alix; he ran away if my father or Joseph spoke to him; he turned pale and hid if Mario looked at him. But with Suzanne he talked, laughed, obeyed her every word, called her Miss Souzie, and was never so happy as when serving her. And when, twenty years afterward, she made a journey to Attakapas, the wealthy M. Patrick Gordon, hearing by chance of her presence, came with his daughter to make her his guest for a week, still calling her Miss Souzie, as of old.

CHAPTER VI.

ODD PARTNERS IN THE BOLERO DANCE.

ONLY one thing we lacked—mass and Sunday prayers. But on that day the flatboat remained moored, we put on our Sunday clothes, gathered on deck, and papa read the mass aloud surrounded by our whole party, kneeling; and in the parts where the choir is heard in church, Alix, my sister, and I, seconded by papa and Mario, sang hymns.

One evening—we had already been five weeks on our journey—the flatboat was floating slowly along, as if it were tired of going, between the narrow banks of a bayou marked in red ink on Carlo's map, "Bayou Sorrel." It was about 6 in the afternoon. There had been a suffocating heat all day. It was with joy that we came up on deck. My father, as he made his appearance, showed us his flute. It was a signal: Carlo ran for his violin, Suzanne for Alix's guitar, and presently Carpentier appeared with his wife's harp. Ah! I see them still: Gordon and Tino seated on a mat; Celeste and her children; Mario with his violin; Maggie; Patrick at the feet of Suzanne; Alix seated and tuning her harp; papa at her side; and M. Carpentier and I seated on the bench nearest the musicians.

My father and Alix had already played some pieces, when papa stopped and asked her to accompany him in a new bolero which was then the vogue in New Orleans. In those days, at all the balls and parties, the boleros, fandangos, and other Spanish dances had their place with the French contra-dances and waltzes. Suzanne had made her entrance into society three years before, and danced ravishingly. Not so with me. I had attended my first ball only a few months before, and had taken nearly all my dancing-lessons from Suzanne. What was to become of me, then, when I heard my father ask me to dance the bolero

which he and Alix were playing! . . . Every one made room for us, crying, "*Oh, oui, Mlle. Suzanne; dancez! Oh, dancez, Mlle. Françoise!*" I did not wish to disobey my father. I did not want to disoblige my friends. Suzanne loosed her red scarf and tossed one end to me. I caught the end of the shawl that Suzanne was already waving over her head and began the first steps, but it took me only an instant to see that the task was beyond my powers. I grew confused, my head swam, and I stopped. But Alix did not stop playing; and Suzanne, wrapped in her shawl and turning upon herself, cried, "Play on!"

I understood her intention in an instant.

Harp and flute sounded on, and Suzanne, ever gliding, waltzing, leaping, her arms gracefully lifted above her head, softly waved her scarf, giving it a thousand different forms. Thus she made, twice, the circuit of the deck, and at length paused before Mario Carlo. But only for a moment. With a movement as quick as unexpected she threw the end of her scarf to him. It wound about his neck. The Italian with a shoulder movement loosed the scarf, caught it in his left hand, threw his violin to Celeste, and bowed low to his challenger. All this as the etiquette of the bolero inexorably demanded. Then Maestro Mario smote the deck sharply with his heels, let go a cry like an Indian's war-whoop, and made two leaps into the air, smiting his heels against each other. He came down on the points of his toes, waving the scarf from his left hand; and twining his right arm about my sister's waist, he swept her away with him. They danced for at least half an hour, running the one after the other, waltzing, tripping, turning, leaping. The children and Gordon shouted with delight, while my father, M. Carpentier, and even Alix clapped their hands, crying "Hurrah!"

Suzanne's want of dignity exasperated me; but when I tried to speak of it, papa and Alix were against me.

"On board a flatboat," said my father, "a breach of form is permissible." He resumed his flute with the first measures of a minuet.

"Ah, our turn!" cried Alix; "our turn, Françoise! I will be the cavalier!"

I could dance the minuet as well as I could the bolero—that is, not at all; but Alix promised to guide me: and as, after all, I loved the dance as we love it at sixteen, I was easily persuaded, and fan in hand followed Alix, who for the emergency wore her husband's hat; and our minuet was received with as much enthusiasm as Suzanne's bolero. This ball was followed by others, and Alix gave me many lessons in the dance, that some weeks later were very valuable in the wilderness towards which we were journeying.

CHAPTER VII.

A BAD STORM IN A BAD PLACE.

THE flatboat continued its course, and at long intervals some slight signs of civilization began to appear. Towards the end of a beautiful day in June, six weeks after our departure from New Orleans, the flatboat stopped at the pass of Lake Chicot.¹ The sun was setting in a belt of gray clouds. Our men fastened their vessel securely and then cast their eyes about them.

"Ah!" cried Mario, "I do not like this place; it is inhabited." He pointed to a wretched hut half hidden by the forest. Except two or three little cabins seen in the distance, this was the first habitation that had met our eyes since leaving the Mississippi.²

A woman showed herself at the door. She was scarcely dressed at all. Her feet were naked, and her tousled hair escaped from a wretched handkerchief that she had thrown upon her head. Hidden in the bushes and behind the trees half a dozen half-nude children gazed at us, ready to fly at the slightest sound. Suddenly two men with guns came out of the woods, but at the sight of the flatboat stood petrified. Mario shook his head.

"If it was not so late I would take the boat farther on."

[Yet he went hunting with Tino and Gordon along the shore, leaving the father of Françoise and Suzanne lying on the deck with sick headache, Joseph fishing in the flatboat's little skiff, and the women and children on the bank, gazed at from a little distance by the sitting figures of the two strange men and the woman. Then the hunters returned, supper was prepared, and both messes ate on shore, Gordon and Mario joining freely in the conversation of the more cultivated group, and making altogether a strange Babel of English, French, Spanish, and Italian.]

After supper Joseph and Alix, followed by my sister and me, plunged into the dense part of the woods.

"Take care, comrade," we heard Mario say; "don't go far."

The last rays of the sun were in the tree-tops. There were flowers everywhere. Alix ran here and there, all enthusiasm. Presently Suzanne uttered a cry and recoiled with affright from a thicket of blackberries. In an instant Joseph was at her side; but she laughed aloud, returned to the assault, and drew by force from the bushes a little girl of three or four years. The child fought and cried; but Suzanne held on, drew her to the trunk of a tree, sat down,

and held her on her lap by force. The poor little thing was horribly dirty, but under its rags there were pretty features and a sweetness that inspired pity. Alix sat down by my sister and stroked the child's hair, and, like Suzanne, spite of the dirt, kissed her several times; but the little creature still fought, and yelled [in English]:

"Let me alone! I want to go home! I want to go home!"

Joseph advised my sister to let the child go, and Suzanne was about to do so when she remembered having at supper filled her pocket with pecans. She quickly filled the child's hands with them and the Rubicon was passed. . . . She said that her name was Annie; that her father, mother, and brothers lived in the hut. That was all she could say. She did not know her parents' name. When Suzanne put her down she ran with all her legs towards the cabin to show Alix's gift, her pretty ribbon.

Before the sun went down the wind rose. Great clouds covered the horizon; large rain-drops began to fall. Joseph covered the head of his young wife with her mantle, and we hastened back to the camp.

"Do you fear a storm, Joseph?" asked Alix.

"I do not know too much," he replied; "but when you are near, all dangers seem great."

We found the camp deserted; all our companions were on board the flatboat. The wind rose to fury, and now the rain fell in torrents. We descended to our rooms. Papa was asleep. We did not disturb him, though we were greatly frightened. . . . Joseph and Gordon went below to sleep. Mario and his son loosed the three bull-dogs, but first removed the planks that joined the boat to the shore. Then he hoisted a great lantern upon a mast in the bow, lighted his pipe, and sat down to keep his son awake with stories of voyages and hunts.

The storm seemed to increase in violence every minute. The rain redoubled its fury. Frightful thunders echoed each other's roars. The flatboat, tossed by the wind and waves, seemed to writhe in agony, while now and then the trunks of uprooted trees, lifted by the waves, smote it as they passed. Without a thought of the people in the hut, I made every effort to keep awake in the face of these menaces of Nature. Suzanne held my hand tightly in hers, and several times spoke to me in a low voice, fearing to wake papa, whom we could hear breathing regularly, sleeping without a suspicion of the surrounding dangers. Yet an hour had not passed ere I was sleeping profoundly. A knock on the partition awoke us and made us run to the door. Mario was waiting there.

¹ That is, "Lake full of snags."

² The Indian village having the Mississippi probably but a few miles in its rear.—TRANSLATOR.

"Quick, monsieur! Get the young ladies ready. The flatboat has probably but ten minutes to live. We must take the women and children ashore. And please, signorina,"—to my sister,—“call M. and Mme. Carpentier.” But Joseph had heard all, and showed himself at the door of our room.

“Ashore? At such a time?”

“We have no choice. We must go or perish.”

“But where?”

“To the hut. We have no time to talk. My family is ready.” . . .

It took but a few minutes to obey papa's orders. We were already nearly dressed; and as sabots were worn at that time to protect the shoes from the mud and wet, we had them on in a moment. A thick shawl and a woolen hood completed our outfits. Alix was ready in a few moments.

“Save your jewels,—those you prize most,—my love,” cried Carpentier, “while I dress.”

Alix ran to her dressing-case, threw its combs, brushes, etc. pell-mell into the bureau, opened a lower part of the case and took out four or five jewel-boxes that glided into her pockets, and two lockets that she hid carefully in her corsage. Joseph always kept their little fortune in a leathern belt beneath his shirt. He put on his vest and over it a sort of great-coat, slung his gun by its shoulder-belt, secured his pistols, and then taking from one of his trunks a large woolen cloak he wrapped Alix in it, and lifted her like a child of eight, while she crossed her little arms about his neck and rested her head on his bosom. Then he followed us into Mario's room, where his two associates were waiting. At another time we might have laughed at Maggie, but not now. She had slipped into her belt two horse-pistols. In one hand she held in leash her bull-dog Tom, and in the other a short carbine, her own property.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAGGIE AND THE ROBBERS.

“We are going out of here together,” said Mario; “but John and I will conduct you only to the door of the hut. Thence we shall return to the flatboat, and all that two men can do to save our fortune shall be done. You, monsieur, have enough to do to take care of your daughters. To you, M. Carpentier—to you, son Celestino, I give the care of these women and children.”

“I can take care of myself,” said Maggie.

“You are four, well armed,” continued Mario. (My father had his gun and pistols.) “This dog is worth two men. You have no risks to run; the danger, if there be any, will be

with the boat. Seeing us divided, they may venture an attack; but one of you stand by the window that faces the shore. If one of those men in the hut leave it, or show a wish to do so, fire one pistol-shot out of the window, and we shall be ready for them; but if you are attacked, fire two shots and we will come. Now, forward!”

We went slowly and cautiously: Tino first, with a lantern; then the Irish pair and child; then Mario, leading his two younger boys, and Celeste, with her daughter asleep in her arms; and for rear-guard papa with one of us on each arm, and Joseph with his precious burden. The wind and the irregularities of the ground made us stumble at every step. The rain lashed us in the face and extorted from time to time sad lamentations from the children. But, for all that, we were in a few minutes at the door of the hovel.

“M. Carpentier,” said Mario, “I give my family into your care.” Joseph made no answer but to give his hand to the Italian. Mario strode away, followed by Gordon.

“Knock on the door,” said Joseph to Tino. The boy knocked. No sound was heard inside, except the growl of a dog.

“Knock again.” The same silence. “We can't stay here in this beating rain; open and enter,” cried Carpentier. Tino threw wide the door and we walked in.

