

White Hand

A Tale of the Early Settlers of Louisiana.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

For some moments after this recital, not a word was spoken, and the only sounds that broke the stillness were the sobs of the marquis.

"Shall such a foul mockery stand?" at length said St. Denis, in agony. "Let it be torn in sunder and cast aside. By no law of justice or right can—"

"Hold!" interrupted Lobois, who had now nerved himself up to the conflict. "You but make a useless disturbance when you thus give thought to the idea of annulling the bond of marriage between my wife and myself. Ere I took the final step I consulted with the governor, and he bade me go on, and I have his pledge of sustaining me. You have heard my wife's story. That I used stratagem to gain her hand, I admit, for I saw an interloper was about to snatch the prize from me. And now you know all. Henceforth I trust nothing may occur to mar the harmony of our social intercourse."

Turning to St. Denis, he added, a triumphant look settling on his sharp features: "And as for you, sir, I trust you will see the necessity of removing yourself from the society of those who can only be made unhappy by your presence. If you have the common sense to suppose you have, you will see the necessity of this; and if you have the feelings of a gentleman, you will not hesitate."

Goupart raised his clasped hands towards heaven, exclaiming:

"Has it come to this? Must all my hopes thus fall back upon my broken heart, and the sweet dream of years end in black despair? Louise, beloved of my soul, lost, but still cherished one—"

His words failed him, and he bowed his head in a passionate burst of tears. In a moment more he heard a low cry of hopeful tone, and a pair of arms were twined about his neck. He looked up, but it was not Louise. It was the flowing eyes of White Hand that met his own, and darkly stained arms were entwined about his neck. A voice of thanksgiving next fell on his ear, and he saw the Indian girl on her knees, with her hands clasped, her streaming eyes raised heavenward, and giving thanks to the Great Spirit. St. Denis started as he gazed into the deep blue eyes fastened on him. A moment more, he heard his name pronounced in a tone sweet and familiar, that made his heart bound wildly in his bosom.

"This scene has progressed far enough," now spoke the one Simon believed to be his wife. "Simon Lobois, your wickedness has come to a climax, and back upon your own head shall fall the terrible consequences of your machinations!"

"Ha—ha, Louise, you have gone too far now!" Lobois uttered, confidently. "If you imagined your marriage was but a jest, you were mistaken. You'll find the knot too strongly tied to be cast off at will."

"Poor fool! Cannot you open your eyes? Simon Lobois, did you think Louise St. Denis would have married you while life remained? Did you think she would have stooped to mate with you when the grave was open to her?"

"A—and—are you not married to me? Are you not my wife?"

"I think you'd find me a hard one to manage; for at this very moment, were you not beneath my notice, I would challenge you to mortal combat, and I'd serve you worse than Goupart did. Look, Simon! Don't you see that Indian youth resting in Goupart's arms? How I have longed for this moment! Up—up, my father! Thy children are safe, and if they have returned to thee in exchanged guises, be assured they live in the same way!"

"How?" gasped Simon, starting back and turning pale. "You—you—"

"Why, I am your wife, Simon, if you say so; but if you keep me, you shall fight a duel with me every morning, and we'll alternate till one of us falls; first morning, pistols—next morning, swords. You have seen me shoot some."

At this juncture the truth had forced itself to the old marquis' mind.

"It must be!" he whispered, seizing his noble son by the hand. "It must be my own noble Louis! Assure me I do not dream."

"You do not, father, for I am your own Louis. But see—here comes Louise. Don't cast her off because her skin is dusky!"

"Is it possible?" gasped Lobois, as he saw Louise sink on her father's bosom. "There's been some foul witchery here—some deep, infernal machination! Louise!—Louise! The son is the daughter, and the daughter is the son! There's a foul plot here!"

"Ay!" cried Louis, tearing the rich gown he wore from his body, and revealing the light dress of a French officer. "There has been a foul plot, and you can well explain it!"

"Me—explain?" stammered the villain, gazing first at the youth and then at the maiden, who yet wore her Indian dress. "Who are you?" he gasped, starting towards the seeming Indian, and seizing the dusky arm. "Speak! Who are you?"

"I am one whom you once sought for a wife!"

"Louise St. Julien?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Daped—befooled! But—there's a plot!"

A few moments more he gazed upon the two metamorphosed ones, and then, utterly powerless from mad delirium, he sank down.

But Simon Lobois was not the only one in the dark. The old man and St. Denis were lost in amazement. The latter had clasped his own loved one to his bosom, and she had whispered into his ear the sweet promise of love once more, yet he could not understand it.

