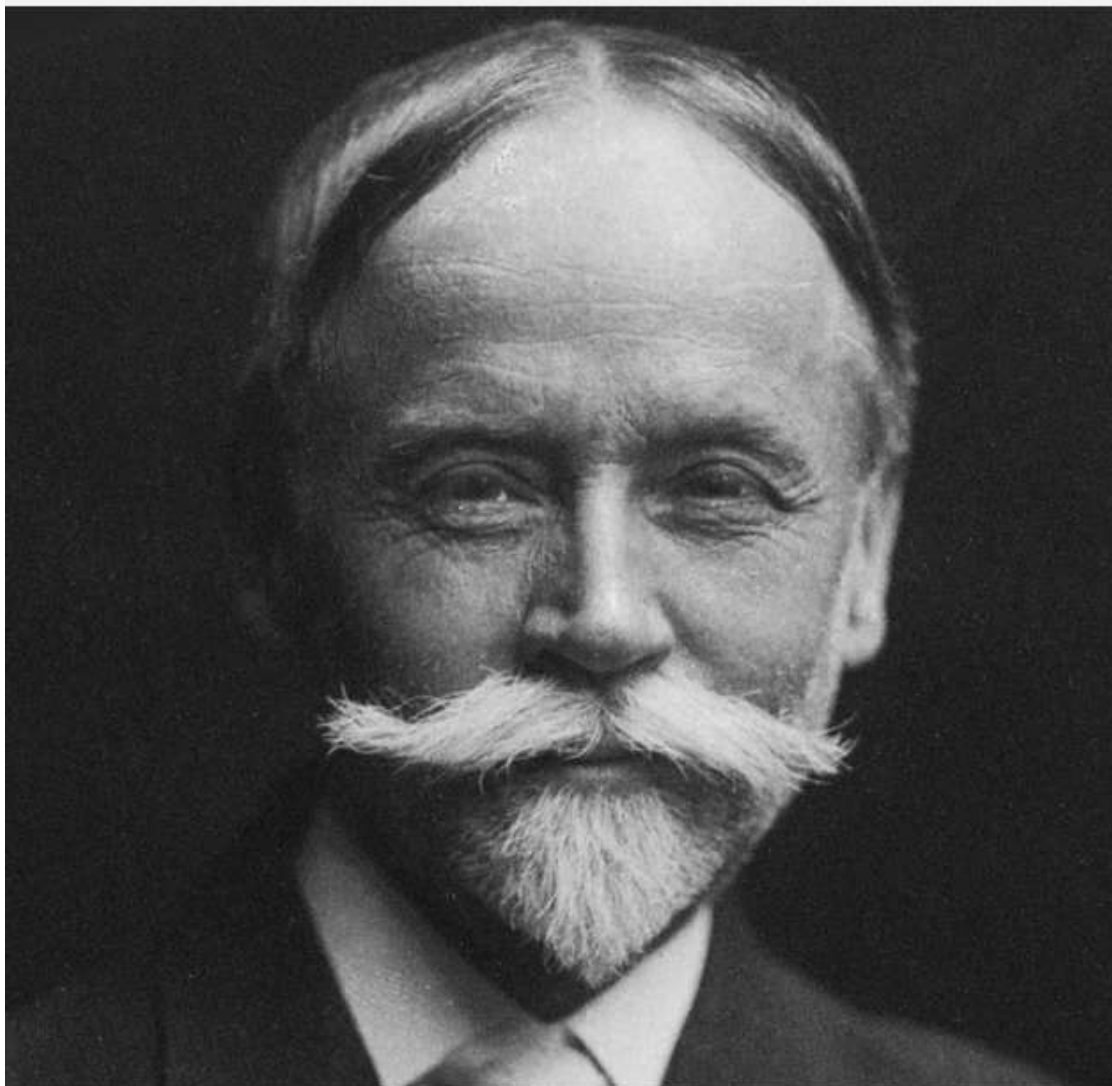




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George Washington Cable
Complete Works



Series Fourteen

The Complete Works of
GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE

(1844-1925)



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George W. Cable (1901) by E. F. Harkins

The Delphi Classics Catalogue

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. W. Cable". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a large, looping final "e".