There was but one room. A large fire burned in a clay chimney that almost filled one side of the cabin. In one corner four or five chickens showed their heads. In another, the woman was lying on a wretched pallet in all her clothes. By her slept the little creature Suzanne had found, her ribbon still on her frock. Near one wall was a big chest on which another child was sleeping. A rough table was in the middle, on it some dirty tin plates and cups, and under it half a dozen dogs and two little boys. I never saw anything else like it. On the hearth stood the pot and skillet, still half full of hominy and meat.

Kneeling by the fire was a young man molding bullets and passing them to his father, seated on a stool at a corner of the chimney, who threw them into a jar of water, taking them out again to even them with the handle of a knife. I see it still as if it was before my eyes.

The woman opened her eyes, but did not stir. The dogs rose tumultuously, but Tom showed his teeth and growled, and they went back under the table. The young man rose upon one knee, he and his father gazing stupidly at us, the firelight in their faces. We women shrank against our protectors, except Maggie, who let go a strong oath. The younger man was frightfully ugly; pale-faced, large-

eyed, haggard, his long, tangled, blonde hair on his shoulders. The father's face was written all over with depravity and crime. Joseph advanced and spoke to him.

"What the devil of a language is that?" he asked of his son in English.

"He is asking you," said Maggie, "to let us stay here till the storm is over."

"And where do you come from this way?"

"From that flatboat tied to the bank."

"Well, the house is n't big nor pretty, but you are its masters."

Maggie went and sat by the window, ready to give the signal. Pat sank at her feet, and laying his head upon Tom went straight to sleep. Papa sat down by the fire on an inverted box and took me on one knee. With her head against his other, Suzanne crouched upon the floor. We were silent, our hearts beating hard, wishing ourselves with mamma in St. James. Joseph set Alix upon a stool beside him and removed her wrapping.

"Hello!" said the younger stranger, "I thought you were carrying a child. It's a woman!"

An hour passed. The woman in the corner seemed to sleep; Celeste, too, slumbered. When I asked Suzanne, softly, if she was asleep, she would silently shake her head. The men went on with their task, not speaking. At last they finished, divided the balls between them, put them into a leathern pouch at their belt, and the father, rising, said:

"Let us go. It is time."

Maggie raised her head. The elder man went and got his gun and loaded it with two balls, and while the younger was muffling himself in an old blanket-overcoat such as we give to plantation negroes moved towards the door and was about to pass out. But quicker than lightning Maggie had raised the window, snatched a pistol from her belt, and fired. The two men stood rooted, the elder frowning at Maggie. Tom rose and showed two rows of teeth.

"What did you fire that pistol for? What signal are you giving?"

"That is understood at the flatboat," said Maggie, tranquilly. "I was to fire if you left the house. You started, I fired, and that's all."

"——! And did you know, by yourself, what we were going to do?"

"I have n't a doubt. You were simply going to attack and rob the flatboat."

A second oath, fiercer than the first, escaped the man's lips. "You talk that way to me! Do you forget that you're in my power?"

"Ah! Do you think so?" cried Maggie, resting her fists on her hips. "Ah, ha, ha!" That was the first time I ever heard her laugh—and such a laugh! "Don't you know, my dear

sir, that at one turn of my hand this dog will strangle you like a chicken? Don't you see four of us here armed to the teeth, and at another signal our comrades yonder ready to join us in an instant? And besides, this minute they are rolling a little cannon up to the bow of the boat. Go, meddle with them, you'll see." She lied, but her lie averted the attack. She quietly sat down again and paid the scoundrel not the least attention.

"And that's the way you pay us for taking you in, is it? Accuse a man of crime because he steps out of his own house to look at the weather? Well, that's all right." While the man spoke he put his gun into a corner, resumed his seat, and lighted a cob pipe. The son had leaned on his gun during the colloquy. Now he put it aside and lay down upon the floor to sleep. The awakened children slept. Maggie sat and smoked. My father, Joseph, and Tino talked in low tones. All at once the old ruffian took his pipe from his mouth and turned to my father.

"Where do you come from?"

"From New Orleans, sir."

"How long have you been on the way?"

"About a month."

"And where are you going?" etc. Joseph, like papa, remained awake, but like him, like all of us, longed with all his soul for the end of that night of horror.

At the first crowing of the cock the denizens of the hut were astir. The father and son took their guns and went into the forest. The fire was relighted. The woman washed some hominy in a pail and seemed to have forgotten our presence; but the little girl recognized Alix, who took from her own neck a bright silk handkerchief and tied it over the child's head, put a dollar in her hand, and kissed her forehead. Then it was Suzanne's turn. She covered her with kisses. The little one laughed, and showed the turban and the silver that "the pretty lady," she said, had given her. Next, my sister dropped, one by one, upon the pallet ten dollars, amazing the child with these playthings; and then she took off her red belt and put it about her little pet's neck.

My father handed me a handful of silver. "They are very poor, my daughter; pay them well for their hospitality." As I approached the woman I heard Joseph thank her and offer her money.

"What do you want me to do with that?" she said, pushing my hand away. "Instead of that, send me some coffee and tobacco."

That ended it; I could not pay in money. But when I looked at the poor woman's dress so ragged and torn, I took off [J'autai] my shawl, which was large and warm, and put it

on her shoulders,— I had another in the boat, — and she was well content. When I got back to the flatboat I sent her some chemises, petticoats, stockings, and a pair of shoes. The shoes were papa's. Alix also sent her three skirts and two chemises, and Suzanne two old dresses and two chemises for her children, cutting down what was too large. Before quitting the hut Celeste had taken from her two lads their knitted neckerchiefs and given them to the two smaller boys, and Maggie took the old shawl that covered Pat's shoulders and threw it upon the third child, who cried out with joy. At length we returned to our vessel, which had triumphantly fought the wind and floating trees. Mario took to the cabin our gifts, to which we added sugar, biscuits, and a sack of pecans.

CHAPTER IX.

ALIX DE MORAINVILLE.

FOR two weeks more our boat continued its slow and silent voyage among the bayous. We saw signs of civilization, but they were still far apart. These signs alarmed Mario. He had already chosen his place of abode and spoke of it with his usual enthusiasm; a prairie where he had camped for two weeks with his young hunters five years before.

"A principality—that is what I count on establishing there," he cried, pushing his hand through his hair. "And think!—if, maybe, some one has occupied it! Oh, the thief! the robber! Let him not fall into my hands! I'll strangle—I'll kill him!"

My father, to console him, would say that it would be easy to find other tracts just as fine.

"Never!" replied he, rolling his eyes and brandishing his arms; and his fury would grow until Maggie cried:

"He is Satan himself! He's the devil!"

One evening the flatboat stopped a few miles only from where is now the village of Pattersonville. The weather was magnificent, and while papa, Gordon, and Mario went hunting, Joseph, Alix, and we two walked on the bank. Little by little we wandered, and, burying ourselves in the interior, we found ourselves all at once confronting a little cottage embowered in a grove of oranges. Alix uttered a cry of admiration and went towards the house. We saw that it was uninhabited and must have been long abandoned. The little kitchen, the poultry-house, the dovecote, were in ruins. But the surroundings were admirable: in the rear a large court was entirely shaded with live-oaks; in front was the green belt of orange trees; farther away Bayou Teche, like a blue ribbon, marked a natural boundary, and

at the bottom of the picture the great trees of the forest lifted their green-brown tops.

"Oh!" cried Alix, "if I could stay here I should be happy."

"Who knows?" replied Joseph. "The owner has left the house; he may be dead. Who knows but I may take this place?"

"Oh! I pray you, Joseph, try. Try!" At that moment my father and Mario appeared, looking for us, and Alix cried:

"Welcome, gentlemen, to my domain."

Joseph told of his wife's wish and his hope. . . . "In any case," said Mario, "count on us. If you decide to settle here we will stay two weeks—a month, if need be—to help you establish yourself."

As soon as we had breakfasted my father and Joseph set out for a plantation which they saw in the distance. They found it a rich estate. The large, well-built house was surrounded by outbuildings, stables, granaries, and gardens; fields of cane and corn extended to the limit of view. The owner, M. Gerbeau, was a young Frenchman. He led them into the house, presented them to his wife, and offered them refreshments.

[M. Gerbeau tells the travelers how he had come from the Mississippi River parish of St. Bernard to this place with all his effects in a schooner—doubtless via the mouth of the river and the bay of Atchafalaya; while Joseph is all impatience to which he has inquired. But finally he explains that its owner, a lone Swede, had died of sunstroke two years before, and M. Gerbeau's best efforts to find, through the Swedish consul at New Orleans or otherwise, a successor to the little estate had been unavailing. Joseph could take the place if he would. He ended by generously forcing upon the father of Françoise and Suzanne the free use of his traveling-carriage and "two horses, as gentle as lambs and as swift as deer," with which to make their journey up the Teche to St. Martinsville, the gay, not to say giddy, little capital of the royalist *émigrés*.]

My father wished to know what means of transport he could secure, on his return to this point, to take us home.

"Don't let that trouble you; I will arrange that. I already have a plan—you shall see."

The same day the work began on the Carpentiers' home. The three immigrants and Tino fell bravely to work, and M. Gerbeau brought his carpenter and a cart-load of lumber. Two new rooms were added. The kitchen was repaired, then the stable, the dovecote, the poultry-house; the garden fences were restored; also those of the field. My father gave Joseph one of his cows; the other was promised to Carlo. Mme. Gerbeau was with us

much, helping Alix, as were we. We often dined with her. One Sunday M. Gerbeau came for us very early and insisted that Mario and Gordon should join us. Maggie, with her usual phlegm, had declined.

At dinner our host turned the conversation upon St. Martinsville, naming again all the barons, counts, and marquises of whom he had spoken to my father, and descanting especially on the grandeur of the balls and parties he had there attended.

"And we have only our camayeu skirts!" cried Suzanne.

"Daughter," observed papa, "be content with what you have. You are neither a duchess nor a countess, and besides you are traveling."

"And," said M. Gerbeau, "the stores there are full of knickknacks that would capture the desires of a queen."

On returning to our flatboat Alix came into my room, where I was alone, and laying her head on my shoulder:

"Françoise," she said, "I have heard mentioned to-day the dearest friend I ever had. That Countess de la Houssaye of whom M. Gerbeau spoke is Madelaine de Livilier, my companion in convent, almost my sister. We were married nearly at the same time; we were presented at court the same day; and now here we are, both, in Louisiana!"

"O Alix!" I cried, "I shall see her. Papa has a letter to her husband; I shall tell her; she will come to see you; and—"

"No, no! You must not speak of me, Françoise. She knew and loved the Countess Alix de Morainville. I know her; she would repel with scorn the wife of the gardener. I am happy in my obscurity. Let nothing remind me of other days."

Seeing that Alix said nothing of all this to Suzanne, I imitated her example. With all her goodness, Suzanne was so thoughtless and talkative!

CHAPTER X.

ALIX PLAYS FAIRY.—PARTING TEARS.

IN about fifteen days the work on the cottage was nearly done and the moving began, Celeste, and even Maggie, offering us their services. Alix seemed enchanted.

"Two things, only, I lack," she said—"a sofa, and something to cover the walls."

One morning M. Gerbeau sent to Carpentier a horse, two fine cows and their calves, and a number of sheep and pigs. At the same time two or three negresses, loaded down with chickens, geese, and ducks, made their appearance. Also M. Gerbeau.

"What does all this mean?" asked Joseph.

"This is the succession of the dead Swede," replied the generous young man.

"But I have no right to his succession."