"I see you are all astonished," said Louis, "and I will tell you what I know of this funny affair. So sit down and listen; sit down—all of you."

And down they sat, Coqualla keeping close by her companion's side, and seeming as happy as the rest of the happy ones.

"Now listen," commenced Louis. "You

remember on that night when we played 'hide and find me' in the yard, Louise and I went off into the house before we hid. We had planned to have some sport with Goupart. Louise and I never realized how much we resembled each other until we exchanged garbs. When I saw her in my clothes, she looked just like my own self in a mirror; and when I had put on her dress, which had to be let out but very little, she assured me I was her counterpart, and when I looked in the mirror, I could have sworn she stood before me. We had reached the corner of the barn, and I was showing Louise where to hide, intending then to have gone myself to the stable, when a party of Indians rushed and seized upon us, and having gagged us, hurried through the postern. Away they took us, and all night they kept on through the deep forest. One of them spoke to me in the Chickasaw tongue, and I was upon the point of answering him, when the thought struck me that he only wished to try if I knew the language; so I pretended to know nothing of it. You know I learned a great deal of it from old Oakwood. After I had listened to their conversation, and I found that I—the girl—was to be carried to New Orleans, while the boy was to be taken up to the Natchez. Of course, I then knew that Simon Lobois had a hand in this, for he had gone to New Orleans, where he meant to have Louise taken, and there force her to marry him, while I was carried off another way, perhaps to be killed—and thus he would have all our father's wealth. Before morning, we came to the place where we were to separate. I did once feel like giving battle to the whole pack; but I was wholly unarmed, and the thought was dropped. I begged to be allowed to speak a few parting words with my companion, and they granted my request. I told Louise what I had heard. 'Now,' said I, 'they don't mistrust the change we've made. I will let them still think I am the girl, and thus you will be free of Simon; while, if you go to the Natchez, still retaining your male disguise, you can at any moment save yourself from death by revealing yourself.' At all events, we both concluded that it would be best for each of us to continue the deception, and we did so. And now for Louise's story."

Thus called upon, Louise commenced. She told how she was taken to the village of the White Apple by Stung Serpent; how they meant to kill her, and for what strange purpose; how Coqualla interceded for her, and how it was arranged that she should marry the princess.

"Here I was puzzled," said Louise; "but I determined to throw myself upon Coqualla's friendship. I told her the secret of my sex, and asked her to save me. She threw her arms about my neck and promised to keep my secret, and be to me a sister, while she passed for my wife. So my secret was safe. Only she told her father when he was on his deathbed, and thus he was led to absolve me from my promise to remain with them."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Louise went on and told her startling story, and as she did so, more than one bright look of holy gratitude was cast upon the beautiful Coqualla.

"And now," said she, in conclusion, "I am able to give you some clue to the great mystery which underlies the whole. When Stung Serpent was upon his deathbed, he sent for me, and he told me all, and he gave me this paper in token of his truth. Read it, father, and know what a villain you have kept beneath your room."

As Louise handed her father the paper, Simon Lobois started to his feet.

"Back!" shouted Louis, springing forward and pushing him back into his chair. "Tony, watch this man, and see that he does not leave the room."

Old Tony, who had stood by and heard all, now moved to Simon's side, and as the villain gazed upon the huge bulk of the negro, he uttered a stifled groan, and settled back.

The marquis read the paper aloud. It was as follows:

"This is my bond, that I will pay to Stung Serpent one hundred large pieces of gold, in French coin, when he shall have removed Louis and Louise St. Julien from their home. And he, on his part, promises that said Louis shall be killed, and that Louise shall be sent safely to the middle trail on Lake Pontchartrain."

SIMON LOBOIS.

That was enough. Simon denied it all, then swore, then drew his sword, and then—Tony knocked him down; and ere long afterwards he was taken from the room.

Before noon, Louise had contrived, with Coqualla's assistance, to remove the last stain from her skin, and when she stood, all white and pure, she saw a tear on Coqualla's dark cheek.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Nothing," was the reply.

"Ah, tell me the truth. Coqualla will not deceive her sister."

"No—no," murmured the noble girl, throwing her arms about Louise's neck, and pillowing her head upon her bosom. "But you will forgive me. Coqualla has left her people forever, but she has not left her skin."

"But tell me all, my sister."

"Coqualla loved the White Hand, and she was only a sister. Now Coqualla has seen another with the same beautiful face. But she does not murmur. She is content; only—"

"Go on, my sister. Tell me all."

"If Coqualla was white, she could love; O, my sister does not know how she could have been loved had she not been Coqualla's sister!"

