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The Lost Mysteries of New Orleans

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Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein

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**The “Lost Mysteries of New Orleans” by
Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein**

*Introduced and Translated from German
by Steven Rowan*
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Contents

Introduction to Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein	1
New Orleans Whisker Stories (1855).....	5
The Devil in New Orleans (1861)	31
Bonseigneur in New Orleans (1865).....	54

Ludwig von Reizenstein (1826-1885) was the elder of two sons of Baron Alexander von Reitzenstein, Hartungs Linie (1797-1890), (besides at least ten daughters) and his first wife, Baroness Philippine von Branca (1800-1864). The Reitzensteins had been Imperial Barons in Franconia, whose status was altered by the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire by Napoléon in 1806. They then became Protestant nobles in an expanded, predominantly Catholic, Kingdom of Bavaria. Baron Alexander endeavored to reconstruct the holdings of the Reitzenstein clan from catastrophic losses sustained in the later eighteenth century. Baron Alexander held a position in the Bavarian customs service under King Ludwig I (ruled 1825-1848) and Ludwig II (ruled 1848-1886), retiring in 1863. He had all his children baptized as Catholics. In 1847-48, in the middle of the general upheavals in Germany, taking its special form in the scandals surrounding Lola Montez, whose relationship to the King would eventually issue in Ludwig’s abdication and the rise of “political Catholicism,” the palpably unstable young Baron Ludwig emigrated to America to take a position managing a plantation for a Bavarian planter in Louisiana. When his employer died on the boat going to New Orleans, Ludwig was reduced to eking his way as a hired laborer. He eventually contacted a “cousin,” the cartographer and future explorer Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Egloffstein, in St. Louis, where Ludwig was trained in surveying and cartography. Ludwig returned to New Orleans by 1853, and between 1853 and 1855 he published his most notable work, *Die Geheimnisse von New-Orleans*, in the *Louisiana Staats-Zeitung*. Protests against the scandalous nature of the book, particularly its portrayal of the seamy underside of New Orleans life, as well as its prediction of race-war over slavery, led to the withdrawal of the bound edition from the public, so that few copies survive.

But this did not end his career as an author. I undertook to translate three of his later newspaper novels, although none of them was completed. The obvious reason for discontinuance was that a serial novel did not win enough subscriptions for the

newspaper to justify its publication, although it is possible that it offended the public or simply did not arouse adequate interest. Recall that there had been extensive protests in the *Tägliche Deutsche Zeitung*, the more “moderate” journal, against the *Geheimnisse* in the course of its publication.

The first novel after *Geheimnisse* was placed in the same “more radical” German-language New Orleans paper that had completed the *Mysteries*, the *Louisiana Staats-Zeitung*, playing on his recent publishing success and using his supposedly great financial profit from its publication as an element in the story. It began on 10 July 1855 and terminated suddenly in the middle of the evolving narrative on 9 August of the same year. It is the tale of a *Bluebeard*, a man who is said to marry and murder his wives one after another. He begins with an encounter with the stranger in a New Orleans restaurant, where he unravels the man’s secret. Then he goes on a long wander through the city, ending in a disreputable bar, while he plots to track down the secret residence of his old obsession from the *Geheimnisse*, Prince Paul of Württemberg. The tale appears about to explode in some sort of major confrontation when the whole thing ends after a couple-dozen episodes without further explanation.

The second abortive novel, now published in the *Tägliche Deutsche Zeitung*, dealt directly with strictly contemporary events, the siege of New Orleans that commenced in 1861 with the stationing of ships of the United States Navy to interrupt the flow of commerce into and out of the Mississippi preparatory to New Orleans’ actual capture in 1862. This was a much more successful narrative based on the English-language *The Devil on Two Sticks*, derived from *Le diable boîteux* by Alain-René Lesage in 1707, itself adapting a 1641 Spanish novel (*El diablo cojuelo*) by Luis Velez de Guevara. The story’s running conceit is that a student has freed a devil from confinement, and in reward he is taken on adventures. Reizenstein’s adaptation is a well-written and actually very funny story that was called “How the Devil is in New Orleans, and how he lifts the roofs of houses.”

The adaptation begins with the display of souvenirs from the first major battle of the Civil War, the first battle of Bull Run or Manassas (21 July 1861). Among the crowd viewing the treasures in a shop-window on Canal Street is a colonel of Zouaves, who might actually be a Yankee! He has the face of *Colonel Elmer Ellsworth*, the first martyr to the Union cause, but when his foot is extended, it looks more like a hoof. Reizenstein, representing himself once more in his own novel, immediately recognizes this being as the Devil, and he greets him as “Señor Diablo.” The Devil appreciates the attention, and he promises to take Reizenstein along on a rooftop meander on the telegraph lines, after he redeems his large black cape that he had left behind in wild retreat during the battle. He recovers the cape using gold-pieces, which had become a rarity after the start of hostilities. What follows is a series of adventures in New Orleans, stressing the intense and often comic hyper-patriotism of the day.

On the street near Union and Carondelet, the Devil and the narrator encounter a German preacher bearing a collection box and crucifix, seeking to gather money among Germans of the South to make amends to Southerners for the sins of their fellow Germans to the North. The precarious position of Germans in the South is underlined here, since Forty-Eighter propaganda had convinced everyone that all Germans in America were abolitionists and Unionists. This put every German in the South on probation if not in peril. The Devil terrifies the preacher, sending him fleeing with the

message that the Germans needed not preachers but self-reliance, as they had shown when they bled and died in the revolutions of 1848. Following this scene, the Devil and his companion resort to a bar to drink waves of German beer. Then Signor Diavolo makes his mission clear: he is in New Orleans to lift the roofs from houses to reveal the scandals within.¹

Signor Diavolo and his companion ride the fire-telegraph lines through the French Quarter from Rampart Street to Canal Street well after midnight to reach the home of the beautiful Creole Cornelia de ***y, wife of a leading Confederate officer now serving far away.² It turns out that she is no Penelope to her Odysseus. The observers happen on the scene of the fair Cornelia paying \$550 to two Italian oystermen to carry letters to the captain of the federal blockade ship “Niagara.” At least one of these letters appears to be a love letter to someone other than her husband.

This treasonous deed by “one of the most prominent families of the city” shows that Reizenstein had not lost his power to shock.

“I considered what degree of self-confidence and heroism was required for this woman, the wife of a man who held such a high position and had only recently been entrusted by the leaders of our young republic with an influential military post, to decide to prostitute her most inner secrets to two such disreputable subjects. This is to say nothing of the treasonous message entrusted to them, whose result must subject her own husband to the revenge of his political enemies.”³

But the Devil does play gallant favorites, and he betrays the fishermen while preserving Cornelia’s reputation, confirming that Goethe’s characterization of the Devil still holds true:

I am a part of that force
That always wills the bad and does only good.

In the last printed episode, the narrator encounters the Devil once more, this time at a German-language theater.⁴ His Excellency is dressed in the garb of a dandy, with a sulfur-colored vest. The stage is clearly being set for new adventures.

It is at this point that the tale is at an end. Why? There is no indication why, but in an era of political crisis, the fey playfulness and irresponsibility of Reizenstein probably hit too close to home to be tolerable. He would not return to fiction until the very end of the War, in April 1865, when he would publish *Bonseigneur in New Orleans*, which would also be the object of protest and rewriting. After this, Reizenstein concentrated on writing about scientific subjects. He continued to make a living as a surveyor and placard-painter of property for sale.

Despite his abolitionist novel of 1854-55, Reizenstein himself felt that Germans had to participate in the defense of the South so that Germans would continue to have a place in it. He would serve in the medical corps of the Louisiana Militia in 1861-62, but after the conquest he made his peace with the Union and remained in the city. He presented a series of lectures on the insects of Louisiana, using his vast collection of specimens as a door prize to encourage attendance. He would endure until his death in 1885 as “the Baron,” an increasingly eccentric New Orleans character. Despite the fact that he had not published fiction for almost twenty years, the mourners at his funeral included the two leading lights of New Orleans literature, George Washington Cable and Lafcadio Hearn.

Before the end of February, Admiral Farragut had landed on Louisiana soil, and by May Day New Orleans would again be a reluctant federal city, under the command of General Benjamin Butler.

Although the Southern identity of New Orleans will always be secure, its time as the greatest city of the Confederacy proved to be only a brief interlude.

The last of Reizenstein's novels would be of a far greater dramatic size and scope, but it would also be ended before arriving within sight of completion. It began publication in the final days of the Civil War, and it clearly was intended to have a dramatic scope reaching over decades. Like E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels* of 1815, his story is designed to coordinate narratives across many years and in many settings, toward a goal that remained hidden to its participants. The first section deals with the reality of New Orleans in 1862, but it then moves back at least forty years to other parts of the Creole Caribbean, particularly Guadeloupe. It all curls around the fates of members of the Bonseigneur family, and the central event appears to be the fates of two members of the family with the same name. Which person is buried on a plantation to the south of New Orleans while his namesake lives on Rampart Street?

The final episodes of the last novel appear to be preparing termination rather than continuation, so that it ends the story boldly by pursuing the fate of one branch of the Bonseigneurs to an end in oblivion and enigma on an island of the Lesser Antilles as a result of a yet-unfinished rebellion of the black population of the Caribbean. The historic sin of the Bonseigneurs is seen to have been its role in introducing and perpetuating slavery in the Western Hemisphere. The current generation of that family suffers the penalty leveled on the whole historic clan,

These and other questions will not be resolved here, but along the way he begins with an intense series of events, starting with the election of November 1860, the secession of the South, and the events on both sides in the siege of New Orleans and its capture by the United States. Here Reizenstein is acting as a historian, and his narrative is a lost gem of serious (if unorthodox) history of a central event in the first year of the Civil War. It began publication on 9 April 1865, shortly before the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox, and it would cease publication on 26 November of the same year, at a dramatic break in a parallel story of Bonseigneurs caught in a Mardi Gras nightmare of black revenge against the world the Creoles had created.

What will probably interest most readers is what we should call Reizenstein's historical account of the fall of New Orleans. It turns out that it is not only good narrative, it is perhaps even pretty-good history.

New Orleans Whisker Stories, without a beginning or an end
by
Ludwig von Reizenstein

Louisiana Staatszeitung, nos. 162-188, 10 July to 9 August 1855
translated by Steven Rowan

Motto: My diary roasts
On the spit
Nothing is easier to write full
Than a calendar.

“Everything I do,” the author of *Monte Christo* [Alexandre Dumas père] once told me, “is amusing, I only have to locate myself there.” I am of the same opinion, and when my pen is unwilling and does not wish to think — I throw it away and get something else to do. For example, I pull the hidden white hairs out of my head and have them pass in review as notions before my spirit, or I consider in which bank I should deposit the wealth earned from the *Mysteries of New Orleans*,¹ or I open my umbrella in my room and wander hither and yon. In this instant, I now hold my pen in my hand and truly have joy with my whole heart over how it will try with all its will to please the sweet inclination of the public that only wishes to read something interesting.

It was about ten in the morning when a young man took his seat opposite me in a beer house on Orleans Street, whom I saw in a glance was suffering from a not hopeless but still very serious illness, that has taken away so many of the most promising youths and men and dumped them in a too-early grave. To summarize quickly, I saw at once that this young man was short of funds. With that sharp sense, that even I do not grasp, to evaluate every person not by their face or clothing, but from their very pockets, whether he has money or not, it seemed to me that I had hit the target again. If my table colleague had been poorly dressed, or if instead of a beaver he wore a Kossuth- or Hecker-hat,² if the Gulf wind blew through the holes in his pants or if he had had no stockings at all, and so on, then it would have been all the easier to conclude the lamentable condition of his finances, but the young man wore an incredible outfit, dare I say, like a well-padded and-laced court poet from the time of King Louis XV. In such select clothing he would have misled many connoisseurs of mankind who judge from such impressions, as well as from the expression of his face he would have misled even a Lavater.³ But I understood the art of reading his pocket, although it was hermetically sealed and located so as to terrify a person less courageous than I. I may call this art of divining from the pocket *Pocketology* as one might speak of *Phrenology*, *Physiology*, etc.

¹ The narrator in both this and the following story is openly the author, Reizenstein.

² Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894) was the leader of the revolutionary government of Hungary in 1848; Friedrich Hecker (1811-1881) led an attempted putsch against the princely governments of Germany. Both wore distinctive hats.

³ Johann Caspar Lavater (1740-1801) of Zürich, a physiologist, most noted for *L'art de connaître les hommes par la physiognomie* (Paris, 1820).

This spirit of observation accompanied me during the course of an entire quarter-hour, as my table-neighbor was still drinking from his first glass of Bock-beer and trailed me by six glasses. He had not yet spoken a word to me, and I none to him, which I never do to a person unknown to me, since to take the initiative in such a situation looks curious, hence dumb and petty-bourgeois.

A *garçon* brought me my seventh glass. I did not look at my neighbor, since he began to seem very boring to me, that he had not made any effort to show himself, although I completely understood the reason.

“The young man looks entirely noble,” I said to myself, “but unfortunately he has no money. For that reason, he does not drink all of his beer because he cannot decide how he is to pay for it. Obviously, he is too proud to give me his trust, and I cannot forgive him for that, and although I am no longer looking at him, I wanted to remain sitting there, to experience what the end of the song will be.”

A pushing and shuffling with his feet moved me to give him my attention again, for I thought he would now make an effort to leave the beer hall and — not pay, in which case I would have grabbed him by his coattails, bringing him to a standstill, and would have said to him:

“Listen, my dear friend, I am an author, so I have money like hay, and even if you are closer to a millionaire than I, you would not take it badly if, instead of your Bock beer, which you, incidentally, only appeared to drink, I invite you to drink half a dozen bottles of Catawba in my company.”

The shuffling with his feet began again, and this time it was accompanied by a delicate movement of his right hand into his left vest pocket, from which he took something that he still held in his closed hand. At the same time, he leaned somewhat over the table and spoke to me in a soft but expressive tone:

“I suspect that you are a German?”

“That I am,” I responded rather dryly: “but if I may ask, on what grounds do you suspect that?”

“I thought so,” was the answer: “Otherwise you could not have sat for an eternity with a Bock beer.”

“I thought so too,” I said, “otherwise you would not be in the position — and at that point I looked at my golden watch decorated with diamonds from the Munich treasury, which I always carry next to my skin, since I am afraid of New Orleans thieves — to spend an entire hour figuring the cubic contents of an empty beer glass without spitting even once or putting your legs on the table.”

“It has not upset you,” the seated man continued, “that I supposed you to be a German? I know — I have heard — read — they have told me of the Know-Nothings — in short, I know that people have grounds — often one denies being a German.”

“Denied?” I asked, yawning, “on the contrary, I would deny at the present time not to be a German.”

“I actually have a request for you,” he continued and then interrupted himself for several moments. I filled this pause with a respectable “Well, what now?” But, to admit openly, I knew (in keeping with my Pocketological science) where his feet rested. I was just not clear what he was holding in his enclosed fist.

“Yes, a request ...”

I listened, but not with much attention, because I have been unable to get excited about anyone or anything.

“First of all — do you live in this district?”

“No,” I declared. I actually had sensed a great desire in me not to give him an answer, but this time I have undertaken to be patient, so as to realize over time whether he really could be read from his pocket.

“Then you live in the first or fourth district?”⁴

Once again, I was unable to imagine what he intended with this question. So I answered once more entirely in keeping with my conscience:

“I live in the first, but very often come to the fourth district for business.”

With this answer, his face seemed to brighten, he opened his previously closed fist, and now I saw a carefully tied packet of omnibus tickets lying on his flat hand.

“I am currently without money,” he said, and since you often come into the fourth district, you could perhaps need the tickets. I bought them in better days, but later misplaced them and now accidentally found them again in my vest pocket.”

It was as if I had fallen from the clouds — but no, I shall not lie, but my heart beat with joy at the thought that my science of reading pockets was demonstrated in practice. Not much had been lacking for me to embrace this man out of pure joy over my Pocketological victory. How proud I am now that I did not do that then. But I was so pleased that I would have given him my well-stuffed wallet, but since I had so solidly attached it to my vest pocket when I decided to go out, that I came to my senses and made a negative hand motion to his omnibus tickets, paid my bill and *his*, and invited him to a French restaurant for a *déjeuner dinatoire*.⁵

Arriving in the restaurant, I chose a small, round table that was far from the others, otherwise almost entirely occupied, giving us a view of the entire locale. I always do this in a public place, because I cannot tolerate anyone turning his back on me, which would be true to excess if I were placed in the middle of the salon among the other gnawing beasts and cud-chewers.

My omnibus-ticket man took a fine place across from me.

As a courtesy, because he was my guest, I first passed him the menu, which he took with no small haste. He appeared to have chosen his meal, for he cast the menu aside on the table, but soon he took it up again and appeared to be considering, as if he were afraid not being able to pay when he had quieted the nagging complaints of his stomach. He acted as if he were completely alone and a cavalier did not sit opposite him who had so much money that he could have invited all the famous German writers in New Orleans to a brilliant banquet — I finally lost my patience and my stomach began to growl — for the first time in my life. As much presence of mind as I possess and have ever possessed, this time I lost all control. It was not as if I feared for the growling of my stomach, no, but rather an entirely strange combination of ideas caused me to see no good premonition. I do not know how it came about, but I saw my guest, still reading the menu, with entirely different eyes.

⁴ Due to long-term tensions between Creoles and Anglos, New Orleans was governed by virtually autonomous district governments until 1855, with an annual council to settle matters. The First District was the French Quarter.

⁵ A formal midday dinner.

For the moment, I thought no more of my art of reading pockets.

While we earlier saw the face of our supposed captain of industry, despite his lack of money, redden, now it was as pale as death. His eyes seemed larger, darker and so bloodshot that a mosquito, had it come near, would certainly have drilled them with his wings and snout. I looked and looked, and the closer I looked at him, all the more did his face vary from the one I had seen before.

“He is an actor and must have something against me, whatever it is, perhaps against my wallet, and at this time he is trying out a mood or direction of spirit in order to mislead or cheat me”: that was my first thought.

My next thought was:

“Perhaps the poor man has some concern that has suddenly arisen like a phantom into his head and stares out of his eyes.”

Both of these thoughts occurred to me for an eighth of a second, but immediately I was corrected, since his eyes, his facial features, appeared to show no more concern, but rather devilish evil and a Mephistophelian coldness. But how should I make sense of it when he laid down the menu, which hitherto had covered the lower part of his face, on the table, so that I saw his beard. His fine, full beard, which shone like combed silk and had appeared black as coal, had become steel blue and moved back and forth, although he moved no facial muscle, and he held his chin as stiffly as a wax figure. He continued to look down on the menu, and now I noticed that he held a tiny piece of red chalk in his hand, with which he was making several signs on the menu, to note the dishes with which he intended to amuse his mouth. I would soon learn, however, why he was doing this.

Several waiters had already passed by us without receiving any order from us on our preference. Perhaps they were also waiting for us to decide.

I was still in the grips of bemusement about the blue beard of my table mate when he finally broke his silence, leaned over the table to place the menu directly under my nose and pointed to several little red crosses that he had placed next to several dishes with the aforementioned chalk.

“What does that mean?” I responded, being so courteous as to take the cigar from my mouth so that my smoke would not fly into his face.

“Be so good as to look here, and here, and here” he continued, “I would have chosen these dishes if I felt any appetite at all, — but since this is not the case, although you have been so good as to invite me, I would appreciate it if you would give me the money for it — I would also like to have that with the wine that I would have had if I were thirsty — that makes a grand total of about six dollars.”

If I had not already been dumbfounded, then that was certainly the case now. If he had asked me for ten or twenty dollars, or even more, I would have given it to him without protest. But to do so in such a way? That is really offensive, really filthy! But since I had until then never seen his blue beard, which appeared ever more blue to me, I suppressed my upset and paralyzed my rancor as much as I could. And although I was not at all afraid of the Devil, I had always had enormous respect for Bluebeards. And now I understood all too well that my tablemate was a Bluebeard.[#]

[#] The story of Bluebeard, a knight who serially murders his wives, derives from Charles Perrault in his *Contes de la Mère l'Oye* [= “Stories of Mother Goose”], 1697. It further appeared in the first edition of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812-14), as well as Ludwig Bechstein, *Deutsche Märchenbuch* (1845).

As a student I encountered many students, such as one in Milan when I visited the café “at the Yellow Glove,” another Bluebeard dined with me at the *table d’hôte* in the “Habsburg Dragon” in Venice, and with a third, to whom I have to owe the fact that I am now in America, I met in Rome in the “Dead Cardinal,” and now it was happening again in the New World, and precisely in a city where I have sinned and celebrated and brought so much to the light of day which were eternally fated to remain *Secrets*.

When I first saw a Bluebeard, I believed there was only one, who would also be the last. On making the acquaintance of the second, I was a skeptic insofar as a belief in a duality of Bluebeards. When I encountered the third one, I just thought that all good things came in threes, and that this was the very last one. It did not last long that my faith in the trinity of Bluebeards received a mortal wound, so that I had to begin to believe in a pluralism of Bluebeards. — That Bluebeards existed in the New World, and particularly in New Orleans, had never been asserted by me, and if anyone had asserted that an hour earlier, then I would have declared him a liar without any hesitation.

Although I am in the best humor right now, I still have to press my pen against my forehead, and then it occurs to me to be like the hand on the white face of a clock that one has forgotten to wind. The hand stands still, pointing at the same number. The buzzing of a mosquito above my eyebrow warned me to put the hand back in motion. The reader has missed nothing during this halt, since, if he has to wait a few minutes for the continuation of my adventure with the Bluebeard, so in the course of what now follows add his imagination to the theme, of which he previously had nothing or only something very incomplete about it. Yes, I owe the reader something about the nature, the characteristics and the appearance of Bluebeards.

There have been Bluebeards at all times, but they appear more often in one century than in another. The assertion of the author of *Cabbala denudata*,⁶ that there is only one Bluebeard in the world in any century can be completely refuted through my own experience of having encountered several Bluebeards in a period of only five years. —

No one can be disturbed by the fact that I am not proceeding in philosophic terms. Doing that, I would fall into a dilemma from which the care and good will of the public would have difficulty rescuing me. —

It is a generally-recognized axiom that all our dealings and thoughts to encounter and judge are anchored to the changeless laws of Nature, and that a person may never step beyond the prescribed circle of Nature without falling victim to madness.

This is not the case with Bluebeards.

They possess certain advantages in their cerebral system so that from time to time they may step outside the sphere assigned them by nature with a totally healthy mind and in that way, bring things to the light of day that I myself would be all too happy to write in the Book of Myths, if I were not entirely convinced that I have seen them myself, experienced them myself, and tried them myself.

⁶ Baron Christian Knorr von Rosenroth of Silesia (1631-1689) composed a “Christian Kabbala” entitled “The Kabbala Revealed,” *Kabbala denudata*.

The Italian poet Ugo Foscolo⁷ once showed a friend of mine the plaster impression from the skull of a Bluebeard, as the poet remarked the following:

Under this platform-shaped skull, the idea of an unnatural crime once slumbered. Tormented by the Demon of Woman-Murder, this Bluebeard applied his enormous wealth to pursue his unnatural lusts *with Security*, which over fifteen years, in which time he had no fewer than twelve wives, he succeeded. And when he fell into the hands of justice through a remarkable series of conditions, he brought his destructive strength to bear on himself by means of a horrible weapon, which he hid in his shoe sole, splitting his skull to the eyebrows, taking his brain out, and contemplating it for several minutes with dreadful glee and then eating it as the guard was entering. — That was his end. —

One encounters with horror these terrible mysteries of human nature, which science has not been able to solve, and which it perhaps never shall resolve.

Bluebeards do not reproduce themselves, any more than do albinos or mules do in nature. But it is more surprising with Bluebeards that their erotic drives rise to a truly stratospheric height. Here Nature appears to compensate on one side what is broken on the other.

An Italian physician, traveling from Munich to Milan nine years ago, assured me that Bluebeards arise when the umbilical cord of boys is not tied quickly enough, although I cannot believe this, since otherwise my good friend ***, with whom I bathed in Lake Pontchartrain two weeks ago, and who in his Byronic passion would bet he could swim across the Lake at the cost of nearly a prince's apanage, would also be a Bluebeard. If I had insisted on this umbilical doctrine, he would have fainted on the ground in terror.

There have been Bluebeards like San José who were truly heroic, pouring out their blood for a good cause; others, however, are deviant, vengeful, and continually making trouble, such as Adrian Christo, the dreadful instrument of Pope Gregory VII and the true inventor of celibacy.

On the influence that Bluebeards exercise on their immediate surroundings, so many marvelous things are told that we cannot omit stressing some items:

* If a Bluebeard encounters a girl on her way to church, she dies within a month.

** If a Bluebeard enters through an open window, and a girl is in the room standing before a mirror, she will never have a husband or a lover.

*** If a girl permits a Bluebeard to kiss her, all her teeth will fall out on the same day.

**** If an unmarried young man sits on a chair, a sofa, etc., where a Bluebeard sat previously, his wife or sweetheart will be unfaithful on the same chair, etc.

***** Whoever drinks from a glass that a Bluebeard has drunk will not be able to drink anything but water for the rest of his remaining life.

⁷ Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827), Italian poet and patriot.

***** Whoever lights his cigar on that of a Bluebeard will lose its savor.

***** If a Bluebeard gives a letter with money to the post office, then whoever receives it becomes either a thief or a robber.

So Bluebeard of New Orleans took the role of an outstanding industrialist in order to make my acquaintance, and it will further be seen that it was no accident that he encountered me in the German Beer House on Orleans Street.

After all that I have said of Bluebeards up to now, many will wonder why, as soon as I recognized him as such, I did not have him immediately arrested. In the first place, such a step is by no means an entirely easy matter, for a thousand means stand at his disposal to avoid such a peril — and secondly, they would have laughed in my face if I had complained to the police that there was a Bluebeard there and then, and if I sought them to arrest such a being.

And it would make no more sense than if I sought you to blow out all the lights. — (Since you can only read Whisker Stories by night, when your wife and children have long been in bed) — to steal a glance in these papers by full moonlight. — And is there any woman in New Orleans who could be so remiss to sneak out of bed in the middle of the night, if her husband is sitting, to look over her husband's shoulder at these pages, then say beforehand the name of "Adrian Christo" three times and drop your gaze into her beautiful hovering breasts. That is as good as a talisman that she carries by her heart to be secure against the love of another man.

We now find ourselves back in the Restaurant.

"Bluebeard manners!" was heard in my insides as he, instead of eating with me, asked for six dollars. Naturally I wanted to give it to him, since I was now sitting hot in Bluebeard's nest and I knew well that one does not get rid of Bluebeards that easily if they have you in their grasp. So you have to give him to his destiny so far as it does not offend your honor or as a cavalier. And there is, in addition, my instinct as a novelist that I should still get a great story, which would be useful, for me and others, to bring to the literary market.

As I said, I wanted to give him the six dollars, but the fellow let it sit and continued to do what he had been doing before.

"Also, not bad," I thought to myself. I only want to see how the day ends.

He had his elbows on the table and suddenly asked me:

"You take me for a Bluebeard?"

I did not feel myself threatened at all, as the reader could perhaps think, since the same question had been raised to me by all the Bluebeards with whom I had met.

I answered calmly:

"To judge by your beard, one could come to that supposition."

“By my beard?” he asked: “Have you already seen Bluebeards with black beards?” The last question was directed at me with a repellent smile, as he stroked the whiskers on his chin and upper lip.

“But your beard is blue —”

“Become blue!” he interrupted me quickly, “and if you would be so good as to cease to blow your cigar smoke in my face, you will find my beard to be as black as it was before.”

I mechanically took the cigar out of my mouth and laid it on the table. The smoke now rose almost perpendicularly into the air, and it was only because a waiter passed by, making some wind, that my table mate received it back in his face. Since this seemed to irritate him, he took a silver spoon lying before him and pressed its backside on the glimmering end of my cigar, which would not have burned very long in any case, since it was only Virginia tobacco in a Havana wrapper.

“How do you find my beard now?” was his next question.

“Damn!” I cried out, since I was truly amazed, “I see it as black as coal.”

“May the Devil take you!” I thought to myself.

But to him I said:

“If you should wish it that way — on my behalf!” I spoke these words very carefully, since I was careful not to irritate this monster.

One sees that I understand how to deal with Bluebeards.

He was silent a few moments, staring at me in a shameless manner.

A waiter came by and asked us if we had not yet decided to eat.

“Here!” my table mate suddenly declared, passing the menu to the *garçon* and pointing to his red marks.

And he said to me:

“You are my guest today, and you will make no further efforts to read my wallet as to whether one has money or not!” Then he leaned over, reached into his right shoe and laid a hundred-dollar banknote on the table, then a second and a third followed. “We will blow away this money today,” he continued, “and you will not go home until all of it is obliterated.”

I sat for a few moments as if struck down, since up to now I had never seen a Bluebeard read my thoughts. That was rather too much. “He had read it directly out of your brain,” I thought to myself, “and you were not even able to read what money he had. Since how are his shoes different from his wallet? Who knows,” I thought further, “whether my table mate is not the real, true, original Bluebeard, and the others that I had met earlier were just pseudo-Bluebeards? Which would lead me to think that it was perhaps true that only *One* Bluebeard existed, and this is he who exists for the nineteenth century?” — As mentioned, I sat for several moments as if struck down, which incidentally would have appeared very poorly, since nothing is dumber than a person who is so astounded that he loses his senses. I had actually not lost them, but I had not yet entirely recovered, and I was unable to ask Monsieur Bluebeard:

“How do you know that I boast of the art of reading wallets, and that I tried it on you? That in fact does not appear to me to be possible by natural means — —”

He smiled in a rather malicious manner and stroked his whiskers several times. Then he said:

“You displayed your secret art on the open street, and you are surprised that someone knows it?”

“On the open street?” I repeated in a stretched-out tone, since I needed time to think what that might mean.

“Yes, on the open street,” he asserted stiffly and solidly.

“Where, when, to whom?” I asked in confusion.

“On Orleans Street, this morning before ten o’clock, and to me,” he declared entirely in the order of my laconic question.

“That is a pure lie,” I thought to myself.

But to him I said:

“Entirely inconceivable!”

“Entirely conceivable if you think about the fact that you have the lovely virtue of driving your openness so far as to express your thoughts aloud on the open street,” he responded, again smiling most maliciously.

After several lines exchanged back and forth, this matter was finally clarified. It proved to be this way:

Without my being aware, the Bluebeard had followed me a considerable distance until he left me about fifty paces from the Beer House in Orleans Street. He then rushed ahead of me and sat in that Beer House, whose name I had mentioned several times to myself, as I always do when I have a goal in my wandering. In the same way, I acted about reading wallets. If I had gone to another house whose name I had spoken in a low voice, I probably would not have made the acquaintance of the Bluebeard on this day. But it is still inconceivable to me either how sharp his hearing was, nor how he recognized me, and how he hunted for me on this particular day, and actually found me. For what purpose he sought me out, the reader will discover in the next lines.

“*Me Hercule!* I call that really eating!” — I had not even touched my Pompano with caviar, when my table mate was long since done. In place of the usual lunch wine he had ordered two bottles of haute Sauterne, which I was not happy to see, for a drinking place — which was still in expectation, if his three hundred dollars were still to be consumed today as he said — that begins with such varieties could not easily expect a good conclusion.

He uncorked both bottles at the same time and placed a bottle in front of me. I poured some of it in my glass, while he poured into my glass from his bottle. That is obviously a convivial act for a Bluebeard.

“Long live my father!” he cried out, raising his glass high.

“Long live!” I wanted to toast him, but I gulped it down in such a way that I spent at least five minutes coughing.

He smiled and said:

“I knew in advance that you would choke when there was talk of my father, for whom I sought you out today.”

“On account of your father?” I asked in astonishment.

“Whom you have maligned —” he continued.

“I? Have maligned your father? Would you be so good first of all to tell me who your father is?” I asked.

“The Prince of W*,⁸” he answered, and he looked severely into my face.

“That cannot be!” I responded, “he has no son ...”

“But he has a bastard ...” he assured me.

“So far as I know, he has neither a natural nor an unnatural son, but since you yourself say that you are his bastard, I could believe that — incidentally, I can in no way recall ever having ever maligned your Lord Father,” I declared.

“You no longer recall what you wrote of him, concerning an amour ...”

“And you call that a malign comment against your Lord Father?” I asked rather amazed, since I well knew what he meant.

“Yes,” he declared, “but this is not important — in fact, it is even pleasant to me that you wrote in that manner, for I have no reason to be a thankful natural son, as you earlier so splendidly expressed it — as I have heard, my father will soon depart New Orleans forever, and I would like to speak with him once more. I sought you out because I suspected that you knew where he lived, which until now I have been unable to find out.”

“So, all of his blue hairs have gone away!” I thought to myself. “He is supposedly not able to find his father’s dwelling! Either he is laying some sort of trap for me or it is another story like the omnibus tickets. These Bluebeards are inscrutable! One never knows what is going on with them. But I am ready for anything with him. I must believe what he says provisionally, even if the inadequacy of what he says is obvious. If he is playing a trick on me that affects my honor, I have my six-shot Colt Revolver which will not fail, even if he is a Bluebeard a thousand times over.”

I responded to him:

“Your Lord Father currently lives in three different places in the city ...”

“Unnecessary,” he interrupted me, “I know that very well, but I need only to know, where does he sleep? For I want to surprise him in the middle of the night, and that you should accompany me is obvious ...”

“Good,” I told him, “and so far as your Lord Father’s sleeping quarters go, we will not fail to seek him in St. Louis Street, one block above Dauphin.”

“Do you know the localities in the house precisely?” he asked me.

“I do not know them,” I responded.

“Quite fatal! So, we are compelled to ring the bell.”

“In every case,” I responded to him, “unless we want to pass through the keyhole.”

“Isn’t there an adjoining roof there, or a gallery from which one could ...?”

“We are supposed to enter like thieves?” I interrupted him.

“Bah! Thieves! Is it only thieves who climb into houses in the night hours?”

“Not entirely!” I declared, “gallants also do that to visit their beloveds.”

“Good, then we will enter as gallants ...”

“And where are the beloveds?” I asked, compelled to smile, since the whole story did not please me.

“They are also there,” he replied, “it is exactly for that reason that I want to visit my father.”

⁸ This refers to Prince (Duke) Paul Wilhelm of Württemberg (1797-1860), an avid traveler and collector, who has a major and finally ambiguous role in Reizenstein’s *The Mysteries of New Orleans*. In fact, he had an illegitimate daughter who lived with a family in Mascoutah, Illinois.

This answer proved to me that he was very well instructed, only he did not wish to enlighten me about the Prince of W* being his father. At least I had never heard that the Prince had a son.

Now he rose from his chair, grabbed both empty bottles and struck them in half on the edge of the table. I watched him in amazement, but immediately I thought: “*No matter*, that is just a Bluebeard’s manners!”

The few guests still remaining in the restaurant looked at us in astonishment, and I could see from their smiles that they held both of us, or at least my table mate, to be drunk.

A *garçon* came up, but said nothing about the unfortunate bottles, but also brought the bill, which Monsieur Bluebeard did not check.

On leaving, he asked me for a cigar.

I passed him my cigar case. He took two cigars at once, gave me one and hurried to the spirit lamp, where he lit his up and passed it to me for the same purpose with a very courteous manner.

I was close to lighting my cigar on his. But luckily, I recalled at the same moment that in this way I would lose my sense of smell forever.

I acted as if I were afraid of ruining my cigar if I brought it near, and I quickly made use of the spirit lamp. When I accidentally caught a glance in the mirror, I remarked how his lips were distorted into an ominous smile. This smile seemed to say to me: “Just wait, I will get you yet!”

I now took the greatest care to pay strict attention to Monsieur Bluebeard’s attitude, and I recapitulated all of experiences gained, which now rose massively from the depths of my brain. Often, I shuddered at the thought that perhaps this very night I would witness one of those dreadful scenes that I saw the Bluebeards in Venice and Milan perform, when I found myself robbed of all my ability not to be shocked. My stiletto or pistol had vanished from my pocket even before I noticed that I was no longer in control of my own will. —

What courage did I have as we stepped into the street? As a person I was morally disarmed, as an author I found myself extraordinarily good. The most splendid association of ideas, proper for all possible sorts of poetics, came to me in droves and formally besieged the fortress of my brain. Epics, Heroics, dramas, etc., I could now write down, as we were only beginning our wandering. The closeness of a Bluebeard put me into such a productive mood.

It was barely twelve, and the second half of the day still lay open before me. Then night suddenly fell; three, four hours vanished — midnight is there! Where will we be then! Have we awakened the beloved of Lord Paul from her sweet slumber and how is it going with the father of the supposed son? Then we climbed back out of the window through which we had entered the interior of the house — perhaps the morning was already breaking — Monsieur Bluebeard left me and I go with hanging head, like a man hard stricken, to home — — drink three cups of black coffee with Cognac and did not permit my cigar to go out until I had written down the experiences of this day — assuming that my pen has no hesitation.

The vanity of my Bluebeard exceeds all boundaries. The fact that the people everywhere stand still and look at us does not amaze me. He hangs his right arm with

cosmopolitan nonchalance on my left arm, yet light as a feather, and if there is any pressure to turn a corner, so elastically gentle that I would only have to close my eyes to imagine a particular illusion that would have made me into the most envied being in the entire world. I did not do this, perhaps because there was no difficulty to overcome. But if anyone who had been in the position to give me such an illusion on the condition that I would first have to vault a barrier seven feet high — my heart would have had one renunciation less about which to complain.

Yes, I was entirely right when I predicted that the vanity of my Bluebeard would exceed all boundaries. At every show window, he caused me to pause. He did this not to devour the splendors displayed, but rather to see his own reflection appear, so that the bright mirror-glass showed him caressing his moustache and displaying a pair of rows of the most splendid pearls between his half-open lips.

Then the wings of his nose expanded as if in expectation of a romantic liaison, and he left that show-window with me, only to stand in front of the next window or the one after that to go through the same procedure. We came to places where Daguerreotypes were displayed, then his mooning at mirrors seemed to have no end. People standing behind or beside us to look at the pictures saw at once that he was using them as bathroom mirrors. This concerned him not at all. He continued in his effort to make ophthalmological studies, for his eyes opened their widest, as if he wished to consume the image in front of him — first his eyelids would sink to melancholic width, then they opened so wide as necessary to press his case with success with ladies. — No one but I could tolerate the Bluebeard so long.