"That's a question," responded M. Gerbeau. "You have inherited the house, you must inherit all. If claimants appear—well, you will be responsible to them. You will please give me a receipt in due form; that is all."

Tears came into Carpentier's eyes. . . . As he was signing the receipt M. Gerbeau stopped him. "Wait; I forgot something. At the time of Karl's [the Swede's] death, I took from his crib fifty barrels of corn; add that."

"O sir!" cried Joseph, "that is too much—too much."

"Write!" said M. Gerbeau, laying his hand on Joseph's shoulder, "if you please. I am giving you nothing; I am relieving myself of a burden."

My dear daughter, if I have talked very much about Alix it is because talking about her is such pleasure. She has been so good to my sister and me! The memory of her is one of the brightest of my youth.

The flatboat was to go in three days. One morning, when we had passed the night with Mme. Gerbeau, Patrick came running to say that "Madame 'Lix" wished to see us at once. We hastened to the cottage. Alix met us on the gallery [veranda].

"Come in, dear girls. I have a surprise for you and a great favor to ask. I heard you say, Suzanne, you had nothing to wear—"

"But our camayeu petticoats!"

"But your camayeu petticoats." She smiled. "And they, it seems, do not tempt your vanity. You want better?"

"Ah, indeed we do!" replied Suzanne.

"Well, let us play Cinderella. The dresses of velvet, silk, and lace, the jewels, the slippers—all are in yonder chest. Listen, my dear girls. Upon the first signs of the Revolution my frightened mother left France and crossed into England. She took with her all her wardrobe, her jewels, the pictures from her bedroom, and part of her plate. She bought, before going, a quantity of silks and ribbons. . . . When I reached England my mother was dead, and all that she had possessed was restored to me by the authorities. My poor mother loved dress, and in that chest is all her apparel. Part of it I had altered for my own use; but she was much larger than I—taller than you. I can neither use them nor consent to sell them. If each of you will accept a ball toilet, you will make me very happy." And she looked at us with her eyes full of supplication, her hands clasped.

We each snatched a hand and kissed it.

Then she opened the chest, and for the first and last time in my life I saw fabrics, ornaments, and coiffures that truly seemed to have been made by the fairies. After many trials and much debate she laid aside for me a lovely dress of blue brocade glistening with large silver flowers the reflections of which seemed like rays of light. It was short in front, with a train; was very full on the sides, and caught up with knots of ribbon. The long pointed waist was cut square and trimmed with magnificent laces that re-appeared on the half-long sleeves. The arms, to the elbow, were to be covered with white frosted gloves fastened with twelve silver buttons. To complete my toilet she gave me a blue silk fan beautifully painted, blue satin slippers with high heels and silver buckles, white silk stockings with blue clocks, a brodered white cambric handkerchief trimmed with Brussels point lace, and, last, a lovely set of silver filigree that she assured us was of slight value, comprising the necklace, the comb, the earrings, bracelets, and a belt whose silver tassels of the same design fell down the front of the dress.

My sister's toilet was exactly like mine, save that it was rose color. Alix had us try them on. While our eyes were ravished, she, with more expert taste, decided to take up a little in one place, lower a ribbon in another, add something here, take away there, and, above all, to iron the whole with care. We staid all day helping her; and when, about 3 o'clock, all was finished, our fairy godmother said she would now dress our hair, and that we must observe closely.

"For Suzanne will have to coiffe Françoise and Françoise coiffe Suzanne," she said. She took from the chest two pasteboard boxes that she said contained the headdresses belonging to our costumes, and, making me sit facing my sister, began to dress her hair. I was all eyes. I did not lose a movement of the comb. She lifted Suzanne's hair to the middle of the head in two rosettes that she called *riquettes* and fastened them with a silver comb. Next, she made in front, or rather on the forehead, with hairpins, numberless little knots, or whorls, and placed on each side of the head a plume of white, rose-tipped feathers, and in front, opposite the *riquettes*, placed a rose surrounded with silver leaves. Long rose-colored, silver-frosted ribbons falling far down on the back completed the headdress, on which Alix dusted handfuls of silver powder. Can you believe

it, my daughter, that was the first time my sister and I had ever seen artificial flowers? They made very few of them, even in France, in those days.

While Suzanne admired herself in the mirror I took her place. My headdress differed from hers in the ends of my feathers being blue, and in the rose being white, surrounded by pale blue violets and a few silver leaves. And now a temptation came to all of us. Alix spoke first:

"Now put on your ball-dresses and I will send for our friends. What do you think?"

"Oh, that would be charming!" cried Suzanne. "Let us hurry!" And while we dressed, Pat, always prowling about the cottage, was sent to the flatboat to get his parents and the Carlos, and to M. Gerbeau's to ask my father and M. and Mme. Gerbeau to come at once to the cottage. . . . No, I cannot tell the cries of joy that greeted us. The children did not know us, and Maggie had to tell Pat over and over that these were Miss Souze and Miss Francise. My father's eyes filled with tears as he thanked Alix for her goodness and generosity to us.

Alas! the happiest days, like the saddest, have an end. On the morrow the people in the flatboat came to say good-bye. Mario cried like a child. Celeste carried Alix's hands to her lips and said in the midst of her tears:

"O Madame! I had got so used to you—I hoped never to leave you."

"I will come to see you, Celeste," replied Alix to the young mulattress, "I promise you."

Maggie herself seemed moved, and in taking leave of Alix put two vigorous kisses on her cheeks. As to our father, and us, too, the adieus were not final, we having promised Mario and Gordon to stop [on their journey up the shore of the bayou] as soon as we saw the flatboat.

"And we hope, my dear Carlo, to find you established in your principality."

"Amen!" responded the Italian.

Alix added to her gifts two pairs of chamois-skin gloves and a box of lovely artificial flowers. Two days after the flatboat had gone, we having spent the night with Alix, came M. Gerbeau's carriage to take us once more upon our journey. Ah! that was a terrible moment. Even Alix could scarce hold back the tears. We refused to get into the carriage, and walked, all of us together, to M. Gerbeau's, and then parted amid tears, kisses, and promises.

(To be continued.)

George W. Cable.

STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF LOUISIANA.

FRANÇOISE IN LOUISIANA.

BY GEORGE W. CABLE,

Author of "The Grandissimes," "Bonaventure," etc.

CHAPTER XI.

LITTLE PARIS.



O the carriage rolled along the margin of Bayou Teche, with two big trunks besides Monsieur's on back and top, and a smaller one, lent by Alix, lashed underneath; but shawls, mats, and baskets were all left behind with the Carpentiers.

The first stop was at the plantation and residence of Captain Patterson, who "offered his hand in the English way, saying only, 'Welcomed, young ladies.'" In 1795, the narrator stops to say, one might see in and about New Orleans some two-story houses; but along the banks of Bayou Teche, as well as on the Mississippi, they were all of one sort,—like their own; like Captain Patterson's,—a single ground floor with three rooms facing front and three back. Yet the very next stop was at a little cottage covered with roses and with its front yard full of ducks and geese,— "A genuine German cottage," said papa, "—where a German girl, to call her father, put a great ox's horn to her lips and blew a loud blast. Almost every one was English or German till they came to where was just beginning to be the town of Franklin. One Harlman, a German, offered to exchange all his land for the silver watch that it best suited Monsieur to travel with. The exchange was made, the acts were all signed and sealed, and—when Suzanne, twenty years after, made a visit to Attakapas there was Harlman and his numerous family still in peaceable possession of the place. . . . "And I greatly fear that when some day our grandchildren awaken from that apathy with which I have always reproached the Creoles, I fear, my daughter, they will have trouble to prove their titles."

But they journeyed on, Françoise ever looking out the carriage window for the flatboat, and Suzanne crying:

"Annie, my sister Annie, do you see nothing coming?" And about two miles from where Franklin was to be they came upon it, greeted with joyous laughter and cries of "Miss Souzие! O Miss Souzие!" from the woman and the

children, and from Mario: "I have it, Signor! I have it! My principality, Miss Souzие! It is mine, Signorina Françoise!" while he danced, laughed, and brandished his arms. "He had taken up enough land," says Françoise, "for five principalities, and was already knocking the flatboat to pieces."

She mentioned meeting Jacques and Charles Picot, St. Domingan refugees, whose story of adventures she says was very wonderful, but with good artistic judgment omits them. The travelers found, of course, a *charmant cordialité* at the home of M. Agricole Fuselier, and saw a little girl of five who afterward became a great beauty—Uranie Fuselier. They passed another Indian village, where Françoise persuaded them not to stop. Its inhabitants were Chetimachas, more civilized than those of the village near Plaquemine, and their sworn enemies, living in constant fear of an attack from them. At New Iberia, a town founded by Spaniards, the voyagers saw "several houses, some drinking-shops and other buildings," and spent with "the pretty little Madame Dubuclet . . . two of the pleasantest days of their lives."]

At length, one beautiful evening in July, under a sky resplendent with stars, amid the perfume of gardens and caressed by the cool night breeze, we made our entry into the village of St. Martinville—the Little Paris, the oasis in the desert.

My father ordered Julien [the coachman] to stop at the best inn. He turned two or three corners and stopped near the bayou [Teche] just beside the bridge, before a house of the strangest aspect possible. There seemed first to have been built a *rez-de-chaussée* house of ordinary size, to which had been hastily added here a room, there a cabinet, a balcony, until the "White Pelican"—I seem to see it now—was like a house of cards, likely to tumble before the first breath of wind. The host's name was Morphy. He came forward, hat in hand, a pure-blooded American, but speaking French almost like a Frenchman. In the house all was comfortable and shining with cleanness. Madame Morphy took us to our room, adjoining papa's ["*tu ta côté de selle*

de papa"], the two looking out, across the veranda, upon the waters of the Teche.

After supper my father proposed a walk. Madame Morphy showed us, by its lights, in the distance, a theater!

"They are playing, this evening, 'The Barber of Seville.'"

We started on our walk, moving slowly, scanning the houses and listening to the strains of music that reached us from the distance. It seemed but a dream that at any moment might vanish. On our return to the inn, papa threw his letters upon the table and began to examine their addresses.

"To whom will you carry the first letter, papa?" I asked.

"To the Baron du Clozel," he replied. "I have already met him in New Orleans, and even had the pleasure to render him a slight service."

Mechanically Suzanne and I examined the addresses and amused ourselves reading the pompous titles.

"Le chevalier Louis de Blanc!" began my sister; "'L'honorable A. Déclouet'; 'Le comte Louis le Pelletrier de la Houssaye!' Ah!" she cried, throwing the packet upon the table, "the aristocrats! I am frightened, poor little plebeian that I am."

"Yes, my daughter," responded my father, "these names represent true aristocrats, as noble in virtues as in blood. My father has often told me of two uncles of the Count de la Houssaye: the first, Claude de la Pelletrier de la Houssaye, was prime minister to King Louis XV.; and the second, Barthelemy, was employed by the Minister of Finance. The count, he to whom I bear this letter, married Madelaine Victoire de Livilier. These are noble names."

Then Alix was not mistaken; it was really her friend, the Countess Madelaine, whom I was about to meet.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COUNTESS MADELAINE.

EARLY the next day I saw, through the partly open door, my father finishing his toilet.

