

White Hand

A Tale of the Early Settlers of Louisiana.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

The old chief took the youth's hand, and having gazed into his face a few moments, he said:

"White Hand, you once gave me an oath, but I have never heard you ever give me I now absolve you. Coqualla has told me all. She has told me how true you are in heart, and how yet you long for the home of your childhood. I do not think your father has fallen in this general massacre for his place is strong, and his red men owe him no grudge. Yet he may have fallen with the rest. If he has, you may sometime find opportunity to reach your native land. But you are under no oath now. Of what has now happened I will not speak, only to say that you cannot see nor understand all that has led us to this fearful work. The story of the white man's rule is everywhere the same. Where a tribe, or a people, have made peace and accepted the friendship of the French, they have become weak and puny. White Hand, I have a strange love for thee, but I hate thy people. And that thy father almost hates them too has drawn my heart towards him. But we could not see our people being gradually swept away, and our homes torn from us, without striking this blow. Yet Stung Serpent has fallen. The bullet of the white man has found his life. But he dies content. The white man has fallen, too."

The old chieftain sank back exhausted as he ceased speaking, and for some moments he remained with his eyes closed. When he opened them again, White Hand spoke.

"My father," he said, "ere the hand of death has done its work upon thee, wilt thou not tell me why I was taken from my father's house? Surely you cannot object to tell me all now?"

"No, my child, I have no objections, for I never promised not to tell. And when I sent for thee now, I meant to tell thee all. Do you remember when your father met me in the woods near his dwelling?"

"Yes," returned White Hand, bending over with eager interest.

"Well, I had then been to see Simon Lohois. By some means he learned that I was down the river, and he sent for me. He had heard that I was a savage chieftain, and a lover of gold. I met him in the woods, and he proposed to me that I should seize St. Julien's son and slay him, and for this he offered to pay me a hundred pieces of gold. But I spurned the offer and left him. I came home, and told my brother what Lohois had said to me, and he pondered upon the subject in a new light. You know the Natches often send messengers to the Great Spirit, and the Great Sun had wished to send a white messenger to the white man's God, even as we told you when you first came here. At length I fell in with his views, and I knew of no one whose spirit would be surer of admission to your God than the spirit of Louis St. Julien, for I knew him to be a good youth. So I returned to your father's house and saw Lohois again, and he told me he had hired a party of Chicasaws to kill you, but that you and your companion had killed them all—six of them. I then offered to do what he wished. But this time his wants had received an addition. He not only wanted the son killed, but he wanted the daughter captured and carried off towards New Orleans. I agreed to this; but I made him give me a written promise to pay me the money when the work should be done. He hesitated at first, but at length he wrote the pledge and signed it; and then it was arranged that Louise should be left upon the bank of Lake Pontchartrain, at the end of the middle trail, and I pledged myself to take you with me and kill you, for you know this had been my purpose in seeking you."

"But the paper—the pledge—you had of Lohois—where is it?" uttered White Hand.

"It is safe. Coqualla, go to my closet, and you will find it in the oaken casket. The princess went, and in the box she found the paper, which she handed to her father. He took it, and having opened it, he handed it to White Hand, saying, as he did so:

"Here—it is yours. And now all I ask is pardon."

"For all that you have done to me," murmured the youth, "I pardon you from the bottom of my soul; for you may have been an instrument in the hands of heaven for saving my life. Had you not taken me, another would, and I should not have lived. So I shall, after all, remember Stung Serpent with more gratitude than of complaint or anger."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do."

Stung Serpent raised himself upon his elbow, and caught the youth by the hand.

"Coqualla," he whispered, "where art thou?"

my father has now to travel, and surely it is fitting he should have company."

"And does this always happen when one of your people dies?"

"Certainly; though some have not so many companions, but all have one. When the last Great Sun died, there were one hundred who went to keep him company over the dark road."

"So many?"

"Yes—and of course they were happy, for with him they were at once admitted to the happy home where the Great Spirit is."

"But," queried White Hand, "Stung Serpent has been dead now four days, and these people will not die until tonight. How, then, shall they go together?"

"Ah," returned Coqualla, with a faint smile, which seemed to indicate a pity for her companion's ignorance, "my father's spirit will not start alone. It remains near the old body until other spirits join it, and then they all go off together. Do you not understand?"

"Yes," returned White Hand, "And is it not right and proper?"

"It is, if you think so; but I should hardly dare give my voice in favor of it. Why, look, Coqualla, and tell me if this very thing has not already reduced your nation from a once powerful people to a mere handful."

"My father spoke of that ere he died," answered the princess, thoughtfully. "He said he wished only his few immediate companions to go with him beyond the grave, and even they must be old people."

"And he was right, Coqualla. I have heard that the Natches were once a mighty race—a great nation, numbering many warriors by the many thousands, and now they have only a very few hundred. In a large community, the births will not much overrun the deaths by nature. But see here—not only do your people die off as do others, but for every one who dies naturally from one to a hundred more must be killed to keep them company."

"I know," said Coqualla, thoughtfully. "I know. But still it were cruel to send my father's spirit away over the dark, long trail alone. Your people do not think of this. They do not think of the loved spirit wandering alone in the dark alone."

ed, and he sat down and told her all.

"And will you go?" the princess asked.

"Yes, I must. But, Coqualla, have you changed your mind?"