This directionless wandering through the streets had to have an end, which was all the more to be desired because we hardly exchanged ten words with one another in the entire time.

The heaven shown like a gigantic sapphire and only a single little cloud, precisely in the shape of my profile, swam through the pure water of this precious stone. As if in greeting, the little cloud nodded as it passed over my head and seemed to call to me, “You there *Baccalaureus Monachensis*” — “*Ego Civis Romanus sum!*”[#] was my reply, and I still believe today that my little cloud heard me, since it flew faster than ever and soon vanished from my view. — I turned to Monsieur Bluebeard with the words:

“If we want to drink, I believe now would be the best time, for my tongue is sticking to my gums and hinders me from having a lively conversation with you.”

“I am one of those unfortunates,” he said in a joking tone, “who cannot thaw out until he has emptied half a dozen bottles. Besides, you are always coarse and insipid if you are being practical. You will have found it best with me. —”

“Absolutely not,” I responded, “except for the miserly use of your tongue, I have found you very enlightening and interesting up to now.”

“I see,” he said on the other hand, “you are working to be sly and accommodating toward me because you see me as a Bluebeard.” With these words he passed the back of his hand over my whiskers, which now, for the first time, turned steel blue.

I could grasp how this happened as little as I could understand how his blue beard became coal-black in the restaurant. It would also be a pointless exercise to try to figure out this change, because the little that was known of the physics of Bluebeards does not

[#] Latin: “Munich Bachelor (of Arts)” — “I am a citizen of Rome!”

suffice to explain the chameleonic nature of their beards, and particularly their mustaches. —

“A Bluebeard,” I responded to him, “has the right to certain demands that one of us never can nor should.”

His lips formed into a light smile when I spoke these words. Through a gentle pressure on my arm, he had me stop walking, grasped my hand and said:

“Now is the time for me to show you how I really am. Tell me openly to my face, that up to now I have shown myself to be a silly, repellent person — Through such openness you would be performing no small service to me ——”

“I did not know” I responded to him, “that you were playing a little comedy with me, and that was all.”

“That is not said openly,” he responded. “I know that until now you have taken me to be a half-fool, but I also know that you are already aware that the moment has taken place in which the fool in me has departed. I thank you from my whole heart for the patience you have practiced at my side, and when you wished to enter my father’s house tonight, I was not disinclined to have you get a significant sum of money.”

“False serpent!” I thought to myself, “You are not tangling me in your yarn and, just because you do not believe that I am afraid of you that I will share this day’s adventure. My curiosity drives me to climb with you tonight into the house of your supposed father in order to see the lover of whom you have spoken, but by the blue hairs of your whiskers, if you play too hard with me, I will still seek my revenge. I foresee an awful scene if it happens. I will also beware of pocket-picking, in case you desire my revolver: these were my thoughts at this moment, since I noted a particular motion in my legs that this Bluebeard was not to be feared as much as the others I had encountered in the course of my life. —

“Ah! *Parbleu!* You’re here, Mother Goose-Feet?”⁹ he suddenly called out to an old woman who had just jumped over the edge of the street, rushed toward him and kissed his hand. “How are the little ones doing?” he continued — “do you now have the Devil in New Orleans?”

“A devil has the little one, has both of us — but unfortunately it is a poor devil. Little Malvin has since become quite handsome and strong, but this what use is that if you have no money,” the woman asked said that, showing two rows of ugly teeth.

“A poor devil!” he repeated, “Little Malvina has already attached himself to one?”

“He wants to have her, otherwise nothing has happened, I can swear to it,” the old woman assured him, drilling the Bluebeard with a pair of bold eyes from head to foot.

“If I see anything, Mother Goose-Feet,” he responded, I will throttle the necks of you and him.”

“Holy Virgin! Don’t look at me so nastily — Little Malvina is as guiltless as a dove, and if you wish to convince yourself of that, just come along — You could still caress and kiss her, as much as you wish.”

“In what hole do you live, then.”

“We lived in the ‘Old Frame Corner’ for a while, until we found something better.”

“The name sounds suspicious, Mother Goose-Foot,” the Bluebeard remarked.

⁹ “Gänsefüßchen” is the usual German term for quotation marks.

“If you would like, I can take you there. The little ones will rejoice!”

“Good,” said Bluebeard, “but only keep three feet away — go ahead, and the man here will follow you.”

The old woman wanted to continue kissing, but the Bluebeard forbade it. With rapid steps, she rushed ahead of us, and when she went around a corner, she stood and waited until we had come so close that she could not lose sight of us.

From this moment the Bluebeard was as if transformed. He often pressed my hand as we walked along and assured me that I would still experience a wonderful day. Mother Goose-Foot, he said, was a charming person, and I just had to see Little Malvina. At the beginning, I said yes to everything, but since he acted ever more trustingly with me, I finally took more freedoms toward him. That seemed to please him more than my earlier severe, guarded manner. He thought that I was a perfect companion for a Bluebeard if I only wanted to be, and he was only sorry that, like all other Bluebeards, he was bound by the necessity not to have a good friend for longer than one day. — So far as the good friend went, I defended myself in stillness against what any other person would have done in the same situation.

“But I am curious where Mother Goose-Foot is taking us — we have already gone halfway across town, and still not seen an “Old Frame Corner,” the Bluebeard remarked, when we have already crossed Esplanade Street.¹⁰

“It must not be very far away” I responded.

“You know we are at the Old Frame Corner and have said nothing about it ...” the Bluebeard said.

“What *Orleanser* would not know that?” I said. “If there is any dubious hole of a bar into which any young man of reputation avoids entering by daylight, it is the “Old Frame Corner.” If Mother Goose-Foot, as you call the old woman, has lived in this nest, she must have had low expectations for the respect of her fellow man.”

“Hm! Hm! You would not speak that way if you learned from me who Mother Goose-Foot really is and from whence she descends!” the Bluebeard declared in a tone that very much excited my curiosity.

“Well, who is Mother Goose-Foot supposed to be?” I asked with feigned nonchalance.

“You will barely think it possible if I say ...”

“Why not? The destinies of people are often marvelous.”

“Seldom as marvelous as of Mother Goose-Foot ...”

“She was probably once in as good a situation as she now seems to be in a bad one,” I rashly inserted.

“That says everything and nothing,” he responded.

“Certainly,” I said, “the story of every person consists of ‘then’ and ‘now.’”

“But who Mother Goose-Foot is and from whence she descends? That, my friend, would remain a riddle if I did not tell you ... hm, my friend, and if I told you in what relationship Mother Goose-Foot stands to me ... hm, hm, the charming person once

¹⁰ Esplanade separated the French Quarter from the Marigny suburb. Bernard Xavier Philippe de Marigny (1785-1868), a prominent New Orleans Creole planter, was an aide to General Wilkinson 1805-7, later aide de camp to Governor Claiborne, developed the Marigny suburb east of Esplanade from 1806. He was a notorious gambler who sought to make good his debts through property speculation.

guided the Devil to New Orleans — truly, it cannot get any better — and in addition, today, imagine what that would mean, today, today! — where I have you at my side, where you will have the goodness to accompany me into the sleeping quarters of my Lord Father — — *Parbleu*, my friend — you will have fun!”

“But, don’t take this badly” I responded, “if I here cite a well-known rhyme:

To me all of this is as dumb
As if a mill-wheel is rotating over my head.

The Bluebeard roared such a loud laugh that Mother Goose-Foot, who had advanced a portion of the way ahead of us, suddenly stopped and looked back at us.

The Bluebeard saw this in an instant and said to me:

“That must be where the ‘Old Frame Corner’ is, since the witch is standing there.”

When I took a closer look around, it was truly so.

“It is correct,” I said, “to the left of Mother Goose-Foot stands the ‘Old Frame Corner.’” — But that is not why Mother Goose-Foot stopped, but rather due to the loud laughter, since she immediately made a right turn, and rushed ahead.

“The Devil take the old witch!” the Bluebeard cried out: “Where is she going then, if that house is already supposed to be the Old Frame Corner?”

“Call to her,” I said, “probably in her zeal she has overlooked the goal we set.”

The Bluebeard placed two of his fingers — specifically his *Läuseknicker* and his *Goldfinger*¹¹ — on his lips and let an alarming whistle sound. Many people who thought it was for them turned around. Among them was Mother Goose-Foot. She looked around, first to the right and left a few times, then her gaze fell accidentally on the “Old Frame Corner,” because she slapped her forehead, and reversed her path back, then remained in front of the specific house and waved to us, who approached her with very slow steps.

Before we entered the “Old Frame Corner,” it was only between two and three in the afternoon. The Bluebeard promised me, if good wine could be found here, to tell me the whole story of the father, the bastard, Mother Goose-Foot, Little Malvina, the two dears, explaining them a little more and to distinguish them better than he had done before. By the time he was finished, he thought, we could have opened half of at least three dozen bottles of wine — if they actually had any good wine in the Corner. In the meantime, for entertainment, we could play “Moses’ Temple,” and if there, gamblers were to be found, we could also play “Monte” in Duero-style. — Midnight would come quicker than one could believe, and the Bastard would have had rather a buzz when he went to his father and his beloved. On the other hand, I consoled myself with the fact that I could consume huge amounts of wine and am not easy to get drunk. Besides, I was careful to remain sober, that is, still to think clearly even with a slightly warmed head, and remain on my legs.

The “Old Frame Corner” is an old, two-story building, over whose entry hangs even now a piece of sailcloth on which the name given above is still unclearly to be read. According to this name, the “Old Frame Corner” must have consisted of half-timber construction and mark a street corner, which is, however, not the case. It is built of brick and occupies two so-called key lots that split the block in question in two. Even the

¹¹ *Läuseknicker*, louse-kicker (=index finger); *Goldfinger*, gold finger (=middle finger).

proprietor himself does not know where the name, “Old Frame Corner,” comes from, since he took it over with the name already attached. He only knows that his house is rather run down, and was built in the days when a dime was still the smallest coin in New Orleans. — I have searched through London and Paris, but I never saw any bar, any gambling den, any café, and any flophouse of such dubious appearance. Nowhere was the Devil so present with his repellent noise and terrifying grimaces than in the “Old Frame Corner.” A *Hamburg Mill* or a *Hotooh-Kraal*¹² still preserved some external decorum, and strictly speaking, appear rather proper, even if inside the plague-marks show all the more dreadfully. Here, however, even the outside is filthy, and it requires no novelist’s instinct to see from a quick glance that things were not quite right with the “Old Frame Corner.”

If the proprietor is wealthy enough to give his house a fine outside, and yet he omits such a renovation, this must in fact have an entirely special reason. The proprietor himself must know best whether he gains or loses by such external neglect. He must have had the experience that a certain sort of customer, from which he draws the most money, are attracted by this sort of exterior rather than repelled.

The deserted sailor or soldier, the peddler who sells stolen goods, the recruiting officer who seeks to fill his empty pockets in wartime, the policeman who would love to seize someone by the collar to let him go immediately afterward for a decent payoff, the dishonest gambler who has been excluded by his higher-ranking colleagues — All of these and many besides, race with sunken heads past the splendid venues of our city and search with lifted beards for such caves. Here you will find food and lodging, and since the landlord never grants credit, he always bears a certain fatherly concern for their security, if his protection is also at the expense of the wallet. Like the host, so also the hostess. Both of them compete in their zeal to make their guests’ stay as comfortable as possible.

I do not wish to take the trouble to spell out the distasteful, vulgar songs and remembrances that cover the exterior of the “Old Frame Corner,” since the reader would thank me little for such an anthology, but he would turn directly around before he had accompanied the Bluebeard and me into the aforementioned cave. To prevent such a pastiche — which as an author I have more to fear than the honking of the Capitol geese — I would rather follow right behind Mother Goose-Foot along with my Bluebeard into the interior of the “Old Frame Corner.”

First of all, a remarkable gallery of pictures greets our eyes that we could not have seen had not Mother Goose-Foot taken a match out of her shriveled bodice and lit a tallow stump in an old, bent wall sconce. — This gallery consists of a very long passageway, barely a foot and a half wide, into which light must have streamed, whether through windows or half-shades. For I have trouble accepting that anyone would have

¹² The Hamburg Mill is a locale described by Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein in *The Mysteries of New Orleans*, tr. Steven Rowan (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), Book III, Chapter 7. It was a bar and brothel destroyed by a fire set by the villain Lajos. The Hotoohs were a New Orleans African gang with a bizarre secret language, mentioned *ibid.*, page 519 and following. *Kral* is here an Afrikaans or Dutch word for a fenced corral.

such a perverse passion to hang pictures in a place where the light of day never penetrates.

Already with the first glance at the first picture that old ghost flies into our face that haunts the world under the name of “religion” and undertakes its nightly wanderings in the labyrinths of the Bible. The Archangel Gabriel appears to Mary in a quiet little chamber, alone, so entirely alone — they call this the “English greeting.” This flyer blotched with garish colors — for this gallery of pictures consists only of this — has two very moral pictures next to it. One of these shows the “Death of a Sinner” who lies stretched out on a poor straw bed. Devils with horns, tails, and bat-wings decorate the ceiling, but do not appear to be touching the corpse itself. Despite the impoverished surroundings lacking in furniture, etc., there is still a large sack with gold coin rolling out everywhere at his side. Probably the poor rich man was a miser, and the devils’ visit was only arranged because the Church needs money. The other picture shows the “Death of a Just Man.” Instead of the hellish hosts angels stand assembled around the deathbed with lilies and flower garlands in their hands. A priest places a crucifix on the breast of the Just Man, and a little man in a broad choir shirt, round as a ball, sprinkles him with Holy Water. The man must have done much for the Church in his lifetime, or at least promised to do it after his death.

Next to it hung a realistic portrait of King “Gambrinus,” then comes the “Holy Sweat Cloth, then “Mazeppa,” on which there is another holy image, then “Fanny Elster,” “Jenny Lind”¹³ as the *Daughter of the Regiment*¹⁴ with a Schnapps keg on her back, the “Interior of the House of Representatives” in Washington, then “Black Hawk” and finally “Calhoun,” the “Pirate Kid,” and “the Queen of Spain.”

I would not have paid any attention at all to these pictures if Bluebeard had not stopped suddenly in the middle of this series and remained there with invariable stubbornness, precisely examining one picture after another. Mother Goose-Foot, who had rushed on from beginning to end of the passage, showed her impatience by coughing lightly, blowing her nose in between with all her force.

Mother Goose-Foot has congestion problems — can’t you hear how the charming person back there is *suffering?*” Bluebeard remarked after being silent a long time, then he went several steps back and remained before the picture that showed Jenny Lind as the *Daughter of the Regiment*. This new rudeness was so irritating that I began to stamp the ground with my right foot. The Bluebeard did not turn around at this, but seemed to continue to look at the picture. — Anyone can imagine how tiresome this had to be to me, who had long been burning with curiosity to get into the interior of the “Old Frame Corner,” where the “Whiskers Stories” could really get started over a good glass of wine. — Hope and obsession makes many into fools: I said to myself, “I finally have to go there and tear the Bluebeard away from his Jenny Lind. So I placed myself hard at his side, laid my arm across his back, and after also looking deeply into the picture, I called out as if enthused:

“What an artistic hand has made this *Daughter of the Regiment!* See how everything lives and moves! And this background hidden in dark gunpowder mist, through which one expects to see the fine regiment emerge! And how masterfully the

¹³ Jenny Lind, the “Swedish Nightingale” (1820-1887), wildly popular singer in her time in Europe and America.

¹⁴ *La fille du régiment* is a popular comic opera by Gaetano Donizetti first performed in 1840.

schnapps keg is carried out! It is so natural that one can almost literally smell the brandy? It must really be a great master who is in the position to create such pictures!”

“If you knew,” he said, “what has held me so long bound up with this picture, you would have been able to avoid your niggling enthusiasm. If it had been someone else who had disturbed my contemplations in such a manner — *Ventrebleu!* Sir! — he would not leave my side unpunished.

“*Parbleu, Mortbleu, Ventrebleu! Manuel de cocher de Fiacre!*” he cursed in his beard, at the same moment throwing his right arm around my neck.

Instinctually I ducked and made a motion to extract myself. At the same time, I put my right hand in my coat pocket to reach for my six-shot Colt revolver. But how I was shocked to grasp, rather than the revolver, the Bluebeard’s hand.

Like a spring-beetle when it is laid on its back, so I moved quickly out from under his arm and made a biting duelist’s cry when I came face to face with him, free of all holds. — But he laughed heartily and said:

“*The Daughter of the Regiment* means nothing — the picture does not interest me in the least, as little as the other smears that hang there — *Ventrebleu*, my friend, I wanted by a little maneuver to get at your revolver, which you do not need to have at all in my company — *Parbleu*, sir, here you have my right hand and nothing for trouble, we are now as much friends as before ...”

And as if nothing at all had taken place between the two of us, the Bluebeard took up my right arm in friendship, drew me along faster than I was going through the narrow hall to its end, where Mother Goose-Foot stood at her door that led to the bar of the “Old Frame Corner.”

“May the gentlemen enter,” she said, making a deep bow and moving sideways through another door.

What frequent guest or wandering bar-fly, if possessing only ordinary observation ability, has not noted that at certain hours of the day in cafés, bars, and gambling dens it is so utterly still that, if the clock of death were also active during the day, one could entirely clearly be able to count the number of hours he still has to live? At such a time, neither the host nor the hostess move, and only the barkeeper rocks listlessly and yawning on his chair behind the bar. Since at this time he can bring his master no profit, he must at least do some harm. He smokes through one cigar after another petulantly, tossing them out the window if they can’t be inhaled or will not light immediately. Since as *Commander of the bar* he has the privilege of drinking as much as he wants, or rather to drink when he is thirsty, he does not avoid doing at least this something boldly to the end. You would be seriously wrong if you believed that he gave the bottles and glasses standing open to general contemplation even a brief glance. He is far too proud and has far too much noble blood in his veins — rocking on one chair leg, he allows one arm to sink and grasps behind himself for a bottle, in which only real grape, real Scotch Whiskey, and real Dutch Gin are located — pure good “drinks” that are seldom brought out and only available to those guests our picky barkeeper knows at first glance to know *what* they are drinking. But since such guests come only rarely, our barkeeper, on true moral grounds, cannot leave the costly “drinks” untouched for an eternity. In addition, he once read that New Orleans is called the “*Paradise of Barkeepers*,” and that can have no

other meaning than glorying in real drinks. This title is for him a sign of Providence that, at the distribution of its valuable gifts was reserved especially for him.

I made such observations from only one step into the bar of the “Old Frame Corner.”

But instead of a sleepy, yawning barkeeper, who out of sheer boredom stole his master’s best cigars, the best drinks, and one piece of “Pine Apple Cheese” after another, there sat a girl behind the bar, who quickly rose from her seat as I entered with the Bluebeard, and quickly placed two glasses on the blue-black marble surface of the bar.

“*Ventrebleu!*” the Bluebeard cried out, “I like this sort of barkeeper — — but *Mortbleu! Parbleu!* my friend, we should not drink at the bar — — tell this angel of a barkeeper, would you dip your wings in Champagne? — — *Ventrebleu*, away with these glasses and bring us Champagne instead! — — “there at the table in the corner!”

And turning to me, he said softly:

“This tyke pleases me, eyes like burning coals and a neck to be cut off — *Ventrebleu*, the little one must drink with us!”

With the first glance, I did not know what I thought, let alone what I should prevent. Quickly I looked at the Bluebeard, then I glanced at the pale barkeeper behind the bar. The girl at this moment appeared not to have passed her sixteenth year. Slim and tall, but with a gentle sinking of her shoulders, so that the motions of her arms showed a wonderful grace, the antique mold of her Cleopatra head, the flat satin brown of her skin, the same all over, her glimmering coal-black eyes, her dark hair lying in a wide part with a light blue shine — all of that was more than enough to raise my curiosity to the highest degree. Then I looked back at the Bluebeard, and — the reader should not be shocked — he told me his thought that this girl arose from the womb of a woman that in an unfortunate hour had lain in the arms of a Bluebeard, and that hence — hence — she had not experienced the child’s birth. “Unhappy mother!” cried out from a seldom-visited corner of my heart — “unhappy mother who had to die before you could imagine that a time would come when the embrace of your lover would carry your fruit!” — — “You are wrong,” a teasing demon told me — “how can you think this? Don’t you know that Bluebeards cannot have children?” “I know that,” another cry arose within me, — “Bluebeards have no children — but a girl can be no Bluebeard, but still be the daughter of a Bluebeard, still the wandering shadow of a godless Bluebeard!”

Today I attempt in vain to resurrect the feelings that seized me then at this discovery.

I can only recall so much, which was that I was frozen through and through, and I mechanically followed Bluebeard to a table in the bar where we could sit opposite one another.

The girl left us with the assurance that they had not had Champagne in the “Corner” for two weeks, and she would get Catawba if the gentlemen wished it.

In a certain way, that was preferable to me, since to drink Champagne seemed to me somewhat too dangerous in the company of the Bluebeard, particularly since he had taken my revolver from my pocket in such a sly manner. Incidentally, I had bought it only a few days before from the Duke of Olivarez-Genieland for the sum of 45 dollars. On the other hand, I longed to drink him under the table with Catawba in order to gain control of the weapon once more in this manner. I then very much wished then to avoid

the midnight visit to his father and his two beloveds, which adventure I had largely forgotten, although I had apparently agreed to climb through the window with him. —

It was not long before Mother Goose-Foot entered with a bottle in each hand and under each arm, for the Bluebeard had earlier ordered four bottles from the pretty barmaid.

“*Mortbleu!* Mother Goosefoot, how does it happen that you bring us the wine — I believed that Little Malvina was looking for it —.”

“Didn’t you send her to order four bottles of Catawba?” the old woman replied.

“*Ventrebleu!*” the Bluebeard cried out, “was that Little Malvina? I would not have recognized the scamp! And where has she gone? And why doesn’t she come back? —.”

“She said to me that on your entrance she had immediately recognized you, and if this gentleman — she pointed at me — not been with you, she would not have delayed for long, and she would have fallen on your neck right away ——”

“*Ventrebleu!* I can still do that with the lovely scamp, just bring her back quickly!”

“Poor girl,” I thought to myself, “if only you would stay away, for if you kiss this monster, which would have happened (if it is true that you want to fall on his neck), then all your teeth will fall out. — In my eyes, Mother Goose-Foot was nothing but a bawd who had, God knows where, already passed the girl to the Bluebeard, who, now that she had grown up, probably is seeking to assert his *ius primae noctis*. That he claimed a certain right over the poor child occurred to me earlier, when he asked Mother Goose-Foot immediately at our first encounter so hastily, “Has the little one already joined with a man?” and the old woman responded, “He wants to have her, otherwise nothing has happened, I can swear to it, etc. ——”

Mother Goose-Foot appeared to me to be very upset when the Bluebeard, despite her statement that Little Malvina had suddenly become unwell, continued to demand to see her. The Bluebeard also appeared not to have missed the old woman’s upset, for he raised his finger to her and said:

“I tell you, Mother Goose-Foot, if you have not kept the girl pure for me, then you will not leave this house alive.”

“Do you believe this?” the old woman asked, and when the Bluebeard made no response, then she continued:

“My God! How could you believe this — if I had the smallest accusation to make, I only needed not to address you on the street or tell you where we lived — and were you not surprised when you learned from me that we were now in New Orleans? If I had not been sure of my business, I would have preferred to avoid you instead of my approaching you happily —— By the Holy Virgin, I repeat it to you again, Little Malvina is an angel, and the fact that she cannot serve you now lies purely and alone in the fact that she suddenly has become unwell.”

I must truly confess that I could not explain to myself this strange attitude of the Bluebeard toward Mother Goose-Foot. — Who Mother Goose-Foot was, who Malvina was, and what relationship the two had to him, was of little interest to me, and in addition I had the expectation of being able to hear the whole confused story from his own mouth over a glass of wine. I thought to myself, “If the Bluebeard really had a certain right to Malvina, what was the purpose of this high-flying business and this pointless noisy dispute? Wouldn’t it be more proper if he simply took Mother Goose-Foot to one side

and discussed Malvina's past and her present situation? Why, if he is so obsessed with that girl, did he ask after her room so as to convince himself whether it is as the old woman says? Couldn't he say to the old woman, 'Mother Goose-Foot, I am burning with desire to embrace my Little Malvina, take me to her, I must, I will see her, and if not — to speak the language of Bluebeards — I will twist your neck off in an instant?' — Despite that, after assuring him another dozen times of her statement concerning the illness of his Little Malvina, he let Mother Goose-Foot leave the bar entirely undisturbed, only pressing her on her departure, since she controlled the cellar in the "Corner," to have four bottles of Catawba delivered every twenty minutes.

It was Mother Goose-Foot who did not return. A good half-hour had already passed, and the first four bottles had long been empty. During this time, I hoped with every minute that the Bluebeard would go on with his "Whisker Stories." But nothing came of it. He stamped with his feet, like a bad-acting child, and suddenly he cursed Mother Goose-Foot instead of getting up and looking for her. "The old witch," he said, "has misled both of us, and who knows into what hole she brought us here."

"Mother Goose-Foot," I responded, "will not have a good conscience, and who knows whether she has not packed up with Malvina and is now across the mountains?"

"*Mortbleu!*" the Bluebeard said, "if she did not have a good conscience, why did she accost me on the street and lead us here?"

"I do not have as sharp a sense as the Bluebeards," I responded, "but it seems to me that the old woman had worked out a special plan that you appear to have wasted due to your crudeness —."

"How so? I cannot understand —."

"Well, I think Mother Goose-Foot figured on your wallet — and now she is happy to escape with her whole skin."

"*Ventrebleu!* My sir, you could be right."

"I would almost bet my head on it," I said.

"What? Bet your head?" the Bluebeard said, "it is hard to grow another head once you have bet it away."

"You don't have to take me literally," I responded.

"If you want to play your head out *partout* — naturally"

"I will leave that there, sir, all I said was almost bet my head — but let us leave behind these pointlessly silly things and look rather for the hosts of the 'Corner' if you are determined not to remain here any longer."

I had barely pronounced these words than a door located close to the bar opened, and a man entered who greeted us in a friendly manner and expressed his amazement that no service was present in the bar.

"An old woman," the Bluebeard said in a grieved tone, as if he did not know Mother Goose-Foot, "promised us to come back every twenty minutes and bring us four new bottles — but now three-quarters of an hour has passed and she has not appeared — — a poor barkeeper, an old woman!" he added after a small pause.

"You must excuse, gentlemen," said the man who had just entered, "since the old woman is not quite herself. Often, she goes out of the 'Corner' twenty times in a day, and when we ask what she was doing outside, she says that is none of our business and we will later learn what she was doing in the city."

“I would have thrown her to the Devil long ago ——” the Bluebeard inserted in a light tone.

“Hm, hm!” the other man responded: “that would long ago have happened, if she did not have such a pretty daughter, who is a true treasure for our ‘Corner,’ we would not have half our guests —.”

Mortbleu! Sir!” the Bluebeard interrupted her, “where are all your guests hidden? Up to now, I was of the opinion that I was here with this man — then the Bluebeard pointed at me — alone ——.”

The answer was “Hm, hm! They are stuck in the whole house —— out front, out back, in the second story, in the attic — everywhere you may find customers, only not here — that is, at this time; but if you would grant us for two more hours the pleasure of your company, you will find it crowded here as well ——.”

“Then we certainly will not remain here,” I inserted, and looked at the same moment at the Bluebeard, who was eagerly chewing at his fingernails, which I had not yet seen him do.

“As the gentleman wishes,” the host said, “but you will certainly drink a couple bottles — ‘t’is a fine wine, this Catawba —— I only have it reserved for noble tastes —.”

“Fine,” the Bluebeard said, “You want to make money —— so bring in the names of three devils another four bottles —— the others will soon show up —.”

“Very good, gentlemen,” the host smirked, “you should not say that the ‘Corner Host’ serves is guests poorly —.”

“That sheep’s head!” called out the Bluebeard, when the host had gone, “he means that he is doing us a favor with his Catawba, for which we must pay three times as much as his other guests.”

“Do you believe that?” I asked mechanically, for I was thinking of entirely different things, that is, of absolutely nothing.

“It is obvious,” the Bluebeard said, turning the tips of his mustache up, “full quality is always three times, if not five or six times the price.”

Who did not return was the host of the “Old Frame Corner.”

“Strange!” the Bluebeard remarked, “that *Grobian* of a host is doing exactly like Mother Goose-Foot —— You know, my dearest friend, it would be best if we left and moved to a decent place, where one is not so neglected, and to be frank, I cannot stand the wine —— what do you say to that, my best?”

“The wine was alright,” I said, “but the service is so poor. And besides that, your own conduct seems so strange that I long to be out of this hole with every minute. You let yourself be led here by the old witch, raise an awful fight because of the girl, without reaching a situation to make a clean table in this matter.”

“*Ventrebleu!*” he turned to me, “You certainly will not demand that I should give you a full account of my attitude with Mother Goose-Foot. I know what I have to do, and if you cannot wait until I can show you the end of this, then we will separate.”

“That is fine with me,” I responded, “only give me my revolver back first.”

“You may have it back,” he said, “once we have made our evening visit — not one minute before or after.”

“As the matter stands now,” I said, “it is really doubtful that we will undertake the night excursion with one another, and also you yourself touched on the desire that it would be very good if we separated ——.”

“That happened only in a momentary whim, for it has not occurred to me to let you from my side today.”

“And to me,” I declared dryly, “it did not occur to me to continue as a companion to someone so flighty and changeable.” For I had really become irritated.

The Bluebeard was silent and had the empty wine bottles dance on the table.

I paid exact attention to the slightest of his motions, for I really believed that, when he had completed the dance, he would throw them at my head.

Then, suddenly, I felt as if a finger was probing around the arch of my left foot. Since the Bluebeard was using both his hands to balance the bottles, at first, I thought I was mistaken. In addition, he had his legs at the side of the table, one over the other. So he could not be touching the arch of my foot. For that reason, I did not look down then. But then in the next instant I felt a similar probing near my heel, so that I found it worth my time to cast a glance under the table. I pulled back somewhat in shock when I saw a narrow, wrinkled hand occupied in sliding a paper in the form of a letter into the shoe of my left foot. If the Bluebeard had not been so occupied with his dancing bottles, he would have seen my movements at once and immediately seen the cause. What results this discovery would have had would be hard to determine, since they could only be abstracted from facts that only took place later and which I had to experience as I knew them in the moment I am writing, and which I then did not yet know. I have to suppress this silent maneuver in order not to get ahead of the story.

I saw immediately that this was the hand of Mother Goose-Foot sticking the paper in my shoe, from the large carnelian she wore on her finger, and which I had seen before when the Bluebeard subjected her to a gruesome inquisition. But particularly the long fingernails that covered her fingertips like the claws of a vulture showed me that Mother Goose-Foot was the owner of the hand in question. She had extended these through the panel that could be lightly lifted from the outside, and since the table at which the Bluebeard sat was right against the wall, it was an easy matter to reach from the opening of the panel to my foot. I saw all of this in a glance, and my native drive for secrecy permitted me to discover a great discovery, which I of course could only put down to the Bluebeard’s account. — Above everything, it was now necessary to leave the Bluebeard’s side for a moment to be put into the situation to discover the content of the mysterious paper quietly and observed by no one else. And that I must do this right away was obvious, since why otherwise would Mother Goose-Foot have taken the risk to surprise me with such a slipped-in message. The hardest part of the whole matter was to hold off the Bluebeard with a passable excuse to keep him from following me. Bluebeards possess an infinite fund of distrust, and I recall my Venetian Bluebeard pulled me back by my hair when I wanted to close a window to prevent a shower from entering. He then extended himself out of the window frame, thinking there was some sort of spy outside to whom the closing of the window would be some sort of sign. As said, I had to go to work very carefully to be able to leave the table and the bar itself for a few minutes.

I hold it to be the greatest miracle that has ever been granted in my adventurous life that the Bluebeard remained peacefully with his bottle dance as I left the bar. I must confess that this peaceful conduct on his part stimulated my mistrust. Yet, as decided as I

was at this instant, I wanted more than anything to read the contents of the note passed to me. For this purpose, I went to a place where I was sure not to be spied upon.

I ran through the lines in great haste without paying attention to the signature. But then my eye went to that — a deep sigh arose from my breast — I looked there once, no — it was no mistake! She who wrote me these lines was the ‘Countess of Orizaba,’ who was called Mother Goose-Foot here, even by her own son, for the Bluebeard was her son, as will be seen from the following letter, And such a son! And such a mother! The same Countess of Orizaba, who was barely twenty years earlier the idol of her people — I saw the same Countess, without being able to explain the connection even in the slightest, degraded to one of the lowest positions, I saw here — but I immediately give the content of the writing that was placed in my shoe:

Dear Sir!

You may regard it as an act of heaven that I encountered you with the Bluebeard. He is my son, but as truly as there is an eternal justice, he should not escape his punishment. Malvina is my daughter and also his sister. This monster of a Bluebeard-Son knows everything — he is guilty of all our misery — his strange obligation against me, as well as my common expressions that I have let fall against him, should not strike you. had to play this role, and he has taken the same on himself — but the time has come when the mother and the daughter together with the sister will revenge — his plans worked out for you are not known to me, but I believe that he has only something dreadful in mind for you, as with so many others. — After reading these lines, go directly back to him, and I will follow with four more bottles. Two of the bottles will be sealed with yellow wax — you should get these into his hands — the two with red wax you should seek to use so as to get the contents into your glass. You will then experience the rest. Fear not that you should have any guilt loaded on you, but do precisely what I have told you here, and do not be horrified when I sign myself “Elizabeth Countess of Orizaba, called Mother Goose-Foot.”

Three thoughts stood out that passed through my head as I left my hiding place to return to the bar to my Bluebeard.

The *First* amounted to the question that was so significant for me: does the old Count of Orizaba know that his wife is living in Nueva Orleans? Does he know that his son Bluebeard of Orizaba related to the mother, his wife? Does he know of the role-change in which I have received understanding in the most remarkable manner in the world? Or is this perhaps another Caspar Hauser¹⁵ story that is developing before my eyes?

The *second* thought is associated with the supposition that the unfortunate Countess of Orizaba in some way was connected with me personally— for she could not

¹⁵ Caspar Hauser (1812-1833) was a mysterious child who appeared in Nuremberg on 26 May 1828 with an account of having been held in a dark cell as long as he could remember. He was twice attacked when he had grown up, the second time fatally. There were stories that he was an inconvenient member of the Grand-Ducal rulers of Baden.

just choose any person, feeling the interest of freeing him from the claws of a Bluebeard-monster and entrusting with *such* a secret.

The third thought extended a thousand feet, like the long-haired black centipede that consumes the life of these trees under the surface of the swamp: if the Bluebeard breaks the yellow seal from the bottles — what will happen? Would I then sit at the feet of the Countess of Orizaba to learn the resolution of this dreadful confusion from her mouth, where once the most splendid teeth in the world shone?

There is an ancient saying: if one stands with one foot in the grave, it is better to jump straight in rather than to wait until the other leg is so good as to follow. With this saying on my brow, I stepped up to the table where the Bluebeard sat.

He had leaned himself in the corner and appeared to be sleeping with his face directed upward. A revolver lay on the table, the same one he had taken from me. The bottles, probably half of them smashed, as he had done in the restaurant several hours before, lay in a thousand fragments throughout the bar, so that I had to be very careful not to get them in my foot.

When I had reached the immediate vicinity of the table, I was shocked to see the corpse-like pallor that lay on the Bluebeard's face. He was breathing softly and regularly, as one who was enjoying a healthy, fortunate slumber. Yet it seemed to me, on closer examination, that he was just pretending to sleep, for I believed I saw that he glittered between his eyelids. Recalling the lines of the Countess of Orizaba, I was very careful, since it was extremely dangerous to cause a conflict before he had emptied the bottles with the yellow seals. So I left my revolver on the table before me untouched, but did not neglect placing my arm in such a position that I could grab it immediately in an emergency.

“Bad wine!” I said aloud, but not so loud that he would hear it if he were not sleeping. — “Bad wine, this Catawba! It would be better to go to another bar — this filthy nest has displeased me from the first. I am amazed at my dear friend Bluebeard, that he prefers to drink such bad stuff here and also take such an extra cost on his neck.”

At once the Bluebeard began to snore, first softly, then ever stronger and stronger, until he passed to that uncanny gurgle that ordinarily is attributed to a severe dream, quickly followed by a sudden awakening. This phenomenon actually occurred right away.

The Bluebeard suddenly opened his eyes, and he stretched as far as he could with his legs and arms. I thought this maneuver was naturally only a preparation, and I awaited with concern what his first word would be.

“*Ventrebleu!*” he called out, “now you know who Mother Goose-Foot is.”

This question was so unexpected that I was utterly confounded. But I responded, “How would I know — you have not spoken a word about that?”

“But you have read it!” he said, to my utter astonishment, and now for the first time in our acquaintanceship panicky terror gripped me.

“Just get Mother Goose-Foot to come with the bottles,” he continued, “you will drink those sealed with *yellow wax*,”

“Betrayed and sold!” I thought to myself, “and perhaps soon poisoned!” Instinctually I reached for my revolver. The Bluebeard did not prevent me. But he said in a leisurely tone:

“Go ahead and take your revolver again, but I advise you to load it first, for I removed your bullets when you were gone.” At the same moment Mother Goose-Foot, the traitorous Countess of Orizaba, entered — with her bottles. She was followed by Malvina on the arm of a young man who bore a large blond mustache.

I moved my chair to the side, to make room for the new arrivals,
But it was basically nothing but my distress that left me so courteous.

Mother Goose-Foot did not respond to my gaze but simply placed the four bottles on the table and departed.

Then Malvina and the blond mustache took chairs and seated themselves between the Bluebeard and me with a friendly, even festive manner.

In my case I never let the two bottles with the yellow seal out of my eyesight, and I was solidly decided, despite the coming reinforcement, not to drink from the bottles in question. For I had not the slightest desire to poison myself, for your information.