He had already fastened over his black satin breeches his garters secured with large buckles of chased silver. Similar buckles were on his shoes. His silver-buttoned vest of white piqué reached low down, and his black satin coat faced with white silk had large lappets cut square. Such dress seemed to me very warm for summer; but the fashion and etiquette allowed only silk and velvet for visits of ceremony, and though you smothered you had to obey those tyrants. At the moment when I saw him out of the corner of my eye he was sticking a clus-

ter diamond pin into his shirt-frill and another diamond into his lace cravat. It was the first time I ever saw papa so fine, so dressed! Presently we heard him call us to arrange his queue, and although it was impossible for us to work up a club and pigeon wings like those I saw on the two young Du Clozels and on M. Neville Déclouet, we arranged a very fine queue wrapped with a black ribbon, and after smiling at himself in the glass and declaring that he thought the whole dress was in very good taste he kissed us, took his three-cornered hat and his gold-headed cane and went out. With what impatience we awaited his return!

About two hours afterward we saw papa coming back accompanied by a gentleman of a certain age, handsome, noble, elegant in his severe suit of black velvet. He had the finest black eyes in the world, and his face beamed with wit and amiability. You have guessed it was the Baron du Clozel. The baron bowed to us profoundly. He certainly knew who we were, but etiquette required him to wait until my father had presented us; but immediately then he asked papa's permission to kiss us, and you may suppose your grandfather did not refuse.

M. du Clozel had been sent by the baroness to oppose our sojourn at the inn, and to bring us back with him.

"Run, put on your hoods," said papa; "we will wait for you here."

Mr. and Mrs. Morphy were greatly disappointed to see us go, and the former declared that if these nobles kept on taking away their custom they would have to shut up shop. Papa, to appease him, paid him double what he asked. And the baron gave his arm to Suzanne, as the elder, while I followed, on papa's. Madame du Clozel and her daughter met us at the street gate. The baroness, though not young, was still pretty, and so elegant, so majestic! A few days later I could add, so good, so lovable!

Celeste du Clozel was eighteen. Her hair was black as ebony, and her eyes a beautiful blue. The young men of the village called her *Celeste la bien nommée* [Celeste the well named]; and for all her beauty, fortune, and high position she was good and simple and always ready to oblige. She was engaged, we learned afterward, to the Chevalier de Blanc, the same who in 1803 was made post-commandant of Attakapas.¹ Olivier and Charles du Clozel turned everything to our entertainment, and it was soon decided that we should all go that same evening to the theater.

Hardly was the sun down when we shut

¹ Ancestor of the late Judge Alcibiade de Blanc of St. Martinville, noted in Reconstruction days.—TRANSLATOR.

ourselves into our rooms to begin the work of dressing. Celeste put herself at our service, assuring us that she knew perfectly how to dress hair. The baroness asked us to let her lend us ornaments, ribbons — whatever we might need. We could see that she supposed two young girls who had never seen the great world, who came from a region where nearly all articles of luxury were wanting, could hardly have a choice wardrobe. We thanked them, assuring Celeste that we had always cultivated the habit of dressing each other's hair.

We put on our camayeu petticoats and our black velvet waists, adding gloves; and in our hair, sparkling with gold powder, we put, each of us, a bunch of the roses given us by Alix. We found ourselves charming, and hoped to create a sensation. But if the baroness was satisfied she showed no astonishment. Her hair, like her daughter's, was powdered, and both wore gloves.

Suzanne on the arm of Olivier, I on Charles's, Celeste beside her fiancé, the grandparents in front, we entered the theater of St. Martinville, and in a moment more were the observed of all observers. The play was a vaudeville, of which I remember only the name, but rarely have I seen amateurs act so well: all the prominent parts were rendered by young men. But if the French people are polite, amiable, and hospitable, we know that they are also very inquisitive. Suzanne was more annoyed than I can tell; yet we knew that our toilets were in excellent taste, even in that place full of ladies covered with costly jewels. When I asked Celeste how the merchants of St. Martinville could procure these costly goods, she explained that near by there was a place named the *Butte à la Rose* that greatly shortened the way to market.¹ They were bringing almost everything from London, owing to the Revolution. Between the acts many persons came to greet Madame du Clozel. Oh, how I longed to see the friend of Alix! But I would not ask anything; I resolved to find her by the aid of my heart alone.

Presently, as by a magnetic power, my attention was drawn to a tall and beautiful young lady dressed in white satin, with no ornaments except a set of gold and sapphires, and for head-dress a *résille* the golden tassels of which touched her neck. Ah! how quickly I recognized those brown eyes faintly proud, that kind smile, that queenly bearing, that graceful step! I turned to Charles du Clozel, who sat beside me, and said:

"That is the Countess de la Houssaye, is n't it?"

"Do you know her?"

¹ By avoiding the custom-house.—TRANSLATOR.

"I see her for the first time; but—I guessed it."

Several times I saw her looking at me, and once she smiled. During the last two acts she came and shook hands with us, and, caressing our hair with her gloved hand, said her husband had seen papa's letter; that it was from a dear friend, and that she came to ask Madame du Clozel to let her take us away with her. Against this the baroness cried out, and then the Countess Madelaine said to us:

"Well, you will come spend the day with me day after to-morrow, will you? I shall invite only young people. May I come for you?"

Ah, that day! how I remember it! . . . Madame de la Houssaye was fully five or six years older than Madame Carpentier, for she was the mother of four boys, the eldest of whom was fully twelve.² Her house was, like Madame du Clozel's, a single rez-de-chaussée surmounted by a mansard. . . . From the drawing-room she conducted us to a room in the rear of the house at the end of the veranda [galerie], where . . . a low window let into a garden crossed and recrossed with alleys of orange and jasmine. Several lofty magnolias filled the air with the fragrance of their great white flowers. . . .

CHAPTER XIII.

"POOR LITTLE ALIX!"

HARDLY had we made a few steps into the room when a young girl rose and advanced, supported on the arm of a young man slightly overdressed. His club and pigeon-wings were fastened with three or four pins of gold, and his white-powdered queue was wrapped with a black velvet ribbon shot with silver. The heat was so great that he had substituted silk for velvet, and his dress-coat, breeches, and long vest were of pearl-gray silk, changing to silver, with large silver buttons. On the lace frill of his embroidered shirt shone three large diamonds, on his cravat was another, and his fingers were covered with rings.³ The young girl embraced us with ceremony, while her companion bowed profoundly. She could hardly have been over sixteen or seventeen. One could easily guess by her dress that the pretty creature was the slave of fashion.

"Madame du Rocher," said Charles du Clozel, throwing a wicked glance upon her.

"Madame!" I stammered. "Impossible!" cried Suzanne.

"Don't listen to him!" interrupted the

² A very bad guess; the countess had been married only nine years. As will be seen in the next installment of "Strange True Stories."—TRANSLATOR.

³ The memoirist omits to say that this person was Neville Déclouet.—TRANSLATOR.

young lady, striking Charles's fingers with her fan. "He is a wretched falsifier. I am called Tonton de Blanc."

"The widow du Rocher!" cried Olivier, from the other side.

"Ah, this is too much!" she exclaimed. "If you don't stop these ridiculous jokes at once I'll make Neville call you out upon the field of battle." . . . But a little while afterward Celeste whispered in my ear that her brothers had said truly. At thirteen years Tonton, eldest daughter of Commandant Louis de Blanc and sister of Chevalier de Blanc, had been espoused to Dr. du Rocher, at least forty years older than she. He was rich, and two years later he died, leaving all his fortune to his widow. . . . One after another Madame de la Houssaye introduced to us at least twenty persons, the most of whose names, unfortunately, I have forgotten. I kept notes, but have mislaid them. . . .

A few moments before dinner the countess reappeared among us, followed by two servants in livery bearing salvers of fruit; and while we ate she seated herself at the harpsichord and played.

"Do you sing?" she asked me.

"A little, madame."

[The two sisters sang a song together.]

"Children," she cried, "tell me, I pray you, who taught you that duet?"

"A young French lady, one of our friends," replied Suzanne.

"But her name! What is her name?"

"Madame Carpentier."

The name meant nothing to her. She sighed, and asked us to sing on. . . . At dinner we met again my father and the count. After dinner the countess sent for me to come to her chamber while she was nursing her babe. After a few unimportant words she said:

"You have had your lessons from a good musician."

"Yes, madame, our friend plays beautifully on the harp."

"On the harp! And you say her name is—"

"Madame Joseph Carpentier."

"It is strange," said Madame de la Houssaye. "The words of your duet are by me, and the music by my friend the Viscomptesse Alix de Morainville. All manner of things have happened in this terrible Revolution; I had for a moment the hope that she had found chance to emigrate and that you had met her. Do you know M. Carpentier?"

"Yes, madame; he was with her. He is—in fact—a laboring gardener."

"Oh! then there is no hope. I had the thought of a second marriage, but Alix de Morainville could never stoop so low. Poor, dear, innocent little Alix! She must be dead—at

the hand of butchers, as her father and her husband are."

When we returned to the joyous company in the garden all wanted to speak at once. The countess imposed silence, and then Tonton informed us that a grand ball was proposed in our honor, to be given in the large dining-room of Mr. Morphy's tavern, under the direction of Neville Déclouet, the following Monday—that is, in four days.

Oh, that ball! I lay my pen on the table and my head in my hands and see the bright, pretty faces of young girls and richly clad cavaliers, and hear the echoes of that music so different from what we have to-day. Alas! the larger part of that company are sleeping now in the cemetery of St. Martinville.

Wherever you went, whoever you met, the ball was the subject of all conversation. All the costumes, masculine and feminine, were prepared in profound secrecy. Each one vowed to astonish, dazzle, surpass his neighbor. My father, forgetting the presents from Alix, gave us ever so much money and begged Madame du Clozel to oversee our toilets; but what was the astonishment of the dear baroness to see us buy only some vials of perfumery and two papers of pins. We paid ten dollars for each vial and fifteen for the pins!

Celeste invited us to see her costume the moment it reached her. It certainly did great honor to the dressmaker of St. Martinville. The dress was simply made, of very fine white muslin caught up *en paniers* on a skirt of blue satin. Her beautiful black hair was to be fastened with a pearl comb, and to go between its riquettes she showed us two bunches of forget-me-nots as blue as her eyes. The extremely long-pointed waist of her dress was of the same color as the petticoat, was décolleté, and on the front had a drapery of white muslin held in place by a bunch of forget-me-nots falling to the end of the point. In the whole village she could get no white gloves. She would have to let that pass and show her round white arms clasped with two large bracelets of pearls. She showed also a necklace and earrings of pearls.

Madame du Clozel, slave to the severe etiquette of that day, did not question us, but did go so far as to say in our presence that camayeu was never worn at night.

"We know that, madame," replied my sister, slightly hurt. We decided to show our dresses to our hostess. We arranged them on the bed. When the baroness and her daughter entered our chamber they stood stupefied. The baroness spoke first.

"Oh, the villains! How they have fooled us! These things are worthy of a queen. They are court costumes."

I said to myself, "Poor, dear little Alix!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE HAT.

"OH!" cried Celeste, "but what will Tonton say when she sees you?"

"Do not let her know a thing about it, girls," said Madame du Clozel, "or, rather than yield the scepter of beauty and elegance for but one evening, she will stay in the white chapel. What! at sixteen you don't know what the white chapel is? It is our bed."

Before the ball, came Sunday. Madame du Clozel had told us that the population of the little city—all Catholics—was very pious, that the little church could hardly contain the crowd of worshipers; and Celeste had said that there was a grand display of dress there. We thought of having new dresses made, but the dressmaker declared it impossible; and so we were obliged to wear our camayeu a second time, adding only a lace scarf and a hat. A hat! But how could one get in that little town in the wilderness, amid a maze of lakes and bayous, hundreds of miles from New Orleans, so rare and novel a thing as a hat? Ah, they call necessity the mother of invention, but I declare, from experience, that vanity has performed more miracles of invention, and made greater discoveries than Galileo or Columbus.

