

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 Loboïs, 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 I 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 Loboïs, your wickedness has come to a climax, and back on your own head shall fall the terrible consequences of your machinations!"

"Ha—ha, Louise, you have gone too far now!" Loboïs 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 Loboïs, 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 left thee in the same way!"

"How?" gasped Simon, starting back and turning pale. "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 Louise! Assure me I do not dream."

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

"Is it possible?" gasped Loboïs, 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 Louise, tearing the rich gown he wore from his body, and revealing the light undress 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 ye?"

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

"Louise St. Julien?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Duped—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 Loboïs 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 Louise, "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 Louise. "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 out 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 Oakbow. After I had listened to their conversation, and I found that 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 Loboïs 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 Loboïs started to his feet.

"Back!" shouted Louise, 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 Louise and Louise St. Julien from their home. And he, on his part, promises that said Louise shall be killed, and that Louise shall be sent safely to the middle-trail on Lake Pontchartrain."

SIMON LOBOÏS.

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 Loboïs 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 Louise 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 in 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, Louise and Coqualla walked away down in the garden.

At length the old cure, Father Languet, 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 wonderful depth of her mind, but he was not 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 Loboïs 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, "we will not return, for in this colony, 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.)

Tale of a Tender Heart.

The boy in tears naturally attracted the attention of the sympathetic man.

"What's happened, my boy?" the latter asked. "Perhaps I can help you."

"I lost a quarter," answered the boy, "and when I go home I'll get licked for it."

"Oh, well, don't cry," returned the sympathetic man. "Here's another quarter. How did you lose the first one?"

"Matching," promptly replied the boy.—Chicago Evening Post

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

GOOD WORK OF BUREAU.

Harriman Lines are Turning Thoughts of Thousands to Oregon.

G. M. McKinney, who has charge of the immigration department of the Harriman lines, met with the real estate dealers of Salem to discuss matters relating to his work. He explained the plan of his department and talked with the real estate men concerning the methods of advertising that they must rely upon to draw immigration to this state. That Oregon is now the most widely talked of state in the Union is the declaration he made, after telling how the resources of this state have been advertised through the immigration bureau. As an indication of what has been done for the Willamette valley, he said that since his department has been working between 4,000 and 5,000 one-way railway tickets have been used by Eastern people, who came to the valley and did not go away again.

He said that the immigration bureau of the Harriman lines is the most perfect enterprise of the kind ever organized in the United States, and that it reaches in the most effective manner those persons who are the most desirable immigrants. Within seven months after he began work his department had placed the literature advertising this state into the hands of 2,000,000 people. The bureau has placed in the field six lecturers, with stereopticon views showing scenes illustrating the resources and industries of Oregon, and these lecturers are addressing Eastern audiences four evenings a week. Six immigration agents in the different sections of the middle West are giving their whole time to disseminating information regarding this state, supervising the distribution of literature to those who are most likely to come to this state, and aiding scores of Eastern real estate men who are encouraging Western immigration.

By means of this vigorous policy the people of the Eastern states have been interested in Oregon, with the result that there is more talk of this state as a desirable place for home-seekers than there is of any other state.

Plenty of Gold but Little Silver.

Clackamas county officers report an unusual scarcity of silver. Treasurer Cahill says gold pieces, in denominations of \$20, were never before as plentiful as they are at this time, and he finds it troublesome to keep on hand a sufficient amount of silver with which to make change. No reason is assigned for this condition, save that it indicates in a substantial way a greater degree of prosperity among all classes.

Wool in Marion County Pool.

From information produced at the Marion county woolgrowers' association meeting, it seems probable that the quantity of wool controlled by the pool this year will be nearly double that of last year. The soliciting committee has not yet completed its work, but thus far 50 members have been secured, and it is expected that the total amount of wool represented will be from 75,000 to 100,000 pounds.

Survey of the McKenzie.

Professor McAlister, who is at the head of the University of Oregon mechanical department, has completed arrangements for a hydrographical survey of the McKenzie river this summer. The survey will be made for the purpose of determining the water power of the river with a view of locating the points where electric plants and the like may be established to the best advantage.

Water Seeps from Ditch.

The irrigating ditch belonging to Henry E. Ankeny, of Eugene, and Mrs. J. T. Henley, of Klamath county, runs through the town of Klamath Falls, and the village authorities have commenced suit in the circuit court to secure an injunction against the owners, alleging that the property is a nuisance on account of injury from seepage.

New Road to Crater Lake.