The Bluebeard uncorked all four bottles at once, and with a speed that bordered on witchcraft. He did not remove the remnants of the seal with the corkscrew, but quickly whisked it away using the brush joined to the corkscrew. It shocked me through and through when I saw that while doing this, he touched the opening of the bottles with his pointed mustache. Malvina’s fine appearance, which earlier had appeared to be appealing, now brought me to distress. The intense interest that I had had for her when I saw her for the first time behind the bar had now vanished completely. Behind the fine face grimaced a disgusting Megaere who appeared only to be awaiting the right moment leap into my hair and scratch out my eyes. — The blond mustache with whom she had come also had a fatal face, and his friendly eyes and healthy cheeks appeared even more dreadful to me than the corpse-paleness and staring gaze of the Bluebeard. So, all of them together combined to make me even more distressed, putting me in a mood that I could only describe with the expression “dumb terror.”

(Continuation follows)

There were no further entries for this story

How the Devil is in New Orleans and how He Lifts the Roofs from Houses

a novel by

Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein

1861

I

Motto: In colorful images a little clarity

Much error and a spark of truth,

That's how the best drink is brewed

That intoxicates and instructs all the world.

(Goethe's *Faust*)

The very last ray of the setting sun was glinting off the steep roofs of New Orleans when a tall, haggard figure in the uniform of a Zouave approached one of the shop windows along Canal Street, where a great crowd had gathered. They were there by the magic glimmer of the newly-lit gas-lamps to marvel at the trophies, once federal property, taken by Southern soldiers in the eternally memorable battle at Manassas. There could be seen the cap of a New York Fire Zouave, a fez with a long blue tassel on which the light traces of dried blood were still to be detected.¹⁶ Next to it was a scarlet-red wool blanket with black stripes on the end which, according to the attached label, had also been conquered from one of Ellsworth's "pets."⁵¹⁷ Next to be seen was the minié-ball gun of a Massachusetts soldier and a revolver with a brass bayonet. Next to that stood a mahogany chest for keeping medicine and surgical instruments. On its lid inlaid in brass could be read the fatal initials of Uncle Sam.⁶ Next to this chest was a bit of wood from the carriage of a cannon of Sherman's Battery.

But most attention was directed at a cloak of such dark cloth and of such a peculiar shine that one could not determine whether it was cloth, satin or silk. Small, shell-like buttons and many tangled silver braids gave it a remarkable appearance.⁷

I as well happened to come to that shop window that evening, but I was not nearly as interested in the trophies as in that haggard figure in the Zouave uniform, whose aquiline nose and thin, speculating lips with their cold expression made a deep impression on me. Since I had never seen this tall person, who bore the insignia of a colonel, I was rather struck by his appearance. The same astonishment gripped those around me, most of them old citizens of New Orleans, and I could learn from their gesticulations and their occasionally-expressed words what the core of their concern was. It seemed amazing to me that despite the fact that officers and soldiers of branches ran by, and occasionally one would stop, none of them gave him a sign of greeting or

¹⁶ The first battle of Bull Run (or Manassas) took place on 21 July 1861. Zouave regiments were modelled after French colonial troops in Arab costume distinguishing themselves in the Crimean War; Zouave units were regarded as elite troops.

¹⁷ "Trophies of the War," *Daily Picayune*, 31 July 1861, p.4: "Among the war prizes taken by Lieut. Delisle of the Crescent Blues and placed on display at the City Telegraph office in City Hall was "...a red blanket, well stained with powder."

recognition. Tiring of speculation, I had decided at last to start a conversation with him, when two old acquaintances saw me from across the street and crossed over to join me among the gawkers. One was an off-duty major of Germanic blood and a resolute, military appearance; he was in civilian clothes, of course, and wore a modest kepi covered by a towel. Across his face passed the reflection of his inner distress and his lips continually twitched as if to say, "O Varus, Varus — give me back my legions!" Alongside him, with the busy legs of a shopkeeper, ran a little man with a naturally ironic manner, a high forehead marked with a corporal's insignia. Behind his left ear was stuck a battalion-staff pen that poked and squirted on the solid cheek of the little man in impatience for a new order.

I approached the first one, hoping they at least could tell me who the unknown Zouave might be, and I said to him, "Major, I have been standing here for fifteen minutes hoping to run into an acquaintance (since I know almost no one in New Orleans) who could tell me who the tall man is who looks with such scorn on the trophies?"

The major looked at the person in question and replied in a subdued voice, "That Zouave over there? Looks like a man of distinction, and he wears, if I'm not mistaken, the uniform of a colonel — I don't recall ever seeing him before; it is impossible that he is from here — still, wait a minute, there is a Zouave officer standing on the corner, perhaps he can inform us — have a minute's patience."

With these words he left me, and I soon saw him in conversation with the officer. I saw from the latter's shrugging of his shoulders and expressions of denial that the major did not get a satisfactory answer. And it was so. The Zouave officer expressed the opinion that it was some sort of renegade who had put on a Zouave uniform for fun.

I was not at all satisfied with these words, and when the major had left I stepped up to the mysterious man and asked him for the time. In complete contrast to his hard, grim exterior, he answered with a benevolent, soft voice, "precisely the fourth hour before midnight."

After I thanked him for his strange circumlocution, I noted that it made him peculiar pleasure to describe the trophies with a precise analysis.

The mysterious man smiled and said, "Do you know, my friend, who owns this lovely cloak?"

"Used to own," I corrected him.

"No," he responded solidly and surely, "owns."

"How am I to understand that?" I asked him, "I do not expect that the owner of this curio will come here to reclaim it. Can't you read here on this strip of paper that it comes from the scene of battle and was sent here to acquaintances as booty?"

"The owner of this cloak stands before you," the mysterious man responded to me, laying his right hand on my shoulder. — I must honestly confess that a strange feeling overcame me with these words, something like goose bumps. "Yes, yes, he continued, "this is my cloak, which I lost in the rout as I stood on a height with Mr. Russell⁸, the well-known correspondent for the London *Times* to follow the movements of the two armies and await the decision of that murderous fight. "I bet a hundred to one that the Southerners will prevail," I said to the good Russell. He did not want to believe me until the federals stormed past us in the wildest flight and I lost my lovely cloak in the press. Six weeks passed before I learned that it was in New Orleans. During this time, I

have seen and experienced much, and I have just dined with the old man in Washington, in the presence of Prince Napoléon, General Scott and Seward...”

“For heaven’s sake,” I interrupted him, “speak more softly, one could think you were ...”

“No one will understand us — that has been taken care of,” he interrupted me while lifting his left trouser leg.

“*Ah, benvenuto, Signor diavolo!*” I cried when I saw with whom I was dealing. It was the infamous horse’s hoof that he showed me, and there was not the least doubt that this apparent colonel was the Right Honorable Satanas in person. If I had earlier had an uncanny feeling when he presented himself as the owner of the captured cloak, it was just because I held him for a Northern spy. Now, however, when he showed his *carte blanche*, or rather *noire*, I was completely at peace; besides, I have often wished to meet His Majesty in person...”

“...Since we are old acquaintances ...” Signor Diavolo whispered.

“Certainly not!” I interrupted him, “but I am utterly charmed by this unexpected meeting, since it is one of my greatest interests to learn Your Majesty’s views of current events whose conclusions lie in the bosom of the future ...”

“How the man does speculate over my talkativeness in advance!” he responded. “But I know you are a man of literature from conviction, and such men are always my favorites. So, I will speak with you in retrospect and will not be disturbed if you put it all down in black on white. You may accompany me on my nocturnal journeys when I lift the roofs of houses of the city to reveal the activities of their inhabitants. For this grace, I ask nothing more from you than a hearty handshake at parting.

“But for this I must have back my cloak, which is still fixed in this shop window, for hidden in its folds we are withdrawn from the sight of mortals and can be entertained by people’s doings to our heart’s content.”

As Signor Diavolo said this, he went into the shop, where the proprietor met him with a friendly manner. “You desire, colonel?”

“To buy this cloak!” he intoned, “I hope that its price will not exceed my means ...”

The proprietor first looked slyly at the cloak and then at the colonel and said, “In fact I am very reluctant to sell this trophy, since to a good patriot it would be worth more than all the treasures of the world ... but this time I will make an exception ... bad times ... and then one can set his conscience aside ... and since you are perhaps in the position to buy it with hard money ... you may have it for two hundred dollars!”

“I am most beholden to you,” Signor Diavolo replied and put down a roll of twenty-dollar gold pieces on the counter. Then he took the trophy out of the window with his own hands and hung it on his shoulders. On leaving the shop he said, “Did you see how pale this man became when he saw that solid gold?”

“He recognized you!” I remarked.

“Not at all, my friend! He almost fainted in his joy of seeing gold again!”

II

Night had already put on her starry crown and the silver sickle of the moon was sharpening itself on the lightning rods when Signor Diavolo took me into his cloak, lined

with the satin paws of hundreds of cats, which seemed to promise a pleasant refuge. Thus, were we two made invisible. We decided it was still too early to rise up into the air and lift the roofs from houses. His Majesty decided to fill the time until midnight with wandering the streets and making a few little visits on *terra firma*. Since I naturally also wanted to see which way our path would lead, I extended my head as far as possible from the folds of the cloak, I was astonished to find that this dominating part of my body seemed to throw an extensive shadow, despite the fact that I was totally invisible. The whole long figure of Signor Diavolo, however, along with the vast enveloping cloak, however, crept along without any shadow at all.

Since I expressed my astonishment about this, His Majesty said, “Don’t you know, my friend, that the Devil only throws a shadow if one can see him? Your countryman Goethe, whom I deeply respect, did not know that, and that is certainly the only dud he shot in all of his “Faust.” In your case, then I am not at all amazed that you cast a shadow despite being invisible. The time of fools has long since passed, and it has never truly prospered in this hemisphere. Further, the Devil will no longer be so silly as to make a contract over the ownership of a shadow if it is so easy for him to get the whole living being itself ...”

“That is an astonishingly good remark,” I responded, “only I would not wish it turned against myself, in case Your Majesty ...”

“You have nothing whatsoever to fear if I hold you — and the fact that I have taken you into the folds of my cloak is only to prove to you that the Devil is the best fellow in the world, who only does his little masterpieces to kill time, to turn Polish beards into foxtails or alligators into gnomes.”

“Those are just figures of speech!” I thought to myself, “and if the Devil speaks the truth, then he lies routinely.” But I accepted the risk of a close acquaintance and had to accept any results.

We had barely passed a few squares when it began to become too hot for me. The cats’ paws lining the cloak caused such an intolerable warmth that I could hardly breathe.

“If you do not let me out of this cloak, I shall burn up!” I told Signor Diavolo, “and wouldn’t it be more comfortable for me and for you to roll up the cloak until the time when it takes us to the roofs, and we now become flesh and bone again? By then the atmosphere will be cooled down somewhat ...”

“I am in total agreement!” Signor Diavolo interrupted me, stripping the mantel from his shoulders, rolling it up and sticking it in the broad pocket of his red trousers. “Hang on to my arm, so we can wander and gossip together all the better.”

I felt reborn when I got my feet back on the ground, and I quietly felt reluctant about returning to the cloak when the hour of midnight approached.

Today the streets were becoming very lively, in fact in some places it crawled with people, since the evening dispatches had arrived from the theater of war, causing something of an uproar. Then, when it became a little quieter, you could hear the loud tramp of rhythmic feet and the shrill commands of company commanders. “The fruit is ripening!” Signor Diavolo said ... but suddenly, as if seized by a tarantella, he made a sidestep that nearly bowled me over.

When I looked around for the cause of his strange maneuver, I saw a man with a large belled collection bag attached to an old crucifix. In a beseeching tone he proclaimed, “Give a little donation, sirs, for the poor souls from the North who have fled

to the sunny South to free the Germans of the South from the shame of sin their Northern brothers have brought down on their heads! Please, please!”

“March! March!” Signor Diavolo shouted with such sparkling eyes and grim manner that for the first time I began to fear him. Then he made his signature whinny, stamping his horse’s hoof so hard on the ground that you can see the impression on the granite even today, and advanced on the man with the collection bag. “Tell you poor souls from the North (who have already slipped through my legs) that I don’t want them for a gift, let alone give them anything! That is in clear German, my dear former keeper of customs⁹, and I tell you that they would do better to crawl into the belly of an iron turtle than to wander so shamelessly in the grove of the Eumenides¹⁰. I tell you further, that the Germans of the South do not need a preacher in the wilderness. They know themselves what to do and to avoid! Also tell your poor souls that even the Devil had to bend a knee in reverence when the blood of the most noble freedom-fighters of the German spurted heavenward on the Brigittenau¹¹ ... of the greatest spirit of 1848!”

The man with the collection bag ran howling away, fell into the nearest coffee house and in his confusion ordered a *Lacrimae Christi*¹² cocktail. I, however, thought to myself, “The Devil must have changed a lot recently, and despite the old horse’s hoof he is no longer the old Devil. Sated with the Judas-kisses of commonness and hypocrisy, he has become sick of those very people he used to try to buy. The modern Devil has become a fellow fighter for humanity and only takes those who stand stunned at the divide between good and evil. He lets the really bad go — into their own hell!”

I would have thought even more about the mission of the modern Devil had Signor Diavolo not suddenly stopped.

“Now we are here,” he said, “without intending to, at the famous southeast corner of Union and Carondelet streets. Poor Silenus! I would gladly have granted him longer to drink if Atropos, my sister in destiny, had not cut through the thread of his life so prematurely. I would give a dozen cat’s paws from my cloak if I could bring him up to the upper world again, even for one or two years.”

“How goes it with old Silenus?” I asked.

“It goes pretty well, on the whole — he was a little downcast and sad at the start, and we had to keep forcing him to play our shadow-games — until recently, when I brought down some of his fellow tradesmen. He was particularly happy when I brought him old Fat Louis. Still not satisfied, he tormented me until I had to promise him to bring at least one of his old brothers of Bacchus every year ...”

“Oh, now I understand why they all seem to die so frequently, like him, and him, and him ... and who’s next?”

“That one is!” Signor Diavolo replied, taking a metal plate from his sleeve on which was painted the image of a vassal of Gambrinus in an uncanny speaking image.

“Impossible!” I said, “he radiates life and good health.”

“So sorry,” Signor Diavolo said, “it’s not my fault.”

We entered the saloon and, as we stepped to the bar, Signor Diavolo demanded three glasses of beer, of which he drank two at once. When we had clinked glasses and drunk, he took the third glass, emptied it to the last drop, and spoke in a solemn tone to the picture that hung behind the bar, “This for you, my Silenus, and this drink will descend to Hades and moisten your burning lips!”

Then it seemed as if the picture winked its eye in a friendly manner, opened its mouth and said, "Prosit, gentlemen — that did me a world of good!"

Utterly carried away by the magic of Cerevesia, (including the libation for Silenus) we emptied seven times seven and seventy glasses of beer in a half-hour, which is quite against my habit, and if I had not been there I would never have believed it. Even Signor Diavolo grew warm and proved my previous opinion about the modern Devil. Finally, he rose and said, "Let us not fall too early into German *Gemütlichkeit*, since we have other obligations to perform. If I am not wrong, we are only a cat's jump from another Valhalla, where premium lager is served in genuine German mugs. Let's go there, for we have only a short hour left, and then we'll go lifting roofs!"

III

It really was only a cat's jump to the Premium Lager Valhalla. Before we entered, Signor Diavolo said, "If they ask who I am, tell them 'Colonel Ellsworth of the New York Fire Zouaves.'"

"No one will believe that," I responded, "since every child in the street knows that this colonel was most unpleasantly put down by the patriotic innkeeper of Alexandria as Ellsworth was stealing a flag ..."

"They will believe you," Signor Diavolo said, "since I will put the gentlemen in there into a state that they will believe everything that's absurd and reject everything that's believable."

"Possibly," I responded, "but all the worse for that, then — since you will run the risk of being seized at once, and in the best case being tarred and feathered."

"Don't worry! Even if there is a riot (which is pretty likely), then we will create sufficient diversion to give us time to become invisible — I just spread my cloak and ..."

"It will carry us through the air!" I added, making a pleasant recall of an old story.

"That is still not everything," Signor Diavolo continued, "to fool them utterly I shall grow the reddish moustache and Henri IV beard — just as the late Ellsworth wore it."

With these words Signor Diavolo took a small silver vessel in the form of a needle-box from one of the pockets of his jacket, opened it, and dipping in his index finger declared, "You will be amazed at the speed of this salve." And in truth, no sooner did he touch parts of his face than a splendid beard sprouted in the required form and color, making the disguise complete.

"If one could conjure up this salve in any color you wanted, this would quickly lead to immeasurable riches in the hands of an enterprising man," I remarked

"To be sure," Signor Diavolo responded, "and if I did not have something else in mind for you, it would give me the greatest joy to give you the recipe for that salve as a little present. But I intend it for one of your countrymen, an exempt member of the honorable guild of pharmacists who hitherto has tried to make his fortune by making Hochstetter Bitters and phosphorus."

"Oh, I know whom you mean," I cried out, "the good man! He has long since deserved to be a Croesus — but if you think a moment, wouldn't it be easier just to have him get a few hundred thousand dollars ..."

“No, no!” Signor Diavolo interrupted me, “you know that the energy of men is all too inclined to slumber when suddenly buried in gold without doing anything for it. Col. Ellsworth’s Beard-Salve (once the troubles are over) will take off and make the owner of the recipe the richest man not only in New Orleans but across the entire continent — still, here, let’s go in.”

The guests had already passed through all the stages of German *Gemütlichkeit*. This was determined from their reddened faces and the all-too-great nonchalance of their behavior. Only here and there was there some liveliness that was in the process of vanishing without a trace, like a spark among the ashes.

“Not even the slightest trace of Auerbach’s Cellar!” Signor Diavolo whispered to me, “only Brother Straubinger greets us over there, and an irregular fourth junior lieutenant snores away over in the corner, full of pride in his dreams — further back there is Uncle Midas, filled with astonishment over the increasing growth of his ears — the noblest of all philanthropists’ blusters thoughtfully under the table, and see with half his body over the rim leaning out of the open window, it’s the “Ecce homo” of Exchange Alley!”

“How well Your Majesty knows all the people! One could believe you had been in New Orleans for twenty years!” I remarked, in full marvel at Signor Diavolo’s knowledge of persons. He just nodded cheerfully to me and stroked his Ellsworth-beard.

“But where shall we sit? There, here — no, look at the floor! whole streams of barley-juice, in which endless rows of salmon, shrimps, mutton-roulades and shriveled goose-breasts swim — and just look at the pigs’ feet! and there! A lovely waterfall descends from the bar, a little Niagara!”

With such remarks, we made our way without injury to the back room, where we took our place at a small table. “Bring me a Throatcleaner!” Signor Diavolo commanded with a loud voice, with the result that many of the guests awoke from their dim state and also called for Throatcleaners. Throatcleaner! Throatcleaner! sounded from all the tables, and the two functional servants of the bar-owner had so much trouble handling the rush that there was momentary threat of their being crushed. A real “Throatcleaner” is a drink consisting of the following ingredients: whipped cream with maraschino, sherry and sulfuric acid, with the addition of refined sugar and some vanilla — to give it all a pleasant aroma. Such a Throatcleaner has the peculiarity during its consumption of producing insurmountable revulsion against smoking tobacco. Whoever can smoke a cigar or a pipe after a Throatcleaner can be certain that it is faked or has been incorrectly prepared. This demonic drink had already caused a dangerous elasticity in these spirits, already beaten by Gambrinus, and it was not long before there was whispering back and forth about who this handsome colonel was who threw down his Throatcleaner with such grandeur. Signor Diavolo kicked me with his horse-foot and whispered, “See that moustachio’d fellow in a sapper’s uniform? He will approach you and ask you something.”

And it was so. The man with the moustache came to me and held his face very close to my ear, whispering, “Listen, dear friend, who is this colonel?”

“Col. Ellsworth of the New York Fire Zouaves,” I answered in a voice just as soft. The moustached man reacted in shock, and without saying a word he returned to his place. It didn’t take three minutes for a great storm to rise, and “The enemy! The enemy!” sounded from all sides.

“Tear down the bridges!” commanded a thin young man who took the pouring beer for a river, “so that the enemy cannot cross! Left and right wing! Have you no ears? Center, forward! Don’t you see the peril? There, there! —— whole battalion, left turn! right turn! Advance in columns! ——

And now arose a dreadful uproar. Tables, chairs, everything movable was used to create a barrier, and a large empty beer-barrel was brought in like a 32-pounder, the floor broken in and the mouth aimed at Signor Diavolo. When they advanced with drawn swords, His Majesty said, “Enough fun, let’s hurry to get out of shooting and sticking range!” And he unrolled his splendid cloak, and in its folds, we fled swiftly as lightning through an open window and only rested when we reached the roof of a dwelling in Rampart Street near Canal Street.

“*This is to be the first roof we will raise,*” said Signor Diavolo, “and how did you like the scene in the Premium Lager Valhalla?”

“Quite well!” I responded, “I understand what you intended. With this drama, you showed how unfounded the fears are that we are not adequately protected if the enemy should attack our city, and that even the most stiff-necked sleeper will cheerfully reach for his weapons and rescue the state’s honor when the cry, “The enemy! The enemy!” sounds. *In vino veritas!* In German that is “the truth is to be found in Throatcleaners!”

IV

To the author or authors of “The Art of Lifting Roofs” — The Man in the Moon, the Quarreltown of New Orleans, and his Fellow-Travelers.

Most Esteemed Mystery of the Crescent City!

Your charming compilations recently appearing in the *Deutsche Zeitung* have drawn my attention because they awaken in me many pleasant memories that have not been quieted in me despite the fact that the confusions of the present day take up all my attention.

It is not an accident, for with me there is no talk of accident, but rather it is the fate of the New World that a masterwork of a republic founded by me has been outlived by time and rushes to its demise before the game was finished, by my own reckoning. I won, as usual, but I won in a shorter time than the most sanguine estimate would have granted me.

Since New Orleans and events there play such a major role in the game whose preparation attracted so much attention in my dear Germany in 1848, it is understandable that this fine city often enjoys my presence — particularly since the famous cohort of ’48 has won me so many adherents. As a result, I made many a promenade along Canal Street and environs, here and there losing myself on purpose in a corner of the most distant neighborhoods, out in the suburbs.

Out to dear Quarreltown and its jovial residents, where buttermilk, hand-cheese, cottage cheese, sour milk, sour —— vinegar and, God knows, whatever else is sold as sour, except sour faces, since in dear Quarreltown everything is friendly and agreeable; even the coffee has its own flavor, a mocha or mocker-taste, as they call it, mixed with a little stearin. Theodore could tell you about it. He has long lived in the neighborhood, where people import coffee and provide vessels passing north on the river, bayou or canal

with teams to pull them. I certainly know the function of towing on the Weser, the Alter and the Lahn, and I know what outstanding characters are developed there. Towing up a river with a mule or a draft-horse is splendid schooling. It gives a man practical basic training. On the River Lahn, everyone doing towing is they are all named Fritz or Heinrich, but Fritzes always have the advantage, since Englishmen are always in love with these poetic names because of their Anglo-Saxon sound. The English consulate in Frankfurt has the same preference, and for that reason cottage-cheese Fritzes have flourished.

I also often visit the old Third District, spoken Gombo and eaten garlic even with Spaniards, Portuguese and Gascons. And Turkey — out back, where the world is free of —, since the streets come to an end, — far behind Claiborne at the corner of Ursuline and ———, visit lonely garrets and contemplate the person who declines along with his career and the world. Those are precisely the people I can often use. They have arrived at a state of apathy that makes them eminently suitable to be my instruments. They take positions as stokers bringing wood to heat ovens, and for this they get some liquor from time to time. They are entirely suitable instruments of destruction. Unfortunately, the fellows are usually bespectacled, since that is almost the only thing that sets them apart. Since their significance was identified when they put on glasses when they were fourteen, to give them a learned air, nothing can be said against it, since they would be much blinder without the glasses than with them, and one must concede them the light.

My travels extend from time to time to all parts of the city. It is no wonder that one day I heard to my amazement that the Devil was in New Orleans and that “the Man in the Moon” had seen him, spoken with him, hid under his cloak, and lifted the roofs of New Orleans, that is to reveal the “Mysteries of New Orleans.”

“The Devil,” I said to myself, “here you are and you don’t know a mortal word about it. That is certainly strange. Perhaps there was a little adventure along the way. But the “Man in the Moon?” Who, for all the world, has the right to speak of the Man in the Moon? It is an original thought of my old friend Natas, that no one will take from him so long as I reside in the surface world.

I wandered down the street and asked various persons whose exterior indicated they were gentlemen acquainted with the affairs of the day, “Could you tell me where the Man in the Moon lives?” Some looked at me with astonishment, others shook their heads thoughtfully and said, “No,” and others asked me, “Do you mean the man in the full-, half- or quarter-moon?” Suddenly I recalled that we all lived in the Crescent City and that the Man in the Moon is impossible in New Orleans.

Uncertain what to do, I entered a bar and — look there! — I was drawn to a lonely man with glasses, with a worn black coat, dirty cravat and unwashed shirt. Involuntarily I thought of my friend Hauff’s master in his quiet bar where Palvi was wont to meet him — and at once it was certain that the man had to give me information. I approached the bar with slow, measured steps and demanded a glass of barley-juice, invited the barkeeper to have a drink with me, and at once asked him, “Would you be so good as to give me the name of the bespectacled gentleman who nips his drink so shamefully there in the corner?”

“Oh, the man is not ashamed,” the barkeeper responded. “You are most mistaken, sir. He was to the Latin school and has just told me that Horace was not a Roman. He has quite a lip and can curse people like a Paris fishwife.”

“So, so,” I said, “can he also do good?”

“Do good!” was the answer. “I have no idea. I doubt it. No proof available. But he could make good into bad at a time when people did not yet know him and decent people were not yet compelled to let him fall. Now he is morally dead.”

“May I ask what his name is?”

“His name is — is — is — doesn’t come to me right away, but it is some sort of bird.”

“*Vogel* [= “bird”] — good enough, that gives me some information. So, I advance on his table and take a seat, saying, “Good evening Mr. Vogel. Am I disturbing you?”

“Please sit down. Quite pleased. But my name is not Vogel. My name is *Geier* [= “vulture”].”

Geier, so charming! Mr. Geier. Still a bird, really, I thought to myself. Even if it does belong to the family of carrion birds, all the better. The glasses are not without function, since by the rule of nature the vision of the vulture is poor. They *smell* carrion. They lack the sharp eyes of the eagle.

As the barkeeper had said, Vogel or Geiervogel or Vogelgeier was a talkative little fellow. As Vogel, he was a feather in the quiver of the *Pionier*, and he was among the most radical abolitionists and Black Republicans, and I recalled that I had already seen his name somewhere with a black mark against it. He had also once published a harmless, folksy narrative in the *Pionier* whose birth needed more than a midwife. Still, the greater the pains the fatter the child! And the result was splendid, with the small exception that the new birth came to the world with a hydrocephalic head that almost overcame the skill of the midwife and critics. From sheer terror one lens fell out of his glasses and broke, and in commemoration of this somehow fortunate event, he decided with a sigh, a resigned glance and an automatic grab at his well-holed pockets, to make half of his doctoral dignity a monument to a remarkable event of the past and not to commit himself again.

The evening was cool and the gas lamps flickered due to their rationing on account of the bad times. Several glasses of barley-juice, the barkeeper assured us it was brewed of hops and malt — but the poor sucker should instead have said, “anything but hops and malt” — excited the speech of my companion, and his enthusiasm rose with every toast.

“This is good beer,” he said, “a new invention since the malt disappeared.”

It is no wonder that it tastes good to him since the malt disappeared. He had long since lost the taste for hops and malt.

“You perhaps wish to know who I really am?” he continued. It had not even occurred to me to ask about it. “I am a scholar, I have actually studied *iuris prudentia*, but I lacked strength in my speaking organs, and a native shyness did not permit me to assert myself. As a result, I have been compelled to hide my knowledge in the depths of my innermost soul, and I sit there with my *Weltschmerz* like a brooding hen on a rotten egg, and if a kindred hen did not occasionally drop a fresh egg into the nest ... I hate the world. The prosaic triviality of daily life disgusts me. And now these politics! This South with its hated institutions! I will satisfy myself by making a fist in my pocket and only expressing my thoughts among those who agree with me. Until then, the rod of my

colossal satire will punish this puffed-up people. Just listen how I described one of your festivals a few years ago.”

And now he began to declaim a long, broad portrayal of persons appearing in a festival parade, and when we reached the next lamp-post, I was astonished when he pulled out a filthy, torn copy of the *Pionier* and read aloud through good and bad until what was for me an extremely boring story was at an end.

He said, “Oh, I read it out to everyone so that they can see that it was once printed.”

“Tell me please, you certainly have read Hauff’s works and know the *Memoirs of Satan*.”

“How could I not,” he responded. “Satan! Memoirs! And how! My countryman’s pen currently resides in this Sodom of the Secession. He, Hauff, inspires his devotees and must correct the present as well.”

I thought, “Ha! Birdy! You really know precisely how to fall into the house, door and all.” I asked him how it was possible that such a gifted, deep-thinking pupil of *justicia* who bore the doctoral dignity on his very nose could carry his magisterial modesty so far, and in such worn — I did not add unwashed — clothing.

“Oh!” he said with a poorly-suppressed sigh, “you should also know — true art is always modest, since the artist himself will be overlooked, slandered and pushed aside. Often the necessary *pecunia* is missing. I have already tried many things. I was involved in the daily press here for a long time, — I have ...”

“So, you were a journalist?” I interrupted.

“Not exactly, but I was almost indispensable. I was a distributor.”

“Distributor?”

“Yes indeed. When the paper was printed, I hauled it about the streets.”

“So that’s it! I know. I’ve heard the boys crying out through the whole day, here is this paper, here is that paper. Important news from the theater of war, great victory — and so on.”

“Only just as I was unable to follow my chosen craft of jurisprudence because of my weak voice, it was the same in this case. Those accursed boys could run and shout far better than me — and so...”

Let’s enter this saloon and drink a glass of beer, I said.

“This place?” he asked in shock. “For God’s sake no. The man, Theodore, is so coarse, particularly if you have spent a long time at his table...”

“And?” I asked curiously, “and you have eaten and drunk your fill?”

“Not for that reason. But I still owe the man the bill and I do not appreciate his reminding me about it. He would not be at the cash box right now.”

“Just come on in,” I called to him. “The man will say nothing if you come in with me.”

“There he is coming out the door!” he responded, turning instantly around and bolting around the corner like a greyhound.

“Where did that damned scoundrel standing next to you go?” a man asked as he emerged from the public room. “An accursed people, these semi-students. Big mouths. They continually gossip about the immaculate nature of humanity, but they will not pay even a man who has saved them from starvation.”

We entered and sat at the marble table. I ordered a round and Theodore served. I don't need to say much about him, since all New Orleans knows him. He will not restrain himself in speech, so he has the same experience as Seume when he wrote

Hence out of the many fine fields
I have not a foot's worth to cultivate my cabbage.

because, as Seume says of himself elsewhere, in *The Career of Jeremiah Bunkel*,

I spoke directly and boldly
With fools and scoundrels;
For that I earned mouse droppings
Instead of pepper in my cucumbers.
I always called a spade a spade
And that delivered a direct insult
To many a dumb jerk.

A group of men sitting at the next table were entertaining themselves mightily, and their conversation drew my serious attention because it mentioned the devil, the lifting of roofs and other significant terms. Now and then the name of Reizenstein was mentioned, so that I asked my host sitting next to me why these gentlemen had so much to say about the devil in connection with a certain Reizenstein.

"Didn't you read the *Deutsche Zeitung* yesterday? Here it is with the devil in it." With those words, he passed it over from the other table.

I seized the paper with curiosity and read with much interest to see what they were saying about me in New Orleans, and I must take the pleasure of confessing that Reizenstein deals with me decently. I only think the cats' claws in the cloak was excessive. Decent and well-raised people never go so far as to conceive of the devil as a gentleman who wears kid gloves and walks about without a horse's foot or cats' claws.

The things are really very nicely written, and their style works well, but the devil himself assures you, my dear Herr Reizenstein, that he has other business in hand than playing the lifter of roofs, particularly since he is playing a major role in the world-historical events now shaking America's continent. Still, I am pleased that they have studied so carefully with my long-departed favorite and university colleague Hauff. I marvel at your memory. Your adoptions from the *Memoirs of Satan*, including the Devil in the Bath, Hasenpfeffer, Natas and so on, are not bad. All that I have to object to is that I do not love imitations that have little originality. If you wish to imitate Hauff, then you have to do it in such a way that you seem to be a second Wilhelm. For that reason, I recommend that you read "The Man in the Moon" a second time, to profit from the reading.

Finally, I must ask of you the courtesy of not using my name in the future without my permission. The honor of learning your own name comes only from today, and I assure you that since I have checked in my lists, you will not make my personal acquaintance for some time, since you have several years yet to live.

When the hour strikes, we will meet one another again.

For that reason, dear Reizenstein,
Don't worry yourself.
If I cannot do it, my friend Hain will come —
And he will be the one to talk about uncovering roofs!
Then you will be so bold as to believe that is the devil.
Satan in his true form.
There will not be the slightest doubt,
When he arrives — he will settle the matter.

In the expectation that you will no longer abuse my name and will leave me
untouched in the future, I sign myself

With great respect

Satan

V

Was it the influence of all too many Throatcleaners, or do I find myself in the charmed circle of a magician who only presents himself as the devil and seems to like the clothing of a colonel of Zouaves? I had to ask myself this question as I sat atop a roof while Signor Diavolo ran scouting along the wires of the fire telegraph from Rampart Street to beyond Canal Street and back again.

I asked him, "Aren't you about to raise this roof? I am burning with curiosity to take a look into the house of the lovely Cornelia de ***y, who is probably dreaming of her husband returning in glory from the battlefields of Virginia so he may shower thousands and thousands of kisses on her lovely lips."

"Let's be quiet about that for the moment," Signor Diavolo replied, and he laughed so loudly that a watchman pounding his beat on the opposite side of the street stopped and lifted his head to see whatever persons were up above producing unexpected laughter. But since we were invisible to everyone but ourselves, his curiosity could not be satisfied. This alteration of His Majesty's mood would be explained before a half-hour was up.

"That damn fire telegraph has to be fixed precisely to this roof!" Signor Diavolo continued. "A dumb business! I will be done in an instant with the lightning rod. One push and it will give way and no one will be the wiser. But to put this wire to one side I have to use certain tricks that operate in an electrical medium and would suddenly trip fire signals all over town and make all the sleepers rebel."

"That will be no trouble," I responded, "since people will see right away that it is just a false alarm and everything will calm down again ..."

"And the two men currently visiting Madame de ***y will stop speaking once the alarm sounds, and they might even leave the house out of curiosity, and ... that will deprive us of the finest fruits of this night!" Signor Diavolo was most concerned.

"Two men?" I asked, utterly astonished. "And what would men be doing at this late hour in the rooms of a lady whose unbending commitment and almost idolatrous love of her absent husband has already earned her the title of a modern Penelope in this town?"

“Cornelia de ***y a Penelope?” Signor Diavolo responded with a nasty smile. “Still, does it always have to be *that* when a couple men are found after midnight with a woman whose husband is away? Well, you will discover soon enough what it is about — now let’s try to lift this roof up!”

“But the fire telegraph!” I objected. “Will it sound? You just said . . . “

“No,” Signor Diavolo said, “I believe I just found how to do it. If we succeed in bending the wires of the lightning rod and the fire telegraph so they touch one another over my hoof, then the magnetic flux of the telegraph will be paralyzed and firemen will be spared the trouble of running their legs off chasing imaginary fires.”

“A fortunate thought,” I declared, although I had not the slightest idea of the physical laws to explain this brilliant combination. But I was filled with marvel when I saw how Signor Diavolo lifted the roof as easily as a parasol in barely five seconds, opening to my gaze an image that so completely surprised and dazzled me that for an instant I had to close my eyes and hide my face in the deep folds of His Majesty’s cloak so as not to fall victim to my own imagination.

First Roof The Two Oyster Fishermen

Signor Diavolo was not devil enough to remain totally indifferent to the sight of the perfected beauty of Madame Cornelia de ***y. “How lovely she is this evening,” he sighed, “I will place myself close by her side, so close that the fresh breath from her lips redden my pale cheeks and the fire of her eyes sets my Ellsworth beard afire. And you, my friend, will be so good as to place yourself between those two men, so you hear the words they whisper one to another.”

I did as Signor Diavolo ordered, and soon I was thoroughly acquainted with the content of their conversation and was at least partly informed of the reason for their being here.

“If you do not pay us at least five hundred dollars for the trip,” said a raw man of filthy, wild appearance, “you can take care of your letter yourself.”

“You’re quite right, Giuseppe,” the other chimed in, “there are spies everywhere now, and if they catch us, they would not hesitate to string us up from the nearest tree.”

“We could shut the mouth of the short dingy-man with fifty dollars, and we would rather not pay him out of our own pockets.”

“That is obvious,” the other interrupted, “Five hundred fifty dollars and not a cent less!”

“What did Captain S* pay?” the one earlier addressed as Giuseppe asked, after a brief pause.

“Nothing at all up to now,” was the answer, “but he asked me to see him at his bookstore under the St. Charles Hotel, and there he is to give me a message to take to the commander of the *Niagara*.

“By the Holy Virgin! You are an idiot!” Giuseppe the Italian said, “The commander of the *Niagara* will not pay you a cent, and he will give you back a message for Captain S* — do not let yourself in for such complications; if the Captain does not pay you in advance, then . . .”

“I know what you are trying to say, Giuseppe, but that will be the last order from this side. As the crooked cop said yesterday, the captain along with his friend, Captain W*, are already on the black list, so it will be barely a week before both are arrested.”

“Dumb gossip!” Giuseppe responded, “then one of us must warn them so that we ourselves escape with a whole hide.”

“Something occurs to me,” the other replied, “since I don’t believe the crooked cop was entirely wrong, then it would be best to be paid in advance from both sides and just not carry the orders out. Then, if one of the captains is arrested and certain letters are found in their hands, we would be in danger of being held at a difficult time. ——”

I saw Madame de ***y suddenly rise from the soft cushions of her armchair, where she had sat in deep thought, only occasionally throwing a contemptuous glance at the chattering oyster fishermen, and she stepped to a credenza, on which a well-filled strongbox stood. I also saw how the two men pursued the movements of the beautiful woman with their eyes, halting their mutual whispering.