The women of St. Martinville, Tonton at their head, had revolted against fate and declared they would have hats if they had to get them at the moon. Behold, now, by what simple accident the hat was discovered. Tonton de Blanc had one of the prettiest complexions in the world, all lily and rose, and what care she took of it! She never went into the yard or the garden without a *garde-soleil* and a thick veil. Yet for all that her jealous critics said she was good and sensible, and would forget everything, even her toilet, to succor any one in trouble. One day Tonton heard a great noise in the street before her door. She was told that a child had just been crushed by a vehicle. Without stopping to ask whether the child was white or black or if it still lived, Tonton glanced around for her sun-bonnet, but, not finding it at hand, darted bareheaded into the street. At the door she met her young brother, and, as the sun was hot, she took his hat and put it on her own head. The Rubicon was crossed—Tonton had discovered the hat!

All she had heard was a false alarm. The crushed child was at play again before its mother's door. It had been startled by a galloping team, had screamed, and instantly there had been a great hubbub and crowd. But ten minutes later the little widow, the hat in her hand, entered the domicile of its maker and astonished the woman by ordering a hat for her own use, promising five dollars if the

work was done to her satisfaction. The palmetto was to be split into the finest possible strips and platted into the form furnished by Madame Tonton. It was done; and on Sunday the hat, trimmed with roses and ribbons, made its appearance in the church of St. Martin, on the prettiest head in the world. The next Sunday you could see as many hats as the hatmaker had had time to make, and before the end of the month all the women in St. Martinville were wearing palmetto hats. Today the modistes were furnishing them at the fabulous price of twenty-five dollars,—trimmed, you understand,—and palmetto hats were really getting to be a branch of the commerce of the little city; but ours, thanks to Alix's flowers and ribbons, cost but ten dollars.

The church was crowded. The service, performed by an old priest nearly a hundred years of age, was listened to with interest; but what astonished me was to see the crowd stop at the church door, the women kissing; to hear laughter, chat, and criticism at the door of this sacred place as if it were the public square. I understood the discontent that knit my father's brows and the alacrity with which he descended the church steps. Tonton saw and came to us—so fresh, so young, she was indeed the queen of beauty and fashion. Out of nothing Tonton could work wonders. Her dress today was of camayeu the pattern of which was bunches of strawberries—the very same stuff as our dresses; but how had she made it to look so different? And her hat! It was a new marvel of her invention. She had taken a man's felt hat and entirely covered it with the feathers of the cardinal bird, without other ornament than a bunch of white ribbon on the front and two long cords of white silk falling clear to the waist. That was the first hat of the kind I ever saw, but it was not the last. With one turn of her little hand she could make the whole female population of St. Martinville go as she pleased. Before we left St. Martinville we had the chance to admire more than fifty hats covered with the feathers of peacocks, geese, and even guinea-fowl, and—must we confess it?—when we got home we enlisted all our hunter friends to bring us numerous innocent cardinals, and tried to make us hats; but they did not look the least like the pretty widow's.

Sunday was also the day given to visiting. Being already dressed, it was so easy to go see one's friends. . . . Among the new visitors was Saint Marc d'Arby—engaged to little Constance de Blanc, aged thirteen. He came to invite us to a picnic on the coming Wednesday.

"Ah," I cried, with regret, "the very day papa has chosen for us to leave for the town of Opelousas!" . . .

Since arriving in St. Martinville we had hardly seen papa. He left early each morning and returned late in the evening, telling of lands he had bought during the day. His wish was to go to Opelousas to register them. . . . To-day the whole town of Opelousas belongs to his heirs; but those heirs, with Creole heedlessness and afraid to spend a dollar, let strangers enjoy the possession of the beautiful lands acquired by their ancestor for so different an end. Shame on all of them!

It was decided for papa to leave us with the baroness during his visit to Opelousas.

"And be ready to depart homeward," said he, "on the following Monday."

CHAPTER XV.

THE BALL.

THE evening before that of the ball gave us lively disappointment. A fine rain began to fall. But Celeste came to assure us that in St. Martinville a storm had never prevented a ball, and if one had to go by boat, still one had to go. Later the weather improved, and several young gentlemen came to visit us. . . . "Will there be a supper, chevalier?" asked the baroness of her future son-in-law.—"Ah, good! For me the supper is the best part of the affair."

Alas! man proposes. The next morning she was in bed suffering greatly with her throat. "Neither supper nor ball for me this evening," she said. "The Countess de la Houssaye will take care of you and Celeste this evening." . . .

At last our toilets were complete. . . . When Madame de la Houssaye opened the door and saw us, instead of approaching, she suddenly stopped with her hands clasped convulsively, and with eyes dilated and a pallor and look of astonishment that I shall never forget. I was about to speak when she ran to Suzanne and seized her by the arm.

"Child! for pity answer me! Where did that dress—these jewels, come from?"

"Madame!" said my sister, quickly taking offense.

"Françoise!" cried the countess, "you will answer me. Listen. The last time I saw the Countess Aurelia de Morainville, six years ago, was at a reception of Queen Marie Antoinette, and she wore a dress exactly like that of Suzanne's. My child, pity my emotions and tell me where you bought that toilet." I answered, almost as deeply moved as she:

"We did not buy it, madame. These costumes were given to us by Madame Carpentier."

"Given! Do you know the price of these things?"

"Yes; and, moreover, Madame du Clozel has told us."

"And you tell me a poor woman, the wife of a gardener, made you these presents. Oh! I must see this Madame Carpentier. She must have known Alix. And who knows—oh, yes, yes! I must go myself and see her."

"And I must give her forewarning," I said to myself. But, alas! as I have just said, "Man proposes, God disposes." About six months after our return to St. James we heard of the death of the Countess de la Houssaye, which had occurred only two months after our leaving St. Martinville. . . .

OH, how my heart beat as I saw the lights of the ball-room and heard its waves of harmony! I had already attended several dances in the neighborhood of our home, but they could not compare with this. The walls were entirely covered with green branches mingled with flowers of all colors, especially with magnolias whose odor filled the room. Hidden among the leaves were millions¹ of fantastically colored lampions seeming like so many glow-worms. To me, poor little rustic of sixteen, it seemed supernaturally beautiful. But the prettiest part—opposite the door had been raised a platform surmounted by a dais made of three flags: the French, Spanish, and Prussian—Prussia was papa's country. And under these colors, on a pedestal that supported them, were seen, in immense letters composed of flowers, the one German word, *Bewillkommen!* Papa explained that the word meant "Welcome." On the platform, attired with inconceivable elegance, was the master of ceremonies, the handsome Neville Déclouet himself, waiting to wish us welcome anew.

It would take volumes, my daughter, to describe the admirable toilets, masculine as well as feminine, of that memorable night. The thing is impossible. But I must describe that of the king of the festival, the young Neville, that you may understand the immense difference between the toilets of 1795 and those of 1822.

Neville had arranged his hair exactly as on the day we first saw him. It was powdered white; his pigeon-wings were fastened with the same pins of gold, and his long queue was wrapped with a rose-colored ribbon. His coat was of frosted rose silk with broad facings of black velvet. His vest came down nearly to his knees. It also was of rose silk, but covered with black buttons. His breeches, also rose, were fastened at the knees with black velvet ribbons escaping from diamond buckles and falling upon silk stockings shot alternately with

¹ Number of millions not stated.—TRANSLATOR.

black and rose. Diamonds sparkled again on his lace frill, at his wrists, on his cravat of rose silk, and on the buckles of his pumps.

I cast my eye around to find Tonton, but she had not come. Some one near me said, "Do you know who will escort Madame du Rocher to the ball?" And another said, "Here is Neville, so who will replace him at the side of the pretty widow?"

As we entered the room the Baron du Clozel passed his arm under papa's and conducted him to the platform, while his sons, following, drew us forward to receive the tributes prepared for us. Neville bowed low and began his address. At first he spoke with feeling and eloquence, but by and by he lost the thread. He cast a look of despair upon the crowd, which did not conceal its disposition to laugh, turned again quickly towards us, passed his hand twice across his forehead, and finished with:

"Yes, I repeat it, we are glad to see you; you are welcome among us, and—I say to you only that!"

There was a general burst of laughter. But my father pitied the young man's embarrassment. He mounted the platform, shook his hand, and thanked him, as well as all the people of St. Martinville, for his gracious welcome and their warm hospitality. Then, to our great joy, the ball opened.

It began with a minuet danced by twelve couples at once, six on each side. The minuet in vogue just then was well danced by but few persons. It had been brought to St. Martinville by émigrés who had danced it at the French court. . . . But, thanks to the lessons given us by Alix, we had the pleasure to surprise them.

Now I ought to tell you, my daughter, that these male costumes, so effeminate, extravagant, and costly, had met great opposition from part of the people of St. Martin parish. They had been brought in by the French émigrés, and many had adopted them, while others had openly revolted against them. A league had been formed against them. Among its members were the Chevalier de Blanc, the elder of the d'Arbys, the Chevalier de la Houssaye, brother of the count, Paul Briant, Adrian Dumartrait, young Morse, and many others. They had thrown off entirely the fashionable dress and had replaced it with an attire much like what men wear now. It was rumored that the pretty Tonton favored the reform of which her brother was one of the chiefs.

Just as the minuet was being finished a loud murmur ran through the hall. All eyes were turned to the door and some couples confused their steps in the dance. Tonton had come. She was received with a cry of surprise; not

for her beauty, not for her exquisite toilet, but because of him who entered with her.

"Great God!" exclaimed Celeste du Clozel, "it is Tréville de Saint Julien!"—"Oh!" cried Madame de la Houssaye, "Tonton is a fool, an arch-fool. Does she want to see bloodshed this evening?"—"The Countess Madelaine is going to faint!" derisively whispered Olivier in my ear.

"Who," asked Suzanne, "is Tréville de Saint Julien?"

"He is 'the hermit of Bayou Tortue,'" responded the gentle Celeste de Blanc.

"What pretense of simplicity, look you!" said Charles du Clozel, glancing towards him disdainfully.

"But look at Madame du Rocher," cried a girl standing on a bench, "how she is dressed. What contempt of fashion and propriety! It is positively shameful."

And Tonton, indifferent to these remarks, which she heard and to which she was accustomed, and to the furious glances thrown upon her cavalier by Neville Déclouet, continued, with her arm in his, to chat and laugh with him as they walked slowly around the hall.

If I describe to you, my daughter, the toilets of Tonton and of Tréville de Saint Julien, I write it for you alone, dear child, and it seems to me it would be a theft against you if I did not. But this is the last time I shall stop to describe petticoats, gowns, and knee-breeches. Tréville was twenty-five; large, dark, of a manly, somber beauty. A great unhappiness had overtaken him in childhood and left a permanent trace on his forehead. He wore his hair slightly long, falling behind without queue or powder. In 1795 only soldiers retained their beard. Tréville de Saint Julien, despite the fashion, kept the fine black mustache on his proud lip. His shirt, without a frill, was fastened with three gold buttons. His broad-skirted coat, long vest, and breeches were of black woolen stuff. His black stockings were also of wool. His garters and shoes were without buckles. But serving him as a garter, and forming a rosette on the front of the leg, he wore a ribbon of plaided rose and black.

And Tonton. Over a dress—a real dress, such as we have nowadays—of rose satin, with long-pointed waist, was draped another, of black lace. The folds, running entirely around the skirt, were caught up by roses surrounded by their buds and leaves. The same drapery was repeated on the waist, and in front and on the shoulders reappeared the roses. The sleeves were very short, and the arms bare and without gloves. It was simple, but prettier than you can think. Her hair was in two wide

braids, without powder, forming a heart and falling low upon the neck. Among these tresses she had placed a rose like those on the skirt. For ornaments she had only a necklace and bracelets of jet to heighten the fresh whiteness of her complexion.

