

White Hand

A Tale of the Early Settlers of Louisiana.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

"Why, really, gentlemen," said Simon, after he had picked the paper up, "one would think there was something surprising in a simple marriage. And you, sir," he added, turning to the marquis, "I should not suppose that you would wonder at this, especially seeing that you yourself gave me permission to seek Louise for my wife."

"I did not!" groaned the old man. "O, I never gave it!"

"You told me distinctly, that I might ask Louise for her hand, and that if she consented you should bid her follow her own choice."

"But that was after you had fairly hunted me down with questions—after I had refused to listen to you on the subject. But my child never freely gave her consent to this. She could not have done so. O, Simon, you have forced her to this! You have— But the poor man's emotions were too powerful, and his speech failed him. A moment more he gazed into the villain's dark features, and then he bowed his head and burst into tears. He sobbed as though his noble heart would break.

"Ha, ha, ha! you didn't want me for a son-in-law, then," the scoundrel uttered, in a coarse tone. "For," he added, turning a defiant look upon Goupert, "you meant, no doubt, to have had a more beautiful husband for her."

"You will be careful how you use your tongue in my presence," spoke Goupert, in a hushed tone, the very breathing of which told that there was a smothering volcano near at hand.

"Ho—ho, monsieur!" the fellow replied; "you hoped to stick your fingers into the old man's gold pots, eh? I understand the reason of your coming here very well. But rest assured you won't handle the money through the daughter's pockets."

"Hush, Simon Lobo! I am moved now more deeply than I can bear, so be careful that you move me no more. It is enough that you have crushed this old man's heart, and overturned his life cup."

"Ho—ho! thou art wondrous sensitive, Monsieur St. Denis. You have lost the prize, eh? I suppose if you had married the daughter, 'twould have been all right. But you're a little behind the coach this time. However, if you remain here long enough, you shall see the bride."

"Villain!" gasped the marquis, in a frantic tone. "O, would you had killed me ere you had done this thing!"

"But, monsieur, what do you mean? If the girl chose to marry me, what can you object?"

"She did not choose so to do. O, she never consented to wed with such a you of her own free will."

"Such as me!" hissed Lobo. "And so you would spurn me now, eh? You have found a new flame in your dotage—have you? Monsieur St. Denis, I give you joy of the friend you have gained; but I can't give you up the wife. You did it well, but I'm afraid you'll have to work some other way for a living now, unless, indeed, monsieur le marquis may take pity enough on you to give you a few crowns just to find you in bread and salt until you can get your eyes upon some other heiress!"

This was spoken in a coarse, sneering manner, and during its delivery Lobo had kept his eye fixed upon the youth with a look of fiendish exultation.

Goupert St. Denis could not have moved more quickly. Not in all the language of all the world could words have been found more insulting. With one bound he was by the dastard's side, and on the next instant he dealt him a blow upon the face that felled him to the floor like a log.

"O, St. Julien, I could not help it! Forgive me!"

"Goupert, I do not blame you!" For some moments Lobo lay upon the floor like one dead, and the youth was beginning to fear that the blow might have been fatal, when the villain moved, and shortly afterwards he arose to his feet. He gazed a moment upon his enemy with a deadly look, and then, as he noticed that the blood was trickling down his face upon the floor, he turned towards the door.

"Goupert St. Denis, thou shalt answer for this!" And thus speaking, the villain left the room.

CHAPTER XVI.

That evening Brion St. Julien and Goupert conversed long and earnestly together. For some time the youth had entertained the thought of proceeding at once to New Orleans and seeking Louise, but finally he resolved to wait awhile, at least until he had one more interview with Lobo.

"That Lobo is the cause of her being abducted I have no longer any doubt," said the marquis, after some remarks had been made upon the subject.

"How can there be a doubt?" returned Goupert. "His story of the rescue of the poor girl is too improbable for belief, unless he had some understanding with the Indians."

"But do you not think that he found her as he says?" inquired the marquis, earnestly.

"Of course I do. He found her as he says; but, of course, the Indians understood that he was to meet them there. He took her there, and he must have used some terrible power to make her marry him."