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Version 1

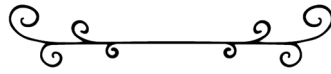
The Complete Works of
GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE



By Delphi Classics, 2024

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Complete Works of George Washington Cable



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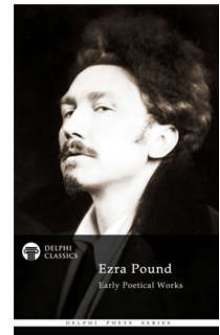
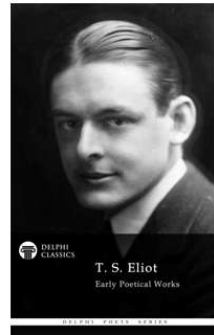
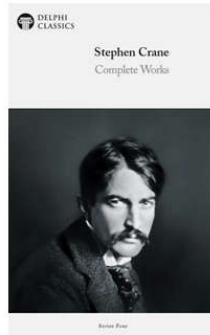
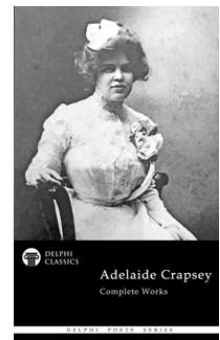
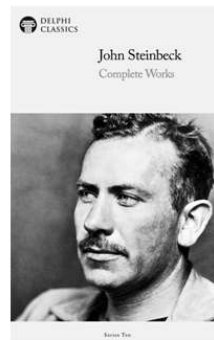
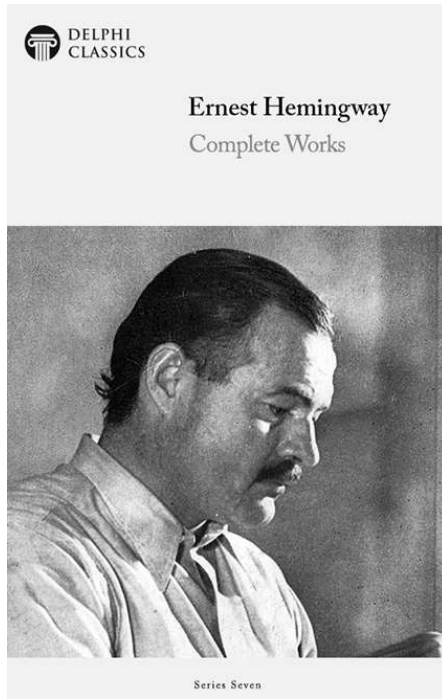
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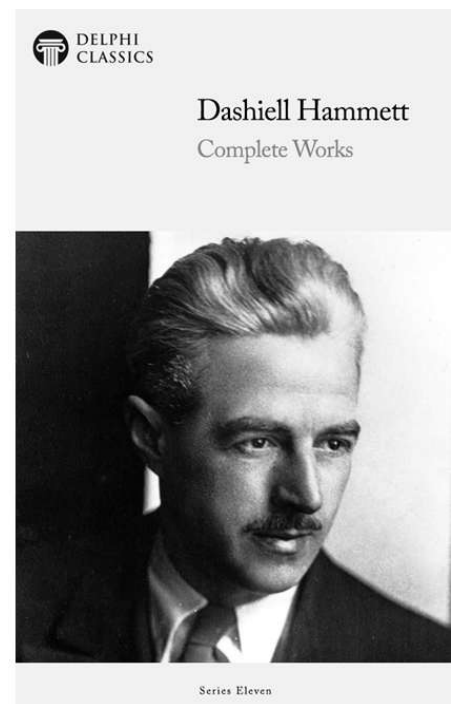
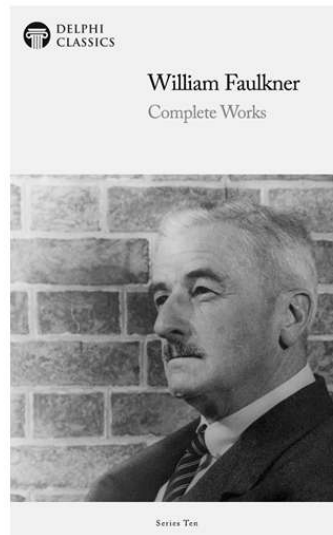
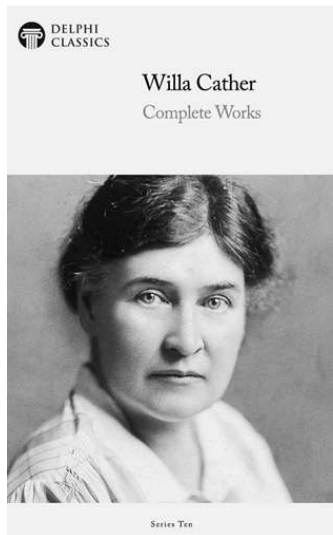
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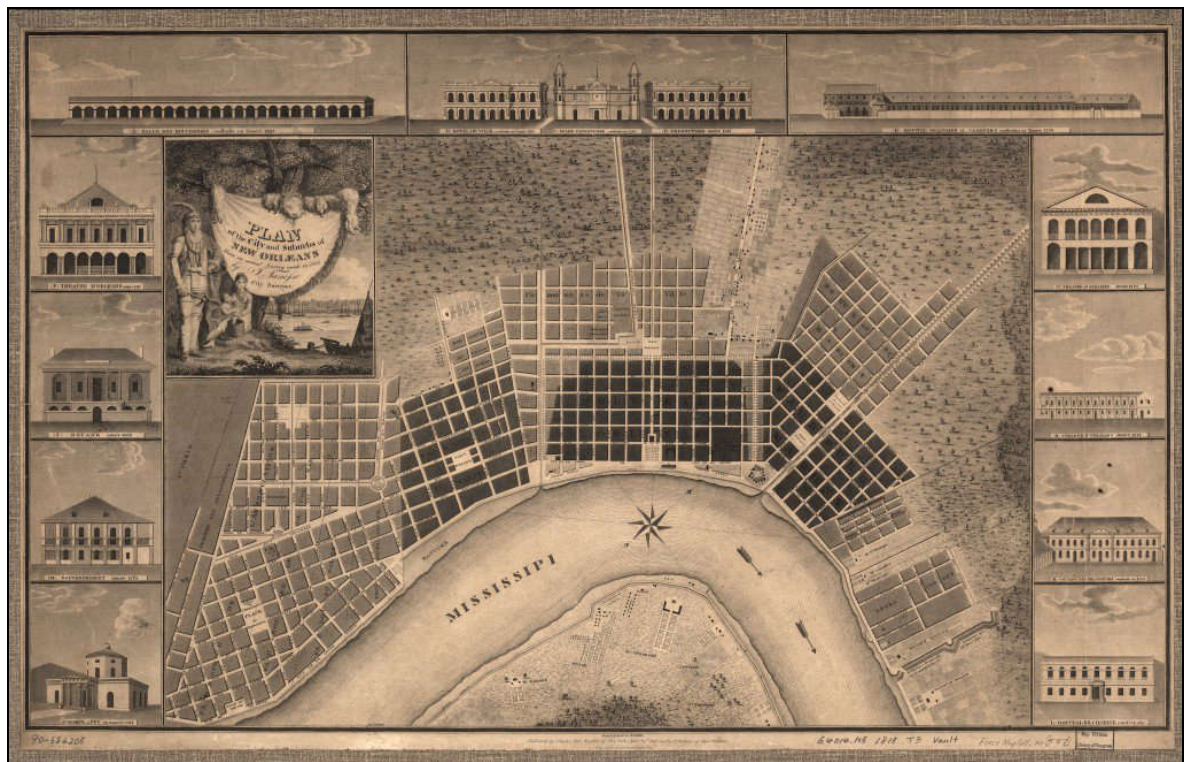
Vintage American Classics.