They had said Tonton would die of jealousy at our rich toilets. Nothing of the sort. She came to us with her habitual grace, kissed us, ignoring etiquette and the big eyes made by the Countess Madelaine. Without an allusion to our dress or seeming to see it, she sat down between us, told us persons' names, pointed out the beauty of this one, the pretty dress of that one, always admiring, never criticising. She knew well she was without a rival.

I amused myself watching Tréville and Neville out of the corner of my eyes. Tréville seemed to see but one woman in the room. He danced several times, always with her, and when he did not dance he went aside, spoke with no one, but followed with his glances her whom he seemed to adore. He made no attempt to hide his adoration; it shone from his eyes: his every movement was full of it. When she returned to her place, he came, remained before her chair, leaned towards her, listened with ravished ear, and rarely sat down by her side. It was good to watch Neville. His eyes flashed with anger, his fists fidgeted, and more than once I saw him quit the hall, no doubt to make a quarrel with his rival. Not once did he come near Tonton! Not once did he dance with her! But he danced with all the young girls in the room and pretended to be very gay. While I was dancing with him I said:

"How pretty Tonton is this evening!" And I understood the spite that made him reply:

"Ah! mademoiselle, her beauty is certainly not to be compared with yours."

After the supper, which was magnificent, the bolero was danced. Twelve couples were engaged, continually changing partners. Tonton danced with Tréville, Suzanne with Olivier, and I with Neville.

Alas, alas! all things earthly have an end, and at 2 in the morning the ball was over. When we reached our chamber I saw that my sister had something to tell me.

"Ah!" she said, "have patience. I will tell you after we get into bed."

[What she told was the still famous Saint Julien feud. Tréville and Neville were representatives of the two sides in that, one of the darkest vendettas known in the traditions of Louisiana. The omission of this episode in the present translation is the only liberty taken with the original that probably calls for an apology.]

CHAPTER XVI.

PICNIC AND FAREWELL.

THE day of the picnic rose brightly. Oh, what a day we passed under those grand trees, on the margin of that clear lake full of every imaginable sort of fish! What various games! What pleasant companions! All our friends were there except Tréville de Saint Julien, and Madame Tonton gave her smiles and sweet looks to Neville, who never left her a moment. Oh, how I regretted that my father was not with us! He had gone to Opelousas. He had bought several plantations in St. Martin parish, and in a region called Fausse Pointe, and in another known as the Côte Gelée.

The days that followed were equally fête days—a dinner here, a dance there, and everywhere the most gracious reception. At length came the day for us to meet at La Fontaine—a real spring near St. Martinville, belonging to Neville Déclouet's uncle. About 5 in the afternoon we gathered on the bank of the bayou. We never saw Tonton twice in the same dress. To-day she was all in blue. Suddenly the sound of distant music, and an open flat—not like our boat—approached, arched over with green branches and flowers. Benches stood about, and in the middle the orchestra played. In the prow stood the captain [Neville Déclouet], and during the moments of the journey the music was mingled with the laughter and songs of our joyous company. About 7 o'clock all the trees about La Fontaine were illuminated, and Neville led us to a floored place encircled by magnolia trees in bloom and by garlands running from tree to tree and mingling their perfume with the languishing odor of the magnolias. Only Heaven can tell how Neville was praised and thanked.

I felt sure that Tonton's good taste had directed the details. There was something singular in this young woman. Without education save what she had taught herself, Tonton spoke with remarkable correctness, and found means to amuse every one. Her letters were curious to see, not a single word correctly spelled; yet her style was charming, and I cannot express the pleasure they gave me, for during more than a year I received them by every opportunity that presented itself.

But to return to La Fontaine. About 7 the handsome Tréville de Saint Julien came on a horse as black as ebony, and I saw the color mount to Suzanne's forehead. For a wonder he paid Tonton only the attentions required by politeness, and the pretty widow, while still queen of all, belonged that evening entirely to Neville.

The following Saturday my father arrived. The next day, after mass, our friends came in

a body to say adieu. And on the morrow, amid kisses, handshaking, regrets, tears, and waving handkerchiefs, we departed in the carriage that was to bear us far and forever from Little Paris, and the friends we shall never meet again. Suzanne and I wept like children. On the fourth day after, the carriage stopped before the steps of M. Gerbeau's house. I must confess we were not over-polite to Mme. Gerbeau. We embraced her hurriedly, and, leaving my father talking about lands, started on a run for Alix's dwelling.

Oh, dear Alix! How happy she seemed to see us again! How proud to show us the innovations made in her neat little house! With what touching care had she prepared our chamber! She had wished for a sofa, and Joseph had made her one and covered it with one of the velvet robes of the Countess Aurelia de Morainville. And when we went into Alix's own room, Suzanne, whose eye nothing ever escaped, pointed out to me, half hidden behind the mosquito-net of the bed, the prettiest little cradle in the world.

"Yes," said Alix, blushing, "I am blessed. I am perfectly happy."

We told her all our adventures and pleasures. She wept when she heard that the Countess de la Houssaye had not forgotten her.

"You will see her," said Suzanne. "She will come to see you, without a doubt."

"Ah, Heaven prevent it! Our destinies are too unlike now. Me perhaps the Countess Madelaine might welcome affectionately; but Joseph? Oh, no! My husband's lot is mine; I have no wish for any other. It is better that she and I remain strangers."

And Joseph? How he confessed his joy in seeing us!

During our absence M. Gerbeau had found means for us to return to St. James. It seems that two little boats, resembling steamboats in form, kept up a constant trade in wood—clapboards, *pieux* [split boards], shingles, and even cord-wood—between the lakes and the

Bayou Teche plantation. M. Gerbeau had taken his skiff and two oarsmen and gone in search of one of these boats, which, as he guessed, was not far away. In fact he met it in Mexican [now Berwick's] Bay, and for two hundred dollars persuaded the captain to take us to St. James. "Yes," said M. Gerbeau to us, "you will make in a week a journey that might have taken you two months."

The following Monday the captain tied up at M. Gerbeau's landing. It was a droll affair, his boat. You must have seen on plantations what they call a horse-mill—a long pole on which a man sits, and to which a horse or mule is hitched. Such was the machinery by which we moved. The boat's cabin was all one room. The berths, one above another, ran all round the room, hung with long curtains, and men, women, and children—when there were any—were all obliged to stay in the same apartment.

We remained with Alix to the last moment. The morning we left she gave Suzanne a pretty ring, and me a locket containing her portrait. In return my sister placed upon her finger a ruby encircled with little diamonds; and I, taking off the gold medal I always wore on my neck, whispered:

"Wear it for love of me."

She smiled. Just as we were parting she handed me the story of her life.¹

At an early hour my father had our trunks, baskets, and mats sent aboard the *Sirène*; and after many tears, and promises to write and to return, we took our leave. We had quitted St. James the 20th of May. We landed there once more on the 26th of September. Need I recount the joy of my mother and sisters? You understand all that.

And now, my daughter, the tale is told. Read it to your children and assure them that all is true; that there is here no exaggeration; that they can put faith in their old grandmother's story and take their part in her pleasures, her friendships, and her emotions.

¹ The next to follow of these Strange True Stories.

George W. Cable.

FRUITION.

THREE blossoms in a garden grew
Each day more full of scent and hue.

Three maidens, dreaming, lingered there;
Each chose a bud for special care.

When sun and dew their work had done,
The flowers were gathered one by one

And given, from the parent stem,
Into the hands that tended them.

The first, by kisses made more sweet,
A lover bade his love repeat.

The second's blushes told to both
The blissful tale of plighted troth.

The third, the fairest of the three,
With tears was taken from the tree,

And o'er a pulseless bosom lay
On what had been a bridal day.

Kate Putnam Osgood.

STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF LOUISIANA.

THE HISTORY OF ALIX DE MORAINVILLE.

EDITED BY GEORGE W. CABLE,

Author of "The Grandissimes," "Bonaventure," etc.

*Written in Louisiana this 22d of August, 1795,
for my dear friends Suzanne and Françoise
Bossier.*



HAVE promised you the story of my life, my very dear and good friends with whom I have had so much pleasure on board the flat-boat which has brought us all to Attakapas. I now make good my promise.

And first I must speak of the place where I was born, of the beautiful Château de Morainville, built above the little village named Morainville in honor of its lords. This village, situated in Normandy on the margin of the sea, was peopled only and entirely by fishermen, who gained a livelihood openly by sardine-fishing, and secretly, it was said, by smuggling. The château was built on a cliff, which it completely occupied. This cliff was formed of several terraces that rose in a stair one above another. On the topmost one sat the château, like an eagle in its nest. It had four dentilated turrets, with great casements and immense galleries, that gave it the grandest possible aspect. On the second terrace you found yourself in the midst of delightful gardens adorned with statues and fountains after the fashion of the times. Then came the avenue, entirely overshadowed with trees as old as Noah, and everywhere on the hill, forming the background of the picture, an immense park. How my Suzanne would have loved to hunt in that beautiful park full of deer, hare, and all sorts of feathered game!

And yet no one inhabited that beautiful domain. Its lord and mistress, the Count Gaston and Countess Aurélie, my father and mother, resided in Paris, and came to their château only during the hunting season, their sojourn never exceeding six weeks.

Already they had been five years married. The countess, a lady of honor to the young dauphine, Marie Antoinette, bore the well-merited reputation of being the most charming woman at the court of the king, Louis the Fifteenth. Count and countess, wealthy as

they were and happy as they seemed to be, were not overmuch so, because of their desire for a son; for one thing, which is not seen in this country, you will not doubt, dear girls, exists in France and other countries of Europe: it is the eldest son, and never the daughter, who inherits the fortune and titles of the family. And in case there were no children, the titles and fortune of the Morainvilles would have to revert in one lump to the nephew of the count and son of his brother, to Abner de Morainville, who at that time was a mere babe of four years. This did not meet the wishes of M. and Mme. de Morainville, who wished to retain their property in their own house.

But great news comes to Morainville: the countess is with child. The steward of the château receives orders to celebrate the event with great rejoicings. In the avenue long tables are set covered with all sorts of inviting meats, the fiddlers are called, and the peasants dance, eat, and drink to the health of the future heir of the Morainvilles. A few months later my parents arrived bringing a great company with them; and there were feasts and balls and hunting-parties without end.

It was in the course of one of these hunts that my mother was thrown from her horse. She was hardly in her seventh month when I came into the world. She escaped death, but I was born as large as—a mouse! and with one shoulder much higher than the other.

I must have died had not the happy thought come to the woman-in-waiting to procure Catharine, the wife of the gardener, Guillaume Carpentier, to be my nurse; and it is to her care, to her rubbings, and above all to her good milk, that I owe the capability to amuse you, my dear girls and friends, with the account of my life—that life whose continuance I truly owe to my mother Catharine.

When my actual mother had recovered she returned to Paris; and as my nurse, who had four boys, could not follow her, it was decided that I should remain at the château and that my mother Catharine should stay there with me.

Her cottage was situated among the gardens. Her husband, father Guillaume, was the

head gardener, and his four sons were Joseph, aged six years; next Matthieu, who was four; then Jerome, two; and my foster-brother Bastien, a big lubber of three months.

My father and mother did not at all forget me. They sent me playthings of all sorts, sweetmeats, silken frocks adorned with embroideries and laces, and all sorts of presents for mother Catharine and her children. I was happy, very happy, for I was worshiped by all who surrounded me. Mother Catharine preferred me above her own children. Father Guillaume would go down upon his knees before me to get a smile [risette], and Joseph often tells me he swooned when they let him hold me in his arms. It was a happy time, I assure you; yes, very happy.