Louise had read the girl's secret, and as she gazed into those soft, mild features, she uttered, with all the truth of her soul:

"Coqualla does not need a whiter skin. She is beautiful enough. I know Coqualla's heart, and her face is as pure as that."

The maiden princess blessed her sister, and wiped away her tears, for she heard some one coming.

On the next morning the room where Simon Lobois had been put was found empty, and the slave Peter was also found to be missing; but no search was made for them, for the one was worthless and the other carried guilt enough to punish him with its shame and burden.

And now joy was once more in St. Julien's household. Goupart and Louise wandered about together, and for a while Louis was left alone, for the only other young person with whom he could associate seemed to shun him. One day Louise drew her brother one side, and whispered with him, for she had that

morning found Coqualla's tears, and the poor princess had murmured the thought of going back to the homes of her fathers to lie down by their graves. But what Louise said to her brother, may not be known—only, an hour later, Louis and Coqualla walked away down in the garden.

At length the old cure, Father Laugnet, made his visit to the chateau, and there was work for him to do. Goupart and Louise were made one for life, and this time the blushing girl was fastened.

But the work ended not here. Louis St. Julien had spent many hours with Coqualla, for he had become her teacher, and he had opened to her mind the riches of the Great Book. And while she had studied that, he had studied her. At first he was surprised at the wondrous depth of her mind, but he was no less awed by its sublime purity and grandeur of conception. And thus he probed her heart to its inmost depths, and he found it as noble and pure as it was generous and loving. Ere he knew it, he had loved her, and almost unconsciously the story of his love dropped from his lips.

"Coqualla," he whispered, "thou didst love my sister for her face. Mine is like it. Love me, then, and be mine for life. I love thee, for thou art all love and purity to me."

And Coqualla placed one of her soft hands in his, and then rested her head upon his bosom, and as her dark tresses fell over his shoulders, hiding her face and the tears that shone there, she answered him:

"Coqualla can give thee all her heart, and be to thee a slave for life. But if you make her your wife, O be sure you will never regret it; for Coqualla's heart would break if you loved her no more!"

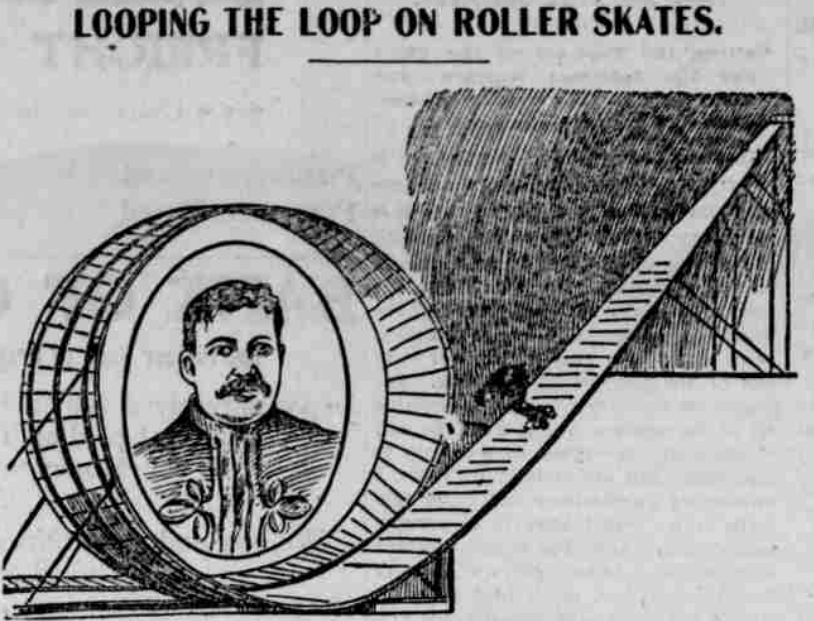
For a long time the panic caused by the fearful plot of the Indians lasted among the colonists, but they gradually waded out of the danger, though their way was through much blood. The Natchez had sealed their own doom, and a few short years sufficed to sweep them from the list of Indian tribes, and the once powerful nation was known no more on earth but in name and the history of the past. Simon Lobois joined the French force, having received a lieutenant's commission from Perier, and he fell at the siege of one of the Natchez forts. So a Natchez bullet found the life of him who had thought to barter away the life of another through the hands of the Natchez.

Troubles came now thick and fast upon the hardy settlers, and once the marquis told his children that if they wished, he would sell out and return to France. But they did not wish it. St. Denis was happy enough where he was, for Louise was a sufficient shield against every ill from within, and his own bravery and fortitude swept away all other fear. And Louis found himself in possession of a treasure the intrinsic merits of which were every day developing themselves to his understanding; and after a few short months of wedded life, all doubts vanished from Coqualla's mind, for she was assured that a love like her husband's could never grow cold while she remained true and faithful.