"Only to be more strongly bound to thee. And yet," she added, putting her arms about her husband's neck, "speak but one word—simply whisper to me—that thou wouldst rather go free from care or thought of me, and—"

"Hush, Coqualla! You wrong me now. O, I should never sleep in peace again, did I think that remainedst here when thy wish was with me. But we must see to-night."

"I am all ready, dearest."

"It is all ready provisions."

"I have such all prepared as we can carry."

"Then you have thought of this?"

"Yes. But O, speak the truth, my love. It is within thy inmost soul there dwells a thought—"

"It is all of love for thee, Coqualla," interrupted the youth, seeing at once her drift. "So let me hear no more of it. Now let us prepare."

"Bless thee," murmured the fair girl, sinking upon her companion's bosom. "O, since we first spoke of this, my heart has sunk deep down in its darkest mood when the thought of staying here has dwelt with me. Those sweet words you whispered to me have been with me ever since, and they have wrought a wonderful change in my feelings. When we get to our new home we will talk more about it, and you shall teach me to read the great book wherein these precious truths are written."

OUR Immigrants

New York the Great Port of Entry for Most of Them—How the Incoming Thousands Are Dealt with by Uncle Sam at Ellis Island—Less Desirable Aliens Now Coming . . .

THE remarkable prosperity with which this country is being blessed has the effect of bringing to our shores hordes of immigrants in ever increasing numbers. Last year the army of immigrants numbered over 648,000—an increase of 100,000 over the year before—and the present year will probably see a considerable increase in the voluntary exiles who yearly set out from the old world to better their conditions in the new.

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RUSSIAN JEWS JUST ARRIVED AT NEW YORK TO BEGIN LIFE ANEW.

other persons, or by any corporation, society or government, whether in possession of money, and if so whether upward of \$50, whether going to join a relative, and if so what relative and his name and address, whether ever before in the United States whether a polygamist, whether under contract, expressed or implied, to perform labor in the United States, the immigrant's condition of health, and whether deformed or crippled, and if so from what cause. The census is a searching one and the questions must be all answered.

At Ellis Island. When the steamship reaches her pier the inspectors discharge such immigrants as they may deem it necessary to examine—usually not over 15 or 20, says a writer in the World's Work. All the rest are transferred to barges and taken to Ellis Island. There on the main floor of the big immigration building they are divided into groups, according to the manifest, and separated. Each immigrant is questioned to see if his answers tally with the manifests. If they do not, he is detained for "special inquiry" by boards of four inspectors, who decide all questionable cases.

Only the Secretary of the Treasury can overrule their decision. The immigrants are kept in a big detention room until the railway agents take them to board trains to their final destination.

One of those who recently came over to become one of us was Florio Vincenzo, who hailed from Palermo, Italy. He was 14 years old and traveled light. When he opened his cheap paper valise it was apparently empty, save for a pair of decreed and disreputable old shoes. Florio bowed, cap in hand, and his white teeth flashed as he suavely smiled: "I am a poor man, nobleman, seeking my fortune."

There was an odor that the old inspector knew. He picked up one of the old shoes and extracted from it a crossed and crumpled hunk of Bologna sausage. The other shoe was stuffed with a soft, sticky and aggressively fragrant mass of Italian cheese. These articles and a sum of Italian money equivalent to about \$1.50, and the clothes he stood in, formed the basis on which Florio expected to rear his fortune.

Another immigrant, Pietro Viadilli, was gray-haired, round shouldered and weakened. He, too had come to make his fortune. His unpedimented consisted of a canvas valise, lined with paper and containing two striped cotton shirts, one neckerchief of yellow silk, a black hat, a waistcoat, two pairs of hose, one pint of olive oil and half a peck of hard bread biscuit.

At the examination the immigrants are asked to show their money, which, after being counted and a record made of it, is returned to them. In one recent year the French led all the others, with an average of \$39.37. The Hebrews stood at the foot of the list, bringing an average of \$8.58. After the French came the Italians from Northern Italy, with \$23.53 per capita; Bohemians and Moravians were next, with \$22.78; Scandinavians next, with \$18.16, and the Irish next with \$17.10. Next to the Hebrews the Italians from Southern Italy were lowest, with an average of \$8.67.

At the battery an employment bureau is conducted for the benefit of the immigrants by the German Society of the City of New York, and the Irish Immigrant Society, and here from

impossible. "Gentleman—Gentleman—who enter in the broad light of day must pass the scrutiny of the attendant at the door and the elevator boy, and the tenure of these functionaries in their jobs depends partly on their ability, to keep undesirable characters out of the building, says a correspondent of the Pittsburgh Dispatch. Then there is the fixed rule that packages cannot be delivered or taken out of the front door. This makes it awkward for the burglar to leave with his plunder, necessitating as it does embarrassing explanations and delays in leaving the premises. A police captain said that most of the thefts committed in apartment houses are to be traced to servants and that these were few in number. Family rows in apartment houses, he also says, are rarer than in separate dwellings. Flat dwellers seem to fall in with the unwritten laws of neighbors' rights more quickly than those who live in individual family houses. Quarrels are heard more easily through walls than across lots. Hence, against their wills sometimes, wives and husbands keep their tongues between their teeth, and during this enforced period of self-restraint recover their tempers. As a civilizing and refining agent the flat no doubt does many other things which will suggest themselves to dwellers therein. The observations are given forth because this phase of modern city life shows itself more prominently in New York than elsewhere.

She Had Her Wish. A little girl who had noticed on various houses about the city the cards

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