I was two years old when my parents returned, and as they had brought a great company with them the true mother instructed my nurse to take me back to her cottage and keep me there, that I might not be disturbed by noise. Mother Catharine has often said to me that my mother could not bear to look at my crippled shoulder, and that she called me a hunchback. But after all it was the truth, and my nurse-mother was wrong to lay that reproach upon my mother Aurélie.

Seven years passed. I had lived during that time the life of my foster-brothers, flitting everywhere with them over the flowery grass like the veritable lark that I was. Two or three times during that period my parents came to see me, but without company, quite alone. They brought me a lot of beautiful things; but really I was afraid of them, particularly of my mother, who was so beautiful and wore a grand air full of dignity and self-regard. She would kiss me, but in a way very different from mother Catharine's way—squarely on the forehead, a kiss that seemed made of ice.

One fine day she arrived at the cottage with a tall, slender lady who wore blue spectacles on a singularly long nose. She frightened me, especially when my mother told me that this was my governess, that I must return to the château with her and live there to learn a host of fine things of which even the names were to me unknown; for I had never seen a book except my picture books.

I uttered piercing cries; but my mother, without paying any attention to my screams, lifted me cleverly, planted two spans behind, and passed me to the hands of Mme. Levicq—that was the name of my governess. The next day my mother left me and I repeated my disturbance, crying, stamping my feet, and calling to mother Catharine and Bastien. (To tell the truth, Jerome and Matthieu were two big lubbers [rougeots], very peevish and coarse-mannered, which I could not endure.)

Madame put a book into my hands and wished to have me repeat after her; I threw the book at her head. Then, rightly enough, in despair she placed me where I could see the cottage in the midst of the garden and told me that when the lesson was ended I might go and see my mother Catharine and play with my brothers. I promptly consented, and that is how I learned to read.

This Mme. Levicq was most certainly a woman of good sense. She had a kind heart and much ability. She taught me nearly all I know—first of all, French; the harp, the guitar, drawing, embroidery; in short, I say again, all that I know.

I was fourteen years old when my mother came, and this time not alone. My cousin Abner was with her. My mother had me called into her chamber, closely examined my shoulder, loosed my hair, looked at my teeth, made me read, sing, play the harp, and when all this was ended smiled and said:

“You are beautiful, my daughter; you have profited by the training of your governess; the defect of your shoulder has not increased. I am satisfied—well satisfied; and I am going to tell you that I have brought the Viscomte Abner de Morainville because I have chosen him for your future husband. Go, join him in the avenue.”

I was a little dismayed at first, but when I had seen my intended my dismay took flight—he was such a handsome fellow, dressed with so much taste, and wore his sword with so much grace and spirit. At the end of two days he loved me to distraction and I doted on him. I brought him to my nurse's cabin and told her all our plans of marriage and all my happiness, not observing the despair of poor Joseph, who had always worshiped me and who had not doubted he would have me to love. But who would have thought it—a laboring gardener lover of his lord's daughter? Ah, I would have laughed heartily then if I had known it!

On the evening before my departure—I had to leave with my mother this time—I went to say adieu to mother Catharine. She asked me if I loved Abner.

“Oh, yes, mother!” I replied, “I love him with all my soul”; and she said she was happy to hear it. Then I directed Joseph to go and request Monsieur the curé, in my name, to give him lessons in reading and writing, in order to be able to read the letters that I should write to my nurse-mother and to answer them. This order was carried out to the letter, and six months later Joseph was the correspondent of the family and read to them my letters. That was his whole happiness.

I had been quite content to leave for Paris:

first, because Abner went with me, and then because I hoped to see a little of all those beautiful things of which he had spoken to me with so much charm; but how was I disappointed! My mother kept me but one day at her house, and did not even allow Abner to come to see me. During that day I must, she said, collect my thoughts preparatory to entering the convent. For it was actually to the convent of the Ursulines, of which my father's sister was the superior, that she conducted me next day.

Think of it, dear girls! I was fourteen, but not bigger than a lass of ten, used to the open air and to the caresses of mother Catharine and my brothers. It seemed to me as if I were a poor little bird shut in a great dark cage.

My aunt, the abbess, Agnes de Morainville, took me to her room, gave me bonbons and pictures, told me stories, kissed and caressed me, but her black gown and her bonnet appalled me, and I cried with all my might:

"I want mother Catharine! I want Joseph! I want Bastien!"

My aunt, in despair, sent for three or four little pupils to amuse me; but this was labor lost, and I continued to utter the same outcries. At last, utterly spent, I fell asleep, and my aunt bore me to my little room and put me to bed, and then slowly withdrew, leaving the door ajar.

On the second floor of the convent there were large dormitories, where some hundreds of children slept; but on the first there were a number of small chambers, the sole furniture of each being a folding bed, a washstand, and a chair, and you had to pay its weight in gold for the privilege of occupying one of these cells, in order not to be mixed with the daughters of the bourgeoisie, of lawyers and merchants. My mother, who was very proud, had exacted absolutely that they give me one of these select cells.

Hardly had my aunt left me when I awoke, and fear joined itself to grief. Fancy it! I had never lain down in a room alone, and here I awoke in a corner of a room half lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling. You can guess I began again my writhings and cries. Thereupon appeared before me in the open door the most beautiful creature imaginable. I took her for a fairy, and fell to gazing at her with my eyes full of amazement and admiration. You have seen Madelaine, and you can judge of her beauty in her early youth. It was a fabulous beauty joined to a manner fair, regal, and good.

She took me in her arms, dried my tears, and at last, at the extremity of her resources, carried me to her bed; and when I awoke the next day I found myself still in the arms

of Madelaine de Livilier. From that moment began between us that great and good friendship which was everything for me during the time that I passed in the convent. I should have died of loneliness and grief without Madelaine. I had neither brothers nor sisters; she was both these to me: she was older than I, and protected me while she loved me.

She was the niece of the rich Cardinal de Ségur, who had sent and brought her from Louisiana. This is why Madelaine had such large privileges at the convent. She told me she was engaged to the young Count Louis le Pelletier de la Houssaye, and I, with some change of color, told her of Abner.

One day Madelaine's aunt, the Countess de Ségur, came to take her to spend the day at her palace. My dear friend besought her aunt with such graciousness that she obtained permission to take me with her, and for the first time I saw the Count Louis, Madelaine's *fiancé*. He was a very handsome young man, of majestic and distinguished air. He had hair and eyes as black as ink, red lips, and a fine mustache. He wore in his buttonhole the cross of the royal order of St. Louis, and on his shoulders the epaulettes of a major. He had lately come from San Domingo, where he had been fighting the insurgents at the head of his regiment. Yes, he was a handsome young man, a bold cavalier; and Madelaine idolized him. After that day I often accompanied my friend in her visits to the home of her aunt. Count Louis was always there to wait upon his betrothed, and Abner, apprised by him, came to join us. Ah! that was a happy time, very happy.

At the end of a year my dear Madelaine quitted the convent to be married. Ah, how I wept to see her go! I loved her so! I had neither brothers nor sisters, and Madelaine was my heart's own sister. I was very young, scarcely fifteen; yet, despite my extreme youth, Madelaine desired me to be her bridesmaid, and her aunt, the Countess de Ségur, and the Baroness de Cheigné, Count Louis's aunt, went together to find my mother and ask her to permit me to fill that office. My mother made many objections, saying that I was too young; but—between you and me—she could refuse nothing to ladies of such high station. She consented, therefore, and proceeded at once to order my costume at the dressmaker's.

It was a mass of white silk and lace with intermingled pearls. For the occasion my mother lent me her pearls, which were of great magnificence. But, finest of all, the queen, Marie Antoinette, saw me at the church of Notre Dame, whither all the court had gathered for the occasion,—for Count Louis de la Houssaye was a great favorite,—and now the queen

sent one of her lords to apprise my mother that she wished to see me, and commanded that I be presented at court — *grande rumeur!*

Mamma consented to let me remain the whole week out of the convent. Every day there was a grand dinner or breakfast and every evening a dance or a grand ball. Always it was Abner who accompanied me. I wrote of all my pleasures to my mother Catharine. Joseph read my letters to her, and, as he told me in later days, they gave him mortal pain. For the presentation my mother ordered a suit all of gold and velvet. Madelaine and I were presented the same day. The Countess de Ségur was my escort [marraine] and took me by the hand, while Mme. de Cheigné rendered the same office to Madelaine. Abner told me that day I was as pretty as an angel. If I was so to him, it was because he loved me. I knew, myself, I was too small, too pale, and ever so different from Madelaine. It was she you should have seen.

I went back to the convent, and during the year that I passed there I was lonely enough to have died. It was decided that I should be married immediately on leaving the convent, and my mother ordered for me the most beautiful wedding outfit imaginable. My father bought me jewels of every sort, and Abner did not spare of beautiful presents.

I had been about fifteen days out of the convent when terrible news caused me many tears. My dear Madelaine was about to leave me forever and return to America. The reason was this: there was much disorder in the colony of Louisiana, and the king deciding to send thither a man capable of restoring order, his choice fell upon Count Louis de la Houssaye, whose noble character he had recognized. Count Louis would have refused, for he had a great liking for France; but he had lately witnessed the atrocities committed by the negroes of San Domingo, and something — a presentiment — warned him that the Revolution was near at hand. He was glad to bear his dear wife far from the scenes of horror that were approaching with rapid strides.

Madelaine undoubtedly experienced pleasure in thinking that she was again going to see her parents and her native land, but she regretted to leave France, where she had found so much amusement and where I must remain behind her without hope of our ever seeing each other again. She wept, oh, so much!

She had bidden me good-bye and we had wept long, and her last evening, the eve of the day when she was to take the diligence for Havre, where the vessel awaited them, was to be passed in family group at the residence of the Baroness de Cheigné. Here were present,

first the young couple; the Cardinal, the Count and Countess de Ségur; then Barthelemy de la Houssaye, brother of the Count, and the old Count de Maurepas, only a few months returned from exile and now at the pinnacle of royal favor. He had said when he came that he could stay but a few hours and had ordered his coach to await him below. He was the most lovable old man in the world. All at once Madelaine said:

“Ah! if I could see Alix once more — only once more!”

The old count without a word slipped away, entered his carriage, and had himself driven to the Morainville hotel, where there was that evening a grand ball. Tarrying in the ante-chamber, he had my mother called. She came with alacrity, and when she knew the object of the count's visit she sent me to get a great white burnoose, enveloped me in it, and putting my hand into the count's said to me:

“You have but to show yourself to secure the carriage.” But the count promised to bring me back himself.

Oh, how glad my dear Madelaine was to see me! With what joy she kissed me! But she has recounted this little scene to you, as you, Françoise, have told me.

A month after the departure of the De la Houssayes my wedding was celebrated at Notre Dame. It was a grand occasion. The king was present with all the court. As my husband was in the king's service, the queen wished me to become one of her ladies of honor.

Directly after my marriage I had Bastien come to me. I made him my confidential servant. He rode behind my carriage, waited upon me at table, and, in short, was my man of all work.

I was married the 16th of March, 1789, at the age of sixteen. Already the rumbling murmurs of the Revolution were making themselves heard like distant thunder. On the 13th of July the Bastille was taken and the head of the governor De Launay [was] carried through the streets.¹ My mother was frightened and proposed to leave the country. She came to find me and implored me to go with her to England, and asked Abner to accompany us. My husband refused with indignation, declaring that his place was near his king.

“And mine near my husband,” said I, throwing my arms around Abner's neck.