The Novels



Mississippi River steamboats at New Orleans, 1853 — George Washington Cable was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1844.



Plan of the city and suburbs of New Orleans, 1815

The Grandissimes (1880)



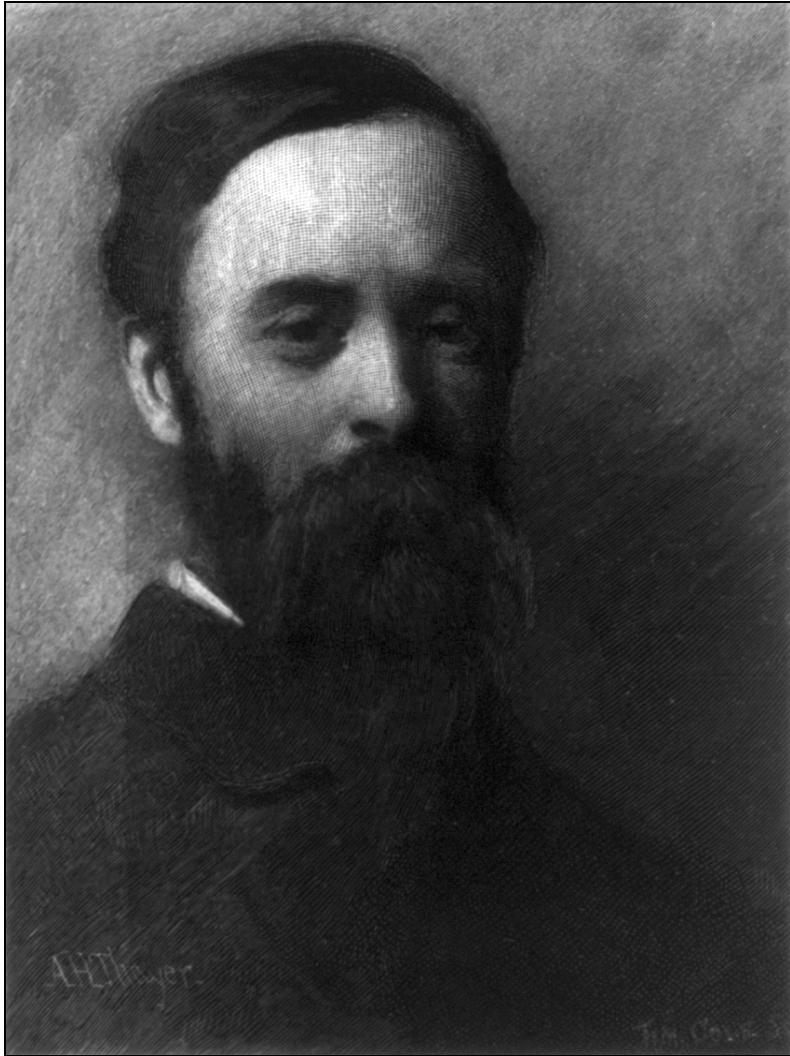
A STORY OF CREOLE LIFE

George Washington Cable was born in 1844. His parents were wealthy slaveholders, members of the Presbyterian Church and of New Orleans society, whose families had moved there after the Louisiana Purchase. First educated in private schools, Cable had to work hard after his father's early death. The family had lost investments and struggled financially. Despite this turn of events, Cable remained a lifelong learner, teaching himself French and cultivating his fascination with the intricacies of multicultural Louisiana life. Supporting the South during the American Civil War, he served in the Confederate States Army, enlisting in the 4th Mississippi Cavalry Regiment in October 1863 at the age of nineteen. Cable's experiences in the conflict altered his ideas about Southern and Louisianan society. He began writing during a two-year bout with malaria. By 1870 he was working as a journalist, writing for the *New Orleans Picayune*. He was employed by the newspaper until 1879, by which time he had become an established writer.

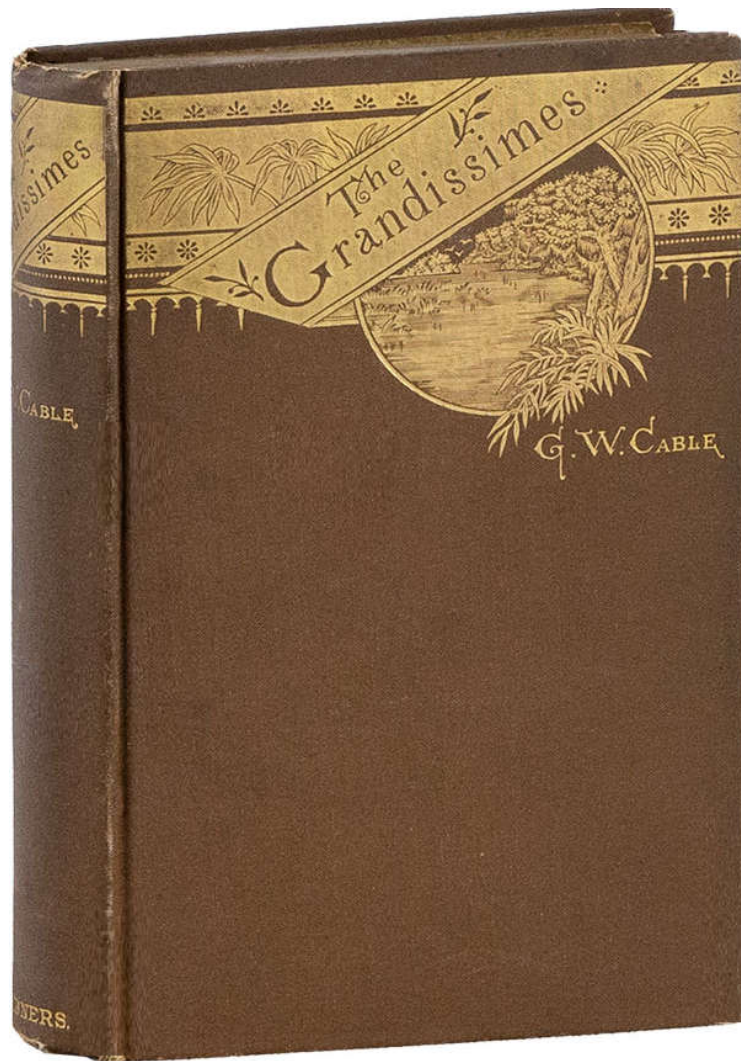
His first novel, *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life*, was published as a book in 1880 by Charles Scribner's Sons, after appearing as a serial in *Scribner's*. The historical romance depicts race and class relations in New Orleans at the start of the nineteenth century, immediately following the Louisiana Purchase. The narrative examines the lives and loves of the extended Grandissime family, which includes members from different races and classes of Creole society. It juxtaposes a romanticised version of French Creole culture with the atrocities committed under the European-American system of slavery in America.