With that imposing presence that a female parvenu can never learn, since when it appears it is always the fruit of a youth passed in splendid society, Madame de ***y approached the two fishermen, who had been seated this entire time in the far corner of the room on a sofa. She presented them with two letters of differing formats while saying, “This letter in the larger envelope is for the first officer of the *Niagara* —— and this one here —— pay strict attention and make no mistake —— is to be placed in an oyster with black cross-stripes. Take care that no other than the short dingy-man oversees the unloading of your boat.”

So! I thought to myself, a love-story is being played with the little letter, and that on an enemy warship! And now I thought of the laughter sounded by Signor Diavolo when I prattled on the roof about the dreams of the faithful wife.

“And this is for the two of you, gentlemen,” Madame de ***y continued, “and you will get double if you can prove to me that my letters have reached the right hands.”

With these words, she handed each of them a thousand-dollar note, and as soon as this was done, she turned her back on them in an unforgettable gesture.

This utterly unexpected generosity appears to have disarmed the two fellows, who had just been planning a double extortion. They declared their thanks aloud and swore high, powerful oaths that they would go through the fire for their noble benefactress.

Madame de ***y had already left the room after having taken a hard pull on a bell-cord. —— I saw Signor Diavolo vanish along with the lady of the house, since he did not depart from his goddess’s side. She could not sense that this invisible figure followed at her heels and clung with his moist cheek to her full shoulders.

Two minutes after the bell had rung there appeared at the door of the room that led to the corridor the figure of a white man in long, silver-gray servant’s coat. On his appearance, the two oyster fishermen rose and departed, so I had to accept that this was the usual sign of their departure. They were probably led into the courtyard to depart by the rear door.

VI

Now I was alone. As much as the conversation of the oyster fishermen had drawn my full attention, I was still glad finally to be freed of the torment of having to breathe the powerful perfume of catsup and bad liquor that streamed from their clothing. The oyster fishermen were truly two repellent creatures, with faces for which there is no phrase in the German language. I thus had the poetic right to bemoan the fact that an evil demon of her spirit had placed Madame de ***y in the position of receiving such revolting beings in her rooms and make them bearers of her secrets, despite the fact that she was guilty of perverse politics and wayward inclinations of the heart. I considered what resources of self-control and heroism was needed for this woman, the wife of a man who held such a high position in the community and had just been named to a high post in our young republic, to bring herself to prostitute her innermost secrets to two such degraded subjects. This says nothing of the treasonous mission, whose upshot would expose her husband to the revenge of his political enemies and destroy him.

I was torn from these thoughts by the arrival of the Negro of our Queen of Hearts, who now entered the door instead of the white servant and, after arranging a few insignificant items, turned out the gas lamp. It was one hour after midnight. There I stood waited impatiently for Signor Diavolo, who appears to have forgotten entirely in his zeal for the lamentable Madame de ***y that I was waiting for him impatiently to get out from under this roof.

Second Roof The Cadi's Hat

How love can elevate the visage even of a devil! After that night Signor Diavolo had become an entirely different devil. When I spoke of Cornelia de ***y, he warmly pressed my hands and assured me that he would soon move events in such a way that the oyster fishers and their cohorts would fall under the full weight of the law without the least damage to Madame's reputation. "In order to cut the threads of this perilous alliance in two," Signor Diavolo told me one evening, "I have instructed J*, the secret policeman, to arrest the two captains at the officers' supper taking place in the Saint Charles tomorrow evening, and to seize the two Italians on their oyster boat at one of the bridges of the Old Canal. An officer who was a friend of mine will use his overpowering voice in the War Council to disavow and suppress in advance all attempts by the captains or the oyster-fishermen to bring the name of Madame into consideration."

I shook my head thoughtfully.

Signor Diavolo, who saw this, continued, "Don't play the infidel, my friend, and do not doubt my fulfilling my promise to act on behalf of the wellbeing of the lovely Cornelia. At the very instant when the Negro of the Queen of Hearts cut off the gas and you were given quite an upset, so that you tapped around in the dark until the start of dawn, I got a good look at my dear from the adjoining "blue closet." There I discovered that her political sin arises only from a matter of the heart, and if one simply took away her opportunity to correspond with her Yankee Adonis on the blockade-ship and compensated her with a *Southern Orangeman*, which is not out of the question in her broad heart, she would cease at once to speculate in Northern principles!"

“I understand,” I responded dryly in my utter stupefaction. “But that depends on whether Madame de ***y is satisfied with this exchange.” This was because it was obvious that the “Orangeman” was himself.

“That is rather coarse, my friend,” Signor Diavolo said, who thought my remark rather premature. But he also smiled in his dominating manner.

I responded, “Your Majesty must excuse me if I was a little too strong there, but I cannot imagine how you could so rapidly win the lady’s heart in your present invisible form.”

Signor Diavolo did not say a word, and I saw at once that he was not willing to go further into the subject with me. Yet I know for sure that his entire rescue project was based on jealousy, and I quietly was ashamed of having condemned Madame de ***y so utterly without forgiving her for having too broad a heart. In this matter did not take into consideration the words of Signor Diavolo’s predecessor,

I am a part of that power
That ever wills evil and only accomplishes good.

And I extended him no pardon.

“Frightful weather this evening! If Your Majesty did not pull the cloak closer around me, the raindrops would so spray on my face that I could not see. I am concerned that we will not be able to get safely to Esplanade Street to raise the second roof. Heaven seems to storm whenever you dare time and again to seize the role of fate on this earth.”

“Have no concern, my friend. Heaven has plenty to do on its own, and the devil is more concerned with his fallen angels. The reason is because a rebellion broke out up there many, many years ago that has not yet been put down. The once-loyal citizens of heaven no longer wished to obey, but they now intend to found their own realm in which they recognize only the elements as their sovereign, not Providence. Yes, they have become so powerful that they can no longer be thrown into hell, as happened with me and with my lordly cousins when we rose against the scepter-bearer in heaven. But even in my own realm there is now and then a rebel raising his head, and I can only keep order down there by handling them as nicely as possible by giving them a throatcleanser instead of nettle soup, which is unpopular. For that reason, in order to strengthen my own party, I will henceforth no longer accept nasty people into my kingdom of shadows, but rather those who can be satisfied with a good bitter, such as Silenus and his company. ——— yes, I assure you, my friend ——— I am horrified at this epoch-making new age where everything — earth, heaven and hell — is in wild ferment, whose end (who knows?) will perhaps have no result except that the material conquests made by you, humanity, over centuries will collapse with a dreadful bang. The result will be that it will need a Copernicus thousands of years from now to prove once more that you will not fall on your heads. And then?”

“The dance will probably start all over again,” I answered quietly and marveled at Signor Diavolo, who despite his slender interest had managed to muster enough clarity to evaluate modern philosophy in its full range.

In this way, we had covered the considerable distance from Jefferson Lake, where we had completed a splendid supper at five minutes before midnight, climbing into the

air, reaching Esplanade in an amazingly brief time. Fortunately, this roof had no wires that could endanger us with lightning striking in all directions.

So, with little trouble we entered the house, a cute but roomy cottage surrounded by a thick forest of evergreens and decorative plants.

We passed first through a room in which a costly night-lamp shed only sparse light. We heard the light snoring of children, who seem to sleep away, dreaming of sunlight and blossoms when it is stormy outside, exactly when adults toss and turn and worry about the cause and effect of all that electricity.

“How quietly the little ones are resting,” Signor Diavolo remarked, “while their mother is still awake in the adjoining room, awaiting the end of the storm.”

I glanced through the half-opened door and saw a woman in deep negligée standing before the fireplace, taking one daguerreotype after another in hand and tenderly kissing them.

“That is the image of her husband,” Signor Diavolo whispered to me, since he saw me looking on with a questioning gaze. “A marvelous story!” he continued, “but come with me into this room on the left.” Here he softly closed the door as soon as I had entered, drew out his hand-lantern and placed it on the round table in the middle of the room.

I had to take hold of myself so as not to let out a cry of terror. The lantern consisted of a single diamond cut in the shape of an octagon, the size of a cassaway’s egg. It was attached on two sides to a silver ring that in turn rested on very thin stand of magnetic iron, five lines high. The lamp projected such a bright light that I had to close and open my eyes several times before I was able to endure its brightness and see the objects it illuminated. The remarkable thing was that this diamond did not project its light beyond a ring three times its size, where its power ceased, leaving the darkness sharply cut off from the light.

This diamond was certainly a great temptation, and I have no idea what I might have done if Signor Diavolo had drawn pen and paper from his pocket, nudged my arm and whispered to me, “Here, my friend, take it if you decide to join my company in the Realm of Shadows in so and so many years.”

There was in fact no such offer, and it would never have happened, since, as Signor Diavolo later told me, this diamond lantern was Lucifer’s wedding gift when he married the daughter of Dr. Faust a few centuries ago, producing *Atoti*, the literature demon. Three other spirits also sprang from this marriage: Mochiel, as swift as the wind, Aniguel, as swift as a bird, and Aziel, as swift as men’s thoughts. A dozen little devils that never found fame also came from this union, besides the two great devils Mogol, the gold-devil, and Cacal, the devil of lust. This dynasty lasts to the present day, with precedence at all the important councils of hell.

“It goes no further than this hat,” I declared, but with a subdued voice so as not to be heard by the woman two rooms away. Signor Diavolo had pointed in a mysterious manner to an object that lay in the area illuminated by the lamp.

“A hat like many others I’ve seen, and yet quite old and worn —— I see nothing remarkable about it,” I remarked.

“*That is the Cadi’s hat!*” Signor Diavolo intoned.

“The Cadi’s hat?” I asked, “I don’t understand that. And even if it is the hat of some particular Cadi, I can still discover nothing remarkable from that.”

“That is the Cadi’s hat, the hat of the husband of the lady who stands in front of the fireplace, who is the wife of the man whose picture she kissed,” Signor Diavolo declared.

“Your Majesty is bringing me to distraction with this Cadi’s hat,” I responded with irritation. “Whose house are we actually in? Perhaps I could then find some interpretation for the significance of this hat.”

Signor Diavolo drew very close to me and whispered a name in my ear. “Is that all?” I asked him. “So that is the hat found on the bank of the Mississippi near the ferry, and it was used as proof that the unfortunate man found his death in the Mississippi? Sad enough! But what why should Your Majesty place so much significance on observing this hat?”

VII

“A family reliquary is always interesting, and observing it is worthwhile, even if it is only an old hat,” Signor Diavolo responded.

“That is nice enough,” I remarked, “and I think it is entirely alright that the unfortunate wife so carefully preserves the hat of her husband, who found his death in the waves, as the sole witness to this tragic event. Perhaps this is even the room he most liked to spend time in — but to make such a fuss out of it, and to include it in this grandiose spectacle of infernal diamonds, I find that extremely odd, and Your Majesty could just as well have told me about it over a glass of wine.”

Signor Diavolo responded, “You would be completely right and this would be no more interesting than that of other dead people, if it were the hat of a *dead person*. But the owner of this hat travels a couple times every week from Havana to Matanzas, and he is only awaiting the lifting of the blockade to return to his family and to release his children from the illusion that their father is *really* dead.”

“What?” I cried out in shock, “then Mr. *** wasn’t drowned, and the entire tragedy was only a farce? And the reward that his family posted immediately after the announcement of his death for the discovery of his body was only a humbug?”

“So it was,” Signor Diavolo responded, “and the lady already feels such pangs of conscience because of the fraud committed on her husband’s life that she no longer has a peaceful night, and with weather such as tonight she rushes as if mad to the fireplace, where the portrait of her beloved, of her husband hangs, and she kisses it time and again until the storm passes and all is calm again. As you have already seen, she does this every time, and because she is very religious, she thinks she can calm the heavens through the tenderness she pours out on the image, and that she turns away trouble from her husband that her conviction, which borders on hallucination, sees as threatening him. She is normally a thoroughly good-hearted woman, but conditions compelled her to act with her husband to spin this plot to keep him out of the claws of his gruesome creditors, to avoid problems that a life of dubious legality brings with it. What frightens her the most is that the children might talk about their dead father, and although she does not expect to leave the city forever to rest in her spouse’s arms, her face reddens whenever she thinks, ‘What will my good children say when they see the father they thought was dead, and how are they to believe he was only dead for a year?’ She asks herself this a

thousand times, and she has no idea what she would say if the moment ever came that the children should meet their father.”

Signor Diavolo accompanied these words with such a cold smile of *Schadenfreude* that I shuddered as I never had in my entire life. “If this story really develops as you are telling me,” I responded in shock, “then this can only be Your Majesty’s work, and I have no doubt but that you have also enticed the unfortunate husband to his daring speculation that plunges him into the abyss of perdition.”

“Sir, obedient servant,” Signor Diavolo agreed, “an indictment in all proper legal form! I only marvel that you do not also accuse me of leading the beautiful Cornelia from the principles of morality. — But that is just the way short-sighted mortals are wont to pursue. Whenever the circumstances under which a human heart goes astray cannot be immediately explained, it must always be His Majesty the Devil who has his hand in the game. — I tell you, though, that you human beings sin a thousand times before the devil hears anything about it or gives a direct incentive to do so. Ever since the great battle when we were thrown down from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell because we were not satisfied to be ruled by despotism but preferred to follow our own heads, people have sinned even without our involvement, that is, you will do evil, and if you do not have the understanding to see this in time to arm yourself against evil, then you go to your ruin due to your own devilry, and we are spared the trouble of seizing your soul and leading it into the eternal prison!”

“Splendid!” I cried out, “Your Majesty knows how to preach from an entirely different text. — But for my part, right now, I only harbor the desire to leave this place and let ‘the Cadi’s hat’ remain the Cadi’s hat as long as it wishes.”

“Thankless fellow,” Signor Diavolo growled. But that was only a phrase, since even the devil is not always ready to give the right answer.

An intense bolt of lightning that even pierced the closed shutters and lit up the *entire* room for an instant almost froze the blood in my veins, for it revealed a third person in the room, sitting in a high armchair alongside the round table, a person whose presence I had not sensed up to now. “Your Majesty!” I said, hardly capable of forming the words, “have you seen it? There is someone else in the room with us — and you have not said anything about it to me?”

“That is the Cadi himself,” Signor Diavolo responded with an icy coldness that chilled me through and through.

“The Cadi himself?” I stuttered away, “What does that mean?”

“That means that the Cadi has really died in this instant in Havana or Matanzas, for what you saw sitting in the flash of lightning was his departing soul staring along with us at his hat, with which he had done such tricks in life.”

At almost the same moment one also heard the smashing of a heavy object followed by the shattering of a pane of glass. Without waiting for a question, Signor Diavolo said in a phlegmatic tone, “That was the picture that hung on the wall — it was of the Cadi in his order’s costume — only a poor lithograph of the lovely original that sits there in the armchair — not much lost with that picture! But let me hide my lantern so that the lady is not even more frightened when she comes in here from the hearth.”

Signor Diavolo had no sooner put the diamond back in the pocket of his cloak than the same lady who had kissed her husband’s picture moments before appeared at the

threshold with a light in her right hand to see what the noise was all about. She had barely taken two steps into this room when she sank to the floor with a terrified cry.

“That was the Cadi’s hat,” Signor Diavolo said, once we were out from under the roof again. “Even in death the Cadi could not be apart from his hat.”

VII

The Devil in the Concert Hall

This episode in the house on Esplanade Street had occupied my imagination to such a high degree that I passed the rest of the night without sleep. I was upset with Signor Diavolo for raising the veil from my own secrets that even the most malicious gossip had as yet been unable to decipher. Since he parted from me most coldly that night, I believed I could hope that he would not pick me up again so soon to participate in one of his roof-raising. Yes, I even avoided sitting near the St. Charles Hotel, where he was living during his visit to this city. I left it to chance when and how we would meet again.

So, several weeks passed without my seeing him. Then my curiosity drove me to learn whether he was still in New Orleans. For this purpose, I only had to approach the *leparello* of the hotel. This countryman of Cincinnatus of Caprero, currently first lieutenant, junior grade, of the cooks’ regiment, gave me the mysterious message that Colonel *** did indeed still live there, but that he was only at home for ladies of high rank. Since I did not pretend to wish to visit his colonel, the answer of this flour-covered lieutenant seemed a little pert. But I let it go and without dignifying him with my gaze any further, I turned my back on him.

I repeated as I walked away, “Only receives ladies of high rank?” And who might these female acquaintances be that find entrance to the chambers of this hotel under the aegis of this hotel *leparello*? This question pressed so much on my avid spirit that I steadily fell away from my determination to avoid Signor Diavolo, until I came to the resolution to approach Signor Diavolo again under some plausible pretext. An occasion soon presented itself. They were presenting the “Teufelsmühle,”¹⁸ and because Signor Diavolo had shown himself an avid fan of German theater while here, I could almost take it as a certainty that he would attend this magician’s opera unless other pressing business kept him away.

I was not disappointed. Immediately on my entrance into the classic space of the concert hall I saw him on the left side of the proscenium, leaning against the wall under the image of the prince of German poets. Since he was only slightly bowed and wore a black top hat as a head covering, his figure reached all the way to Goethe’s feet, so that it seemed that Goethe was standing on his hat.

One could think of no more suitable tableau than what these two gentlemen presented. For that reason, I must voice the opinion that His Majesty chose this position

¹⁸ *Teufelsmühle* (= Devil’s Mill) in this case refers to “*Die Teufelsmühle am Wienerberg*,” an “Austrian popular fairy-tale with music in four acts” composed by Karl Friedrich Hensler (1759-1825), (Vienna: Mathias Andreas Schmidt, 1799). Projekt Gutenberg.de.

on purpose to suitably occupy (until the curtain rose) the imagination of those onlookers whose nervous systems were already being wound up by the overture. For the devil does nothing without a plan, and whether he moves or stands still, the slightest things still add to symbolism. The proof of this is his horse's hoof, which he carries with him if only as an allegory.

His appearance this evening pleased me to an extraordinary degree, and I felt drawn to him even more than before. His civilian dress suited him significantly better than the uniform of a colonel of Fire Zouaves. A dark-blue, long coat of the finest woolen cloth, cream-colored spats of the same material, a sulfur-yellow vest of watered silk, white batiste cravat and silver-gray gloves formed an ensemble that would evoke involuntary tears of envy from every dandy.

As was the case with our first encounter at the shop window where the trophies were displayed, this time he was not wearing his Ellsworth beard. Instead there flowed a long mane of snow-white hair down to his shoulders with the same glow as loose silk, making his face appear even paler than it really was. His temples seemed to me dreadfully fallen this evening, pressing his high forehead, on which there were neither wrinkles nor faults, into an imposing arch. His aquiline nose was thin and finely modeled, the mark of his sharpness of understanding, his deep sensibility, but also his unlimited secretiveness, particularly when his ever-moving nostrils were taken into account. His lips were narrow, and when he spoke he revealed two rows of faultless teeth, as white as orange blossoms and as close together as pearls on a string. Not the slightest trace of a moustache could be seen on his upper lip, and his chin and cheeks were equally bald as an eggshell. His admittedly large eyes did not show the slightest fire this evening but stared out without glitter. They resembled those of a dead man, whose lids no loving hand had pressed closed.

I was almost reluctant to approach him, since I did not have a good conscience, at least to the devil. For when only a few steps away from him, I realized that I had had no real reason for avoiding him week after week. There was no doubt that he had long seen me coming, and it was my own problem how I was properly to introduce myself to him a second time in order to restore our acquaintance. After a rapid approach to the left side of the proscenium I stepped up to him, greeted him with a light movement of the hand and said, "May Your Majesty not marvel that I dare to express my thanks for gracing our German temple of the muses with his high presence."

"I am glad to see you again," he responded in a courtly manner, as if we had never been at odds. Then he left the position he had been holding, which is to say he freed himself from Goethe's footsteps, put his right arm on my shoulder and continued, "They are playing the 'Teufelsmühle,' tonight, and I am convinced that it will be generally well done, but not far from us will be sitting (and here he looked at someone who sat sunk deeply in thought, studying the theater program) Dr. Sassafras, a penetrating critic who makes every imaginable effort to make the actors feel his mood. For that reason, he is seated next to Atoti, the great literature-devil, who will convince him how little purpose it would serve for him to stymie the growth of your German stage by pouring out all the stock of established phrases from decades of reviews in order to embitter the morning coffee of the poor readers. Atoti will tell him that the larger public is confused about the true talents of the performers through his criticism, and that he is more or less compelled to take over the office of judging their efforts."

“There Your Majesty is entirely correct!” I responded, “and let all theater critics who write with goose-quills be condemned to drown in their own ink.”

“Easy, easy my friend,” Signor Diavolo responded, “let’s not throw out the baby with the bathwater, for next to Dr. Sassafras there sits another who writes with a hawk’s feather, and then ...”

Then the curtain rose. I followed Signor Diavolo’s hand, who moved to the center of the proscenium.

[End of the last episode – none further]

¹ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 13 October 1861, p. 1.

² *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 10 November 1861, p. 1.

³ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 17 November 1861, p. 1.

⁴ *Deutsche Zeitung* (daily edition), 1 December 1861, p. 1.

⁵ The local press nicknamed Ellworth’s troops his “Pet Lambs.” See *Daily Picayune*, 26 May 1861, 27 May 1861, 19 June 1861.

⁶ “Trophies of the War,” *Daily Picayune*, 31 July 1861, p.4 Among the war prizes on display at the City Telegraph office in City Hall was “...a mahogany medicine chest, marked “Hospital Department, U.S.A.”

⁷ Ibid. “...A military overcoat belonging to some of the New York Regiment...”

⁸ W. H. Russell of the London *Times*. Russell enjoyed celebrity status yet his reporting was controversial and the authenticity of some of his field correspondence was questioned in the local press.

⁹ Probably Francis Hanson Hatch (d. 1884) who served as Collector of Customs from 1857 to 1862. Hatch under United States administration (4-1-1857 to 1-31-1861), State of Louisiana (2-1-1861 to 2-28-1861), and CSA (3-1-1861 to 4-26-1862). A native of Vermont, Hatch wrote for the *Baton Rouge Advocate* before embarking on a political career. He was fervently anti-Douglas/pro-Buchanan and associated with John Slidell. President Buchanan appointed him as Collector of Customs for the Port of New Orleans. He also may be the same F. H. Hatch who killed a man in a local ballroom. The murder case was major news at the time and Pierre Soulé represented the accused.

¹⁰ Also known as the Furies, the Eumenides were Greek deities of vengeance.

¹¹ Reference to execution of the revolutionary Robert Blum in Vienna, 9 November 1848.

¹² This cocktail does not appear in Stanley Clisby Arthur’s *Famous New Orleans Drinks and How to Mix ‘em*. It may be a fictional drink of Reizenstein’s own creation. If genuine, it may have had a base of Lacrimae Christi del Vesuvio wine.

Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein

Bonseigneur in New Orleans, or a Thousand and One Red Threads

Tägliche deutsche Zeitung, 9 April to 26 November 1865

translated by Steven Rowan

Let the reader imagine that the dreadful conflict has been settled, that peace and repose are reestablished, only interrupted here and there by the sharp crack of a whip beyond the Alleghenies or the shrill whistle of a robber in the mountains of the Shenandoah or the Cumberland; he is to imagine that it is only in memory that he hears the dull thunder of cannon, that the farmer's plow is once more making its deep furrows, that the blessings of fruit bloom again on the fields of Manassas, Shiloh, and Antietam, that the white crane once more builds its nest, unmolested in the marshes of the Chickahominy, that the Tennessee and the Cumberland flow peacefully alongside one another until they reach the gold-green waters of the Ohio; he imagines that the brokers of the Potomac once again stand at the tables of our Caligulas, that the letters of typesetters are no longer impaled on bayonets, and that one no longer needs to resort to *sacred concerts* to enjoy Sundays and holidays; let the reader imagine this all and utterly forget the present — then he will have all the easier mood to follow this portrayal and rightly see the setting through which our red threads pass.

1

“Make way! Here come the Breckinridge men — hurrah for the sons of the South! Hurrah for Southern chivalry!” So certain voices cry out as the Lane Dragoons turn into Canal Street and force their way through the colorful swirl of people, blocking like a mighty barricade all the accesses leading to the Clay Monument. These dragoons, leading the parade, carried themselves as if they were the lords of the situation and all others were mere mummers and children's play. But their advent brought out no enthusiasm, and the hurrahs of those voices found no echo in the pressed and pushing crowd. The good people of New Orleans still to that moment had not seen any sons of Southern cavaliers, and they still wanted to know nothing of specifically Southern cavaliers. It still felt nothing of the great earthquake that always precedes the eruption of a volcano. Up to this moment it still believed itself to be in the times of Hickory Poles¹² and could not see the long shadows that all figures were throwing, fed by a great setting sun. For that reason,

there was no surprise at the great enthusiasm released as the Douglas Men loomed, and the Little Giant of the West was born along in his true image on a banner before his parade. "Hurrah for Douglas! Hurrah for the Little Giant!" It is repeated in a thousand voices, and "*Der Freiheit eine Gasse!*" a devotee of Aesculapius cries out, still clinging to the stony pinnacle of 1848. But the greatest tumult arose as the division for Bell and Everett emerged from the veritable sea of torches and colorful lanterns. From hundreds of carriages, placed in double rows along the sidewalks, from all windows, down from all verandas, handkerchiefs fluttered, hats swung, eyes blazed, bouquets flew, and there was no end to the Hurrahs.

In the meantime, the Breckinridge men, with the Lane Dragoons at their head, had reached the vicinity of the platform that had been raised next to the Clay Monument, forming an impenetrable phalanx, opening only for the great speaker of this evening and the good men and women accompanying him. When the phalanx had again closed, the press of people grew intense. Thousands of Douglas and Bell men¹² abandoned their speakers and gathered around the tribunal of the Senator of Alabama. He drew the masses to himself as if by an invisible magic thread, and even before his speech was over, they saw intelligence, rawness, stupidity, instinct — in short, all the shades of the human spirit and brutality cowered at his feet to kiss the red slippers of secession.

Was it really already secession that the Senator of Alabama was preaching? And were the people already prepared to hear such high treason? History teaches us, that the masses are always ready for anything so long as one knows how to present it as cleverly as did William L. Yancey. For that reason, he did not speak openly of secession, since he could not yet make himself guilty of such a sacrilege. But only through the blinding aura of his arguments, through the sinuous turns of his sophistic doctrines, which moved him forward surely along a direct path

He passed to his hearers the message that it would really be a great misfortune for the South to tear itself away from the federation in the case of a victory of the Republican candidate.

This Yancey! Since the days of Catiline, other than Mirabeau, there had not been such a conspirator, no speaker, to throw the conditions of his hatred as successfully into one's face, than the Senator of Alabama. For that reason, even the cleverest among his listeners received from him in spirit the collapse of that mighty colossus, one foot in the Atlantic and the other in the Pacific, that had defied all the world's storms for eighty-six years.

On the same evening and in the same place, only a few minutes before the close of Yancey's speech, a phenomenon showed itself by accident that unforgettably struck all who saw it. It is still recalled that the statue of Henry Clay stood in full light, and it happened that a flagpole bearing the insignia of the Breckinridge party commenced waving. From this came a lengthened shadow that rose from the right arm to the forehead of the statue and then, when the flagpole inclined to the other side, it vanished. Through this brief variation, a remarkable image arose. When the shadow passed from the right arm to the forehead and then suddenly departed, it appeared as if the arm were moving, rising and placing the hand on his forehead. Then, when the statue again stood in full light, it flickered for a few instants. If in this moment, it had been endowed with life, it would perhaps have said, "Senator of Alabama, in what times do you think that you are living that you dare to spew them with such fratricidal stuff? Are you a sovereign

conspirator tormented by ambition as was Burr, or are you a chained dog working for the camarilla that was already hammering at the coffin of the Union? Look out, William L. Yancey, lest you do not bring upon yourself the curse of coming generations and you find yourself in the ground even before you harvest the fruit of your evil seed.” “And you, fellow citizens, descendants of the heroes of the Revolution, you, whose names are mingled with that of Washington, you, whose fathers were friends and colleagues of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson, who listened to the eloquence of Patrick Henry; you, who have shared the hospitality of a Hayne, Rutledge, and Pinckney.

“Do you think no more of the storied past and greatness of your fatherland? Do you wish to sink to shame and insignificance? Do you wish impudently to squander the rich legacy your fathers bequeathed to you and your children? Do you want to tear into rags the costly garments of your *alma mater*, your common fatherland, and drag it through the dirt? If that is your purpose, then the sorrow of what once was will bring you to silent distress, and your enemies will find it easy to lock you in the irons that long have been forged for you!”

Thus spoke the statue, or rather thus it would have spoken, and the question arises whether the nail was not truly struck on the head.

Concerning Episode 1: Since Germans expected music when they gathered to drink on Sundays, forbidden by Sabbatarian local governments, entertainment was hypocritically advertised as “Sacred Concerts” to avoid police closure.

Hickory poles were a symbol of Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party.

Der Freiheit eine Gasse = Make way for freedom.

Four national tickets were nominated in 1860: “Northern” Democratic candidates were Stephen A. Douglas, running with Herschel V. Johnson; “Southern” Democratic candidate was John C. Breckinridge, with Joseph Lane; Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln ran with Hannibal Hamlin, and the Constitutional Union candidate was John Bell, running with Edward Everett.

2

“The great Calhoun shall live!” Glasses touched and the Senator of Alabama took a deep drink after making this toast. “Long live Louisiana! Long live the Palmetto state!” “Long live the Lone Star!” “Long live the Old Dominion!”

“Long live the whole South!” another called out. “Long live John Breckinridge, our presidential candidate!” drank a third. “Long live the sovereign state of Alabama and its chivalrous senator!” from the lips of a young lady.

It was only a small group that gathered in the night from the 29th to the 30th of October in the City Hotel. It consisted of the same persons that appeared on the platform the previous evening and heard the gripping speech of the senator in the presence of Henry Clay. These gentlemen and ladies, who long since belonged to another time and were greeting the dawn of a new regime, were drinking wine. But they did not drink it as the Philistines drink, but rather they drank it as Mirabeau once did as he gazed in the face of royalty; they drank it as Cromwell did as they brought King Charles to the gallows; they drank it as Luther did when he burned the papal bull; they drank it as Ulrich von Hutten did when he cried out, “The die is cast!” They drank it as the English colonists did

when they cast the tea chests into the water; they drank it as Thomas Paine did when he threw the Bible in the face of reluctant New England and proclaimed his “Common Sense.” — That is, they drank it as great people have always drunk since time immemorial possessed of a higher ideal, whether they were to triumph thereby or fall to ruin.

While the Douglas-men lay in the thirsty arms of King Gambrinus and the Bellites consumed ice cream and soda water, here they swung the Staff of Thyrsus in joy and enthusiasm. Only here and there the rebel spirit released its panther, and then neither Little Giants nor giant dwarfs were safe. If humor and satire are stymied for a while, as happened from time to time, they grew quiet, calculating, and there arose extensive questions.

“The Little Giant will make you work, Mr. Yancey,” said, among other things, that lady who had previously proposed a toast to the senator, “as I heard, he will be touring the state of Alabama.”

“He will take Mobile by storm,” said the Senator of Alabama with great certainty, “but I will conquer the state, and Breckinridge will achieve a majority of at least eight thousand votes over Bell and Douglas. That will secure Lincoln's election, presuming that the others do their duty.”

“It shall not fail,” a young lawyer replied, “but what if Lincoln is still defeated?”

“Then we will wait another four years,” commented the Senator of Alabama.

They went on to speak much about Northern fanaticism, Northern greed and the blackmail tariff. They spoke of the usurpation by the Federal government in the conflict with the government of South Carolina in 1832; they reviewed the suppression of that Whisky Rebellion in Philadelphia and how the government acted then, in short they drew parallels on parallels, finally coming to the conclusion that the government in Washington was in no position to wage a war on a large scale, since the entire North was shopkeepers and speculators, not suited for war, and so far as farmers went, they could never be compelled to exchange their plow for the sword to rage against those of their own blood.

Finally, they spoke of the great power of cotton, whose reign was enough to preserve the peace more than all the diplomatic documents in the world.

How deceived they were! The sovereignty of cotton was not enough in the hour of peril, and Daniel Webster's notions of a peaceful separation had a dreadful fiasco.

For very soon streams of blood would stain the gigantic progress of the rebellion, and where once the daughter of the planter wandered dreamily through the dark passages of oranges and magnolias, vandalism sharpened its sword and destroyed the last remnant of prosperity, quiet and happiness.

3

He came, he saw and —he was conquered! Stephen Douglas of Illinois. It was the 8th of November in 1860, two days after the election, a rainy, nasty day. The people said that there was no more doubt that the Black Republicans had won. They hung their heads and acted like the children in old fairy-tales who climbed into the pig-sty to hide from the big man who was running around with a butcher-knife and crying out, “I smell, smell human flesh!”

But the Little Giant emerged, gathered his courage, and crept away.

He departed Mobile, a beaten man.

With the wrinkled brow of a humiliated titan, with the hard-bitten resentment of a squatter driven from his house and home, the charred remnant of Nebraska Bill, which once was to prepare the way into the heart of the South, in his pocket, he stepped among the people and greeted his constituents. They carried him up the stone steps of the Saint Charles Hotel on their shoulders, and when he showed himself at the main window to the masses gathered below, enthusiasm rose to madness. People screamed, no, they howled into one another's faces, "Hurrah for Stephen Douglas!" And those who did not want to scream felt fists under their chins and screamed and roared with them. They crept between the legs and under the bodies of the cabby's horses, they climbed trees, they rose up — everyone wanted to see the Little Giant.

They screamed in his face, "In 1864 you will be elected President!" That lifted the breast of the Little Giant, and rather than enlivening the excited crowd, it enlivened him.

"In 1864, you will be elected President!" But they shouted it only out of anxiety and distress of heart, trying to remove the weight that lay heavy on the breast. Doing this, they believed they were scaring away the big man they saw approaching them with a butcher knife — but it didn't help at all.

They exhausted themselves in cheering, and when they had done so, all their illusions had vanished, and they felt themselves set down on the cold ground of reality.

To be sure the words of the Little Giant long remained in their ears: "The President is in no position to injure the rights of the citizens of any state — just remain calm — everything will go well, for you are a free people, and next time you will understand how to help a man of your choice — just go home quietly and go to bed — may Uncle Sam and all the good spirits protect you!" He meant this in complete earnest, without hypocritical effrontery, without political theatrics. He believed himself still in the circle of his own, and he was already far removed from the periphery of his effectiveness.

For that reason, it also pressed his heart when he became aware of his great error. The heavy storm clouds that were gathering in the political heavens had already burst when they bore him to the grave, far from New Orleans. He was the last tribune of the democracy of the Union.

4

Allons enfants de la patrie! was already being played on all the pianos, and the mocking bird in the gilded cage sang along. The aristocracy of white babies cried it into the faces of black nannies, and whoever went home late at night whistled it. White and red cavaliers were the order of the day, and the Minute Men bore their pelican cockades. The *Marseillaise*, this nursery song of freedom and funeral song of tyranny, had won entry into many hearts, and the national colors were only seen now on barber poles. The Negroes put their heads together, "We will soon be free," they whispered, and they already showed a certain attitude when they came under the auctioneer's hammer. And yet it was still two months until the 4th of March. The President Elect was still sitting in the garden in front of his house in Springfield, suffering from a cold he had caught on that night from the 6th to the 7th of November, watching the fateful game of the telegraph. He had not had a decent night's sleep since, and whenever he went to his rest

he looked under the bed to see whether someone was there and upset that he had become President. "A kingdom for a good night's sleep!" he called out again, so that his wife grew irritated and regretted that the 4th of March had not yet come and he still had no kingdom to give away. There were still two full months until the fourth of March, the seductive notes of the *Marseillaise* sounded through the streets of New Orleans and the pelican pecked at the eyes of the eagle.

It was a perilous time, and the slightest carelessness was enough to make one a victim of the terrorism that was already emerging. This is so with every revolution, and it will always remain so. They seek a sacrifice and find it all too quickly. An entirely harmless fellow had a stand near the old Post Office, selling garters, ties and medallions of the candidates for President. Incidentally it included a picture of the President Elect. Now passions are released in full intensity, and he becomes the first scapegoat of the rebellion, tormented through the streets of the city. Soon his pursuers catch up with him, seize him, and he soon would have lost his life on a balcony if at the right moment a man had not pressed through the crowd and protected him. They were stunned. They seemed to know this man with white hair on his head and a white beard, since no one opposed him. The pursued man poured cold sweat from his brow and shook over his entire body as he gripped the arm of his savior and went with him until they disappeared into a house on Rampart Street. No one discovered what they said to one another. They only know that when the young man departed the old man's house, he whistled the *Marseillaise*, and as he went he often looked around and whispered, "*Bonseigneur* is right, one feels much more secure, singing out, *Allons enfants de la patrie!*" Yet the pallor of death has remained on his face to the present day.

5¹²

South Carolina had crossed the Rubicon! The 20th of December became the 4th of July of the Southern Confederacy. For thirty years this little state had lived in dissent and bitterness with the Federal government, until finally the election of the Republican candidate gave the signal to demolish the ties that had only been bound with dissent. They conjured the spirit of the great Calhoun and state sovereignty became the gospel of the South, so that it shed from its shoulders the weighty cross that it was doomed to carry to the place of judgment.