St. Denis went to his chamber, and

went to his bed; but he could not sleep. He lay with his hands clasped over his brow, and ever and anon deep, painful groans would break from his lips. His grief was deeper than he could tell, even in his wildest prayers, and his hopes were all gone. The thing had come upon him with a doubly crushing force, for it had found his soul already bowed down beneath the weight of fear. He could have known that Louise had died, for then he might have wept awhile, and then calmly knelt down and prayed. But now even that sad and melancholy boon was denied him. Like the frantic mother who stands and sees the eagle perched upon the cliff with her shrieking infant, stood the youth with respect to his beloved. But, at length, when the first hours after midnight had come, Goupert sank into a dull, dreamy slumber, and his pains were for awhile only the phantoms of sleep.

While Goupert thus lay pondering upon his terrible misfortune, Simon Lobo was not alone. He was in the chamber he usually occupied, and with him was a black slave named Peter. He was a middle-aged man—Simon's special servant, and the only one in the whole household who had any sympathy for the dark nephew. Lobo had purchased him in New Orleans, and though he had done so only as the marquis's agent, yet Peter looked upon the former as his master. And, moreover, Simon had paid him various sums of money to serve him.

"Now, Peter," said Simon, after some other conversation had passed, "have you watched the affair between Goupert and the marquis, as I bade you?"

"Yes, mas'r; me watch 'um well, an' me hear all. Me foun' de hole you tole me of in de floor ober de ole mas'r's library, an' me hab watch 'um every time 's got a chance."

"And what have you found?"

Peter went on and told a long story he had heard about letting Simon go, and about Goupert taking his place.

"And," uttered the negro, with a sparkling eye as he gave a sort of flourishing emphasis to the conjunction, "me's heard one oder ting, berry sartin': One time dey feared young mas'r an' missus'd neber cum back, an' ole mas'r's gwine to gib Goupert all his whole fortin'. He'll hab heaps o' money, eh?"

"Did he say the whole, Peter?"

"He did sartin, mas'r. An' he's planned to gib 'im half of it now. O, I tell ye, mas'r Goupert got mitey big hold onto ole mas'r's pocket, an' onto ole mas'r's lub, too. Dey's together all de time. Yah—guess ole mas'r don't s'pect he'll want you no more."

It was late in the morning when Simon Lobo made his appearance. He had his breakfast served in his own room, and for some time he had been engaged in bathing his face. He walked on to the sitting room, and he found the marquis and Goupert there.

"Monsieur St. Denis," he said, in a low, icy tone, "I would speak with you."

In an instant the young man turned and followed him. Lobo led the way to the garden, and there he stopped and turned.

"Monsieur St. Denis," he spoke, while his eyes flashed and his thin lip trembled, "last night you did what no living man has ever done before. You struck me in the face. Ere I leave this place, the stricken man must be past remembrance of his shame, or the striker must be not among the living! You understand!"

Now, Goupert was not in a frame of mind to endure much, or to argue much on moral points. His heart was aching from a horrid wound, and his soul was tortured by a fearful power; and before him was the serpent who had done it all, who had torn loved children from a doting parent—sundered the brother and sister, and made unhappy the life of a defenseless girl. The young man's eyes did not flash like his enemy's, but they burned with a deep, calm fire, such as utter disgust and abomination add to fierce hate.

"I think I understand," was St. Denis' reply.

"I taught you your first lessons in the sword exercise, and you were a proficient when I last saw you handle the blade. Will you now choose that weapon?"

"Yes."

"Then get it and join me at once."

Goupert turned away and went to his room. He took down his sword, and buckled the belt about him. Then he drew the blade, and for a moment he gazed upon it. It had once been an uncle's weapon—the well-tried companion of Gen. St. Denis, a bold and true knight. It was of Spanish make, and never yet had it failed in the hour of need. There was another sword in the room—a lighter one—a Damascus blade, and of exquisite finish, and one, too, with which the youth had always played. But it had been his father's sword, and he would not use it now. After he had returned the blade to its scabbard, he stopped a moment to reflect. Then he moved to the table, where an ink horn stood, and tearing a leaf from his pocketbook, he hurriedly wrote as follows:

"Monsieur le Marquis—You are my friend, and you know the few friends I have on earth. If I fall to-day, you will know why, and I know you will not blame me. You will see Louise. Tell her we shall meet—"

The youth stopped and started up, and his hand trembled.

"If I fall thus, shall we meet there?" he murmured to himself. "O, heaven will pardon the deed. It knows the deep provocation—the burning shame that blights this house!"

Then he stooped once more and wrote: "—In that world where love knows no night."