"No," said St. Denis, "now surrounded by dangers and gloom, I can see the germ of a nation. A soil so productive, with resources and natural advantages so mighty, must one day be reclaimed to civilization of the highest order. There is no reason why this great valley of the Father of Waters should not, at no very distant time, become literally the Garden of the World. And," he added, while his dark eye burned, and his bosom swelled with deep emotion, "may not those who have already subdued the wilderness in the East, at some time meet us of the West, and, as one family in the New World, bidding adieu to the thrones of the Old, raise the standard of a united nation, with a government commensurate with the grandeur of the result, and with a perpetuity of purpose worthy the memory of those noble pioneers who first grappled the dark terrors of the wilderness, and opened the way to the architects of a new and more glorious realm?"

(The End.)

LOOPING THE LOOP ON ROLLER SKATES.



Here are pictures of Frank J. Davis, of Indianapolis, the roller skate loop-the-loopist. The skates that Davis wears are tremendous affairs, made almost entirely of steel and weighing twenty-five pounds each. They are as strong as the mechanic's art can make them, and when they are screwed and buckled and strapped to Davis' feet and legs, the daring fellow presents a formidable appearance.

Davis gives some interesting facts concerning the little trick that he seems to have a monopoly on. When asked how he guided himself in his dizzy whirl, he replied:

"There is no guiding to be done. Once started, I could shut my eyes and get along just as well. I have a starting box, so that I will start from precisely the same position every time. This position has been mathematically shown to be the correct position. The loop is so built that, given the necessary speed, I will have to go around, when once started. This is accomplished by a peculiar twist to the loop that keeps me in the right position."

"I travel at my greatest speed just as I strike the loop. What this speed is I have no way of determining. It is terrific enough, however, to make me feel that my whole body, blood, bones and all, is being jammed down into my feet. I think, perhaps, I travel at a greater speed than is necessary, but too much speed will do no harm, while too little speed would be fatal."

"How did I do at the start? Well, for a long time I practiced with a swing. I did not try to circle the loop the first few times. I kept going a little farther every time, and when I convinced myself that the trick could be done I cut loose from the swing, took a bracer, and said: 'Here goes.' I got around all right. I wasn't surprised, but I tell you I was gratified."

Davis says that the time required in making the loop varies. He does not know the explanation of this, unless it be due to atmospheric conditions. The principal feature of Davis' skates that he has patented is the upright handles, that come about to his knees. He says it would be impossible to perform the feat without these handles to hold to. Davis says that he does not travel fast on the run-off, as his speed has nearly spent itself by the time the top of the loop is reached. A man can easily catch him as he comes from the loop, he says.

THE RAG-PICKER MAYOR.

A Case of Inflation Which Had Its Counterparts in Our Day.

Congressman Jenkins of Wisconsin was talking the other day about the vanity that inflates some men when they achieve success in life.

"In my boyhood," he said, "I remember how a man from my town was elected to a minor political office, and got so puffed up about it that he would hardly speak to any one on the street. One day a blacksmith who had electioneered for this man entered his office and extended his hand. But the other failed to see the hand, and said: 'I don't remember you, sir.'"

"The blacksmith looked around. A half-dozen men were present, and to these he addressed himself.

"Gentlemen," he said, "this reminds me of the mayor that they elected once in my wife's town. They elected, more for a joke than anything else, an old ragpicker to the mayoralty. They made him buy a frock coat and a white tie and a plug hat, and they persuaded him to ride around in a fall-top buggy. It was a change to tell you. Well, his wife met him at the house door on his first day in office, and he passed her by without looking at her. He was grand, you see, in his plug hat and white tie, but she only had on her working clothes and her sleeves were rolled up. 'Why, James,' she says, 'nearly crying, 'why, don't you know me, James?' 'How can I know you, Mary,' says he. 'How can I know you when I don't know myself now?'"

"There are other men besides that ragpicker mayor," the blacksmith ended, "who don't know themselves." And he grinned at his embarrassed audience and walked out."

WHERE CHARITY DWELLS.

An Instance of Pathos and Tender Sympathy in New York's East Side.