They wanted to be their own ruler over their own land and soil, and they were too proud to take up the role of poor Lazarus, to feed themselves and their children the crumbs that fell from the White House table. They were not used to vassal servitude, and the states set their own crowns on themselves. The coronation of South Carolina only took place on the twentieth day of December eighteen hundred and sixty. In New Orleans, everything was already in order when they received this news, and many still believed that it would remain with the separation of South Carolina, and that the other states would not try to follow the example of its schismatic sister. For the little bit of governmental benefit enjoyed under Buchanan, even influential politicians remained true to the old flag until the separation of South Carolina shook them from their slumber, and they realized to their terror that they were living in a time when it was terrifyingly serious for the South to win its autonomy. A salvo of four hundred cannon thundered through the streets of the city precisely at noon, announcing to the people of New Orleans the

eruption of the long-dead volcano. In the headquarters of the Southern Rights Association on Camp Street, the banner of Louisiana, a red star in a white field with a mother pelican, protectively gathering her young and nursing them with the blood from her own breast, was raised alongside the Palmetto flag to the notes of the *Marseillaise*. The next morning masses gathered on the levee to gaze at the bark *Sea Breeze* arriving from Cardenas, displaying the flags of the palmetto and the pelican. This bark was the first vehicle in our harbor from whose mast the colors and emblems of the sovereign states fluttered. — —

It was Sunday — a splendid December morning. A number of seagulls, more than anyone one had ever seen, appeared on the yellow flood of the stream and over its surface. They moved, loudly crying through their throats at the shore, where there was a fishing boat had moored. Many of these birds were so pressing that the old man sitting in the boat felt compelled to take an oar and beat away at them. The cause of this phenomenon, so astonishing to the ignorant, was a pair of pelicans that lay tied up on the bottom of the fishing boat, throwing themselves about, trying to escape their bonds and jump overboard at the cawing seagulls. To understand this, it is necessary to know that a deadly hostility reigns between the seagull and the pelican, so that if it comes to a fight (which rarely happens), then the pelican always comes out the victor. With their sharp instincts, these seagulls quickly saw that two of their deadly enemies were to be found tied up in the boat, and they had followed here for more than ninety miles.

This rare drama naturally attracted the more than usual attention of the people on the shore.

They flocked from the landing place of the *Sea Breeze* and pressed toward the fishing boat.

Many who went to the river on that Sunday to enjoy the fluttering state flags would still recall this.

Who is this old man with the snow-white hair? He does not look like a fisherman or a boatman, even if he wore a red wool shirt and long wading boots. What was he doing with the two pelicans? “Can they be eaten?” others asked. In the same way, they heard many questions about the appearance of the giant flock of seagulls, the meaning of their shrill cries, and why they were so crowded around this boat.

One of the crowd who appeared more closely acquainted with the personalities of New Orleans and environs declared that it could be no one but Bonseigneur, an old planter of Bayou Lafourche, but who also owned several plantations on the Bayou Terrebonne and on the Mississippi above Baton Rouge, but who several years ago moved to town and lived in the house of his son-in-law on Rampart Street.

Another was of the opinion that this supposed fisherman was certainly not Bonseigneur, only looked like him, for Bonseigneur had already died in 1858 on one of his plantations on the Bayou Terrebonne, and that he lies buried there. Another said that this old man with the white hair was the father of Albert Pike of Arkansas, who was known not long afterwards for composing his “Bonnie Blue Flag.” This opinion was entirely rejected by the others.

As this discussion went back and forth, a wagon hitched to two splendid horses came straight across the *batture* and halted on the wharf. The black coachman, clothed entirely in black and with white gloves, rose slightly from his seat, looking over the heads of the crowd toward the water. Then he returned to his seat and spoke to the person sitting in the

wagon, "The boat is already there, Master! Should I go further?" Instead of an answer, the person in the wagon rose and sprung out.

In the same instant, the wagon was also seen by the old man in the fishing boat, who quickly came on to land with his pelicans, stepping directly into the arms of the person seeking him. No time was left for a greeting, but they rushed as quickly as possible to the wagon, which swiftly vanished from the eyes of the crowd.

6

Now! Now there came a remarkable time. In a general chaos of opinions, in a heaping up of various elements. good as well as stupid, in the desert of justified and unjustified suspicions, in the actions of speculators, this worst of all races, in the tiring and demoralizing struggle of loyalty and disloyalty, in the shadow struggle of sense and senselessness — briefly, in the hasty conflict between being or non-being of our moral and political capacity, comes the shadow side of every rebellion.

Uncanny figures now emerged, filthy, mean and ready for everything. Low-lives who, in an ordered condition of society, even if often tolerated, avoided the light of day, but now they emerge with boldness, openly offering their services. These are accepted because of their tongues, their arms and their eyes that see in the dark. But stupid people are also needed for the successful carrying out of a rebellion; people who are so stupid that they believe that they are intelligent, even though intelligent people will only speak a few words with them.

But people need the stupid because they are dangerous and the dangerous because they are stupid.

Into this last category falls the ilk of the "goat-catchers" or *Gaiskätcher* (as they are called in German-American jargon) in the pounds of the various districts of the city. They don't just corral goats, pigs and cows, but also abolitionists. But these last are not locked into a pound stall, but rather they receive free passage to distant regions. These *Gaiskätcher* played a not unimportant role in their time. They became lieutenants of the militia, received new trousers and cloaks and a saber, which often ended up between their legs when they commanded "Right about!" They were often accidentally tossed to the margin of the streets. But since they were people of a conviction that never fades, they were quickly back on their feet. As valorous party-men they always had credit at the local groceries, and if they were refused, then one was a lousy abolitionist and a traitor to the fatherland.

It is in this period in which the duel of Oscar Blasco falls, in which Mr. Lasalle, earlier a writer for the *Bee*, was mortally wounded.

This cohort of Blascos was part of the *Stranglers*, and they did not fool around with trifles as did the *Gaiskätcher*.

The *Stranglers* or the *Thugs* were the dictators of our city, and the most terrible thing is that they were needed. The sun does not shine any less bright despite having spots.

In certain houses, they were already saving feathers when hens, geese or wild owls were being plucked, and damaged spots of the roofs of horse stalls were not fixed, since tar was being saved. What the best artist could not use went to the *Stranglers*. The figures painted did not remain on the canvas but sprang in great leaps from the hand, then sprang

under the green of trees, then sat on horses, ran up-stairs and down-stairs, and showed others their marvelous bird coats. The beaks of these running, hiding and pursued creatures looked like human noses, and their feathers scattered to many places and came off, as if from a bird that had been shot.

These human owls were the sad set-decoration of our political hunting season, illustrating the Olympic Games of our modern Greeks and Romans.

Thus, the sixth red thread passes through the race course on the Metairie Road and a little further to the rusted rails of the Jackson Railroad, ending at the doors of the mayor's office and the building standing opposite.

7

The Submissionists, that is, those men of the Convention who supported the cooperation of all the slave states in order to promote separation, suffered a dreadful defeat on 26 January 1861. Of the hundred thirty members, ninety-six signed, and the small band of loyalists, the Roselius, the Roziers, the Tagliaferos, the Lebourgeois, the Verreis, were made with a stroke of the pen impossible for the time being and had to take to their winter quarters like bears and the Seven Sleepers and suck on their paws and consume their own fat for fifteen months, when the pasha of the Sublime Porte would enter New Orleans and throttle their enemies.

Yes, it was a significant day for New Orleans, the twenty-sixth of January. The bells sounded and the guns roared. After such a concert, either the sun comes up or the sun goes down. In this case it was the first alternative. To the clanging of music, the military paraded through the main streets of the city, and they still saw Jefferson Rifles, the *Chasseurs à Pied* of the New Orleans of 1814-1815, the Louisiana Grays, the Washington Artillery, the Continental Guards in their costume of the heroes of the Revolutionary time, and so many other companies that were never seen again. They also saw Captain Drew at the head of the Jefferson Rifles. Major General Lewis and Colonel Forstall sat rather poorly in the saddle of the rebel horse, which a German adjutant already knew how to ride better.

Of the few houses near Canal Street that were not illuminated and from whose balconies no pelican flag hung, there was a two-storied building with stately columns and a veranda, through whose iron decorations luxuriant honeysuckle showed, also extending the length of a balcony, which occupied the second floor of the gable side, providing a clear view of Canal Street. This honeysuckle was rooted in the soil of a garden that lay close by the house and formed a part of a property that reached all the way to Basin Street. This back side was bordered by a wall in which a gate through which only colored servants of the house came and went; for the main entrance, located on Rampart Street, is only for the lord of the house and its visitors. Since almost every day a carriage drives up, and no wagon gate can be seen here, and the kitchen building takes up the entire courtyard, it is obvious that horse stalls and storage for the carriage were found on a property separate from the house. In the garden, there is a twelve-to-fifteen feet tall date palm, and between the thickly-leaved branches of the viburnum are found pomegranate bushes, Grand Duke and Cape jasmine, as well as lovely varieties of roses: Marie Antoinette, Giant of the Battle, Guillotine, Ravailac and Queen of the South. From the blue-green leaves of the *Mespilus Japonica* or Japan Plum spreads here and there a

soporific aroma like cinnamon. Everything was quiet in the street, joy had exhausted itself and had gone to bed. A divine sleep, if, with a Phrygian cap on the head, one lay himself down and listened to the Circe song of the goddess of freedom!

But not everyone slept. Among those, other than the police watching at this late hour and enjoying the fresh night air, were three men standing speaking quietly with one another in front of the rear entrance to the house just described. "The Vigilance Committee has certain proof that he is an abolitionist," one of them, a thin, well-built figure with a small blonde beard and open, light gray eyes, said. He wore the distinctive suit of a gambler and affected dandy! For his right eye, he had a gold-rimmed monocle that then dangled from a fine black ribbon around his neck. He could have been about twenty-five years old. As he spoke, he stuck his pants into shiny leather boots and pressed his monocle more securely on his eye.

His companion addressed him simply as "Feather Bob," since even before the outbreak of the rebellion he always boasted of having tarred and feathered dozens of abolitionists in Texas and Kansas. That was, however, not true, since this man only bragged of his many crimes and literally took it poorly if someone took him capable of a good deed. He always remained in New Orleans and had seen neither Texas nor Kansas. Even when he left the city for a few months, it was only to visit the old medicinal springs in the baths at Saratoga and to play the great man with the gold he took from the rich at the gambling tables. However, last summer he had had a poor harvest, since people had seen behind his pretense, and eventually he had to beat it. The ebb in his wallet inspired in him a dreadful hatred of the North, and when he heard the Senator of Alabama giving his thundering speech against Northern aggression, he believed he had found the right position and preached to his companions in such a pressing way, that they shook his hand and cried out, "Yes, you are right, Feather Bob, it works no other way, the South must separate from the North!" So, bad and dirty elements happily identified with conditions that were sustained by a mass of criminality until the major events washed away these and a clear, unsullied image was revealed to their gaze.

But let us return to the three men, in which the reader will certainly see, even before we go on, a *Thug* trinity.

The second of these three men to which the words above were directed, was exactly the opposite of Feather Bob so far as appearance went: a short, broad-shouldered figure, with eyes overshadowed by white brows, prominent lips and a broad gap in his upper teeth, wide, flat feet, and a remarkable form of head that had something of the opossum about it. He was carefully decked out and shaved, but his exterior had the unclean cleanliness of a person who was only cleaned in a barbershop. It was the same with his clothing. His shirt had an uncomfortably hard sheen as if it came directly from Moody or some other shirting-king, and his clothes suited him so little that one could only wonder that he had left the shop so easily satisfied. On his shirt breast was fixed a thick golden needle with a large California diamond. He was chewing away, spitting now left, now right on the sidewalk, which appeared greatly to displease the more elegant Feather Bob, since he must step one way and then another to avoid involving his silver-gray pants in the tobacco crossfire. This *Strangler* or *Thug* bore among his colleagues the nickname *Pigtail*, not because he looked like a pigtail, but because he once lifted a big pig from a neighbor's stall and dragged it in a spirit of thankfulness to the *Gaiskätchers'* pound stall,

pretending he had found the poor animal wandering on the streets. Pigtail was not yet twenty-five years old and was an Irish Creole, that is, he was the son of an Irish father and born in New Orleans, as he said, he was “raised” in the South.

Feather Bob was the son of a German father and a Creole woman, and he had also seen the light of day in the Crescent City.

The third of this clean trinity was the youngest, for he had barely passed his seventeenth year. In height, he excelled both of them by a good distance. He was tall, thin, had a long, skinny neck that look like goose-flesh and a pronounced Adam's apple. He always wore a long Shanghai cloak of black cloth and broad trousers, in which a pair of revolvers were stuck in the back. He always held a pen-knife in his hand, with which he continually cleaned his long, pointed nails. He had long but narrow feet, a flat, depressed chest, and shoulders somewhat pressed forward. He was the calmest, most even-tempered and coldest of the three, since he never expressed any feeling, either for good or for evil. So he seemed without passions, so that he took the money that came to him and his colleagues from the funds of the Vigilance Committee with cheerful peace. He bore no nickname, since they simply called him *Henry*. He came to New Orleans as a child, baby, or — he himself did not know what. He very much liked to fool around the Recorder's Court of the First District, calling the Recorder sometimes his father, sometimes his uncle, whichever pleased him at the time, and he went through the books of the affidavit clerk, who always permitted him. Often, he also accosted the newspaper reporters and tyrannized them with his long legs, which he laid straight across their noses. He loomed around the polls, always keeping his pen-knife in hand and the revolvers behind the flap of his Shanghai cloak.

“The Vigilance Committee has certain proof that he is an abolitionist,” Feather Bob repeated, and then he added, “but I cannot understand why we they take the trouble to climb in and steal his letters. It would be much simpler for the Vigilance Committee to arrest him and take the papers itself.”

“Fool!” said Henry. reaching quietly into the side pocket of his cloak.

“The committee is risking too much if it arrests him — that would only harm our good cause,” remarked Pigtail in an affected manner.

“Fool!” Henry blurted and looked up to the wall, which was decorated with broken wine bottles.

“They should have arrested him when he took away the medallion-man,” Feather Bob remarked.

“I would bet ten thousand dollars,” responded Pig Tail, “that that is not the same man who lives in this house. What would you bet, Henry?”

“Fool!” Henry responded, as he tried the second key that was supposed to open the door located in the wall. Then he estimated the height with a glance.

A watchman who was rounding the corner of Customhouse into Basin Street, struck his staff three times on the sidewalk, then walking more slowly.

Henry was not disturbed on his third attempt to open the door. Both of the others looked at one another, and Pigtail said:

“Is that Jimmy's beat?”

“Yes,” answered Feather Bob; “Jimmy is dumb enough to believe that we are stealing.”

The watchman approached and only said, "Good evening, Henry — humid air!"
"Humid — yes —" the Thug answered, rolling up both tails of his cloak and tying them behind him.

On his renewed attempt to open the door, Henry noted that a large iron bar had been inserted, which he would have to use his small saw in hand to push back the bar through an opening on the outside. As previously noted, he rolled his cloak tails up and gave Pigtail a sign that he immediately understood. Pigtail placed himself with his back against the wall and let Henry mount his hands, cupped as a step, and then climb to his shoulders. The wall was not so high that he could not easily break off some of the glass that most hindered his climbing over. He passed them into Pigtail's hands, who held them until the Thug had passed from his shoulder and over the wall.

Then he laid the fragments in the grass by the edge of the street.

"He is the best in our company," Feather Bob remarked as the Thug vanished from his sight, "he does not say much, but he does his duty."

"He also did not say that we were to come along," the other said.

"Three at the same time makes too much noise," Feather Bob responded.

"If only the niggers in the kitchen building are not awake," Pigtail replied, "since so far as the old man goes, he is sleeping upstairs in the forward room, and Henry has nothing to do there."

They now were silent and listened so carefully that they thought they heard the soft step of their comrade and the rattling of paper. But they heard nothing. Only once they saw a flash of light on the ceiling of the balcony toward the garden, which vanished in the next instant. This light was circular in shape and sharply defined. They saw at once that it came from Henry's pocket lamp.

So they were silent and listened a few minutes when they heard a strange loud sound that seemed to come from the interior of the main building. There was a beating as if from wings, a cry as from large birds, and then a tinkle as if from a broken windowpane and a hasty running sound as if from shoeless feet. At the same instant, there was a light in the second floor of the kitchen and as quickly afterward one in the main building that, as noted, stands with its front on Rampart Street. The Thugs looked at one another silently and immediately left their previous place in haste.

No watchman disturbed them.

8

The corner of Royal and Canal Street is a corner of world-historical importance. Since the competition between Beauregard and Stith, where the first cannons were used that were really significant; since the storming of Citizen's Bank, where those storming the most had nothing to lose; since the election rallies on the eve of the rebellion and the appearance of General Twiggs, that Texan specter that passed three times around the statue of Henry Clay as if banned into a magic circle — the most significant events of the day passed in review here. This corner has never changed its color and was always loyal. It had, and still has, its permanent guests that belong to all nations. Whoever treads this pavement was equal to, and without knowing it, a Knight of the Golden Circle, that is to say, he enters the circle of golden wishes and hopes, noting the beating wings of the gilded pelican on the building opposite. Whoever was suspected in that time only needed

to place himself on this corner before nine in the morning, then at lunchtime and an hour before sundown, to be free of all suspicion. It was also here where "Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern Rights hurrah!" was first sung, or rather whistled, and from here that the melody of this song passed to every corner of the city.

In this world-historical corner once stood the Rinaldini of New Orleans, rising into the heights, making himself broad, with unique coarseness, imitating a Turner chief, with the scarlet feather on his hat, his nose shifting with the wind. He hummed away to himself, and no one protested:

Don Rinaldo Rinaldini,
Schinderhannes, Orlandini
And the robber Moor
Are my ideals before all else.

So thankless! They abandoned him as he led them to the holy struggle, when he wanted to draw his sword for the fatherland. Like John Lackland he still passes through the streets of the Crescent City until, in despair, he casts off his jerkin, crying:

The times are gone out of joint.
Woe to me that I was born,
To challenge you again! — —

On part 8: Christian August Vulpius (1762-1827) wrote a tale of "Rinaldo Rinaldini, the Robber Captain" in 1797. "Old Moor" and his two sons were characters in Friedrich von Schiller's play *Die Räuber* (1781); John Wilkes Booth made the role of Old Moor his own on the American stage. Schinderhannes was another highway robber, but one who actually lived (Johannes Bückler, 1778-1803).

This is most like Shakespeare's Hamlet, act I, scene 5:

The time is out of joint; O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right.

9

Dear Brutus,

I have just returned to New Orleans, and I am again with my father. If it is possible for you, please come this evening to our house. I would like your presence, and my father even more. But please for heaven's sakes, under no conditions, not in your uniform, since your entire gift for persuasion to convince my father of the fruitlessness of his views would fail on this minor matter. He cannot stand seeing a uniform without immediately sinking into deep depression.

You will soon learn what has happened in our house during my absence. There were thieves there trying to rob us — I believe that. But he thinks that they wanted, only wanted, to take certain papers, and that the thieves were sent by the

Vigilance Committee for this purpose. That distressed him dreadfully, and for that reason he is considering leaving New Orleans forever. I know, however, that he will not do that as long as I do not wish it, for he takes no steps without my agreement. You know how well meaning he is and how he seeks to fulfill all my wishes. When he heard me express the desire to have a pair of pelicans, and you know that I am obsessed with these birds — since he knew there were none to be had in the city, he undertook, contrary to my expressed desire not to expose himself to extra troubles, a trip in a fishing boat all alone to catch a pair of these birds alive. During my absence, he has cared for them carefully, and they repaid him, for when the thieves broke in, they frightened them with their cries — but I will tell you everything myself when I see you.

Concerning my journey to Washington, nothing stands in the way now. — I have excellent letters with me, and Mr. Bouligny has already promised to do everything to make my life in that town as comfortable as possible.

The simple fool actually thinks that I am a Unionist, but he will yet experience that he will not be the only representative of Louisiana in Washington. Come this evening.

Your Esperance Bonseigneur

10

On the evening of the same day, Brutus was with Esperance in the parlor of the house on Rampart Street. It had taken half an hour before the old man made an appearance. As he appeared at the door, Brutus stood up from his seat and approached him. They extended their hands silently, after which Bonseigneur sat beside his daughter opposite a rocking chair. We will call Esperance's father Bonseigneur until we in the course of our narrative take the right to change the name and transfer it to another person.

Bonseigneur was a majestic figure of about six feet tall, with a high, clear forehead, not yet marked with furrows. His face was somewhat browned and framed by a snow-white beard. The hair on his head was of the same color. A Roman emperor's nose and coal-black, dark eyes bestowed on his face an inexpressible magic. Esperance did not at all resemble her father. She had blue eyes, red hair and that uncanny white color of which one could not know whether it was nature or art.

She always spoke softly, and yet one understood every word. Although she had teeth like a string of pearls, she never showed them. Only now and then did one see the white enamel shimmering between her resting lips. Brutus in fact had no face, or rather he had a face that one could see a hundred times and always forget. But his figure was all the more surprising. He was slim and high in figure, but had exceptionally fine manners. Only his hands were too small for a man's and his feet not narrow enough for an officer. He spoke loudly, without gesticulation. Also, he never laughed. If something pleased him, he twisted his mustache, and that was his laughter.

That is roughly the exterior of these three persons sitting together there.

It should also be remarked that Brutus and Esperance had already been engaged for six years.

“News, dear Brutus?” Bonseigneur asked in a casual tone, and immediately, “my daughter tells me, that they have fired on Fort Sumter.”

“Not just fired on,” responded Brutus, “but the fort has also been taken. That happened on the fifteenth of April. On the nineteenth of April, northerners fired on the citizens.”

“For what reason? Probably because the citizens were harassing the soldiers of the Union marching through? I actually have not been reading the newspapers anymore for several days,” Bonseigneur declared. Then he continued, “Whither is this all to lead? Do you then believe that to such a demonstration of the Southern hotheads the North is to remain calm and agree to a peaceful separation of the states? Nevermore! A civil war will break out whose end we will probably not experience, and probably our states will be defeated. If the poisoned pens of our journalists would stop, one would think entirely differently of this matter.”

“The North has no weapons,” Esperance remarked. “Floyd and Touery have taken care that the South can take a more imposing position. Of the three arsenals two are already in the hands of Southerners. We have Norfolk with two thousand heavy guns; we have Harper’s Ferry and the machines to make weapons, and only need to take them to a more secure place. The Northerners only have the Springfield Arsenal, and it cannot produce more than 25,000 muskets. All the rest will have to be imported or produced by private businesses. The seizure of forts and arsenals from the Chesapeake Bay to the Rio Grande, from Virginia to Alabama and Louisiana also, has put more weapons into the Southern hands than the North can raise at the moment. Shortly troops will stream from all sides of the South to its northern border, and they will soon appear within sight of the Federal Capitol. Perhaps then Lincoln will give in, but perhaps not. In the latter case the South has the lead in any case. You will see, Father, I am right, and put the idea out of your head that division will be a misfortune for the South or the grave of the republic.

“I must really be amazed how well informed you are, my dear child,” Bonseigneur said in a gentle tone; I knew absolutely nothing of all of this.”

“Esperance absorbed all of her wisdom in that evening when she supped with Yancey in the City Hotel,” Brutus sought to give the matter a joking side; for despite his intention to convert the old man, he was anything but interested in doing that at this moment.

Bonseigneur passed his right hand through his snow-white hair, then suddenly changing the tone of his conversation, he said to Brutus, “From this day on, sir, I will have to accustom myself of not having the pleasure of seeing you in my house, and my daughter must cease to accustom herself to seeing you as her engaged. Incidentally, I thank you for the decency of not showing yourself before me in the uniform of the De Soto Rifles.”

Esperance looked at Brutus with large eyes; then, as she encountered her father's gaze, she sank her head and appeared to be contemplating something.

“And you will not go to Washington, Esperance!” Bonseigneur intoned with great stress.

Esperance was as if overwhelmed. Then she pulled herself quickly together, bowed to her father, seized his hand and quickly asked in a half-beseeking, half accusative tone:

“But Father, you read my letter, didn't you?”

Bonseigneur was silent. Brutus quickly looked at Esperance, then at her father. A silence descended that continued for several minutes.

Then Bonseigneur rose from his seat on the sofa. Brutus also rose, for he felt that this was not the moment to speak about whether he had really earned suddenly to be declared superfluous in this house.

With a light sideways motion, he approached Esperance and extended her his hand. Since both hands were equally warm, she barely noticed that they were touching. Only when the other hand departed did she feel the cold metal of the engagement ring.

She did not rise as Brutus approached the door, and she did not hear when her father said to him:

“If we are to see one another again, captain, I hope to be able to say to you that my daughter, out of love to her father and out of respect for the magnanimous sense of her departed mother, has refused to take up the role of a spy and to sit at the diabolical faro table with Yancey and his consorts to gamble away all that has made our land great and happy! — — — Farewell!”

“Farewell!” replied Brutus, and as he walked down the stone steps of the house and to the street, he literally stepped carefully out of fear that in the sound of his steps he would hear the echo of Bonseigneur’s words and so betray his exit.

As Bonseigneur returned to Esperance, she was still in the same place, her hand on her brow.

Father and daughter were now alone. —

11

The complex mood and spirit of Esperance before her engagement with Brutus is shown by a poem from that time that she included in her album under a sketch of herself she had made:

My life is like the footstep
Pressed on Tampa's empty beach,
Which, when the wave merely touches it
Swiftly vanishes from the light sand.
But as if it wiped out with malice
The track that comes from people,
The sea sounds loudly on the clear beach —
But no one, alas! raises the cries of *my* pain.

[Cf. Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, vol. 2 p. 103 (New York: Harper, 1849), attributed to various authors.]

To understand the tone of touching melancholy running through these verses, one must know that Esperance had suddenly lost her mother then, while she was staying the summer months away on Tampa Bay on the west side of Florida.

On this lonely ocean shore, surrounded by the wild beauty of an almost tropical nature, she received and replied to the letter of her friends, whose sensitivities inclined more to the tumultuous joys of the great baths in the Northern states. On the hand of her mother, they passed through the dark hedges of tulip trees and hedge, or she sought with her strange, often new plants that covered the dark ground away from the beach, from the wide spaces between the cypresses with their falling needles, raising their trunks of a

thousand years into the blue aether. It was also here that she first got to know the young Brutus, who was already practicing in the courts of New Orleans and had taken a trip to the beaches of Tampa Bay.

The pain of Bonseigneur was without limit when Esperance returned to New Orleans with her mother's corpse. They buried her on one of the plantations on the Bayou Terrebone.

12

It was the last Negro Ball under the old regime, that is, the Negroes were holding a ball with the express approval of their lords, and even in the lords' own house. A bit later such pleasures were no longer allowed, and even later their churches were closed and the black reverends were compelled either to resign or to go door to door with the Word of God at their own risk in the rooms of their congregation members.

Yet how unhappy these Negroes were in a city like New Orleans, and even in the very house where the Ball was being held today. How hard they had to work, until the sweat ran over their brows! Yes, Mrs. Stowe had drawn it correctly, or her *Uncle Tom* would not have raised such a furor or made her so much money. We believe it was in 1852 that the ladies of England, led by the Duchess of Sutherland, sent an eloquent petition to the ladies of the Southern states with the request to take a bold and magnanimous step and give their slaves freedom.

This suggestion was received as it deserved — with never-ending laughter. Some of the ladies of New Orleans, anxious to respond to the female abolitionists of Old England, wrote them the following: "Since you are so friendly as to take such a great interest in the well-being of our slaves, we offer to sell them to you, and then you may (at your choice) turn them into British voters." Since this response, no further noise was heard from the black geese of Albion.

But we are forgetting the Negro Ball, which takes place today in the stately home of a rich Creole on Esplanade Street, where the entire aristocracy of color was present. The invitations were on the finest paper and distributed by the *femme de chambre* and the *principal dining servant*. The clothing was of the richest that one could imagine, for the costume of each Negress was composed and arranged under the special oversight of her mistress. Some even gave their Negresses the very jewelry that they bore on the most extraordinary occasions. An entire cargo of fruits and cakes of every description, liquors and wines of all qualities was kept in a grand kitchen, where an old Negro woman sat silently smoking on her short clay pipe and continually watched the fireplace, where the *Gombo filé* was cooking, whose aroma already caused the guests' mouths to water.

A Polish Congress is nothing in comparison with the noisy conversation that came from all sides — naturally all of it in Negro-French patois. There also sounded the cries and jammering of the little niggerchens, who grabbed candies from one another's mouths, and otherwise enjoyed themselves in a manner that one would think himself among young truffle hounds. The young Negresses, their hair arranged according to the latest white fashion, dressed in silken robes with muslin arms and sat in a great hall, illuminated at extreme expense, in a great circle, in the middle of which was an old Negro and an elderly Negress ready to start the Bamboula Dance.

The poor Blacks! How they sweated, how they snorted, how a hundred years of slavery poured out all their pores! How they showed their white teeth, how they made the whites of their eyes shine, how they breathed, how they chattered — one would think himself in Satan's antechamber.

“Oho!” a plump little mulatto suddenly called out, “I do not know the gentleman who just arrived.”

“You don't know him?” her dancing partner asked, a tall Negro with a blue coat and a white collar. “Wait a minute — he is coming here and I want to introduce him to you.”

The new arrival was a large Zambo-Negro with dreadfully long arms, a short vest and a collar reaching over his ears.

On part 12: Zambo-Negro was a term used in the Spanish and Portuguese empires to describe the offspring of an American Indian and a Negro.

He was introduced to Mademoiselle Laura, who made a curtsy to him, just as she had seen with her mistress and had often practiced in a mirror.

They addressed one another by the name of their owners, as is known to be the practice among colored folk when they go into company.

“Do you wish to dance a polka with me, Mr. Thompson?”

“I cannot dance, miss,” the Zambo-Negro replied, who belonged to a rich American.

“What? You cannot dance, Mr. Thompson?” Laura said, whose eyes were entirely blinded by the Negro's great golden watch chain; “then let us at least have one of these cakes and a drop of brandy.”

“Oh miss, I cannot, I am a temperance man!”

Miss Laura then bolted down her brandy herself, receiving a look of disdain from Mr. Thompson.

He saluted her with a dreadful grimace, turned his back and continued his walk through the hall, still unsure what to do with his long arms.

“Lili!” called out a voice, “Mistress wants to go to bed, You should come!”

“I'm coming immediately,” Laura said in a depressed manner, and she left the hall to help her mistress undress.

13

On walking home, they dissolved from the other ball-goers themselves into two pairs. They went, a male and female, each behind the other. It had rained a little and the slippery sidewalk was particularly narrow on one block so that the staved petticoats of the women always pressed the gentlemen of color to the curb.

“How do you like Mr. Thompson?” one of the Black ladies of the ball said, turning around to the other and bringing the whole company to a halt for several minutes.

“He is a gentleman” answered the woman addressed.

“His golden watch chain is worth at least fifty dollars,” the other said.

“Oh, mine is worth at least fifteen hundred dollars.”

“It doesn't belong to you,” one of the gallants fell in.

“I know that, but it as good as belongs to me, since my mistress has promised it to me for every party.”

“She has a good mistress,” responded the other, “and soon also a good master, since they will soon be married.”

“Oh yes, that is true! Mr. Brutus is a fine gentleman and Miss Esperance is a lady!” She stressed the word “lady” with an affected accent.

“He will not get her!” one of the Negroes said, “the old man cannot stand him, because he is a rebel and will be going to war with the De Soto Rifles.”

“Why are they named De Soto?” she asked who was decorated with her mistress’s golden chain.

“You don’t have much education, Leda,” one of the gallants responded. “De Soto discovered the Mississippi River — I read it in a big book.”

“Oh yeah — now I know,” the questioner responded, “De Soto was a gentleman.”

“A colored man, I guess,” said the other back.

“Certainly!” was the confirmation, and the procession returned to motion in its original order.

Now they stood at an original junction. Rails here, rails there, rails in all directions — but no city trolleys were running, for it was already three after midnight.

“Miss Esperance certainly could have sent her carriage,” Leda said, wrinkling her nose. “She has always done that.”

“When I marry Sam,” responded the other lady of the ball, “we will have our own carriage.”

“It is also so common to go home by foot,” Leda remarked. “one can easily catch cold, and the night air is not good for the skin.”

Then they separated. The one pair went down Ursulines Street and Leda with her beau set out for Rampart Street. Leda’s beau lived with her in Bonseigneur’s house and was chief in the dining room department.

As they approached Customhouse Street to turn into Basin Street, where the entrance for the servant described in another chapter was located, Leda suddenly stopped and called out, “I do believe there is light in the parlor!”

And there was. Through the slots in the closed shutters they could see a shimmering light, but not just in the parlor but also in the front room of the upper floor.

“What could have happened there?” asked her companion as he took some steps forward to look at a dark object he had seen lying opposite the sidewalk by the light of the street lantern.

This dark object lay on the very way where six hours earlier Brutus had set out as he left Esperance and her father in great agitation.

14

As the two Negroes stepped into the court to go from there to the upper floor of the kitchen building, the gas in the parlor was already turned off. Bonseigneur had done this himself, for at twelve o’clock the previous day he had already given the colored servants permission to go back to their sleeping rooms.

But he did not go to bed, but rather sat down again at his writing desk to answer some letters.

Let us now look after Esperance. She as well had not yet sought sleep. She stood at the open window and gazed apparently thoughtless over the tops of the trees, whose leaves sank under the heavy night dew. There are people who possess an almost demonic elasticity of the spirit, and women possess it even more than men. After Esperance had passed six hours with her father in conversation, whose content will be completely revealed by later events, having endured a dreadful soul struggle, she still preserved the spirit to watch the dawn of the day with open eyes and to put her arm around the handsome neck of a man who was her idol and had really seduced her to cling to her patriotism so intensely. This man was with her in her bedroom, right by her bed, and he seemed to be waiting to receive his usual goodnight kiss on his brow. His high, stern brow was decorated with a crown of orange blossoms and jasmine plucked the night before entwined, and on his breast, one saw a rosette of heaven-blue silk in whose center was a small pelican embroidered in silver.

Esperance had actually stepped back from the open window and stood now at the side of her idol, her right arm slung around his neck and with her left hand putting in place the rosette, which had shifted somewhat on his breast. Then she looked into his face, so close that the warm breath of her lips brushed him, and spoke with her special light tone, but each word so clear as diamonds on silver foil:

“I will not go to Washington, my beloved, and I will also not see Brutus again, for my father wants it so. But he has allowed me to go to Virginia, where great things are in preparation. Understand me correctly, my beloved, I should separate myself from all people who would only want to gain from my efforts and would only use me to achieve selfish goals who think they have found in me what they are too cowardly or too weak. Yes, my beloved, I have a good father — he does not want people to say some day that his daughter served the country as a spy. He has a straight sense, and even if he cannot bring his heart to say farewell to his old Union feelings forever, he still feels that something should happen to save the honor of the South, even with sword in hand. For that reason, my beloved, I am going to Virginia and my father has heart and understanding enough not to hinder me. An irreversible destiny is driving me, but the spirit of my mother will protect me.

“I cannot yet explain why my father so suddenly turned on Brutus; but I will make every effort to consider it, no matter what pain it causes me.

“Farewell! Tomorrow I will leave the state and perhaps never see you again, but you will receive every evening your crown of fresh flowers, and my father will see to it. Farewell!”

After she spoke these words, she gave the marble bust of Calhoun a deep kiss on its forehead and laid herself down, still dressed.

One will find it entirely natural that Esperance, with such a lively spirit and after speaking with her father in the most agitated way for six hours, was not able to rest at once, but imparted a part of her feelings to the marble bust of the great South Carolinian. Lively persons feel relieved if they can express themselves, even when the object of their address is a dead image. Such a declamation in her bedroom had incidentally become second nature to Esperance, particularly since her mother's death, when she always held her nightly self-conversations.

This had long been made known in the entire neighborhood by the colored maids, who often had something or other to do in the dressing room bordering the bedroom, just to satisfy their curiosity.

As already mentioned, Esperance had laid herself down without undressing, but sleep would not come, and with open eyes she sought a picture hanging on the opposite wall. This picture was a fine steel engraving of the famous painting of the battle of the Huns from Damascius. According to old legends, ghosts held their gatherings and battled on with their enemies even after death. The painter had presented this idea in a gripping manner, and it was a compliment to Esperance's tastes that she had reserved a place in her sanctuary for this picture.

On part 14: This is most likely the painting *Die Hunnenschlacht* by Wilhelm von Kaulbach (1805-74) painted in 1850, now in the Neue Pinakotek, Munich. Damascius (c. 458-538), a Syrian pagan, was head of the School of Athens closed by Justinian c. 529, the last significant neo-Platonist philosopher in antiquity.

The two pelicans, her father's gift, had begun waddling out of the hut that was kept under the stairs of the kitchen, and they remained under Esperance's window, where they were usually thrown breakfast by her hand every morning.

But this time they waited in vain, for the morning wind streaming into her open window had finally brought peace to Esperance's wakeful spirit.

15

He was and is the head and right hand of the sheriff, but he does not have, and did not have, such a big stomach. He was also theoretically held the same office to the German battalion that sprouted from the unexploited fields of German patriotism at around this time.

That was all well enough. But as the martialism of the German battalion asserted itself, that is, when the crisis had passed, and the blue and blue-dyed red flannel and brass buttons — but not weapons — were distributed, then the old devil entered their heads, and no one wanted to be a Private. It is, however, no small matter to be a *Gemeiner* in a specifically German battalion, for the German word *Gemeiner* means something entirely different from the English word *Private*. Things already sounded better in the following battalion order:

Headquarters of the Department of the Galvez Canal
The Soldier C. B. is hereby named Battalion Clerk with the rank and pay of a Corporal.
On the order of the commanding Major
----- Adjutant

This bold order, which was perceived as a formal war-bulletin, brought about a true revolution in the ranks of the first soldiers of the Republic. Now that one had to eat Spartan black soup to please our modern Sullas and Caligulas, one no longer had a better understanding of the great generosity of the Galvez Canal Department. The inaugural

address of the commanding major was seasoned with dozens of bottles of Rhine wine, and pale Colonel Janvier went so far as to make his homage to King Gambrinus.

But this international banquet had bad results. There was a rebellion within the rebellion, and Julius Cromwell, one of the captains of the German battalion, leaped on the table and cried out, "You German men, the first thing is to seize the center!" This was obviously an appeal against the authority of the elected chiefs, and there was a hellish scandal. Julius Cromwell resigned, who in his rage shot a bullet through his bear's head. Another captain, a son of the noble muses, broke his tuning fork over the head of an orderly, and the flower of German chivalry flowed in all directions, that is, they fled to the ranks of companies that were neither German, nor French, nor American, but all of them together. And that was the best.

16

Bells ringing, funeral music, the former brigadier general of the Louisiana Legion as Provost Marshall, followed the body. Sorrow was universal and spread through the entire city. Southern America buried Charles Dreur.

17

"But is this bill still good?"

"I have no idea."

"But Patterson Iron Works is good?"

"No, but it could be good again."

"But you still accept Hockerschmitt?"

"Yes. But don't you have another bill?"

"Here is Lehne's."

"Don't you have anything else? I already have too many of these. For example, don't you have Davidson's or Holt's or Cammack's?"