ST. DENIS.

This the youth folded and directed to Brion St. Julien, and wiping a single tear from his cheek, he hurried down to the hall, and from thence to the garden, where he found Simon waiting for him.

"Now follow me," said Lobo; and thus speaking, he led the way around the house towards the barn, and thence out through the pasture to the foot of the hill beyond, where grew a thick clump of hickory trees.

"Now, Goupert St. Denis, are you ready?" asked Simon, at the same time drawing his sword.

"In one moment," returned the youth, also drawing his own weapon, but lowering its point upon the ground.

He was stopped short in his speech, for at that moment the marquis came rushing out from the court, and soon reached the spot where they stood.

"Simon," he gasped, white with fear, "what means this? Put up your sword!" "Brion St. Julien," quickly retorted the mad nephew, "stand back! You saw what passed last night—did you not?"

"But that was the result of hot passion. You taunted him most bitterly, Simon; you insulted him most shamefully, and he knew not what he did. O, let this thing stop!"

"Stop? You might as well try to stop yonder mighty river from flowing to its mouth! You say I gave him provocation. Did he not give me provocation?"

"Yes—yes. It was all folly—all eager, hot, mad haste. O, give over this thing! Simon, I command you!"

"Brion St. Julien, look upon this mark on my face! Were the man who did that my own brother, he should stand before my sword. So now stand back. There shall be a death to wipe this out. If I fall, 'twill die with me; if he falls, the atonement is complete."

"Good Sir Brion," spoke Goupert, at this point, "let the conflict go on. Life to me now is not worth the price I would pay for it by refusal. Let it go on."

"But—my child—my son, if you are gone—"

"You'll have me left," interrupted Simon—"me, who of right belongs here. Now are you ready, Monsieur St. Denis?"

The youth turned an imploring look upon the marquis, and as the old man fell back, he replied:

"Now I must ask the question I was about to ask ere my friend came to interrupt us. Simon Lobo, you may fall in this encounter, and before I cross your sword, I would pray you to tell, if you know, where Louis St. Julien is."

"How?" hissed Simon. "Would ye heap more insult upon me?"

"I ask but a simple question."

"Ay—and that question means a foul suspicion. I know nothing of him."

"Then come on!"

And on the next instant the swords were crossed.

Simon Lobo had been accounted one of the best sword players in France, and he came to the conflict as though he were sure of victory; but at the third pass he was undeceived. He turned pale in a moment, for he now knew that he had met with a superior, even in fencing skill. He was a coward at heart, and he fairly trembled. Goupert saw it in an instant, and for the moment he was astonished. But then he remembered how Simon used to tremble at the whiz of a pistol ball, and he wondered no more. Almost did he pity the poor wretch. Straight, powerful and tall he stood, with his broad chest expanded, while before him fairly covered the diminutive form of the villain.

"Ah, Simon, I've taught the sword art since you left me in France! Take care! Poor wretch, I gave you credit for more skill, and for more courage."

In all probability, the villain believed that Goupert meant to kill him if he could. That belief begot a feeling of despair, and that last taunt fired him. Like the cornered rat, he set to now with all the energy of a dying man, and for a few moments St. Denis had to look sharp; but it was only for a few moments. Simon made a point-blank thrust from a left guard, and with a quick movement to the right, Goupert brought a downward stroke with all his available force, only meaning to break his antagonist's sword, or strike it from his grasp, and thus end the conflict without bloodshed. But Simon had thrust his arm further forward than Goupert had calculated, and the blow fell upon the sword hand, thus causing a slanting stroke. With a quick cry of pain, Simon dropped his weapon and started back.

"Don't strike me now!" he cried.

"Fear not," replied Goupert. "I never strike a defenseless man. But are you satisfied?"

"Yes—yes! But that was a cowardly stroke."

"No—no, Lobo. I meant not to strike you then; I only meant to knock your sword down. But you know you have been at my mercy thrice."

"It was your own fault that you did not take advantage of it. I should have killed you had I been able, and I think you would have done the same."

"No!" cried the marquis; "you know better than that, Simon."

But the wounded man made no further reply. His hand pained him now, and he held it out towards the marquis with a beseeching look. The old man examined it, and found that a bad gash was cut from the roots of the thumb to the wrist; on the back of the hand, but none of the bones were harmed. Had not the guard of the sword received the weight of the blow, the hand would have been severed wholly off, for the stout iron guard was found cut nearly in twain!