W. S. Arant, superintendent of Crater Lake national park, reports that he will have the new road leading to the lake ready for use by August 1. It will be shorter and have fewer bumps and steep grades than the old one. It will enable a journey from Fort Klamath to the lake, 25 miles, in 2½ hours.

Rainier Lumber Shipments.

Ninety-five carloads of lumber and shingles were shipped from Rainier in the past month. This does not include the cargo of 600,000 feet shipped to San Pedro by sailing vessel.

Cattle Coming to Summer Ranges.

Cattle are beginning to come into Starkey prairie for summer range. The prairie summers several thousand head, principally from Umatilla and lower down, in Union county.

Eastern Oregon Geological Survey.

T. B. White, of the United States geological survey, is in Pendleton and will at once begin work in Eastern Oregon.

WILL FIGHT THE RESERVE.

Southern Oregon Citizens Readily Sign Petitions.

A zealous protest is being made by the citizens of Josephine and Curry counties against the establishment of the great forest reserve, embracing nearly half of Curry and all of Western and Southern Josephine, as well as part of Douglas. Josephine would be blocked in, so to speak, and Curry would be placed in a position whereby its advancement would be a matter of difficulty.

Just at this time, when prosperity seems to be heading this way, capital is becoming interested, new people coming in, and new industries being established, it is a hard blow both to Josephine and Curry, so the citizens claim who are opposing the measure, to establish a forest reserve of so vast dimensions. The argument made that streams are drying up by reason of the removal of trees, seems not well founded. But few, if any trees, have been removed in that section, not enough by any means to affect the flow of water in the creeks and streams. Even the miners, who need the water the most, oppose the establishment of the reserve.

Petitions, begging that the matter of establishing the reserve be reconsidered, or that the tract be not withdrawn, are being circulated in Josephine and Curry counties, and are being liberally signed.

State Labor Federation.

The first annual convention of the Oregon state federation of labor met in La Grande this week. About 100 delegates were present. The attendance was neither as large nor as representative as was hoped. By far the larger part of those in the convention were from Portland, while Astoria, Salem, Albany, Ashland, Baker City and Pendleton have from one to three delegates each. Those in attendance are very much in earnest in their desire to take up in the convention some of the knotty questions confronting organized labor and determine a course of action in regard to them.

Clackamas County Valuation.

The assessable valuation of all Clackamas county is being doubled by Assessor Nelson, who is at work on the 1903 roll. Assessor Nelson reports that heretofore in this county property has been assessed at not to exceed 35 per cent of its real value. This year it is being listed at double the former valuations. The amount of the tax under this plan will be about the same, since it will be cut down in proportion to the increase in the property valuations.

Insane Asylum Report.

The report of Superintendent J. F. Calbreath, of the state insane asylum, for April shows the number of patients March 31 as 1,297; remaining on April 30, 1,298. Number of officers and employees, 160; expenditures for articles consumed, \$7,749.41; pay roll, \$6,064.66; cost of maintenance per capita per month, \$10.66; per day, 35 cents.

Eastern Oregon Pioneer.

Julius O. Mack, one of the best known residents of Eastern Oregon, died at his home at The Dalles Sunday afternoon, after a short illness, from pneumonia. Mr. Mack was about 50 years of age.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 70@71c; valley, 75@76c.

Barley—Feed, \$21.50 per ton; brewing, \$23.

Flour—Best grades, \$3.95@4.25; Graham, \$3.45@3.85.

Millstuffs—Bran, \$19 per ton; middlings, \$24; shorts, \$19.50@20; chop, \$18.

Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.51@1.20; gray, \$1.2½@1.15 per cental.

Hay—Timothy, \$13@13.50; clover, \$10@11; cheat, \$11@12 per ton.

Potatoes—Best Burbanks, 50c per sack; ordinary, 25@40c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3@3.50 per cental.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 11@12c; young, 13@14c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 16@17c; dressed, 20@22c; ducks, \$7.00@7.50 per dozen; geese, \$6@6.50.

Cheese—Full cream, twins, 16½@17c; Young America, 17@17½c; factory prices, 1@1½c; less.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 22c per pound; extras, 21c; dairy, 20@22½c; store, 16@18c.

Eggs—16@17c per dozen.

Hops—Choice, 18@20c per pound.

Wool—Valley 12½@15; Eastern Oregon, 8@14; mohair, 35@36c.

Beef—Gross, cows, 3¼@4c per pound; steers, 4¼@5c; dressed, 7¾c.

Veal—8@8½c.

Mutton—Gross, 7@7½c per pound; dressed, 8@9c.

Lambs—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7½c.

Hogs—Gross, 7@7½c per pound; dressed, 8@8½c.