"No."

"If you wish, I will give you a five-dollar Confederate note."

"I don't care; but you have to accept omnibus tickets worth at least a dollar."

"Also good."

"Then you still owe me three glasses of beer, two cigars and and two dollars, countryman; that makes two dollars and twenty-five cents, then you still receive two dollars in change."

"Excuse me! two dollars and seventy-five cents."

"Right — here you have seventy-five cents in tickets."

"I don't want the red tickets."

"But will you accept green ones instead?"

"I don't want them, either."

"Or the yellow?"

"Nor those, either."

"What about the blue ones?"

75

“Those least of all, since those are the most counterfeits.”

“But my God, I have them and still have to accept them.”

“I don't care; do you have good 25 cent bills?”

“Well it is all the same to me!”

“What? You want to give me the Patterson Iron Works, and you have just said they are no good.”

“I did say that; but look here, I already have so many Patterson Iron Works that I cannot accept any more; I have to find a way of getting rid of them.”

“You have been a good man to me; give me my five-dollar note back and I will still owe you two dollars and 25 cents.”

“Not that I care, but I will do it because you have been good.”

And the first lieutenant of a militia company departed the grocery on Customhouse Street and considered as he left how he could best exchange his five-dollar note.

Then he was called by a familiar voice. He turned around as Feather Bob and Pigtail drove past in a buggy.

“Where are you going?” the militia lieutenant called after them.

“Metairie Race Course! Half Way House Lake! Goodbye, Lieutenant!”

“Those rascals!” the militia lieutenant grumbled to himself. “One of us must walk around with a five-dollar note, and they are throwing money away by the handful — if they had just invited me along — but it serves me right that I did not go with them and had the dumb ambition to become a militia lieutenant. Hm, hm! That would not be so bad — the *Gaiskätcher* is a lieutenant, too, and does a great business besides — but wait a minute, when it finally goes into camp, — my company is supposed to become a State Company — but really, the people have no desire to go into camp — but never mind, I am the man and I need to set myself on my own legs, and the whole militia band, which is not worth a single shot of gunpowder, can go to the devil!” —

18

It was one of Esperance's practices to rewrite even her personal correspondence as a clean copy. The draft of that letter to Brutus, in which she informed him of her intended journey to Washington and beseeched him not to appear in his uniform in the presence of Bonseigneur in order not to excite his prejudices ahead of time, found its way to her waste basket and from there to her father's writing desk. Her father still held to the patriarchal principle of not throwing anything away that still could be used. The clean reverse of the piece of paper was to serve to figure various rents, and so without really intending it, he read through Esperance's lines to the end. It was as if he had fallen from the heavens. The bold decision of this girl, whose enthusiasm for the rebel cause, he had taken to be romantic excess so that he saw no harm in allowing her to participate in the dinner given by the Senator of Alabama for his supporters in the City Hotel, plunged him into the highest astonishment. Only now did he sense the danger of the restraint he had hitherto shown toward Esperance, and in his spirit, he saw her name in the list of those unfortunate celebrities who were misled by experienced hands into the spying system, where she would serve a cause that would make her forever rejected in human company. He shuddered at the thought that this inexperienced girl had already fallen into the hands who portrayed as noble and patriotic what they themselves regarded as worthy of

revulsion. Even more, his daughter was to serve as the instrument of perhaps filthy and ambitious men who were obviously thinking of their own advantage. Further, he had decided that this Brutus, the man he felt was the originator of this entire scandal, and against whom he had always had a certain mysterious dislike, must be separated from her forever. He thought this would not be a hard task. Was it not his daughter who put off her marriage with Brutus from year to year, in fact it often seemed as if he had become nothing more than a *cavaliere servente*, that is, a conventional lover, who must be satisfied with an occasional press of the hand, until one finally decides — to marry another. There were such girls, and normally they are those of high intelligence and the pretensions of a Pallas Athene.

Whether Bonseigneur was wrong or not, whether this old, experienced man really understood the feminine heart, will be revealed in time. So far, we have only learned from Esperance's monologue before the marble bust of Calhoun that she has really decided not to see Brutus again. We have already received some hints of the concessions Bonseigneur has made to her Southern sentiments. His motivations for this, as well as the full contents of the conversations they had in the course of the night, we cannot reveal without prematurely going beyond the sequence of events.

19

About eight days after Esperance departed Bonseigneur's house, he received two letters, whose content so overwhelmed the old man that he felt himself compelled to take to his bed for several weeks. One of these letters did not even give his name as an address, but simply Rampart Street no. --- between Canal and Customhouse Street.

It read as follows:

“Sir! A stranger takes the liberty of telling you that he has spent the past years applying his attention to your esteemed personality, and that he has finally succeeded in being able to show that you are not buried on the plantation on the Terrebonne, but rather Bonseigneur, who is not even your brother or even a more distant relative. Should it please you to continue to present yourself as Bonseigneur, it is doesn't matter to me. In any case you may trust my magnanimity to inform you of my intentions before the situation begins to become dangerous for you. In fact, my magnanimity reaches even further. I will again be silent if you dress again in that romantic fisherman's costume to hunt for pelicans where the blockade ships of the enemy are to be found. I would have thought it would have been much simpler to go to Kenner or Pass Manchac on the Jackson Railroad, where you must know that your pet birds are no rarity. But I do marvel at your cleverness and rowing ability to have passed the forts twice on your way. I knew old Bonseigneur very well, even if only by his face, and although I do not deny that you have a striking resemblance to him, after my return from Paris, when I was introduced to you at that soirée in Mr. Soulé's house, I was amazed to find that you were so little alike.

“These lines are not being sent to disturb you, but on the contrary, to give your spirit time to gather yourself and not to stand in the way of one unknown to

you, if it should occur to him to aid somewhat his damaged finances through this discovery.”

The second letter had the following contents:

Mr. --- Bonseigneur. Sir! Since the Vigilance Committee has ceased to watch you and to honor you with nightly visits, and there are no fat jobs in prospect, to make one's life that of a gentleman, and even the Recorder's Court is as hungry as werewolves, I take the liberty to ask you immediately for a small advance of only five hundred dollars. You can send the money addressed to Mr. A----s, where it will certainly be passed to me by the court. If you should neglect to comply with my modest request, we will arrange a small mob to prepare for you a coat in the *'latest style.'* The material for this will be provided by your pelicans, whose acquaintance I once made. I am in fact the gentleman who was then in your house to wish you good night.

With great respect, sir, your very obedient servant *Henry*.

The reader will certainly recall that the undersigned is a good buddy of Feather Bob and Pigtail, doing business in this case on his own in order, as he himself says, to be able to live as a gentleman.

20

“Here is the scale! Put the judge on one side, and on the other the galley convict, and tell me which direction the pointer goes!”

“And the louts in the police office, do *they* still need to raise their fingers and swear the oath as citizens of the Confederacy?”

21

It was already morning in other regions. There were not only scoundrels in New Orleans. Thousands of men, young and old, had already departed the state to rescue the honor of their land far from the homeland. Thousands of them did not return, and their shattered bones fertilize the ground of battlefields baptized with their blood on which they once followed the calls of their great commanders. The past, the present and the future belongs to the survivors of these heroic ranks.

“They are throwing us back,” Bee said to Jackson, who came with five regiments to aid that general, whose forces were already dissolved.

“Sir!” replied Jackson, “we will give these fellows the bayonet!”

Bee, encouraged by Jackson's solid front, tried again to gather his people around him.

“Here is Jackson!” he called out, “standing like a stone wall!”

“Stonewall! Stonewall!” it passed through the rebel ranks and the plateau on which they stood shook from the battle cry of the storming columns.

From this moment on, General Thomas B. Jackson was called “Stonewall Jackson.”

But what was *that* supposed to mean? “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, tigh *Zouave!*”

Is that all that's left of the famous Ellsworth Zouaves?¹² Yes, the Black Horse fell on them with a dreadful howl on the shaken Zouaves — and the slaughter began. They fell like corn before the sickle; but their rows filled back up and saber, Bowie knives and bayonets glittered in the sunlight; horse sank over horse, platoon on platoon vanished — the chatter of muskets, the tiger-like howls of the rebels, interrupted by the call of the Zouaves, “Remember Ellsworth!” and the groans of the wounded, crushed and pressed fighters filled the air, and then began the countercharge. The few remaining of the Zouaves had to accept the irony of the rebels when they counted, “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, tighah Zouave!”

To episode 21: Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth (1837-61), colonel of the 11th New York Infantry “Fire Zouaves,” had been a major supporter of Abraham Lincoln, and he died as the “first hero” of the Union cause after removing a Confederate flag flying within sight of Washington in Alexandria. Reizenstein has the Devil himself taking the form of Ellsworth in *The Devil in New Orleans*. His name often replaced that of the “disreputable” John Brown in “John Brown’s Body.”

These are only two episodes of those eternally memorable battles of Manassas and Bull Run, fought *on the twenty-first of July of the year eighteen hundred and sixty-one*.

Washington was shaken to its foundations. Like drunks the people ran through the streets of the town, and everything reeled in a circle around it. The Capitol shook and the White House shook, every diplomatic legation shook and it was believed that at any moment the victors would be seen coming over the Arlington Heights. The wild tales of the retreating Zouaves of the fury and valor of the rebels increased the general feelings of anxiety.

In New Orleans, the arrival of reports of victory drove the enthusiasm into madness. Sounding and yelling the newsboys ran, no flew, through the streets of the city, bringing the news of our splendid victory to the furthest corner. Like a Beethoven fugue this message pierced even the coldest heart. The broker drew back from his counter and runs his greedy hands over an exchange slip. But he feels even more a great something compelling him to think that there are higher and greater things than making money, and he wipes his brow and rushes out to the reddened faces of enthusiasm. Judges and advocates flee from the courts and perhaps for the first time in their lives find themselves that they are men among men. Even rowdies and thugs are ashamed in the face of such deeds and many of them abandon their shameful careers and join companies that were still forming.

Every brilliant deed, every noble expression in human society wins its proselytes and thousands of bad men are saved from moral decline. It was high time that a long peace should be followed by a *hard war*, for corruption had reached its highpoint, and world history always separates the chaff from the wheat.

"The people arise, the storm breaks loose!" Now a new period commenced in the history of the rebellion — the supremacy of the political wire-pullers and socialistic speculators who had hitherto monopolized the rebellion, ceased to a great degree and their power sank before the stormy march of victorious columns. Only now began the

general involvement of the people and those who trembled until then were swung into the solar circle of the rebellion.

To episode 21, “The people arise ...” was the first line of a song composed by Theodor Körner, who died a heroic death in the War of Liberation against Napoleon as a member of a volunteer *Freikorps* in 1813.

As if in response to a magic word they stepped up, the marshals of the rebellion: Beauregard, Lee, Jackson, Evans, both of the Johnstons, Kirby Smith, Ewell, Early, Holmes, Longstreet, Hill, Jones and however they are named. The world was astounded by the fearsome abundance of power, talent, genius and Roman sensibility. They saw again arising Aristides, Epaminondas, Alcibiades, Coriolanus, Blücher, Prince Eugene, Turenne, even the spirit of the great Corsican. The cabinet of Saint James growled and moved like a bulldog on the hunt, and the bold coward in the Tuilleries [Emperor Napoleon III] held his breath and brooded over the things that were to come.

The face of the New World had been changed!

22

He remained true to himself, and the guardians of the holy brotherhood approached him in silence. Without ostentation, without principled demonstration, but also without complaining about the powerlessness that beset his beloved Uncle Sam, he stayed at home while his German countrymen harnessed themselves in front of the triumphal wagon on which sat “King Cotton.” The speakers at the German people's festival, the *Inaugurator maximus* of the Schiller Festival, had no words for this new ruler by Divine Right. To him he was a scoundrel, a cotton scoundrel, a cotton soldier of fortune. And in a certain way he was right. If one wished to honor anyone, one does not make a clown out of him, and when one performs a coronation procession, a proper imperial herald is called for, not a camel-herder. The very personification of Cotton was not only inept politically, but also a failed act grammatically. Because the entire masquerade was created by Germans, and “Cotton” in German is *Baumwolle*, and it is not masculine in gender but feminine, it would be totally obvious that we had to crown not a King Cotton but a Queen Cotton. If Americans had organized this procession, that would be an entirely different matter, for they alone may speak of a King Cotton.

Many came home from this masquerade ill, but no Confederate doctor could help them. The excessive fantasy enjoyment of *Long and Short Staple* created the fear of an inflammation of the brain, and if the unfortunate patients had not encountered the rentier Julius Falstaff on their search for a doctor, they would already long be resting in a cool grave. When they complained to him of their illness, he rumped his nose and said, “Cotton fever, right? Yes, gentlemen, there is no prescription for that!” But still basking in the glow of his Franconian dividends and a farmer's life in *Sans Souci*, he had compassion for his suffering brethren. He sought counsel and advice for them and found both. At once he handed them a list of five doctors' addresses, and the patients were on their way.

The first address led them to Bienville and Marais Streets. As they came to the designated place, they saw a splendid hussar dismounting from his horse and rushing into a pharmacy.

“Mr. Hussar,” they called after him, “are you not the doctor? We come to consult you and take your potion devotedly.” The man addressed stared at them from head to foot. From his shako there hang a forest of red cords that reached down his shoulders, back and chest, netting his entire upper body. But that did not bother him.

To episode 22: Moritz Schuppert, MD, published *A Treatise on Gun-Shot Wounds* written for and dedicated to the Surgeons of the Confederate States Army (New Orleans: The Bulletin Book and Job Office, 1861). At the date of his death in 1887 he was living at 179 Carondelet Street [MLE].

“I am he,” he replied, “but I cannot do anything for you, gentlemen, come back if you will in fourteen days and we will see whether we may do a diagnosis.”

“In fourteen days?” the anxious men repeated. “We could be dead by then — we need help in a hurry....”

“Gentlemen, don't be too pressing — I have already said there is nothing to be done now — in just fourteen days I will receive my diploma as *doctor medicinae*, and only then shall I have the right to do what appears extremely needful, to feel your pulse — incidentally, if you want to take the trouble to go to the New Orleans School of Medicine, my future partner could perhaps be moved to fulfill your wish.” Thus spake the doctor, and like cloud-gatherer Zeus, scorn and dissatisfaction gathered on his brow.

“We will not go there,” those gathered about the doctor called out, “don't we have more addresses?”

And they backed out of the pharmacy.

The next path led them to Canal and Roman Streets. The doctor was standing in the door of the pharmacy, his cane in his hand and his cigar in the right corner of his mouth.

They immediately recognized him. The spokesman of the patients began:

We come, doctor, to greet you
Directly from King Cotton —
The way was long, the journey hard,
We had to go backwards all the way.

“Now, gentlemen,” the doctor responded, “what do you want? Are you sick? Can I help you?”

“We have already been to several doctors; none could help us, and we wanted to try it with you, for they speak of your wisdom and the marvelous power of your medicine,” the spokesman replied.

The doctor blew the smoke of his cigar in their faces and said:

“So, already to several doctors, and none can help you? Good that I know that and now you believe that I am good enough — faithful servants, gentlemen, go somewhere else!” And the doctor left them standing and rushed across the street to the awaiting omnibus.

They looked at one another in confusion.

For their third address, they now had to go to Common Street opposite the University Building. When they rang, a servant appeared, from whom they heard that the doctor they requested had sold out and was going to Virginia and was too busy packing lint and linen bandages to allow them in.

With a troubled heart, they went on and finally reached Carondelet Street, but then it went no better there, either. The doctor was actually at work correcting the proofs of his treatise on gun wounds that he had written especially for the wound doctors of the Confederate States Army.

As elected staff physician of the Polish Brigade, he wore a splendid uniform, and this work was supposed to get him a higher rank, as high as possible, in the regular army.

The poor patients fled head over heels as he thundered on their entrance:

Whoever shows him face to me, he will not return
Without shattered upper and lower cheeks,
Whoever shows his rear will soon leave behind
Neck, head and top of the head loose in the grass

“I see already,” quoth the patients' spokesman, “no Confederate doctor can help us. — I believe that Julius Fallstaff is right, there is no prescription for cotton fever.”

“Even the neutral doctor on Roman Street did not want to do something for us,” another remarked.

“Let us try a Union doctor — perhaps he knows a treatment,” a third said and looked at the fifth address.

“I am not eager to do it,” remarked the third of the wandering patients, he has not taken his oath as a Confederate citizen, and there we could get into some real trouble.”

“Confederate or not Confederate,” the spokesman now said, “that has nothing to do with our situation, — so long as he cures us, that is the main question! Even General Twiggs was treated by him, and he is our city commandant, after all.”

The doctor to whom they now went was no other than the man indicated at the start of this chapter; he recognized then at once what was going on.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “you have cotton worms in your noses — and there is only one treatment for that.”

“And that would be?” all of them said at once. —

“You would have to undergo cauterization,” the doctor replied, and he placed a coal bucket in the chimney and placed in it a specially-shaped iron.

“But Herr Doctor, what do you intend to do with this glowing iron? You won't burn away the worms in our noses? We will not permit that,” the spokesman said in an excited tone.

“That would not do much good — they would just grow back,” the doctor replied. “I just will not undertake to cure your illness, which really does no harm to your physical well-being, for your illness is only imagined and you could reach a hundred years of age despite it.”

“But didn't you just say you had a medicine to save us?”

“To be sure I did say that,” the doctor remarked, looking again at the iron that was beginning to glow. “But this medicine is not for the present, but for the future — for it is quite possible that we will have different times, that, for example, the Federals will occupy the city, and so on, and so on, and then you would perhaps have to prove that you were always good Union men.”

“But, Herr Doctor, you are talking entirely like an abolitionist — be careful, for God's sake! With us it does not matter, but take care —”

The doctor knelt before the hearth and paid further attention to his iron. Then he turned to the spokesman of the patients and said to him:

“Would you please request the gentlemen to remove their clothes?”

“But my God, what do you wish to do with us? — We cannot understand you at all — — no, no, we will not do that — — first explain to us — — it is only proper that we understand why?”

“Come here,” the doctor explained, “I will put these two letters on your arm, and it will demonstrate that you are good Union men in case, as I have told you, the times change. It is always good to carry such a talisman with you.”

“We will not accept such treatment either now or in the future!” they all cried with one voice. “That only happens to horses or mules — not and never! We have spirit and wit enough to get along without it, if it should be necessary — but heaven protect us that it should go to that degree!”

“As you wish, gentlemen,” the doctor said, “keep your cotton worms in your noses. As far as I am concerned you are on your own!”

And with that he turned his back to them.

As with all political catastrophes that end in the stabilization of the form of state, undecided persons, pseudo-patriots, clowns, Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas abounded in this rebellion as well. But these wandering patients were not disturbed in the least by the tragic course of events and the energetic advance of the other side, since “Such characters have to exist.”

23

With the exception of the Mexican consul, Señor Ruiz, all foreign consuls had already been seized with enthusiasm for the rebellion's cause. The Prussian consul, whose partner had married the sister of War Minister Benjamin, had gone to Virginia, where he soon reached the rank of a brigadier general. He, along with Brigadier General von Zinsen, were the only Germans in the entire Confederate army who achieved the rank of general.

This is the place to remark, and it provides much material to contemplate, that not a single sugar planter of French descent achieved a prominent position in the Confederate army, in fact, only one of the sugar planters, specifically Dick Taylor, the son of the earlier president of the United States, did so.

They did not exactly want to take their gold, and it served the French misers and envious absolutely right that they took away their Negroes and that they had to gobble down their *Gombo filé* themselves.

How much did the valiant General Beauregard beg his countrymen for reinforcement! Whole regiments consisting of Germans, Americans and Irishmen rushed to his aid! But

the Creoles, who claimed for themselves all the “*Gloire*” of the rebellion for themselves, broke up as soon as the orders came “*to prepare for the field.*”

As reluctant as they were then to fight for their fatherland, they were all the more enthusiastic to rally to Uncle Sam's flag as mercenaries and to lick the Yankees' boots.

These louts caused General Butler a great deal of trouble, and their dubious loyalty to the Union often caused him distress. But we will not get ahead of events, but to tell everything at the proper time.

24.

Toward the end of winter activity in that branch of industry dealing with war reached its greatest dimension. Even though the double blockade from above and below limited the availability of many necessities of life, still they did not permit their mood to sink, and the most intense life arose within the limits held by General Lovell. Subscriptions for fitting out privateers thrived, even if many blockade runners fell into Federal hands. Still, the escape of one of those ships made good the loss of two or three others. The innumerable bayous of the greater Mississippi basin, reaching to Barataria, Terrebonne and Timbalier Bays, and then down to the Gulf of Mexico, would make the craft of our modern buccaneers easier. In addition, the Confederates held Fort Livingston on the west end of Grand Terre Island, dominating the “Grand Barataria Pass.” This island, made famous by Lafitte, was also a center of German hospitality and collegiality. The commanding officer in Fort Livingston, Captain St. b. er, was not quite as short as Napoleon I, but fully as great in mustache and beard as Napoleon III; he kept severe discipline, but he was the very spirit of goodness, mildness and generosity. His siesta was normally taken on the back of a 32 pounder, and a great tarp protected him from the singeing of the sun. His friends came from New Orleans, from the *Bayou des Allemandes*, and the lakes around Barataria Bay, so the champagne flowed in streams and Westphalian ham and Braunschweiger sausage did their best to settle a rumbling stomach. But no one could grasp from whence all these splendid things came, for everyone knew that New Orleans had barely anything to bite or to chew. For that reason, the daring rumors spread and evil men to whom hospitality was not sacred asserted that the blond-bearded captain in Fort Livingston had discovered the treasure that the famous pirate Lafitte once buried on this island, and that he maintained a costly trade in contraband. They believed themselves all the more justified in this opinion when they saw him often secretly reading *Monte Christo*, and he would often refer to the book when he was deep in thought.

Many months earlier things looked quite different in Fort Livingston, since the garrison then barely had enough pork and beans to eat, and the commanding German agents of the fort one fine day found itself alone on this wasted pirate island. The Germans of New Orleans experienced the dreadful sight of seeing their own countrymen bound like bandits, marching through the city.

Among them were seen young men from the best German families, and although several influential citizens succeeded in getting General Twiggs' pardon for them, the insult had not been wiped away. Those shackles had been placed by Confederate authorities on Confederate soldiers, although they had violated military discipline by spontaneously leaving their posts, the disgraceful treatment by their officers, who had

forced them to these steps, was more important in judgment. The military authorities should have dealt with them, and why the massive theft of equipment and food that the soldiers had been sent by their relatives and friends was never investigated is still unsolved.

And were not the Germans of New Orleans in industrial terms the soul of the Gulf Department of the Confederate States? Thousands of officers would have gone to war without sabers if the German sword-grinders of New Orleans had not been there? Would any ram or gunboat have been completed if the German machinists and engineers of New Orleans had not been there? Wouldn't our soldiers have been able to endure the humid nights in Camp Lewis without jackets or socks if the German wool-spinners of New Orleans had not been there? Finally, would Don Miguelo Roostero have been able to deliver his fulminating rebel address at a flag dedication if the German embroiderers of New Orleans had not been there? Never!

On chapter 24: Charles L. Dufour, *The Night the War was Lost* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960); the most recent treatment of the 1862 Union campaign against New Orleans is Chester G. Hearn, *The Capture of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge and London: LSU Press, 1995. Both stress that the city expected the attack from Union forces would come from the northern, rather than the southern, direction.

Harper's Weekly, an illustrated journal, has extensive narratives and woodcut images of the campaign of 1862 to recover New Orleans, although the images often come long after the events. A more coherent postwar narrative can be found in *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War* (New York, 1866).

25

On the 25th of March, exactly thirty days since Butler's departure from Hampton Roads, he was approaching Ship Island with his troops. As the ship with the General steamed into the harbor, a dreadful storm rose up. The waves mounted up as if in rage against the new arrivals and rolled over the island. No one could see what was water and what was land. The rage of the elements continued for two full days and nights, and the people, unable to land, looked without hope at the wasted island. Even General Butler, when he saw that General Phelps had sent away his transport ships, could not fight off his inner dread. When the troops had finally landed, intense depression took hold of them. The heat was particularly dreadful in this year, and innumerable swarms of mosquitoes tormented the new arrivals who were not used to the excessive attentiveness of these insects. In addition, there were the uncanny rumors that reached Ship Island from New Orleans that found all too rapid belief from the distressed troops. The worst distress was brought by the information delivered by one young man who claimed to have fled from the rebel authorities. In the General's presence, he said that the Mississippi was so formidably fortified that no fleet or flotilla could pass.

He said that there were a hundred sixty heavy guns in Forts Jackson and Saint Philip, all sixty-three pounders made by Bartley Britton in England. Six iron floating batteries, whose plate was four and a half inches thick and of the best wrought-iron, from England and France, would take up the battle with the Federal fleet. Each of these iron batteries was armed with sixty-eight pounders, placed to sweep the water and strike the sterns of

the enemy ships where it would do the most harm. Thousands of Congreve rockets and fifty fire rafts were also held in reserve to meet the Federal fleet. Between New Orleans and the forts there was an unbroken series of powerful earthworks; further, the forts in Camp Chalmette were armed with field artillery pieces that could deliver their destructive force at a distance of five miles. In Forts Saint Philip and Jackson were stationed five thousand experienced artillerymen with about a hundred gunners, all of whom served in the United States Navy. In New Orleans itself stood 50,000 infantry, and as many could be called in from the surrounding area. Their discipline and training were the best that could be imagined, and the entire population placed their total confidence in their two capable and tireless generals, General Mansfield Lovell and Brigadier General Ruggles. As commodore they had old Hollins, who was a second Nelson, and they would deliver a fight that world history could never duplicate.

This was the report of the young man, the supposed refugee from New Orleans.

General Butler wrinkled his brow and said to his wife, who was known to be accompanying him on Ship Island:

“Eliza, I think we will have a hard time if the description of the young man is even half true.”

“I have no doubt about it,” Mrs. Butler responded, “but despite that I hope to be with you in the big rebel city before six weeks are past.”

“I hope so, too,” Butler said, “and Captain Farragut will clear the way into the city. I trust his valor and tireless persistence.”

Captain Farragut, who arrived two days later and had already taken command of the fleet, did not share any of General Butler’s fears.

“What do I care about the rams and ironclads?” he said with an old sailor’s usual contempt for anything that did not bear the name of a wooden ship. “I will fight on the decks and not in a teakettle! Nelson, Perry, Lawrence and Decatur also had only wooden ships, and they are good enough for me. The rebels with their rams, floating batteries and fire-rafts will be heartily welcome to me! *Go ahead*, to New Orleans.”

26

Before we allow the following dramatic portrayal to reach its highpoint and return to New Orleans, it is necessary to inform the reader of the true situation of the successive operations of the Federal armed forces that, as we all know, ended with the taking of New Orleans. This is all the more needed because the reader, misled by the ignorance and excesses of the daily press of the time, was never able to get a true picture of things which are really only known in limited military circles. If by doing this we impose too much on the reader's patience, it is only to throw him into a cyclone of surprises which, although previously experienced, will still have much new for him. Until then, he should not forget that Bonseigneur remains in New Orleans and that we have left Esperance at the instant when she is preparing herself to go to the theater of war to be an active witness to our great triumphs.

We will also find Pig Tail, Feather Bob and Henry again. We may not yet betray the whereabouts of Brutus, and before we arrive at the point when Farragut appears with his fleet before New Orleans, we will also attach the red threads to the heels of the Hanseatics, to finally cut them in the manner of the Fates.

Before we allow the enemy fleet to move against Fort Jackson, we must make a few remarks about our state of defense. The weakness of Forts Jackson and Saint Philip consisted primarily in the type of guns with which they were armed. With the exception of about six ten-inch Columbiads and two hundred pounders, they had gathered old so-called *smooth-bore* cannons from the various works in the region around New Orleans and brought them to these forts. If they had been supplied with entirely modern artillery, it would never have been possible for the wooden ships to pass them, the forts would never have been reduced, and they would never have been taken. Right across the river from a point directly below Fort Jackson our people had extended an underwater barrier, on which they expended extensive effort. This was supported by heavy thirty-foot long tree trunks chained to thirty heavy anchors. But this barrier gathered behind it a huge mass of derelict tree trunks and floating branches that in the space of only a few weeks creating a towering mass that extended above it for more than half a mile. Finally, the chains broke and this entire structure — barrier, tree trunks, anchors, and cables — was pushed downstream toward the Gulf by the power of the current. In its place, they sought to erect a lighter barrier received from the naval depot in Pensacola. Seven or eight schooners, dismasted, filled with tree trunks and rubble, were attached at set intervals to strong anchors and posted in a row right across the river. Chains were laid from schooner to schooner and joined at the capstan. At the end of the anchor line, on the shore by Fort Jackson, a battery is reached that could easily drive away all attempts to destroy the barrier. The derelict tree trunks can now pass easily downstream without damaging the barrier by passing under a raised anchor chain. Further, next to the fort there is an ingenious arrangement for opening the barrier that permits our ships to pass through and to allow the opening to be closed again.

But even this undertow structure later proved itself inadequate. We believed this would have been a formidable hindrance if it had been located at another place, that is, if it had been located above Fort Saint Philip rather than below Fort Jackson, since in that case the attacking party would have been exposed to the fire of hundreds of cannons while moving forward, instead of the same operation taking place below the fire of most of the guns, and then having to direct the same fire two miles up the river before it could reach the fleet.

The undertow was thus entirely well-constructed, but in the wrong place.

So far as our fleet was concerned, it consisted of fifteen gunboats, of which only a few were armored. The greater number of them just riverboats refitted for war. Then we had the ram *Manassas*, which looked externally like the *Merrimac*, but was in fact considerably weaker in power and guns. A single ram built like the *Merrimac*, falling head first among the wooden ships, would have quickly driven them off the river and destroyed many of them. The *Louisiana*, that powerful war machine whose armament was of fifteen heavy cannons, was not yet finished at the time of the encounter with Farragut's ships. Nor was the *Mississippi* ready, whose fate will be dealt with in more detail later.

Fire rafts and long rafts with bundles of cypress branches were also held in readiness to receive the attacking fleet.

In the marshes behind Fort Jackson were camped the so-called “Swamp Sharpshooters,” two hundred in number, whose chief occupation was to scout the riverbanks and, if possible, listen for conversations on the enemy fleet. These bold, brave men were very useful to the commandant of Fort Jackson, General Duncan, since they brought him the most precise information on the movements of the enemy fleet. In fact, they were close enough to hear the Federal sailors talking quite clearly.

28

Now he takes the stage, the only man in the entire United States Navy and Army who, through the entire war, never failed. This personified trinity of the valor of a knight, the simplicity of Cincinnatus, and the rectitude of Coriolanus, stood alone in the huge mass of cutpurses, cotton thieves, Black Peters, Heliogabaluses, decadent Sardanapaluses and Shylocks of our day. No one has yet dared to darken his fame and the purity of his conduct with dark accusations. True as gold, hard as steel, and pure as the blue heaven, he encountered no scandal on his course. Even Knipperdolling, the executioner who has cut off the heads of honor of so many heroes, not excepting even Hannibal-Sherman, has yet dared approach him.

If in a hundred or two hundred years a Valhalla is built on this continent, they will grant Farragut a place of honor among those Americans who never lied, never promoted humbug, never stole cotton and never did anything underhanded.

Although born in Tennessee, he remained true to the old flag. For more than half a century he served in the United States Navy, and when war broke out, he could not bring his heart to renounce his old customs. Already as a midshipman he distinguished himself in the war of 1812-14 in many bloody encounters, and although now sixty-five years of age, his heart was still young, his movements light and active, and he still looked like a man in his middle years. He still mounted the rigging like a young sailor, was agile moving around his boat, and the hardest efforts could not tire him.

Such a man was Captain Farragut.

To episode 28: The War of 1812 with England would last until 1814, although the Battle of New Orleans would be fought in 1815, after the peace treaty was signed but before it was ratified by the governments.

29

For the reduction of Forts Jackson and Saint Philip, whose defenses have already been mentioned, the most powerful expedition ever to sail under the flag of the United States, entered the Mississippi. It consisted of forty-seven warships, including eight powerful steam-cutters, then seventeen steam gunboats, most of them new and all armed with the heaviest guns; further, there were two sailing ships that maneuvered like war cutters, and twenty-one mortar boats, which would throw their shells, weighing a hundred and fifteen pounds, accurately over a distance of three miles. The steam cutters each carried between nine and twenty-eight guns, and the gunboats each had five or six cannons. The total of cannon and mortars was about three hundred ten, and most of them were of the heaviest caliber and the newest construction.

On the seventeenth of April, the fleet had reached the vicinity of Fort Jackson, and on the following morning before the sun arose, they were already in a colorful mass four miles below Fort Jackson. When the sun rose, before the eyes of the Federal crews unfolded a drama that was both dreadful and splendid. Two fire rafts drenched in tar and turpentine came hissing, crackling, boiling, and groaning toward them, but since the wind blew against the flow of the river, their approach was slow. But they came, and everyone sought to get out of the way of the crackling monsters. But two boats, one from the *Mississippi* and the other from the *Iroquois*, advanced as swiftly as possible and actually managed to tackle and draw them to the shore with long ship-hooks, where they harmlessly consumed themselves and sank hissing into the stream.

All the mortar schooners now swiftly set to work with axes, ropes and ship-hooks to be equipped when it should occur to the rebels to send more fire rafts to catch them at the beginning. After this occurred, there was a general review, and the scene was more like a regatta than a true war maneuver. The next morning the bombardment was to take place.

Meanwhile General Butler waited at the mouth of the river with his six thousand men to be ready on one command at any moment to cooperate with the fleet.

The following was the plan for taking New Orleans, which had already been formulated at the end of March on Ship Island by General Butler, Captain Farragut, Captain Bailey of the Navy, and Lieutenant Weitzel of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. It was prepared and actually carried out on the whole: first, Captain Porter with his fleet of 21 shell-schooners were to anchor below Forts Jackson and Saint Philip, and to fire on these forts until they were reduced or the ammunition available reduced to a small amount. During the bombardment, Captain Farragut's fleet would remain out of the range of fire directly below the shell-schooners, as a reserve. So far as the Army went, it was to remain at the mouth of the Mississippi to await quietly the end of the bombardment. If Captain Porter managed to reduce the forts, the army would immediately receive an order and come up from the mouth of the Mississippi to occupy the forts. But if the bombardment did not reduce the forts or bring them to silence, then Captain Farragut was to attempt to force the passage. Once this was successful, he was to clear the river of the rebel fleet, cut off all communication between the forts and surrounding country, and go as far upstream as necessary to scout any possible obstructions.

When Captain Farragut had passed the forts, General Butler was to lead his troops to the marshes behind Fort Saint Philip and storm the fort from there. The rebels had made no preparations for an attack from that side, since they regarded the marshes as impassable. But Lieutenant [Godfrey=Gottfried] Weitzel, who had hunted in those marshes during the two years when he was finishing the fort, knew every bay and every bayou. He assured General Butler that landing at this point was not impossible, although very difficult — but for that very reason an attack from that side would be entirely unexpected and could be crowned with the best success.

Once the forts had surrendered, then the entire land and sea force should advance on the city. The way that was to happen depended on the various hindrances encountered going up the river. From this plan, which has been entirely made public, one may clearly see that the Yankees had no idea of the poor defense of the riverbanks.

All of the stories that were told at the time by various fleet officers remaining in the city and reporting on the condition of our defensive force, rested on mere street talk, and

it was supposed there were actually spies in New Orleans and environs at that time, they must have been in any case people utterly untutored in engineering, who were unable to give a passable judgment of the few pitiful earthworks of old Fort Leon on the English Turn, badly-positioned hearth machinery on the Chalmette field, and the even stupider earthwork by the mint building misled minds to believe miracles of how dangerous all these so-called fortifications would be for the approaching fleet.

One does not need to be amazed if the information of the supposed refugee given to General Butler on Ship Island concerning the formidable defensive power of New Orleans was believed. This is demonstrated by the careful maneuvering of the fleet after passing the forts.

Even today the methods of General Mansfield Lovell in combination with the careless and stupid acts of the committee invested with the defense of the city are veiled in secrecy. In years to come, when the atmosphere is cleared of the political miasma, a non-partisan man will write the history of this war, when he comes to speak of the taking of New Orleans, he will say:

“So great was the dedication, patriotism and trust of the citizens of New Orleans in their city commandant, that they only awoke from their deep slumber when the enemy was already there with a mighty fleet standing before the gates, and the main artery of the new league of states was cut as if with a wave of the hand.”

30

The bombardment began on the eighteenth of April. As soon as the day broke, each of the small steamboats attached to the mortar fleet took four bombarding schooners in tow and led them slowly up the river. On each mast was a green garland of leaves, the custom of the navy when it goes into battle. Fourteen of these mortar schooners were in a row along the eastern shore close to one another, covered from the land side by a fifty-yard wide forest, all about two miles below Fort Jackson. On the other bank, a little higher, there were six more mortar schooners in a row with a full view of the two forts.

The command was given to concentrate fire on Fort Jackson, the nearest point for both divisions, because when the one fort was reduced, the other would have to surrender. At nine o'clock, even before the mortar ships had all been formed in battle rows, our people began the conflict, but the cannonballs landed in most cases at least a hundred yards too short into the water. The gunboat *Orasco*, which had steamed forward, gave the first response, firing an enormous shell, one hundred fifteen pounds heavy, arching a mile into the air and landing in the swamp, where it exploded with a deep, severe report. Since they were simply finding the range, through the first hour there was firing only after long delays, and Captain Porter carefully observed the effect of the firing and gave new directions. Ours did the same. At ten o'clock both sides ceased experimenting, and now they went to work.

Now the scene became exciting and artistic in the highest degree. The rigging of Farragut's fleet, located with the *Hartford* in first place, but outside of firing range, were all below the mortar fleet, was filled from the deck to the tops with a great crowd of onlookers, who followed the rise and fall of the shells, and every time there was a fortunate hit, cheers broke out.

Now four or five of the gunboats between the bomb ships moved to the middle of the river and commenced a lively fire with the closest batteries. The forts also fired continuously, and rather well. Their cannonballs whistled around the Mortar boats all day, but they only struck two of them, and these not very seriously. Not one man in the mortar fleet was wounded on this first day, but many grew ill from the severe trauma that followed every firing, so that they had to be put in their berths.