And thus ended the duel. Goupert was surprised at the easy victory he had won, while Simon was surprised at the incredible skill his antagonist had displayed. And the marquis was thankful—deeply thankful—for the result, so far as mere life and death were concerned.

(To be continued.)

Not Alike.

The Professor—Don't use that phrase, my dear. It is grossly unscientific.

His Wife—What phrase—As much alike as two peas?"

The Professor—Yes. Examined under the microscope, two peas will present startling differences.—Puck.

College Colors.

"Our college colors are pink and old gold," said Miss Flocks.

"Our college colors were black and blue when I was initiated into the secret society," added her brother.

WAR IN MACEDONIA

TURKISH FORCE SURROUNDED AND SEVERELY PUNISHED.

While Albanians Resist Reform, Macedonians, Led by a Bishop, Rise and Begin Their Struggle for Liberty—Both Sides Lost Heavily in Fight—Austria May Send Troops.

Berlin, April 6.—A dispatch from Constantinople to the Lokal Anzeiger, dated at noon today, announces that the Bulgarian bands and Turkish troops in the Okhrida district have fought a battle, and that 1000 men were killed and wounded.

Constantinople, April 6.—Official advices from Konastir say the Bulgarian inhabitants of 30 villages in the Okhrida district, totalling 3000 men, and supported by the bishop and a number of revolutionary bands, have risen against the Turks. They surrounded a small detachment of Turkish troops in the mountains northward of Okhrida, but the troops succeeded in cutting their way out after sustaining considerable loss.

Another dynamite outrage at the town of Mustapha Pacha has led to the discovery that the revolutionary committee is supposed to be responsible for the attempt to wreck the Oriental express early in the morning of March 31, when the bridge of the Turkish-Oriental Railroad between Andranople and Mustapha Pacha was blown up by an internal machine.

Although affairs at Mitrovitz and Pristina are reported to be calmer, the rising of the Albanians in those districts creates intense concern at the palace and among the Ministers and at the embassy. It is felt that a continuation of the trouble in the vicinity of Sandjak and Navizar is likely to lead at any moment to an extension of Austrian occupation over the entire Sandjak district, and as far as Mitrovitz, although it is believed that nothing short of absolute necessity will induce Austria to take advantage of its right, which is restored to her by the treaty of Berlin.

USE OF EARTH WAVES.

New Experiments in Wireless Telegraphy Without Masts.

New York, April 6.—An interesting series of demonstrations has been given at Alexandra Palace of the apparatus of transmission and reception of signals and speech through the ground without the use of wires, says the London representative of the Tribune. The inventors, a young Swedish electrical engineer, trained in the United States, and a Devonshire electrician, were present with Sir Girard Smith and other experts. The experiments were conducted without the pretense that a perfected system of installation had been worked out, and the practicability of dispensing with wires and masts and using earth currents of electricity for commercial, military and naval purposes was illustrated.

A characteristic feature of the system was the peculiar combination of high potential discharges and low-tension currents. Experiments with bombs proved that explosives could be synchronized within the same radius, so that all could be fired simultaneously, or each in turn, by means of earth currents without wires. The value of these tests for practical warfare was conceded by the military experts. Other experiments illustrated the transmission of Morse dots and dashes and musical sounds by wireless telephone.

PRETENDER BADLY BEATEN.

Langerman Says Trouble in Morocco Is Due to Progressive Sultan.

New York, April 6.—James S. Langerman, the St. Louis Fair Commissioner, who has just returned from Morocco, says the fighting among the tribesmen and pillaging of caravans reported by cable have no connection with the revolution started by the pretender, Bu Hamara. During the six weeks Mr. Langerman was in the country, the pretender met with continuous defeats. He is not related to the Sultan, and since his defeat has no standing in the country.

The Sultan did not execute the rebels, it is said, because of his humane views. While the custom of hanging the heads of those executed on the gates of the city is continued, the Sultan is opposed to it, and this practice probably will be stopped.

All the trouble, Mr. Langerman said, was started through the Sultan trying to open the country to industries, which is opposed by the people, who are largely fanatics. He built a short line of railroad from his castle, which was torn up by mountaineers. The Sultan told Mr. Langerman he would give every encouragement to the introduction of American enterprises in Morocco.

Ladrones Twice Routed.