The plot opens with Honoré Grandissime, the head of the French Creole family, taking in Joseph Frowenfeld, whose family has died of yellow fever. He describes the New Orleans caste system, comprising three racial groups, to Frowenfeld, who is an abolitionist. Frowenfeld and Grandissime's uncle Agricola Fusilier, are soon in open disagreement. Fusilier seeks to preserve the Grandissime way of life, which means continuing slavery, while Frowenfeld's desire to end the practice would destroy the labour base of the plantations, the revenues of which support city life.

The novel is noted for its descriptions of local dialects and the practice of *plaçage*, a recognised extralegal system in which ethnic European men entered into the equivalent of common-law marriages with African and mixed-race women (primarily of African and European descent). Generally, the young woman's mother would negotiate a dowry, freedom for the woman and her children if she were a slave, and possibly education for future offspring. Typically, young men would have a *plaçage* arrangement before getting formally married to a wife of European descent; others kept their mixed-race mistresses after marriage. The mixed-race children of such arrangements became the Creoles of colour, free people of colour that spoke a French-based Creole language, practiced Catholicism and established a social class between those of the ethnic Europeans and the predominantly-African slaves. Many became artisans and property owners.



Engraving of Cable as a young man, c. 1880



The first edition

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CHAPTER LX. "ALL RIGHT"
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THE GRANDISSIMES

A STORY OF CREOLE LIFE

BY

GEORGE W. CABLE

AUTHOR OF "OLD CREOLE DAYS"

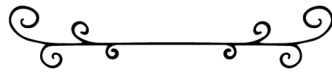
NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
743 AND 745 BROADWAY
1880

The first edition's title page



The original frontispiece: "They paused a little within the obscurity of the corridor, and just to reassure themselves that everything was 'all right'".

CHAPTER I. MASKED BATTERIES



IT WAS IN the Théâtre St. Philippe (they had laid a temporary floor over the parquette seats) in the city we now call New Orleans, in the month of September, and in the year 1803. Under the twinkle of numberless candles, and in a perfumed air thrilled with the wailing ecstasy of violins, the little Creole capital's proudest and best were offering up the first cool night of the languidly departing summer to the divine Terpsichore. For summer there, bear in mind, is a loitering gossip, that only begins to talk of leaving when September rises to go. It was like hustling her out, it is true, to give a select *bal masqué* at such a very early — such an amusingly early date; but it was fitting that something should be done for the sick and the destitute; and why not this? Everybody knows the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

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

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

“*Comment to yé, Citoyen Agricola!*”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wherever those four maskers went there were cries of delight: “Ho, ho, ho! see there! here! there! a group of first colonists! One of Iberville's Dragoons! don't you

remember great-great grandfather Fusilier's portrait — the gilded casque and heron plumes? And that one behind in the fawn-skin leggings and shirt of birds' skins is an Indian Queen. As sure as sure can be, they are intended for Epaminondas and his wife, Lufki-Humma!" All, of course, in Louisiana French.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Behind them sat unmasked a well-aged pair, “*bredouillé*,” as they used to say of the wall-flowers, with that look of blissful repose which marks the married and established Creole. The lady in monk’s attire turned about in her chair and leaned back to laugh with these. The passing maskers looked that way, with a certain instinct that there was beauty under those two costumes. As they did so, they saw the *Fille à la Casette* join in this over-shoulder conversation. A moment later, they saw the old gentleman protector and the *Fille à la Casette* rising to the dance. And when presently the distant passers took a final backward glance, that same Lieutenant of Dragoons had returned and he and the little Monk were once more upon the floor, waiting for the music.