Those who could withstand it stood with gaping mouths, on the tips of their toes, watching the impact of the deafening explosion. As the firing grew more intense, bees in the nearby forest could no longer tolerate the sound and rushed out of the forests and crossed the river, buzzing around the ears of the sailors in the rigging of the fleet. They even saw many fish paralyzed by the thundering of the guns, floating dead on the surface of the passing water.

So passed the first day. About four o'clock, Butler's small steamboat, the *Saxon*, arrived, bringing the news that the General and his troops awaited orders at the mouth of the Mississippi. Already before the night came, both forts ceased firing. The wooden barracks in Fort Jackson were aflame, and until two in the morning the river was illuminated for a great distance by rising towers of fire. In the meantime, Captain Porter had ceased operations and brought his six mortar boats into a line on the west bank of the river to withdraw them from the crowding of their position on the eastern bank.

Otherwise the entire night passed in peace.

31

On the next morning, they were bitterly disappointed. Despite the burning of the wooden barracks, Jackson responded to the firing of the mortar fleet with great energy and liveliness. Toward midday (it could have been about eleven o'clock) one cannonball passed through one of the mortar boats with such effect that it sank in the river within twenty minutes. It hardly was any better for the *Oneida*, which boldly led the other boats. A man was wounded on it.

As it happened, the firing from Fort Jackson relented, but that happened only to repair the damage that the enemy fleet had caused, and our men always resumed their resistance energetically. So passed the entire blessed day in this manner until late into the night, when both sides ceased fire at the same time.

On the twentieth of April, the third day of the bombardment, the gunners on the mortar boats finally lost patience and began to complain about the lack of action of Farragut's fleet, which remained out of firing range below the mortar fleet and the gunboats.

When this was related to Captain Farragut, he called a council of war made up of the captains of the various ships, gathered in the cabin of the *Hartford*, his old flagship. The predominant opinion was that the effort with the mortars should be continued a little longer before going to the point of forcing the passage between the forts.

32

On the same day, Captain Farragut issued the following command:

“After the Flag Officer has heard the views of the various ship commanders, he is of the opinion that whatever is to happen should happen quickly, or we will sink back to being a mere blockade squadron, without having the means to continue the bombardment, since we have exhausted almost all our bombs and even the greater part of the raw war materials. He has always kept the same opinions as expressed by Commodore Porter — that is, that there were three various types of attack, and the question is simply which of them is to be chosen? His own opinion is that a combination of two types should be used, as follows: one should run past the forts and, if a force remains to protect the troops, they should be landed at the Quarantine and proceed from the Gulf side through the bayous. Then our forces should set off up the river and support one another mutually as will be to the advantage of both as necessary.

“When, according to the opinion of the Flag Officer, the proper moment has come, then the signal will be given to raise anchors and advance to battle. In his opinion, if at the time of arrival at the positions of the various fleet divisions the advantage is on our side, the Flag Officer will give the signal for ‘closed action’ and accept the risk to win or to be defeated, either to drop anchor or to lift it, as he sees best. Until the aforementioned signal is given, sailing should only take place after we have Fort Saint Philip at our backs and we are in agreement with my original opinion to move up the river.”

33

But in order to be able to pass the forts and follow a portion of Farragut's order, it was first necessary to break through the barrier described in an earlier chapter. This was to be performed that night. For this purpose, they used what is called a petard to blow up the dismasted schooners on which the undertow rested. The inventor of this ingenious creation was a German Yankee by the name of Kröhl, and he was on board with the fleet to oversee this operation. The plan had been developed that they would throw a petard aboard one of these dismasted schooners and set it off with an electric spark that would be initiated by a wire reaching from a gunboat. The spark would pass through the wire and set off the petard. To carry out this bold and difficult undertaking, Captain Bell was chosen, since he commanded the two gunboats *Pinola* and *Itasca*, which were supported by the gunboats *Iroquois*, *Kennebec*, and *Winona*.

The darkness of the night at first seemed to support the undertaking, but a fresh wind that blew along the river drove the stream with extraordinary speed against them. At ten o'clock the *Pinola* and *Itasca* steamed out to their assigned places. It was a significant moment, for the success of the expedition, the destiny of New Orleans, depended on the success of this nocturnal labor. So as the two boats passed through the line of the mortar schooners, Captain Porter opened fire on the forts — so intensely, so uninterrupted, that the previous bombardments were child's play in comparison. Often eight shells were seen in the air at once, fearful yet beautiful meteors, passing in a broad arch, seeming to touch the night sky, to then sink into the cypress forest nearby. In the middle of this shell spectacle, the *Panola* approached the western riverbank against the undertow of the barrier, almost under the guns of Fort Jackson, and it approached one of those schooners on which the undertow rested. Our countryman Kröhl now threw his petard successfully

on the deck of the wrecked schooner — but horrors! At the same instant, the steam engine in the *Panola* ceased to operate, and the stream instantly drove the gunboat downstream, and the wire spool on the deck played out like the rope on a harpoon when a whale has been hit. Before the operator could turn off the spark apparatus, the wire was gone and the entire work was made pointless.

The *Panola* passed downstream with incredible speed. The power of the flow was so great and the night so dark, that the gunboat took a half hour for its prow to get back against the barrier.

In the meantime, the *Itasca* had tackled itself to the second wrecked schooner of the barrier. They had no petard on board, but they trusted instead in capable hands and cold steel. By steaming right up to the barrier, several of the crew sprang aboard the wreck and set about studying the undertow.

This took place in the deepest darkness. But look! Suddenly a rocket shot into the sky! The rebels had seen them. Both forts suddenly opened fire at once, but protected by darkness and thick gun smoke, the men of the *Itasca* worked in perfect security, and no shot fell close enough to disturb their work. A half hour was enough. With sledgehammer and mallet they managed to destroy the undertow and separate the anchor from the wrecked schooner, but at the same moment the gunboat and wreck swung around against the eastern bank and stayed there, subject to the fire of both forts, stuck in the mud. But fortunately, the *Pinola* came to the aid of the *Itasca*, pulling its companion in arms afloat. In triumph, both of them returned to the fleet and "Well done, *Itasca*!" sounded from all sides. The success was complete. The bombardment ended for today and Forts Jackson and Saint Philip were silent.

34

The fourth day of the bombardment passed without a significant event. The Federals had fired about twenty thousand shells. but the forts replied with the same persistence and energy despite that. It was a costly business, this bombardment, for each of these shells cost Uncle Sam about fifty dollars. Toward evening our people attempted to improve the undertow of the barrier, but they were always driven back by severe fire. In the night another fire raft appeared, which was received with less amazement and less terror than was the case with the first time. The mortar men were the first to push the seething and boiling monster away with their long iron boat hooks and draw it to shore, where it consumed itself like the first one.

As night fell, the moon appeared for a few moments before it drew itself behind a dark shroud of clouds.

Quiet again — only here and there interrupted by the howling singing of the men on the mortar boats, and the voice of a bad-tempered officer on the deck of the gun ship.

35

The fifth day arose gray — it was the twenty-second of April. The bombardment was continued almost uninterrupted with the same regularity as before. The forts responded just as regularly. The Yankees swore and made noise.

So passed the day. Evening came and went.

The twenty-third of April, or the sixth day of the bombardment, arose. But what has happened to the forts? Why do they not respond to the fire of the Yankees' mortars and gunboats? Has Fort Jackson been evacuated? Is General Duncan laying a trap for the enemy? Captain Porter thinks that the rebels are raising a new barrier above Fort Saint Philip. He himself climbed to the crow's nest and believes he saw through his spyglass twelve steamboats above the fort, steaming back and forth with the greatest dispatch. It seems to him as if one of the steamboats moved to the destroyed barrier to determine the state of things. The bombardment was continued for the entire day, but without reply.

At the same time, Captain Farragut has been preparing to pass the forts. The sun had already set and the Yankees ceased firing. The fleet lay in its sailing order, awaiting the signal any moment. They were formed in the following five divisions: the mortar boats kept their old position they had held during the bombardment, and they were to cover the attack with a hefty fire. The six small steamboats, the *Harriet Lane*, *Westfield*, *Owneci*, *Clifton*, *Miami*, and *Jackson*, which had been in the mortar fleet, were to hold the floating battery below Fort Jackson in check, but to make no attempt to pass the forts. Captain Farragut was to advance toward Fort Jackson with the three largest ships — *Hartford*, *Richmond* and *Brooklyn*. Captain Bailey, the second in command, was to advance along the eastern riverbank with the *Cayuga*, *Pensacola*, *Mississippi*, *Oneida*, *Varuna*, *Katahdie*, *Kines* and *Wissahickon*, along with Captain Bell with his division, consisting of the *Scioto*, *Iroquois*, *Pinola*, *Winona*, *Itasca*, and *Kennebeck*, holding the middle of the stream, always ready to attack the rebel fleet above Fort Jackson.

The night was still, and a light breeze rose from the south. The crews settled down to sleep, and only the officers remained up for a while talking in the light tone that one especially uses on the eve of a great battle.

A dead-stillness lay over every ship, not illuminated by even the smallest light.

But listen! A quiet, long drawn out splashing, as from the most careful stroke of an oar, comes closer and closer down the river and falls silent near a small steamboat that came up the passes a second time, having made a visit to the *Hartford* yesterday. On the deck of this small steamboat a man is standing in a simple blue flannel blouse with an open collar. He is holding a pocket-lantern in his left hand, so that he is still hidden by one of the gunwales of the cabin housing. His bald head is uncovered and allows a high, wide forehead to be seen, on which may be read a will to power, a lust to violence, gruesomeness, and a terrifying energy and decisiveness. His eyes are not aligned, rather the one eye is slightly lower, like a hyena when it has satisfied itself in a cemetery and returns to the forest darkness. This man drops down on his knee and bends himself with half his body over the surface of the water. He takes a letter from the hand of a person who sits in the fishing boat that has just approached, stands up and enters the cabin. The fishing boat turns about and departs as silently as it had come.

The following is the content of the letter:

Sir, your offer is accepted. I have taken measures so that the fleet can pass the forts without large loss. I am not responsible for the manner in which you deal

with our gunboats and the ram *Manasses*, if they ever pass the upper line. We two are and remain the only bearers of this secret.

These lines had neither an address nor a signature.

38

At midnight, the *Itasca* gave the signal that everything was proper with the barrier. The opening was very wide, to be sure, but despite that the passage was very dangerous, because in the dark of night, in the case that the gunboats would fire their guns, the gunpowder smoke would easily spread across the whole length of the undertow, covering the opening earlier made by the *Itasca*. The atmosphere was heavy and since there was only a very light breeze, then gun smoke mixing with the thick mist would lie upon the river in an opaque mass. Besides, the darkness of the night was entirely suited for such an undertaking. There need be no fear of the light of the moon, since it would only appear on the horizon at 3 in the morning. By then, they hoped, this light would be most welcome.

At one o'clock the crews were awakened. The hammocks were tied up and the last preparations performed. Then was heard the quiet hiss of the boilers.

At two o'clock the signal was given to raise anchors.

Captain Farragut's division, which held very close to the western bank of the river, was ready at three o'clock to move forward, but Captain Bailey, whose division was significantly larger and was moving along the eastern side of the river, was somewhat slower and had some distance to come before they arrived in front with Captain Farragut.

The moon rose at three o'clock. The night continued misty, and the ships all moved forward in the deepest silence. The mortars held their breath. From a distance, above the two forts, several fires were to be seen that perhaps lighted the way for the fleet. They moved against the current at no more than four miles an hour toward the opening in the barrier — then all at once the mortars opened a dreadful fire, with such an impact and such a raging speed that one would believe that the Last Day had come, and that heaven, the fleet, Fort Jackson, Yankees and rebels were falling into hell, shooting, flying and steaming all the way.

The *Cayuga*, *Varuna*, *Pensacola*, *Mississippi*, *Portsmouth*, in short, all the ships of Captain Bailey's division, passed the forts unharmed.

Captain Bell's division, as the one in the middle, was less fortunate. To be sure, half of his ships, such as the *Scioto*, *Iroquois* and *Pinola* passed Fort Jackson unharmed under our men's fire, which *only began now*. But a true waterfall of cannonballs rained on the *Itasca* as it passed close to Fort Saint Philip, with one cannonball piercing its boiler, so that it drifted hopelessly downstream. The *Winona* had the same fate. The *Kennebec*, which became entangled in the undertow of the barrier on attempting to pass through the opening, was able to free itself but lost its way in the stygian darkness caused by coal and gun smoke, so that it returned to its old anchorage below Fort Jackson.

In the meantime, Captain Farragut had advanced to a mile before Fort Jackson before he received fire from our men. The valiant man sat in the forward rigging and observed the dark night through his spyglass — below and above him all was in the deepest quiet. Then suddenly the fort began its fire on the ship, which was more successful than what had greeted Captain Bailey. — it was hit time and again. Expecting this situation, Farragut had taken the precaution of posting two guns forward, with which he now responded to our fire tenfold as he steamed directly at the fort. Reaching a distance of half a mile, he delivered broadside after broadside, while the guns of the casemates thundered at the *Hartford*. He was followed by the *Richmond* and the *Brooklyn* with full steam.

Most of the ships had now passed Fort Jackson, but the *Hartford* had barely directed its course toward the other fort than a new, dreadful enemy appeared. It was our fleet of gunboats, of which some already lay in battle order above Fort Saint Philip, while others were in combat with Bailey's ships. Then suddenly an enormous fire raft blazed in from of the *Hartford*, revealing the ram *Manassas*, driving the raft forwards. In an instant, the *Hartford* was in flames along an entire side and halfway up its mainmast and mizzenmast. But thanks to the good organization of its fire-suppression team, the fire was put out, and the flagship eventually freed itself of the raft's embrace. Throughout this entire time, Farragut released broadside after broadside both on the fort and on the gunboats. Finally, the fire ceased, and when the smoke and powder faded, Farragut was amazed to see that he was above the fort. On all sides were gunboats standing in flames. He saw the ram *Manassas*, from whose hatches thick columns of smoke rose, already in the process of sinking, for it had already had a dreadful fight with the mortar boats and gunboats that had steamed ahead of Farragut's fleet.

It went no better with the *Morgan* and our six or eight other war ships.

Only an hour and a half had passed since the Federal fleet raised anchor, and yet it had already passed the forts and destroyed our entire fleet without significant losses.

This looked like a victory. But was it really a victory? The Confederate flag still waved from all of our walls.

About seven o'clock in the morning, Captain Porter sent a gunboat to the forts and demanded their surrender. The answer was five cannon shots.

It was the twenty-fourth of April.

On the same day, at nine o'clock, the storm-bell sounded — twelve blows, repeated four times over. The people gathered in wild crowds around the newspaper offices, where the black bulletins were posted:

“It is said that two enemy gunboats have succeeded in passing the forts.”

We are now on a plantation on Terrebonne. Here, on one of the most productive sugar-producing regions of Louisiana, between Houma and the end of the Barataria and Lafourche Company Canal, surrounded by live oaks and pecan trees reaching back a century, the old planter house built in the style of French colonists, with its high roof, its belvedere providing a broad view and a well-planned flower garden in front of the entrance. Somewhat further down on both sides of the bayou, one sees the sugar

plantings, stretching down to Bayou Caillou in a regular depth of forty *arpents*. Even a little further down, toward the Gulf, there are the banks of this bayou with high cane, cypresses and many other trees, still leafless, and hung with gray moss, giving the landscape a darker tone despite the green leaves of laurels, myrtles, and magnolias. But where there is a break in the screen of forest, spreading richly on the marshland along the bayou, one sees a forest of evergreen cypresses in the background. Here and there are measureless swarms of marsh birds, currently called the "red-winged star" because the male has some scarlet feathers on the upper part of his wing. When many thousands of these birds suddenly rise up in a single sweep, they darken the air, like a cloud, and then, when suddenly their wings turn sideways, the cloud vanishes, to appear again in the next instant.

But we return to our planter's house — It was on a dark night, that one that came before the one when Farragut passed the forts, when a tall, thin man emerged from the central door of the house and slowly made his way through the darkness of an orange-tree path that divided the garden precisely in half. Reaching the end of the path, he turned his steps toward the three rows of Negro huts, where everything was at peace save for an old Negro enticing a few notes from the snarling strings of his fiddle.

"Sam!" the young man said, "tomorrow I am going to New Orleans, and tell the overseer that I will not return for a while."

The Negro put his fiddle under his left arm as he stood up: "If you are going to New Orleans, Master, greet Leda and all our folks in Bonseigneur's house."

The young man responded in a superficially indifferent tone, "I will not be going to Bonseigneur's house, Sam. I have had a difference with the old gentleman."

"But Miss Esperance!" the Negro responded, who had long been on intimate terms with the young man.

"Quiet, Sam — you must not refer to that, and if anyone asks you, say you were there when they buried Bonseigneur behind those cedar trees — you must do that out of consideration for my bride."

"Oh, that her good mother is dead!" the Negro said with a sob, "but it was her own fault — she died of pure fear, and on Tampa Bay she saw the ghost that tormented her so much here — when she was still here, she often passed the entire night waking among the trees, and she said to me, 'Sam, always stay near me, I am afraid,' and then she would always go to the gravestone, where the big Newfoundlander lay and would not willingly leave until it died. Oh, that was a fine dog, and it did not want to eat any more until it died — — — she also was afraid, Master, because she sought me — — should I also follow you?"

The young man, who is certainly already recognized as Brutus, was silent for a few moments, then passed his hand across his forehead and spoke quietly, as if he were in thought, "I wished I had remained with the De Soto Rifles and had gone to Virginia —"

"Where you perhaps could have seen your bride," old Sam remarked, who still had the hearing of a raccoon.

"And where I could have found death with her — —" Brutus responded, as if he had to join in the Negro's gossip.

"Oh, when one is still young and handsome," Sam said, "one must not think of dying — it will all come out well, and Miss Esperance will also return fresh and healthy."

“Shut up, Sam!” Brutus now spoke in an aggravated tone, turning away from the Negro, who began shaking his almost entirely white, woolly head, stepping on the door of his cabin with his naked toes.

“I will follow him,” he mumbled to himself on entering, as Brutus disappeared behind the garden fence to take the path that led to a group of tall cedars, from whose darkness, despite the cloudy sky, one saw the cold surface of a four-cornered stone block shimmering, the Negro came back out and sought to reach the same goal as Brutus by a neighboring path.

41

As acquainted as Brutus was with the paths to that cedar grove, in turn straight and curved, then interrupted by a heart and rhomboid pattern, that he took with a forward stride, indifferent to the clouded night sky, swiftly through the bordering branches of pomegranate trees and overhanging jasmine bunches, as if the moon still shone and he saw objects by a full light. Without seeing it, he knew precisely where a rose stock stood in the way, where he was not to step on or touch the violet borders of a bed or disturb a rittersporn delphinium that is already blooming. And how he went! How he raised his left underarm and pressed it lightly on his heart and dropped his hand from his heart as if he were holding a newly-plucked flower, and how he turned his head to the left side, as if he were speaking with someone who hung on his arm. And how he suddenly let his arm drop, stood and looked around, as if someone had called him. And how he now went forward, removed his hat and brushed his hair off his brow. Whoever would have observed him would have taken him as either the happiest or the unhappiest of all mortals. He was both at the same time. Fortunately, since he took the same path she had once wandered, since he was breathing the same air she had once breathed, since the same wind blew from the planter's house and rustled his hair as her hair once had been rustled. He was unhappy because a dark secret gnawed at his heart, since she knew nothing of the secret, since he could not reveal the secret to her, since he knew well that if he entrusted her with it, she would curse him and sink into the cold ground with the old man who lay under that stone in the cedar grove.

Often, he said half-aloud the three words: “Esperance, Pontalba, Bonseigneur,” and then again, as if he regretted saying these words, “Esperance *Bonseigneur*, Bonseigneur.” He sounded the middle name differently than the third, as if they were not the same. And then he smiled again and said, “Dumb fool, they will never hear it again.”

To episode 41: The Pontalba inheritance involved property in Spanish Louisiana and France, and it became a matter of public scandal with the attempted murder of Nicaela Amonester, later the Baroness de Pontalba, by her father-in-law, followed by his suicide after rewriting his will in October 1834. The buildings raised by the Baroness include the Pontalba Buildings on two sides of Jackson Square in New Orleans, and the mansion in Paris that now is the residence of the United States ambassador. See Christina Vella, *Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of the Baroness de Pontalba* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

So, he had reached that block of stone that stood like an icy cube in the high grass, showing its cold edges to the night sky, round about shoots up the young ranks of passion flowers that rings and hides the stone in the course of summer. On the surface turned to the heavens one saw unclearly the letters worn away by wind and weather:

Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur

† 1858

These words were cut only lightly into the stone, as if one wished that it would soon vanish. Brutus sat down on this gravestone. But before he did this, he took off his hat and laid it next to him in the tall grass.

So, he sat there for a long time, his elbows on his knees and his forehead in his hands. Then it seemed to him that the stone moved, rose up and then sank again. He leaped up, rubbed his eyes, as if he were to see what he did not wish to see. He closed his eyes and opened them again. He found himself in the bright light of the moon, which while he sat there so deep in thought had come out of the clouds and thrown an angular light into the cedar grove. He shrank back, then he saw the moon and laughed.

“But Master,” sounded now a voice behind him, “you would be better to go to bed so you may go tomorrow to New Orleans — what then? Think of Madame Bonseigneur and leave the old man down there in peace! — — — Madame Bonseigneur would still be alive if she had followed my advice and the lovely Newfoundlander would not have died and Miss Esperance would still have a mother.”

“It's you, Sam?” Brutus now said, as if he were awakening from a dream. “I thought you were in your cabin — — what are you doing here? — — Will you follow me around like a dog?”

“Yes!” the old Negro grimaced, “and I will guard you like a dog, since I have followed your footsteps for over a half hour, Master, until you sprang up and would have stepped on my head, but Sam has a hard head and he lets that pass, Master.”

“Listen, Sam,” Brutus said, seeing the plain truth again in front of him, “if you pull such tricks you will make the colored folk curious, and I will lose my reputation. They are already so daring that they know that the Yankee fleet is underway against Fort Jackson.”

“They won't be fresh to me,” Sam responded, who had a greater influence on the Negroes of the plantation than even the white overseer. “I would rather beat the cane of twenty sugar fields over the heads of these damn niggers than to tolerate them getting ‘fancy’ over the coming of the blue-bellies. But there is always some Yankee peddler sneaking around putting such dumb stuff into their heads, so that they really believe that the blue-bellies have already come and made them free.”

“Blue-bellies” was the usual name that those on the plantations on Bayou Terrebonne and Lafourche gave Yankees. This expression rests on the fact that the people of the New England states, great friends of mackerel, always skin this fish and eat the skin.

From this they get blue bellies. For the skin has the characteristic that it colors the epidermis of the belly and often of the stomach blue, just as when one eats gall, if it includes an excess of alkaline and resinous parts, will color not just the stomach and belly area but the entire body with a yellow pallor.

“Just relax, Sam,” Brutus said, “your blue-bellies will leave us alone, and they could still sit a whole year below Fort Jackson before they succeed in getting through.”

“Could be,” Sam replied, “but if they do come, they should not be able to take away a single nigger, and they should get nothing from our plantation — — — I would rather burn the whole concern, and the damned niggers as well.”

Brutus could not keep from smiling at these words of loyal Sam, who was himself as black as ebony and had already survived two generations on this plantation. “Go home, Sam,” he said in a pleasant tone, “and when the overseer has slept off his drunk in the morning, tell him that he should keep everything in order, since I won't be back right away.”

“And that he should arrest the Yankee peddler and bring him to the next station if we find him sneaking around our fences — —” Sam added.

Brutus spoke not another word, but turned his back to the old Negro and took the path leading to the plantation house.

“Goodby, Master,” Sam mumbled in a tone that showed clearly that he was irritated that Brutus had not said the same to him,

Then he rushed along the shortest way to his cabin, but still mumbling to himself and swinging his long arm in the air.

42

It is now the place to fill in the gap in Brutus' life between the time he left the house on Rampart Street and when we encounter him again for the first time on the plantation on Bayou Terrebonne. Bonseigneur's words that he had ceased to be Esperance's bridegroom and that he should no longer see her, still long rang in his ears, and when he made every effort to find distraction, he still could not free himself, perhaps to renounce the secret wishes of his heart forever. In addition, that in the very night that he saw Esperance for the last time, he lost his pocketbook, which contained all the talismans and tender remembrances that a lover so gladly carries with him. There were little notes, dictated by accident or caprice and written at a time when they were very near and could just as easily have said them. Then there were larger letters in which castles were built in thin air and of which many were already five or six years old. Then there was hair, dried leaves and flowers, plucked at Tampa Bay or some other place, then a piece of orange peel, seeds from a pomegranate they had divided and eaten on the plantation on the Terrebonne, even a hairpin and a small piece of muslin were among the holy items. But what distressed him most was the loss of a photograph of his bride that he usually left permanently in his house, and had stuck into his pocket book only that day. Of all his comrades and friends, he found none worthy enough to complain of his misfortune or mention it in any way. Hence it came that others could not explain his unusual conduct, and when he soon after left his company, the curiosity of his friends rose even higher. But soon he was seen in civilian clothing as a clerk with Adjutant General Grivol. His liveliness and his well-known social talent had vanished, and he no longer spoke as his duties dictated. But this quiet, detailed work in the military bureau was of short duration: the sense possessed him to join the Swamp Sharpshooters. But there it was, in the marshes behind Fort Jackson, that he got a fever that put him in a hospital bed for several weeks. When he recovered, he left New Orleans for that plantation on Bayou Terrebonne,

where he literally moved in after writing a few lines to Bonseigneur to which he received no answer. Here he learned from the mouth of old Sam the entire dreadful history of the Bonseigneur family, which almost drove him mad.

43

Now Brutus was back in New Orleans.

Just as his relationship to Esperance had earlier excited in him the finest life hopes, the revelations of old Sam gave him a painful blow. One should not misread his character. For we are at the point to allow the tragedy of the Bonseigneur family to follow scene by scene, so the enthusiasm of his suffering and the hopelessness of his distress will certainly excite the sympathy of the reader.

If earlier he was excited with life and full of strength to act, now his heart beat on the slightest contact. Wherever he directed his gaze, he saw before him the image of Esperance arising before him, now imbued with rosy warmth, then with the paleness of death.

And then he saw himself once more set on the still beach of Tampa Bay, where he had passed many happy hours with her, when he had no notion of the terrible fate that loomed, spreading its dark wing over the Bonseigneur family. He then also thought about the rapid decline of Esperance's mother and how in her last moment, before she closed her eyes to this world, she whispered to her daughter, "Be happy with him, Esperance, but do nothing without your father's desire." Now he could grasp all of it, and it was because he could grasp all of it, that he was so unhappy.

Often it drew him irresistibly toward the Bonseigneur house, but when he had gathered the courage to visit the old man, he always turned back after going half way. He avoided his old war comrades when he could, and only once, when news of our victory arrived from Virginia, his heart burst into flame, only to sink as quickly into lethargy.

In this dark period of his life, he received the following lines:

"Sir! What has happened to you? Why your great preference for solitude? Why do you so suddenly avoid all society and do not apply your talents better? Is it your high-flying plans? Have you so completely declined to play a role on the great stage of the world? Do you then estrange yourself from the hearts of your friends? Is your star now in decline? Do you now have no sense for the interest of your country? You are deaf, sir! You do not even hear the storm bell and appear uninvolved and egoistic when everything is fire and flames! Must I come and shake you out of your lethargy? Must I come into your room and sound the general march for you? You see nothing — you hear nothing! You sit in your rocking chair while we are constantly on our feet and the ground under us is burning. Listen now! Wake up! Already there are twelve bells in a row! That is the storm-bell, sir! If you do not stir, then I shall come myself and lead you through the streets, to the river, to city hall, and show you how everything has changed. Listen now! Haven't you read, haven't you heard? Has no one yelled in your ear: the gunboats of the enemy have passed the forts! You are incurable — but I will come to you this evening!"

Brutus read it and read it again. He smiled. "A mystification!" he said to himself. — "Someone simply wants to irritate me; someone wants to get me excited!"

44

At that time Brutus lived in one of those new residences, not far from Dr. Stone's *Maison de santé* with its front on Canal Street. The residents of the house, of which he had rented the *belle étage*, had gone north at the beginning of the rebellion, but had left behind all their furnishings as well as a male and a female Negro. Brutus was not wealthy, but certain incomes that he had from his father, drawing on Pontalba's estate and running to five hundred dollars a month, provided him a carefree existence, even to some extent permitting to live as a gentleman. In his grandest period, when he appeared in all salons and also had to keep a coach and horses, he often had to deal with pecuniary discomforts, but his practice as a lawyer provided him from time to time entirely unexpected activities, so that he was able to refill the emptiness of his purse. Otherwise, he was an entirely noble character and conscientious to the extreme — which is not always to the advantage of a lawyer. Even before the outbreak of the rebellion, he was one of the most active members of the select little company that we have already come to know in the City Hotel. Yes, the Senator from Alabama had so much trust in the ability, action and selflessness of this young man that he entrusted to him and his bride Esperance one of the most difficult missions on whose success in part the success of the young Confederation depended. We have already heard in what manner these two unsullied young people were interrupted. — In the same way, we know his further experiences and the condition in which he found himself when he received those lines that were intended to shake him from his lethargy.

"A mystification!" he called out several times in a row, and then he threw himself back into his rocking chair and smoked the inevitable Havana. There he sat for a long time, more dreaming than waking, then, when he suddenly sprang up and walked back and forth with swift step within the room. "Yes, yes, I hear you!" he said so out loud, as if speaking with someone, "the city is lost! No defenses have been erected. Nothing — nothing, nothing at all! Our city commandant is either a traitor or a fool! — Yes, yes, there is no doubt — tomorrow the entire fleet is before our city! They will do nothing — nothing, nothing! I've seen it all along — nothing but treason, narrow-mindedness, and self-seeking! They will bombard the city! no, they will not let it be bombarded! They will surrender it like cowards. utter cowards, quite infamously!" — — — — Then he was silent for a moment as his thoughts swept to Fort Jackson. So! So!" he cried out again, "Fort Jackson! Fort Saint Philip! The undertow! the *Manasses*! the *Morgan*! the *Louisiana* — — — the fire rafts! It is impossible! — but it is possible — yes, they could pass; yes, I never trusted you, commander of Fort Jackson! So, only two gunboats! That is not true — it is the entire fleet that has advanced here! — — — — What will old Sam say on the plantation! How will he beat his niggers on the heads with sugar-canes so they don't run away!" — It went on in this way for a long time, so that his monologue he opened a large rip in his house-slippers. This must be someone who has something to say, he thought to himself — for an ordinary visit would not allow such liberties. Through the carpet he heard the muffled tread of the Negro walking the length of the hall to the door to open it. He understood it from earlier times from the foundation.

The Negro had his instructions — he could admit no one without first announcing the visitor's name, and if he did not accept the name, he was not at home.

45

The person who had come had stepped into the hall, and after he handed the Negro his card, he sat down in one of the tall armchairs that stood on the wall, forming a harmonious whole with an old-fashioned sofa. Above this hung a large picture in a carved wooden frame showing Queen Antoinette of France on her way to the scaffold. The wall of the hall had dark green velvet tapestry worked with gold, and from the ceiling hung a carmoisine-red Chinese lamp, whose gas-light cast a somewhat uncertain impression of the facial features of the man who sat in the armchair. Nevertheless, one saw that he had snow-white hair, a curved, noble nose, and mournful, dark glowing eyes.

He wore a simple gray cloak reaching to the knee with yellow metal buttons, and similar trousers with a half-worn away gold stripe. As he removed his black, damaged hat to cool his thoughtful forehead, one noticed that he was missing his right arm.

When he arose, tired of the long wait, one could observe from his erect bearing and his forthright gait barely perceive an old man, which he truly was. Fully seventy winters had already passed over his head, but despite the snow-white hair his exterior spoke of the strength and fullness of a man in his middle years.

Let us leave him for a few moments standing before the picture, and let us look after Brutus, who, as we already know, is on the *belle étage*.

As the Negro came up from the hall and appeared at the threshold of his room, Brutus hastily took the card from the hand and after giving it a fleeting glance, he sank into a nearby chair and let his arms lie stiffly for a while on either side of the chair, as struck by lightning, then again looking at the card with staring eyes to see what had been brought him.

The Negro, who held himself at a proper distance, made large eyes and had no idea what he was to think of this. He looked anxiously around the room and thought of creeping away, to call for help. — But he remained. — Still, how he was shocked when Brutus now suddenly arose, throwing himself on him, holding the card in front of his face and with wild accents cried:

“Tell me, you black scoundrel, who gave you this?”

Then he grabbed the Negro so powerfully by the wrist that he could hardly suppress a cry of pain.

“But Master,” he groaned, “the old gentleman down there gave it to me.”

“What does he look like, you black scoundrel? Have I not asked you not to admit anyone until I know who he is — — tell me, what does he look like? — —”

“I don't know, Master,” the Negro replied, who puzzled over everything he had seen.

Then Brutus let him go, and as if he had made a courageous decision, he declared in a commanding tone:

“Tell the gentleman that he may see me — but do not enter my sight again.”

“No, Master,” the poor Negro whimpered, who was only glad that Brutus let go of his wrist.

Brutus did not speak again. He threw his brown hair back from his forehead and went back and forth with powerful strides. In the meantime, the announced person was on the stairs, and he remained standing a pace back before the door.

“It is not possible!” thought Brutus, who saw the arrival standing in the large mirror opposite the door. “He has been buried, or old Sam told me a terrible lie,” he said to himself at once, so loudly that he was himself shocked.

“He knew no better — he said the truth without knowing it,” came a voice, and at the same moment the tall figure entered the door, and since Brutus stood as if he were rooted there, he approached him, extending his left hand.

“Sir!” said Brutus, and a bare paleness of death covered his face, “sir, you must excuse my cold reception — I was not prepared — — I could not have known — — I did not know — — people had lied to me — — yes, yes, I know — — yes I believe — you look very similar to the father of my bride — — yes, yes, I see, you are the brother of the father of my bride — but for heaven's sake — excuse me — I know for sure, I have seen it, I even sat on your gravestone — my God — don't repeat it — what is that about, you cannot be — Je — Jesus Hi — laire de Bonseign — neur! — but sir, do not drive me insane — go at once with me to the Rampart Street to the father of my bride — — —!”

“—Father of your bride?” repeated the man Brutus called Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur; “I know,” he continued, “there are rumors afoot due to some old family histories — — but it is not right that the grandchild pay for the sins of your father — — yes, sir, I know that you are guiltless. You enjoy the advantages of a stolen property — one cannot demand it of you to wash away the marks of sin that will ever stain the families of Pontalba and Bonseigneur, for the sake of your bride.”

He intoned these words with a threatening irony.

“I do not know what you are saying there, sir?” Brutus responded in a confused tone. “What do you want from me — for what purpose did you come — — —”

“I am only coming to tell you that, while you were dedicating yourself to an inactive life, your *former* bride could quickly have died as a result of wounds won in the struggle for your fatherland — — — and then, something else — — *Miss Esperance de Bonseigneur* wished you courteous greetings and sends you back this ring — —”

At the appearance of the ring, Brutus' entire body shook down to his heart; then his tears flowed hotly into his hand with which he had received the ring.

“Come back tomorrow, sir, if you have anything further to communicate — — I am too tired today — — I am collapsing — — I can no longer hear — —” Brutus said after a brief pause, and his lips trembled as if from a fever.

This dreadful scene restored his entire attitude, and another daemon had taken over his heart, his soul and his understanding. — — — —

A half hour later one saw a one-armed old man clothed in a simple military cloak mounting the stone steps of the house located on Rampart Street and occupied by Esperance's father.

Who could ever bury in forgetfulness that night that came before the day when the Federal fleet anchored before New Orleans? In the midst of political storms and rage, with the voice of the hurricane, the rebel city hurled the fiercest curse at the Federal fleet.

Along the Mississippi there was a flaming belt of burning steamboats and ships, sending embers and smoke as high as the terrified moon, over which thickly-gathered clouds fled with urgent haste. Here and there a ship in flames fell into the bosom of the river with a hiss, and cotton released from the inferno flew like a million burning wicks far into the surrounding air, dancing in wild spirals over the houses and warehouses standing on the levee.

Riverbank swallows, driven away by the heat flew complaining through the singeing embers down the river to find quiet and coolness, or they rose with uncertainly beating wings toward the quivering face of the night sky. The Father of Waters celebrated his Sicilian Vesper.

Puffing and spraying sparks in the deep night, the fire rafts pulled every object coming their way into their destructive chaos. It was like the dying of an entire world that spread itself for miles on the waters of the Mississippi, embracing one another and pulling them into the depths.

The scales swayed during this night in the hands of the river gods. — If these glowing and flaming spirits of revenge did not destroy these enemy ships, who was to do it? — If this blood-red heaven does not threaten a second Moscow — what can prevent it from approaching the city? Who will meet the enemy and call a thundering halt? Are Lovell's soldiers not gone from the city, and haven't the others thrown away their weapons and hidden themselves in civilian clothing? But the militia? It is exhausted from burning cotton and seeks their officers in vain. Who wants to earn twenty-five thousand dollars and man a gunboat to destroy the Yankee fleet? They laugh and grin, drums sound from all the streets, and they go to the riverbank. They marvel at this sea of fire, celebrate it and laugh like Nero at the burning of Rome.

What good are all the curses showering down on Duncan, the governor, and General Lovell like a hail shower! Duncan is still wrestling with the enemy, and he remains lord on the proud fortress of Fort Jackson. The Confederate flag still waves on its walls.

But Governor Moore? He is no longer in the city, has gone up the river, publishing proclamation after proclamation to move planters to burn their cotton supplies — *Hannibal is at the gates!* he shouts to them, throwing torches into otherwise peaceful houses. General Lovell? This general, who days before went down to the forts, has returned with the news that the Federal fleet has destroyed all Confederate ships. General Twiggs? He has hastily fled from the city and has left his sword, once given to him by the United States Congress, in the hands of a lady. Lovell's troops are no longer needed in the city. They are to go to Corinth to support General Beauregard! Four million in specie — out of the bank vaults and taken to the station of the Jackson Railroad! Soon our most valuable things will be placed under the protection of the foreign flag! So! But despite that, the people with understanding are silent.