Manila, April 6.—A force of troops and constabulary, commanded by Captain Perry, overtook and routed on the shore of Lake Mainie, March 31, the band of convicts and ladrones who recently attacked and held for a time possession of Suriago, Island of Mindanao. No details of the fighting have been received. Captain Perry is pursuing the enemy. A mixed force of scouts and constabulary numbering 375 men defeated 200 ladrones in two fights near Idan, Province of Cavite, yesterday, killing several of the enemy and wounding 12. The Government troops had no casualties.

IN BURNING FIERY PIT.

Fearful Plight of Sixteen Furnacemen Near Pittsburgh.

Pittsburg, April 3.—By an accident at furnace I of the Edgar Thompson plant of the Carnegie steel company at Braddock today six men were killed and ten are in the hospital and are not expected to recover. Four others injured went to their homes and are suffering from painful burns.

The accident was caused by a "hang" in the furnace dropping and forcing large quantities of white-hot dust down a large pipe into a pit where the men were at work. The victims were without means of escape, and all were burned and blistered over their entire bodies. Large strips of flesh peeled off their bodies when they were pulled out of the pit by fellow workmen. The cries of agony of the victims as they writhed in the lava-like stuff from which they were vainly trying to extricate themselves could be heard over a block away.

Hundreds of workmen from other parts of the plant rushed to the rescue and as quickly as possible pulled the injured men from the pit and carried them to the emergency hospital. The bodies of the fatally burned were blackened or shredded in strips by the white-hot metal dust that burned into their flesh. Many of the men had large blotches burned through the flesh, caused by large splashes of molten iron that had struck them and burned through to the bone.

Furnace I is equipped with the famous electric skids that are now used on all of the United States Steel corporation's blast furnaces.

STRIKE IN BUILDING TRADES.

Thousands of Men Idle in All Parts of the Eastern States.

New York, April 8.—A general strike in the building trades, which it is believed will involve between 15,000 and 20,000 men, and extending throughout Westchester county to the Connecticut border, was inaugurated today. The strike has extended to points further up New York state and to places in Connecticut. The contractors as well as the men are organized, and are prepared for a siege. The men in Westchester county demand an eight-hour day, with Saturday half holiday, and the following scale:

Plumbers, \$4 a day; lathers, \$4.20; carpenters, \$3.60; painters, \$3.28; bricklayers, masons and plasterers, \$4.20; tinner, \$3.28; and bench and machine men \$17 a week.

A proposition to meet the men half way was rejected. Work was stopped on several new mansions along the sound today, between 3,000 and 4,000 men failing to report for work.

At Glens Falls the demand of the employees of the building trades for a 25 per cent increase was acceded to.

Two hundred electricians, copperworkers and laborers employed in the New York stock exchange building went on strike today because they claimed that non-union electricians were working in the building.

At Orange, N. J., 500 plumbers and 400 painters went on strike, demanding an increase of wages and control of helpers.

INSPECT CANAL ROUTE.

Commissioners and Engineer to Prepare for Beginning Work.

Washington, April 3.—The Isthmian canal commission has appointed a subcommittee to inspect the proposed Panama canal route with a view to completing the preparations for the transfer of the canal property to the United States when the final details for such a transfer have been completed.

They will be accompanied by Major William Black, corps of engineers, who has been relieved from command of the post at Washington barracks in order to serve under the commission in connection with the purely engineering work of the canal. Major Black is an expert in canal engineering work, and one of his duties will be the execution of a plan for the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the canal route. He acquired much practical knowledge in that special branch of engineering while serving as engineer officer at Havana, where he initiated improvements which have made that city clean and healthful.

The proposed inspection of the canal works and route will be made entirely under the auspices of the existing canal commission. The new Panama canal commission, under the terms of the act passed at the last session of congress, probably will not be named until after the ratification of the canal treaty by Colombia.

Hold Out for Limit.

Victoria, B. C., April 3.—The North China Daily News says that the Chinese commission to St. Louis is to be headed by Prince Pu Lun as chief, and Huang Nai Chia as vice commissioner. It is stated from Peking that Prince Pu Lun asks for at least 600,000 taels for expenses, etc., for himself and staff, while the government is only willing to give 200,000 taels. Upon Prince Pu Lun refusing that amount, the empress dowager offered to allow him 100,000 taels more from the privy purse, but the prince still insists on 600,000.