Nowhere in the city are there scenes of deeper pathos and more tender sympathy than in some of the little known by-ways that twist and twine in the heart of the East Side, says a New York paper. The hardly earned penny dropped into the cracked plate set on a broken chair to help the homeless and evicted will surely not be forgotten by Him who spake of the widow's mite; the tiny bunch of half-faded posies only obtained after a long trudge that sick Ivan or crippled Hulda may be happier and a score of other kindly deeds only known to such as enjoy the luxury of giving of their poverty, are of daily occurrence; but Isaac and Rebecca do not always get credit for their share of such deeds of kindness as they deserve.

One of these happened a short time ago. A Jewish family, miserably poor, even for Slav newcomers, but rigidly orthodox, wished to have their little son observe the rite of the Law-Birth Meliah, and looking for a rabbi to perform the rite with that natural intuition which makes man look to him who by experience knows the trials of the poor, found one known far and wide as a profound scholar, yet as abjectly poor as his neighbors. Him they asked, and without further ado he came.

When the ceremony was over, the parents told the rabbi they could not give him anything, but a plate had been placed on the table and that whatever the neighbors put therein was for him. The collection amounted to \$2.50 within a few cents. What that meant to the rabbi no one knows, save such as have looked into the

eyes of starvation and faced the weary day, foodless and hopeless. The good man gathered up the coins, each one a deed of self-sacrifice to the giver, looked around the poor home, with its scanty furniture, gazed at the weary faces gathered about him, paused, and then going to the mother, placed it all in her hands, saying: "Daughter, you need it more than I do." Without another word he went forth to his own foodless and desolate home, where he and his wife implored the God of their fathers to help them to earn the longed-for food, the sadly needed next meal.

SENATOR VEST'S BITING WIT.

How He Effectively Squeezed an Offensive Editor in Missouri.

A Missouri paper revives an anecdote illustrating Senator Vest's readiness of wit and sarcasm. On one occasion, twenty-six years ago, the doughty little Senator used this gift with crushing effect on a man who interrupted him while he was making a speech in the Johnson County Court House, at Warrensburg, the home of his colleague, Senator Cockrell. The room was packed. Vest was speaking in a particularly happy vein, when a Warrensburg editor who did not like him arose and asked him a question. It was courteously answered, and the editor followed it up with another and another. To the surprise of most of his hearers, Senator Vest kept his temper, and continued to reply courteously. Finally the editor asked a long and very involved question. The Senator listened to it with the same attention as he had to those that preceded it, but just as he seemed ready to reply, and while the audience was perfectly quiet, awaiting Vest's answer, a little, bench-legged cur came jumping up the aisle and immediately in front of the Judge's stand, in which Vest was standing, barking furiously at him. As quick as a flash Vest turned and, pointing his finger at the dog, said: "One at a time, sir; you are out of your turn. Wait till I get through with the other one, then I'll reply to you."

Hit It Exactly.

There was a great discussion in progress among the members of the faculty of a Western college. They wrangled long and raised their voices to too high a pitch, each eager to have the measure in question embody his particular variation of the idea.

Finally a professor of large mind and calm voice, who had been silent, rose and made a tactful, conciliatory speech. "As the effect of his words began to show in a peaceful quiet that settled over the fidgeting members, another professor, who also took things calmly, turned to his neighbor and whispered the line from Kipling:

The oil-can soothes the worrying cranks.

When the speaker had finished, the more aggressive members took up the discussion again. Presently the professor who had Kipling in mind leaned over once more and quoted the line from "McAndrew's Hymn":

And now the main eccentrics start their quarrel.

Doesn't it occur to you sometimes that "talk about you starts mighty easy, and that others can do as they please without attracting comment?"

There is such a thing as being too good for one's own good in this imperfect world.

Summing Up.

Patience—Yes, Bob Brief, the able counselor, proposed to me last night in true legal style.

Patrice—That smacking noise we heard later?

"Oh, he was just summing up,"—Yonkers Statesman.

At the Occultist's.

"Can I see Dr. Spinks, the occultist?"

"I'm sure I don't know. If you can, you have no need of his services and he won't care to see you. If you can't, why, step right in."—Chicago News.

Very Convenient.

Little Willie was playing with the kitten when he discovered her claws for the first time. Turning to his mother, he exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, hasn't kittle got a handy pincushion?"—Little Chronicle.

Secret of Happiness.

"It is always good to obtain what one desires," said the philosopher, "but it is better to desire only what one can obtain."

About the Size of It.

She—I have noticed that the man who whistles seldom swears.

He—That's right. It is the people who are compelled to listen to him that do the swearing.

Willing to Try.

"For the first year of our married life, dear," said the young man who was poor, but had prospects, "we shall have to live principally on love."

"Well, people can live on spoon victuals, can't they, George?" she said, snuggling closer to him.

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