“But your late companion?” said the voice in the cowl.

“My Indian Queen?” asked the Creole Epaminondas.

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

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

“Do dragoons ever moralize?” she asked.

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

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

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

“Then lead us to the altar,” said the Dragoon.

“Pardon, sir,” she retorted, her words entangled with a musical, open-hearted laugh, “I am not going in that direction.” She cast her glance around the ball-room. “As you say, it is the twilight of the ball; I am looking for the evening star, — that is, my little Huguenotte.”

“Then you are well mated.”

“How?”

“For you are Aurora.”

The lady gave a displeased start.

“Sir!”

“Pardon,” said the Cavalier, “if by accident I have hit upon your real name—”

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

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

She turned to her protectress.

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

The senior lady replied in amiable speech, but with sleepy eyes, and the Monk began to lift and unfold a wrapping. As the Cavalier’ drew it into his own possession,

and, agreeably to his gesture, the Monk and he sat down side by side, he said, in a low tone:

“One more laugh before we part.”

“A monk cannot laugh for nothing.”

“I will pay for it.”

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

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

“Ah! we will unmask? — no! I have no cousins. I am certain we are strangers.”

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

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

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

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

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

“A bargain!”

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

“Good! That was the laugh; now the unmasking.”

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



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

“Not later. It shall be done without fail.”

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

This delightful nonsense was interrupted by the return of the *Fille à la Casette* and her aged, but sprightly, escort, from a circuit of the floor. Madame again opened her eyes, and the four prepared to depart. The Dragoon helped the Monk to fortify herself against the outer air. She was ready before the others. There was a pause, a low laugh, a whispered “Now!” She looked upon an unmasked, noble countenance, lifted her own mask a little, and then a little more; and then shut it quickly down again upon a face whose beauty was more than even those fascinating graces had promised which Honoré Grandissime had fitly named the Morning; but it was a face he had never seen before.

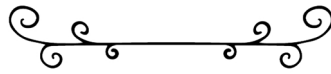
“Hush!” she said, “the enemies of religion are watching us; the Huguenotte saw me. Adieu” — and they were gone.

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

“Now, sir,” thought he to himself, “we’ll return to our senses.”

“Now I’ll put my feathers on again,” says the plucked bird.

CHAPTER II. THE FATE OF THE IMMIGRANT



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After that day and night, the prospect grew less repellent. A gradually matured conviction that New Orleans would not be found standing on stilts in the quagmire enabled the eye to become educated to a better appreciation of the solemn landscape. Nor was the landscape always solemn. There were long openings, now and then, to right and left, of emerald-green savannah, with the dazzling blue of the Gulf far beyond, waving a thousand white-handed good-byes as the funereal swamps slowly shut out again the horizon. How sweet the soft breezes off the moist prairies! How weird, how very near, the crimson and green and black and yellow sunsets! How

dream-like the land and the great, whispering river! The profound stillness and breath reminded the old German, so he said, of that early time when the evenings and mornings were the first days of the half-built world. The barking of a dog in Fort Plaquemines seemed to come before its turn in the panorama of creation — before the earth was ready for the dog's master.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And now,” said the “captain,” bidding the immigrants good-by, “keep out of the sun and stay in after dark; you’re not ‘acclimated,’ as they call it, you know, and the city is full of the fever.”

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

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

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

“Keep the bedclothes on him and the room shut tight, keep the bedclothes on him and the room shut tight,” — “An’ don’ give ’im some watta, an’ don’ give ’im some watta.”

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

“Sister!”

No answer.

“Where is my mother?”

The negress shook her head.

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

“Li pa’ oulé vini ‘ci — li pas capabe.”

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

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

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

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

The polite neighbors who lifted their cocked hats to Joseph, as he spent a slow convalescence just within his open door, were not bound to know how or when he might have suffered. There were no “Howards” or “Y.M.C.A.’s” in those days; no “Peabody Reliefs.” Even had the neighbors chosen to take cognizance of those bereavements, they were not so unusual as to fix upon him any extraordinary interests an object of sight; and he was beginning most distressfully to realize that “great solitude” which the philosopher attributes to towns, when matters took a decided turn.

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