My father, like my husband, had refused positively to leave the king, and it was decided that mamma should go alone. She began by visiting the shops, and bought stuffs, ribbons, and laces. It was I who helped her pack

¹ Alix makes a mistake here of one day. The Bastille fell on the 14th. — TRANSLATOR.

her trunks, which she sent in advance to Morainville. She did not dare go to get her diamonds, which were locked up in the Bank of France; that would excite suspicion, and she had to content herself with such jewelry as she had at her residence. She left in a coach with my father, saying as she embraced me that her absence would be brief, for it would be easy enough to crush the vile mob. She went down to Morainville, and there, thanks to the devotion of Guillaume Carpentier and of his sons, she was carried to England in a contrabandist vessel. As she was accustomed to luxury, she put into her trunks the plate of the château and also several valuable pictures. My father had given her sixty thousand francs and charged her to be economical.

Soon I found myself in the midst of terrible scenes that I have not the courage, my dear girls, to recount. The memory of them makes me even to-day tremble and turn pale. I will only tell you that one evening a furious populace entered our palace. I saw my husband dragged far from me by those wretches, and just as two of the monsters were about to seize me Bastien took me into his arms, and holding me tightly against his bosom leaped from a window and took to flight with all his speed.

Happy for us that it was night and that the monsters were busy pillaging the house. They did not pursue us at all, and my faithful Bastien took me to the home of his cousin Claudine Leroy. She was a worker in lace, whom, with my consent, he was to have married within the next fortnight. I had lost consciousness, but Claudine and Bastien cared for me so well that they brought me back to life, and I came to myself to learn that my father and my husband had been arrested and conveyed to the Conciergerie.

My despair was great, as you may well think. Claudine arranged a bed for me in a closet [cloisette] adjoining her chamber, and there I remained hidden, dying of fear and grief, as you may well suppose.

At the end of four days I heard some one come into Claudine's room, and then a deep male voice. My heart ceased to beat and I was about to faint away, when I recognized the voice of my faithful Joseph. I opened the door and threw myself upon his breast, crying over and over:

"O Joseph! dear Joseph!"

He pressed me to his bosom, giving me every sort of endearing name, and at length revealed to me the plan he had formed, to take me at once to Morainville under the name of Claudine Leroy. He went out with Claudine to obtain a passport. Thanks to God and good

angels Claudine was small like me, had black hair and eyes like mine, and there was no trouble in arranging the passport. We took the diligence, and as I was clothed in peasant dress, a suit of Claudine's, I easily passed for her.

Joseph had the diligence stop beside the park gate, of which he had brought the key. He wished to avoid the village. We entered therefore by the park, and soon I was installed in the cottage of my adopted parents, and Joseph and his brothers said to every one that Claudine Leroy, appalled by the horrors being committed in Paris, had come for refuge to Morainville.

Then Joseph went back to Paris to try to save my father and my husband. Bastien had already got himself engaged as an assistant in the prison. But alas! all their efforts could effect nothing, and the only consolation that Joseph brought back to Morainville was that he had seen its lords on the fatal cart and had received my father's last smile. These frightful tidings failed to kill me; I lay a month between life and death, and Joseph, not to expose me to the recognition of the Morainville physician, went and brought one from Rouen. The good care of mother Catharine was the best medicine for me, and I was cured to weep over my fate and my cruel losses.

It was at this juncture that for the first time I suspected that Joseph loved me. His eyes followed me with a most touching expression; he paled and blushed when I spoke to him, and I divined the love which the poor fellow could not conceal. It gave me pain to see how he loved me, and increased my wish to join my mother in England. I knew she had need of me, and I had need of her.

Meanwhile a letter came to the address of father Guillaume. It was a contrabandist vessel that brought it and

of the first evening
other to the address
recognized the writing
set me to sobbing
all, my heart

I began
demanded of
my father of
saying that
country well

(Torn off and gone.)

56

added that Abner and I must come also, and that it was nonsense to wish to remain faithful to a lost cause. She begged my father to go and draw her diamonds from the bank and to send them to her with at least a hundred thousand francs. Oh! how I wept after seeing

letter! Mother Catharine
to console me but
then to make. Then
and said to me, Will
to make you
(*Torn off and gone.*) England, Madame
Oh! yes, Joseph
would beso well pleased
poor fellow
the money of
family. I

the ceremony, madame, I will hand you the certificate of our marriage, and you will tear it up the moment we shall have touched the soil of England. Keep it precious till then; it is your only safeguard. Nothing prevents me from going to England to find employment, and necessarily my wife will go with me. Are you ready, madame?"

For my only response I put my hand in his; I was too deeply moved to speak. Mother Catharine threw both her arms about her son's neck and cried, "My noble child!" and we issued from the cottage guarded by Guillaume and his three other sons, armed to the teeth.

When the mayor heard the names and surnames of the wedding pair he turned to Joseph, saying:

"You are not lowering yourself, my boy."

At the door of the mayoralty we found ourselves face to face with an immense crowd. I trembled violently and pressed against Joseph. He, never losing his presence of mind [*san perdre la carte*], turned, saying:

"Allow me, my friends, to present to you my wife. The Viscomtesse de Morainville no longer exists; hurrah for the Citoyenne Carpentier." And the hurrahs and cries of triumph were enough to deafen one. Those who the moment before were ready to tear me in to pieces now wanted to carry me in triumph. Arrived at the house, Joseph handed me our act of marriage.

"Keep it, madame," said he; "you can destroy it on your arrival in England."

At length one day, three weeks after our marriage, Joseph came to tell me that he had secured passage on a vessel, and that we must sail together under the name of Citoyen and Citoyenne Carpentier. I was truly sorry to leave my adopted parents and foster-brother, yet at the bottom of my heart I was rejoiced that I was going to find my mother.

But alas! when I arrived in London, at the address that she had given me, I found there only her old friend the Chevalier d'Ivoy, who told me that my mother was dead, and that what was left of her money, with her jewels and chests, was deposited in the Bank of England. I was more dead than alive; all these things paralyzed me. But my good Joseph took upon himself to do everything for me. He went and drew what had been deposited in the bank. Indeed of money there remained but twelve thousand francs; but there were plate, jewels, pictures, and many vanities in the form of gowns and every sort of attire.

Joseph rented a little house in a suburb of London, engaged an old Frenchwoman to attend me, and he, after all my husband, made himself my servant, my gardener, my factotum.

From the way in which the cabin was built, one could see any one coming who had business there. But one day—God knows how it happened—a child of the village all at once entered the chamber where I was and knew me.

"Madame Alix!" he cried, took to his heels and went down the terrace pell-mell [*quatre à quatre*] to give the alarm. Ten minutes later Matthieu came at a full run and covered with sweat, to tell us that all the village was in commotion and that those people to whom I had always been so good were about to come and arrest me, to deliver me to the executioners. I ran to Joseph, beside myself with affright.

"Save me, Joseph! save me!" I cried.

"I will use all my efforts for that, M^{me}. la Viscomtesse," he replied.

At that moment Jerome appeared. He came to say that a representative of the people was at hand and that I was lost beyond a doubt.

"Not yet," responded Joseph. "I have foreseen this and have prepared everything to save you, M^{me}. la Viscomtesse, if you will but let me make myself well understood."

"Oh, all, all! Do *thou* understand, Joseph, I will do everything thou desirest."

"Then," he said, regarding me fixedly and halting at each word—"then it is necessary that you consent to take Joseph Carpentier for your spouse."

I thought I had [been] misunderstood and drew back haughtily.

"My son!" cried mother Catharine.

"Oh, you see," replied Joseph, "my mother herself accuses me, and you—you, madame, have no greater confidence in me. But that is nothing; I must save you at any price. We will go from here together; we will descend to the village; we will present ourselves at the mayoralty—"

In spite of myself I made a gesture.

"Let me speak, madame," he said. "We have not a moment to lose. Yes, we will present ourselves at the mayoralty, and there I will espouse you, not as Claudine Leroy, but as Alix de Morainville. Once my wife you have nothing to fear. Having become one of the people, the people will protect you. After

He ate in the kitchen with the maid, waited upon me at table, and slept in the garret on a pallet.

"Am I not very wicked?" said I to myself every day, especially when I saw his pallor and profound sadness. They had taught me in the convent that the ties of marriage were a sacred thing and that one could not break them, no matter how they might have been made; and when my patrician pride revolted at the thought of this union with the son of my nurse my heart pleaded and pleaded hard the cause of poor J

Joseph. His care, his presence, became more and more

necessary. I knew not how to do anything myself, but made him my all in all, avoiding myself every shadow of care or trouble. I must say, moreover, that since he had married me I had a kind of fear of him and was afraid that I should hear him speak to me of love; but he scarcely thought of it, poor fellow: reverence closed his lips. Thus matters stood when

one evening Joseph entered the room where I was reading, and standing upright before me, his hat in his hand, said to me that he had something to tell me. His expression was so unhappy that I felt the tears mount to my eyes.

"What is it, dear Joseph?" I asked; and when he could answer nothing on account of his emotion, I rose, crying:

"More bad news? What has happened to my nurse-mother? Speak, speak, Joseph!"

"Nothing, Mme. la Viscomtesse," he replied. "My mother and Bastien, I hope, are well. It is of myself I wish to speak."

Then my heart made a sad commotion in my bosom, for I thought he was about to speak of love. But not at all. He began again, in a low voice:

"I am going to America, madame."

I sprung towards him. "You go away? You go away?" I cried. "And me, Joseph?"

"You, madame?" said he. "You have money. The Revolution will soon be over, and you can return to your country. There you will find again your friends, your titles, your fortune."

"Stop!" I cried. "What shall I be in France? You well know my château, my

palace, are pillaged and burned, my parents are dead."

"My mother and Bastien are in France," he responded.

"But thou—thou, Joseph; what can I do without thee? Why have you accustomed me to your tenderness, to your protection, and now come threatening to leave me? Hear me plainly. If you go I go with you."

He uttered a smothered cry and staggered like a drunken man.

"Alix—madame—"

"I have guessed your secret," continued I. "You seek to go because you love me—because you fear you may forget that respect which you fancy you owe me. But after all I am your wife, Joseph. I have the right to follow thee, and I am going with thee." And slowly I drew from my dressing-case the act of our marriage.

He looked at me, oh! in such a funny way, and—extended his arms. I threw myself into them, and for half an hour it was tears and kisses and words of love. For after all I loved Joseph, not as I had loved Abner, but altogether more profoundly.

The next day a Catholic priest blessed our marriage. A month later we left for Louisiana, where Joseph hoped to make a fortune for me. But alas! he was despairing of success, when he met Mr. Carlo, and—you know, dear girls, the rest.

ROLL again and slip into its ancient silken case the small, square manuscript sewed at the back with worsted of the pale tint known as "baby-blue." Blessed little word! Time justified the color. If you doubt it go to the Têche; ask any of the De la Houssayes—or count, yourself, the Carpentiers and Carpentiers. You will be more apt to quit because you are tired than because you have finished.

And while there ask, over on the Attakapas side, for any trace that any one may be able to give of Dorothea Müller. She too was from France: at least, not from Normandy or Paris, like Alix, but, like Françoise's young aunt with the white hair, a German of Alsace, from a village near Strasbourg; like her, an emigrant, and, like Françoise, a voyager with father and sister by flatboat from old New Orleans up the Mississippi, down the Atchafalaya, and into the land of Attakapas. You may ask, you may seek; but if you find the faintest trace you will have done what no one else has succeeded in doing. No, we shall never know her fate. Her sister's we can tell; and we shall now see how different from the stories of Alix and Françoise is that of poor Salome Müller, even in the same land and almost in the same times.