Oh great, powerful ram *Mississippi!* Three times more powerful than the *Manassas* or the *Merrimac* — you, too, are sacrificed to the infernal powers — you, too, were sunk in the depths of the river! We want to illuminate more closely the destiny of this most terrible of all rams, which, according to the judgment of all technically adept persons would have freed the river from the enemy fleet. On the day when Farragut passed the forts, it was taken from its dock, which was known to be on the bank opposite to Jefferson City, to Greenville, to take it to Vicksburg, where it was to be completed. On

the following night, it was brought back to the Navy Yard. On the second morning at five o'clock this colossal work was — set aflame.

In the lowest part of the hull were placed sixteen large boilers and two auxiliaries. Around these boilers they put twenty barrels of californium, standing six inches deep in spirits of turpentine. It took only a short time and this namesake of the Father of Waters was glowing in flames! Oh great patriotism, oh love for the fatherland! Oh gang of thieves, who robbed even one fighting with death! Specifically, as the ram panted and rattled and struggled with a death by fire, three men were seen removing the Worthington Steam-Engine pumps (which were not bolted down and had only been put in place) from the stern of the ram and placed on a raft that had been used for the ram's construction. This happened at a point in the river about four blocks below the waterworks. These three men — oh gang of thieves, oh Southern patriots! — then sold the pumps to a smith, who hid it in a cottonpickery, until it finally went to Clark's Foundry. which sold it to Federal gunboats. This theft is the blackest crime of those days, when they threw a torch into the Father of Waters — but high sounds the song of the brave foreman L. Pierce, who climbed down into the hull of the ram, determined to suffer death by fire. They dragged him half dead from the lowest part of the ship, where he had taken himself for this purpose.

He was saved! — But why did they not bring the ram to Vicksburg, as intended? Why were they in such a hurry to burn it? Think of the eighty thousand dollars that the agent of the Confederate Navy took the day before and put in sacks.

Who could say today that the money was not used to complete the ram?

With what comfort must this man have watched as the ram sent out its last sigh and settled forever in the depths of the stream. — — —

The darkest of all nights, that struggles with the singeing embers of an entire forest of masts, with the thick stink of glowing heaps of anthracite and the crackle of torched bales — when will they arrive? Fine, cutting rain that pins you down when you try to ward off the fire that they will direct on our city?

Already morning? What is coming? And are they really coming? Daylight, you can hardly see it! The rain falls in torrents on the city, into the river. It approaches midday. Look down there! It is the old flag, they are the old stars, it is old Farragut!

47

Only someone who has seen a great city such as New Orleans in a severe case of panic can have a concept of the mad rage, the raving terror and the wild confusion that now made itself known.

For miles, the people occupied the levee, and particularly in the area of the Customs House they had swollen to a thick, threatening mob. Hair-raising obscenities and curses rained down on the approaching fleet from all sides. If these mad curses had taken on real form, then the Confederate flag would still be waving from our city's roofs, for with the taking of New Orleans the feet of the lion of rebellion were shackled, even if his roar continued to strike terror in the enemy and set him to flight.

Yes, it can be shown strategically, that with the taking of our city the fate of the Confederacy was sealed.

To speak as Napoleon III says in his book on Julius Caesar, this was one of the great causes that had great influences.

All troubles arising for the Confederacy, for defeat could not be mentioned, were only the necessary result of this citadel of the South being conceded by the flippant war god.

What would have become of us if the contrary had been the case? Where would we now be? Who would be sitting in Washington? What would one see as loyal? Would not much seen today as a political virtue be a political crime? — but simply complained, made noise, was demoralized, one played with the Jacobin cap and then — it was all over.

There was no Moses to wave his staff in the air and command the Red Sea of the rebellion to part so that Chosen People of New Orleans might pass through. It did not part, and the children of the modern Israel remained standing on the banks and howled and whined and so the waves could not close over Pharaoh and his army. The brick-burners of the rebellion in New Orleans were caught — *Sic semper asinis!* Thus, ever with asses.

48

O bitter irony of destiny! As we persevered toward the things that were to come, we found ourselves up to our ankles in sweetness.

Molasses flowed in streams. Whoever has seen these molasses hands, these molasses feet, this molasses wading, must reconcile with our destiny if only for a few hours. Some magician had held his magical mirror in front of the city and let it see the Big Rock Candy Mountain, where the streets are paved with marzipan and ham. It was a free market for everyone. Whatever super-earthly power had seen the Yankee ships, coming around the bend and ever closer and closer. Open Sesame! All the supply rooms were opened, all doors and gates burst open! What could not be had a few hours ago for any money could now be had for nothing. There flew sugar cured ham, shoulders, sides, pork, mackerels, pineapples, cheese, candles and soap to all the directions of the compass. There one could see how New Orleans was starving, with nothing on which to chew or gnaw. The unhappy city! It was truly close to starving to death. It was a great good thing that the Yankees were coming to feed the emaciated and endangered New Orleanians.

The charitable Samaritans! They have won not only a moral but also a gastronomical victory. But they are not yet here, although they are coming closer and closer.

The people are not delayed by the rain, which still comes down in torrents.

Whole barrels, even oxheads of sugar were being rolled away or broken up and their contents shaken out into skirts, baskets, and wheelbarrows.

In many places, they were literally bathing in molasses, — the tender sex from green Erin in its joy forgets all shame and gathers their skirts up above their knees to hide the white Havana sugar in the deep folds of their clothes. Yes, they fill shoes, bonnets, stockings, with the thick molasses, so that none of it reaches the ground.

Around the corner many wagons crowd — furniture wagons, drays. They fill up with whatever they can — sugar, ham, corned beef, molasses, and whatever they need for their women and babies, to be able to provide for a good household for a long time. No one had experienced such days.

But what is falling out of the windows there, falling on the heads of the crowd below? They are satchels, cartridge pouches, saber-sheaths, even Confederate trousers, stockings — but this did not last long. As if one had another thought, all the windows suddenly closed shut, and all those who had come up short in this collecting of all the wonderful things murmured, complained, cursed, and some among them cried out: “Burn the house down — hang the damned Yankee!”

49

Let us see what is going on at this hour in a cafe not far from the Customs House. Three men are standing at the bar who have only just walked in. Their reddened faces and lively gesticulations show that they have already made libations to the god Bacchus elsewhere. One of them, whom the others entitle “Judge,” took his glass and raised it on high, calling out:

“Gentlemen, let us drink to the health of our president, Jefferson Davis and the entire Southern Confederacy! Let he be damned who, in this hour, harbors a different idea from this, that the devil should take all Yankees, as well as those who dare to set foot on the sacred soil of our city. Yes, gentlemen, I will be damned if I do not say get out! to everyone who refuses to turn New Orleans into a pile of ashes! Three cheers for Jefferson Davis and the Southern Confederacy! — — But God should damn me,” he continued in his rhetorical tone, “Down, gentlemen, with the damned foreigners, down with the General, Judge! Down with the Dutchmen! Long live New Orleans and its home-born cavaliers!”

While the Judge delivered this bombastic toast, he pounded his glass at least twenty times on the bar table, and as often as he attempted to bring it to his mouth, he shook so much of his noble Catawba Cobbler that, when it really came to drinking, there was hardly a drop left.

One of the company, a tall, thin man with a blond mustache and wearing the selected clothing of a dandy, now took the Judge by the arm and drew him into a private room adjoining the bar. The others followed.

“Let go of me, Feather Bob,” the Judge said, “God damn me if I get another drink of brandy before the whole city is in flames and the damned foreigners are chased to the devil.”

“Be quiet, Judge,” said Feather Bob, “the foreigners are patrolling through the city and — we can do nothing now.”

“What, we can do nothing now?” the Judge proclaimed, already so drunk that he could barely keep his feet. “You are cowards!” and then he turned to the others, “Listen Pigtail, listen Henry — if the city is not aflame at twenty corners, I will hang you from the nearest lampposts!”

“We tried,” Henry remarked dryly, “but the European Brigade was at our heels. We had already set Tony’s house, and also that of the old Dutchman on Esplanade Street — that would have been a good start and would have turned at least three blocks to ashes — but our boys quit, thinking that there would be enough time when the Yankees landed. Then there was more confusion and we will settle matters yet with the foreigners.

“Hm! Settle matters!” Pigtail threw in, “I will settle it with the whole European Brigade all by myself!”

The Judge, whom Feather Bob had shoved down into a chair, had meanwhile gone to sleep, as suddenly a remarkable sound and intense noise came from the street. Feather Bob, Pigtail and Henry rushed out of the room into the barroom to look from there out into the street.

50

The cause of this dreadful noise was a mob of gathered louts led by a red-haired rowdy, moving down Canal Street, frightening the already worried part of the better classes to no small degree with its yelling and continual demand of "Hang him! Burn down his house!"

Feather Bob, Pigtail, and Henry left the Judge to sleep off his drunk, and they joined the mob, or rather they took over command over this tumultuous wolf pack together with the red-haired rowdy. The mob howled steadily more threateningly, growing larger block by block. The least of these enraged men know what the intention was, but they were also drawn by the secret red thread into this stormy movement.

When they had reached Rampart Street, the leaders of this mob suddenly stood hesitantly. The same was the case with the raging mob, which still sang its refrain of "Hang him! Burn down his house!"

"You won't take it poorly," the redhead said to Henry, "He had not given you the five hundred dollars as you requested and you promised him a dress of feathers from the feathers of his own pelicans,"

"That doesn't bother me, Red Bill!" Henry answered in an indifferent tone, "I will yet settle accounts with him."

The reader will recall the letter the thug Henry wrote to Bonseigneur, threatening him with tar and feathers if he did not send five hundred dollars to him at the Recorder's Court.

It was the plan of the original organizer of this band to bind the elderly occupant of the house on Rampart Street hand and foot and to bring him to a certain apartment building on Constance Street, where his future would be decided. The prisoner was also to be compelled to sign a document that an unknown person would hold, the very person who once wrote to Bonseigneur, whose content (as we learned earlier) had so distressed and depressed the spirit of the old man.

Some refined burglars found in the midst of the mob, as soon as Bonseigneur was brought shackled into the wagon, were to search through the house and remove all valuables and then set the house on fire. Since one had been able to count on assurances of oversight of certain authorities, they had no fear of any arrest for this grand crime.

But destiny decided otherwise.

The colonel of the fourth regiment of the European Brigade, consisting of six companies of the Hanseatic Guard, three companies of the Garibaldi Legion and a company of the British Guards, had been advised by a female informer at the right moment and received notice of this conspiracy. As quickly as possible, two companies of the Hanseatic Guard had been ordered to stand in front of the Bonseigneur house to protect it. The brave and careful Hanseatic captain of the second company, a man with ultra-blond hair, arrived so truly and punctually that, as the raging mob achieved Rampart

Street, he was already stationed before Bonseigneur's house, bidding a halt to the storming anarchy.

At the glimpse of the extended bayonets, the wild mass of people froze, and when they saw that the leaders, after a brief discussion, called for withdrawal toward the city, everyone ran in all directions.

A few waved their closed fists at the armed foreigners, swearing and cursing for a while, but eventually these few vanished and made their way toward the river, to be witnesses to a great world-historical drama whose curtain was just beginning to rise.

* * *

It was one hour after noon — the 25th of April 1862! The rain was still coming down in streams. The raging and lapping flood of anarchist spirit pressed out of all the streets and rolled toward the river, where with majestic peace one Yankee ship after another came into sight and anchored in the face of the great rebel city.

From the flagship was launched a rowboat, in which were Captain Bailey, second in command after Farragut, with Lieutenant Perkins and Sail-Captain Morton.

In the history of New Orleans now began a new and eternally memorable period.

Part Two

Motto: As on the day when you were given to the world
 The sun stood to greet the planets,
 You bloomed at once and grew and grew
 According to the law on which you set out.
 So must you be, you cannot escape it,
 So said the sibyls, the prophets;
 And no time and no power alters
 The impressed form that develops in life.

To part two: From Goethe's *Primal Words. Orphic. Daimon* [MLE].

51

On the 28th of April residents of New Orleans read the following in the *Picayune*:

The names of the men who made themselves heroes by tearing down the flag of the flag raised on the Mint Building by the enemy, are W. B. Mumford, who cut down the flag under a hail of cartridges, as well as Lieutenant N. Holmes, Petty Officer Burns and James Reed. For this patriotic deed these brave men deserve the highest honor New Orleans gives, in this hour of disaster, through the worthy peace it has preserved in the presence of the enemy, through the demonstration of

the unshakable decision of holding on to the just cause, through the solid trust with which it looks forward to its deliverance from its shackles, providing a shining example to all the other cities of the South, that the proud position it has previously held in the Confederacy, has not yet been surrendered. May this heroic city yet succeed in driving away this rude intrusion.

How proudly and freely the flags flew after everything, but everything, was lost! How heroically this journalist laid it on after they were no longer subjected to the peril of testing their patriotism. How heroic this city of New Orleans was after they could concentrate all their heroism on a single man, on Mumford! Then came a time when one feared for himself and screamed and rationalized ever louder and louder until the tongue grew numb and the fists were only in their pockets.

One felt no shame, infidelity, being pitiable — in the end, one felt the he had lied himself into a false patriotism. Then one began to tremble when suddenly the foot of a pasha was on the neck of this heroic city, and when the doors of the houses of our Confederate viziers opened, they believed that one would come and present him the silken cord in the name of the United States.

To episode 51: Reference is to the Ottoman practice of the Sultan having those in disfavor throttled with a bowstring by deaf-mute black slaves. General Benjamin Butler, Federal military commander of occupied New Orleans, was often compared to an Oriental despot.

The continual anxiety of this creeping and secret horror was the logical consequence of the first order of the Commanding General, written with blood. This order was the utter quintessence of the ancient satrap-character and will remain in the annals of New Orleans, without erasure. It cannot be repeated often enough:

“William B. Mumford, a citizen of New Orleans, has been found guilty of high treason by the military court, and guilty of a public demonstration in that he tore down the flag of the United States from a building belonging to it, to encourage hostile persons in continued resistance to the United States, after this flag had been raised by Commodore Farragut of the Federal Navy.

“He is ordered to be executed by order of this court on Saturday the seventh of June 1862 between eight and twelve o'clock in the forenoon under control of the Provost Martial of the district of New Orleans, and this order shall have authority for him.”

The continuous march to victory of the Confederate Army in other parts of the Southern region silenced this dreadful order for a time, and the Nemesis of the South cried for a victim, which it could only grasp after three years.

This chapter, placed before the course of our narrative, should be seen only as a cover for the second part.

In the above-described dreadful event, all the red threads of this section run together.

One may assert unequivocally that Bonseigneur was, at the time of the occupation of New Orleans by the Federals, the only man of significance who continued to hold to the Union with unshakable loyalty, and who was genuinely happy when the stars and stripes waved again over all public buildings.

But *who is Bonseigneur?*

From an ancient French dynasty that could trace its family tree back to Charlemagne, the man we call Bonseigneur was born in New Orleans in 1791, which then still stood under French sovereignty.

His parents moved from the island of Guadeloupe two years before his birth to this colony. But when the boy was barely eight years of age, his parents died on a vacation on the Mississippi, when a hurricane seized their tiny boat and they found death in the waves.

He still had many relatives on his mother's side, some in Paris, others on the islands in the West Indies belonging to the French crown.

We name here only Pierre-Raimond-Hector, Count of Montalet-Pontalba, former squadron commander, aide de camp of the colonial governor of Guadeloupe and vice president of the colonial council. His wife was *Laura de Richemont*, descended from one of the first families of Guadeloupe, and a niece of the French admiral Truquet.

The children from this marriage were *Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur*, colonel of infantry, born in 1793 and married in 1823 with *Esperance Rouille de Bolsly du Coudray*, sister of the Marquis de Bolsly, Peer of France; further Laure Hortense, born on Guadeloupe on 21 July 1821.

The sole relative who accepted the orphaned child was *Marie Angélique Mumford*, daughter of Maximilian Louis Marie Emanuel, Marquis of Audespine and Mumford Choiseul, Peer of France and Prince of Bauffremont.

To the great fortune of the little Bonseigneur, this relative was in the most splendid condition of wealth, for his parents themselves left only a little.

This outstanding lady devoted the largest incomes and privileges of the governor of the colony of Louisiana to the education of her foster son. The young Bonseigneur wanted nothing to do with the empty pursuits of French youth, who, when he had reached his eighteenth year, had achieved a level of development in his physical and intellectual strengths that brought him to a rare level for one in his age.

At this time, the French colony had passed into the hands of the United States, and the young Bonseigneur was one of the most enthusiastic and active citizens of the young state of Louisiana.

Although an aristocrat by birth, he was yet of republican convictions, and he often spoke publically with warmth and zeal for the increased grandeur of the North American republic. But this earned him many enemies, for the population of the former French colony, and especially those of New Orleans, were very dissatisfied with the transfer of Louisiana to the United States. It irritated them that the Congress introduced foreign laws, and that the governor gave Anglo-Americans preference and completely neglected the Creoles. In addition, the class of judges understood no English. It irritated them further that the governor was the sole administrator of the laws, while they had always had the right to appeal to the Captain General. As the debate of the Congress of those

days was reflected in the French press in New Orleans, irritation arose, and among other humiliations, the new citizens read that Eustis of Massachusetts filed a bill in which it was said that Louisiana would be incapable of exercising the right to vote and should be placed temporarily under martial law. Even worse, Hager of South Carolina, himself of French descent, presumed to say in the Senate that the French in Louisiana were not much better than Negroes. And the young Bonseigneur remained silent on all of this, and despite his years enjoyed a considerable reputation as a legal advisor. He received great respect for his use of English as well as of his mother tongue.

The Americans forcefully storming into the new state of Louisiana had great respect for the young French attorney, who spoke English as well as any Yankee, in fact they preferred him in the frequent property cases as a technical advisor before any of their own countrymen.

His foster mother, the Marie Angélique Mumford Choiseul mentioned above, inclined in her orientation more to the Anglo-Saxon element, and her villa on Rampart Street, which was then the outermost border of the city of New Orleans, soon became the gathering place of all the notables from the land of the Yankees who ruled Louisiana.

General Wilkinson, a contemporary of Governor Claiborne and an extremely restless man who pursued with aggressiveness and persistence his plans as only the Anglo-Saxon race could, was, so to speak, the constant *cavaliere servente* of Madame Mumford Choiseul, who well knew how to esteem the General's qualities.

To episode 52: James Wilkinson (1757-1825) served in the Revolutionary War, after which he was a major figure in Western affairs. He was long suspected of being an agent of the Spanish government, which was only definitively proved from the Spanish archives in the 1850s. He was involved in the Burr conspiracy and was often tried by courts-martial, but he was always able to avoid conviction for treason. His first wife was Ann Biddle (1778-1807), his second Celeste Laveau Trudeau (1810). He was associated with Governor Claiborne in creating defenses for New Orleans. He rose to the rank of Major General in the War of 1812, and he left the army in 1816. He died on a visit to Mexico City. Theodore Roosevelt said of him, "In all our history, there is no more despicable character." William C. C. Claiborne (c. 1772-75, died 1817) was military governor of what would become the territory of Louisiana from 1803 to 1812, and elected governor 1812 to 1816; he was United States Senator, 1816 to his death.

His understanding, his social ability, his stubbornness, and his increasing contributions could not be admired enough, and they could serve as a model for any man of the world. The young Bonseigneur had won a true and reliable friend in this man, who was bitterly hated by the French population, and he had frequently waged duels for him without the knowledge of the General, whose name was often libelled in public by some Frenchmen.

When General Wilkinson later discovered this by accident, his friendship for the bold and heroic man grew even more.

In the intense, public life that unfolded to the dismay of the old colonists in New Orleans, Bonseigneur was the actual central point.

He was now twenty-two years of age, loved and respected by the Americans and feared and hated by the French.

But already nature, custom, inclination, and passion began to goad the young man into an embittered struggle, and in his previously always balanced, charming clarity arose for the first time the dark compulsion of an ideal longing that was entirely different from gallantry, and would pierce his heart and begin to devour the inner essence of his life.

53

It was love that threw young Bonseigneur beyond the periphery of his regulated principles and pulled the ground under his feet.

Even today the house stands into which the then 22-year old man would creep every evening, to see the marvelously beautiful *Esperance Mumford*, making his homage in the presence of a shriveled woman in high old age. He had to *creep* into the house, because that very house had the bad reputation of being the home of a witch, which in those days was a very important thing to the bigoted Creole rabble. If anyone set foot in that house, his good name was gone forever. No one was to blame for this story but one of the father confessors of the Ursuline Convent below MacCarty's Plantation, who had been rebuked several times when he attempted to receive tender attentions from Esperance, then not even seventeen years of age.

In revenge, he had made the residents of this house into witches, and he crossed himself whenever he (often unnecessarily) passed the house.

The stories that the *Chronique de la Nouvelle Orléans* for the years 1810, 1811, 1812 and 1813, tells about this small house genuinely border on the marvelous, and if even half are to be believed, we have new proof of the low level of development at which the French colonist stood at the time. It is no marvel that the Anglo-Americans laughed at the larger part of them, with dominating feelings and contempt, on their first arrival in New Orleans.

The truth of the matter was that the old woman was a variety of prophetess or clairvoyant, and that many of her prophecies, remarkably, really came true. But who was Esperance Mumford, who lived together with this old woman in the infamous house?

And in what relationship did she stand to this clairvoyant?

And what influence did Esperance Mumford obey that she did not live like other maidens in the sunny atmosphere of the flattery of youth, but preferred the shadowed magic circle pursued by the old woman? In Creole circles, they said that Esperance Mumford was the daughter of General Wilkinson and Madame Choiseul Mumford, Bonseigneur's foster mother, and that the child was entrusted a few months after birth to the clairvoyant, perhaps to be freed forever from the evidence of her illicit intercourse. Thus spake the evil rumor, without considering that General Wilkinson only came to New Orleans when Esperance was nine years of age, and at that time Madam Mumford Choiseul's husband, with whom she lived in a truly devoted relationship, had not yet died. The young Bonseigneur, who until this moment, when he was driven by his own demon into the arms of an unhappy passion, had dedicated himself with all his effort to his professional duties, and never heard of these evil rumors that sought to undermine the good reputation of Madame Mumford Choiseul and General Wilkinson, since he only

moved in a sphere where one was owed mutual respect, which respected him, and in his narrower social life rather worshipped him.

Only a few of the old French colonist families had attached themselves then in affection and hope to Americanism, and hence came this perpetual hostility, even deepest hatred, of the opposing elements.

To judge from the bad woodcut in the *Chronique de la Nouvelle Orléans*, the house in which the old clairvoyant lived was none other than that on the corner of Conti and Burgundy Street, which today is used by a grocery. It is opposite the pharmacy. Its roof was covered with round, baked brick tiles and had two windows and two doors facing Conti Street. According to the building style of the time it was very low, and only recently was it raised somewhat by an arch. In about the middle of this block, also on Conti Street, was another house from the same time in which, if the report of the Jesuit Mainard is to be trusted, the unfortunate Princess of Wolfenbüttel was supposed to have stayed. Between these two houses, specifically that on the corner of Conti and Burgundy Street and the last named, there stood two others of almost the same exterior, of whose occupants the *Chronicle of New Orleans* preserves nothing. It excites the greatest interest when we observe the topographic charts prepared by Spanish and French engineers between the years 1709 and 1814, drawing swamps, cypress woods, duck ponds and so-called open promenades, where today there are only stately houses, warehouses and churches of all confessions. The remains of those days, the so-called "haunted houses" in Livandal's block, in the Fourth District, still showed us a few years ago the orange-tree *allée* to the former planter's house. Such houses will all vanish by and by and the descendents of those colonists as well, whose fate appears to be to be ground to dust in the cutting teeth of the Anglo-Saxons.

54

On this evening Bonseigneur snuck once again into the house of the old clairvoyant. For the first time since his many visits, Esperance Mumford was not there. The old woman sat as usual in a deep armchair covered with leather as he entered. She had the *Cabhala denudata* open on her lap, and she read for a time in this large book decorated with colorful letters, hardly glancing at Bonseigneur, who took his place on a stool embroidered with the lilies of France.

As the old woman continued deeply reading in the great book, Bonseigneur finally broke his silence and said in a half casual tone:

"Where is Esperance, Madame Rocheblave?" That was the name of the clairvoyant.

The old woman lifted her head, half hidden in a mantilla of long Brussels lace, and answered in an indifferent tone:

"Mademoiselle Esperance? — I do not know, sir — she has vanished for an obscure reason — oh, how this little lady troubles me," she continued, "Perhaps I will never see her again — never!"

"What does that mean, Madame Rocheblave?" Bonseigneur flew into the heights, "vanished for an obscure reason? — I will make you responsible for it, Madame," he cried in an agitated tone, looking intensely into the clairvoyant's face.

“Unthankful one,” the haggard, almost ninety-year old woman with a shaky voice. “Esperance has vanished because I am determined to punish her lies of the stars — thank God, thank my constant friend, this old book here.”

“Listen, Madame,” Bonseigneur continued, “Speak clearly! Where is Esperance? I have no desire to make myself the eternal kick-ball of your somnambulant whims and cabbalistic fantasies — — I must know — now — at this instant! Where is Mademoiselle Esperance Mumford?”

“Young blood, hot blood!” the clairvoyant responded as a mocking laugh formed on her lips. Then she continued, “You are out of your mind, Monsieur Bonseigneur, if you think you can simply compel me to say the truth. — You will undermine all your happiness with malice aforethought. — You will perhaps go mad if I tell you the whole, full truth — — but be silent, do not question me any further — relieve yourself of your love for Esperance: — it will perhaps all be well — do not bother me any more — for consider, I have a hard struggle to fight through — I am fighting against the stars in which I have read your and Esperance's destiny— and that will only occur with success if Esperance remains vanished for you forever. — —” She now stopped, laid her head back on the high chair back, and looked at Bonseigneur with a questioning gaze.

Bonseigneur, who despite the most dreadful agitation that the absence of Esperance caused him, still possessed the presence of mind to see that violence and threat would accomplish nothing, now attempted to reach the revelation of the mystery of Esperance's disappearance by another route. He stroked back the dark hair from his forehead and asked in a soft, questioning manner:

“But Madame Rocheblave, if you do not wish to confess to me where Mademoiselle Esperance Mumford is, you will instead tell me the terrible things you have read about us in the stars.”

“If one wishes to be happy, my young man, one must limit his curiosity to indifferent things that do not cause us many headaches and do not cause the blood to rise up unnecessarily — — that is my experience, and believe an old ninety-year old who has become unhappy because she was too curious in pursuit of serious questions of life — — I was once young and beautiful, perhaps even more beautiful as your Esperance. — —”

As she said this, she extended her hands and examined them. Then she rolled the sleeves of her black garment to the shoulders and showed her thin, bony arms.

“This is how one looks now,” she said, smiling to herself.

55

The clairvoyant raised herself with an urgent movement from her seat, blowing out the light burning in the room. Then she went to one of the two windows opening on Conti Street.

“If the garb of mourning does not cover it,” she now said with a soft tone, “then it must shine precisely at this place — can you read by moonlight, Monsieur Bonseigneur? Read it yourself and read it aloud — I will tell you where you should stop!”

As one looked out the window, the moon was truly visible on the horizon, and it must throw its light in a short time between the trees along the memorial green opposite. — At that time, the place now occupied by the pharmacy, the entire length of this block along

Conti Street, there was a promenade elevated four feet in the air, on which the loveliest memorial green had been planted.

This was the work of a Mr. Galvez, and other than the prettiest appearance it had no use whatsoever, for already three months after its completion this promenade had been so washed away and sunken by rainstorms that once again, as earlier, the roots of the trees were revealed, and it made walking on this promenade more difficult rather than easier. The Jesuit Mainard brutally attacked Mr. Galvez's pointless mania for beautification in his newspaper *Moniteur*, which Mainard then edited in New Orleans [the first newspaper to appear in this city].

But we return to the clairvoyant's front room.

To the clairvoyant's question of whether Bonseigneur could read by moonlight, the young man responded, "I will be able to conform in everything, Madame Rocheblave, and if you wished, I would also try to read your prophesies even in the dark — but I only ask you to let me get to the goal quickly, for this uncertainty is becoming unbearable to me. Hurry! Let me read!"

The clairvoyant opened a portfolio and drew from it a long strip of paper.

"But you must set yourself, Monsieur Bonseigneur," she said, placing it in his hands.

"I must remain standing," Bonseigneur countered, "I always read while standing."

"That is quite correct, Monsieur — but you only read out the defense speeches for your clients while standing — but here it is a matter of a sentence — read it while seated, Monsieur advocate!"

"I do not wish to!" Bonseigneur responded, casting a quick glance over the strip of paper. "I will protest against your foolishness and magical spells by standing — the body must rest with its entire weight on the feet for the head to remain free — one sits only in matters of the heart, and when — —"

"Oh, how charming, how splendidly allegorical!" the clairvoyant interrupted him, "if I were not standing with one foot in the grave, and if I still had such warm lips as once I did, I would ask you for a kiss —"

"You could do that right now, Madame Rocheblave," Bonseigneur replied, "the lips that my Esperance kissed would certainly not be unworthy to kiss my own — but let us not jest — let me read before the moon flees this position — if there is to be any reading by its light at all —" and he led the strip of paper to his eyes and extended his neck, so that the shirt frills that they wore in those days, revealed his naked neck, and the powdered pigtail fell to the side on his shoulder. — With the swiftness of swallow's wing touching the earth, the clairvoyant stroked Bonseigneur's brow with her thin, flat hand and pressed a kiss on his neck in the same instance. Bonseigneur let out a light cry. For him it was as if he felt an electrical shock passing through his entire body and pressing on his eyelids. "She is truly a witch, as the people say," he thought to himself, for through the next half hour he could not bring forth a single word, no matter how hard he tried.

He wanted to turn toward the clairvoyant, who had who had returned to her place in the tall armchair. But he could not. His arms and legs were as if lamed.

"So, my self-assured, handsome advocate," the clairvoyant began, "remain standing for now, since you want to so badly, and I will tell you the results of my prophetic efforts."

Bonseigneur, who could still hear and see everything and only for the instant could not speak or move, looked on these words of Madame Rocheblave down to his hands, and saw with astonishment that the strip of paper was no longer held in his fingers.

The moon threw its full light into the clairvoyant's lap.

“I do not want you anymore!” she cried out, and she stood up and pushed her chair to the side of the chimney, where the light of the moon did not shine. She then rustled the paper that she had taken from Bonseigneur — but in truth she did not need it, since she did not need to read the words contained there. — She began:

“May the Hour of Jupiter not surprise us, and the Seven Salamanders¹² place the true Bonseigneur in the Milky Way, which some gnome has caused to be born in New Orleans. In the seventh night of my prayer to the moon should the word of the *Cultus Oromasis*¹² to the so-called Chevalier Bonseigneur of New Orleans, who, as a French citizen, became separated from his motherland and clings to the heretics of the North, be the following announced:

“In 1861, not only the entire region held by His Majesty Napoléon I, but all the states of the Gulf and all the land to the northern border of Virginia will be involved in a bitter struggle with the northern states, calling themselves the United States of North America, from which the government in Washington will emerge four years later victorious.

“In New Orleans itself, in the second year after the outbreak of this war, a governor sent from the North will make his entrance, a governor who will have the son of the love-match between Chevalier Bonseigneur and Esperance Mumford, who will take the name of his mother, hanged by rope in front of a public building of this city.

“This son is a later son. He will only be born in the twelfth year of the marriage of Chevalier Bonseigneur and Esperance Mumford, hence in the year 1828, and will end in 1862 on the gallows.

“Later, after twelve years of marriage they will bear a daughter, who will be wounded in the same year of 1862 in the struggle with the enemies of the South and return to the arms of her father, and who will remain true in his convictions and held with the North.

“Toward the end of the year 1865 or the beginning of 1866, victorious northern states' hosts will fall on the old empire of Montezuma, and they will be victorious at first. In the same year England and France will amaze the entire world by entering into an alliance against the United States.

“The struggle will long remain undecided, until finally it was ended to the advantage of the Americans. Until 1872 there will be peace again, and in this year the consequences of the war begun in 1861 will finally reach a conclusion.

“But in the same year, a new war will break out, but for entirely different causes.

“In 1877 Louisiana and all the land to its west to the mouth of the Rio Grande and from there to the Isthmus of Panama will be under French rule.

“The two Carolinas, Georgia and the northern part of Florida will be under held by English occupation.

“In 1880 all the land from the northern border of British America to the Isthmus of Panama will be in the possession of the United States.

“In 1882, they will have the Antilles as well, and they will build fortresses at the mouths of the Orinoco and the Amazon.

“In 1883 a new, fearful civil war will break out such as the world has never seen, and it will break out in the same states from which the war of 1861 against the northern states had its origin.

“Be happy, Chevalier Bonseigneur, that you are the chosen of the great Oromasis, that you have heard such prophetic words.

“May the foresight of these great world events suffice and prevent the evil looming for Esperance Mumford by solemnly promising never to see her again.

“Oromasis is just. He permits free will.

“Dampen your passion for Esperance Mumford and do not lead the Seven Salamanders into temptation, and you will be led undamaged to the Milky Way of your happiness.

“Woe to you if the hour of Jupiter surprises you with Esperance.”

Since we are not writing a novel here, it is our duty to remark that these prophecies, which combine Bonseigneur’s destiny so strangely with the course of great world events, are word-by-word translations from the memoirs of the oft-mentioned Jesuit Mainard, who himself received them from the clairvoyant shortly before her death.

To episode 55: This conjuring closely resembles that in Giacomo Casanova, *Memoirs of Jacques Casanova*, Arthur Machen, tr., vol. 9, pp. 79, 80, including the Hour of Jupiter, Oromasis, the Seven Salamanders and the Milky Way. Salamanders are elementary fire spirits, deriving their characteristics from medieval bestiaries. Casanova (1725-98), who composed his vast memoirs at the end of his life, was a noted adventurer. Oromasis is the name of an Ascended Master in modern Theosophy, regarded as a spirit of fire. The Theosophical Society, founded by Madame Helene Blavatsky and others in 1875, incorporated many elements from earlier occult movements.

56

After reading through the previous chapter, those who believed that, once the magic imposed on him waned, Bonseigneur would not have the courage quietly to submit to the magnetic law of nature, will immediately recognize their error. Despite his healthy common sense and his outlook directed to action, he still always had a core of superstition, even an inclination to spiritualism.

The magnetic process through which he had passed amazed him so thoroughly that in this brief time he had passed through all the levels of distress to peaceful submission and admiration for Madame Rocheblave.

The clairvoyant appeared to have foreseen the transformation of his earlier demonstrated stubbornness and passionate recklessness, for she now approached him with admirable quiet and security, adjusting his disordered frills despite his amazed look, and washing his forehead with a sponge soaked in orange-blossom water.

Then she sat down on a rose-colored velvet easy-chair and told Bonseigneur to sit on the stool.

Light burned again in the room.

“Is it true, Chevalier,” she began, “you promise me never again to ask about the absence of Esperance, and to bid farewell to motions of the heart in this direction forever?”

Bonseigneur sighed deeply and drummed with his fingers on his knee. “Oh, I promise everything,” he responded after some thought, and looked questioningly into the clairvoyant’s face.

“And you take an oath and also swear by the Great Oromasis to hold your promise truly?” Madame Rocheblave moved forward, raising the two fingers of her right hand high.

Bonseigneur sighed again, even deeper than the first time, and glanced restlessly toward the window, where he had been standing only two minutes before. Then he wanted to say something, but he was silent.

“You are silent? You are shaking, Chevalier?” the clairvoyant asked. “Or can you only answer or form a decision standing up? — Then stand in the name of the Great Oromasis!”

“I would rather be seated,” Bonseigneur responded, who did not know what he was supposed to say.

“So! Now you prefer to sit, and only a half hour ago you said that only sat in matters of the heart — — you are not consistent, Monsieur?”

“Oh, on the contrary,” the tormented one responded in confusion, “we are now dealing with a matter of the heart — I indeed tell you, Madame Rocheblave, that I will swear by the Great Oromasis that I will Esperance forever ...” here Bonseigneur halted, and over his noble, pale face there spread a dark red.

“Finish what you are saying!” the clairvoyant said in a solemn tone.

“...love!” sounded suddenly a voice, and on the threshold of door dividing this room from the rest of the house appeared the shaking form of a maiden. lurching in the same moment toward Madame Rocheblave and sinking on her knee before her.

57

If the Milky Way or at least a portion of it had extended in this instant to New Orleans, even if the Great Oromasis and his Seven Salamanders had suddenly stepped between Madame Rocheblave and Bonseigneur, the latter could not have been any less amazed than he was, when he at once saw the hotly desired figure of Esperance Mumford appear before him.

He looked, with an inexpressible gaze he looked at once at the clairvoyant, then at the object of his veneration.

Her emergence was also so unexpected, that for a while he sat there motionless as a statue. Only the pulses flew and the eyes gleamed.

Esperance had placed her face in the lap of the clairvoyant, and as she knelt she grasped her with both hands. Her long blonde tresses hung to the floor and touched the high heels of her bright red morocco shoes. She wore a white dress with the black velvet bodice with shoulder-bands fashionable then.

Madame Rocheblave in her black clothing and the high white lace mantilla made a dramatic contrast. It was as if day and night were embracing.

“Unfortunate child!” the clairvoyant broke the silence, looking down at Esperance and laying her folded hands on her hair, “so I have beseeched you and through whole nights tormented you in the service of the Great Oromasis, for you to destroy everything with one blow! But, unhappy child, I am not angry with you — stand up and look at me! Yes, you love him and will always love him! — The great constellation itself created you, and it was foolish of me to fight against destiny and to turn away with my weak powers the evil that the Great Oromasis planned for you.”

Here she was silent for a moment, and many tears pearled over her faced, marked by innumerable furrows, falling on the now Esperance's slightly raised forehead. Then she continued: “But you have heard nothing, did you? Say no! You unfortunate child! Stand up and look at us!” Then she turned to Bonseigneur and said, “— and you will forgive me the untruths that I allowed myself on the disappearance of Esperance — it turned out for your best! Fortunate man! No human being has so loved and will love again as Esperance! No man will ever be so loved! She has opened her heart to me. Bear her destiny with patience and should you also some-day give life to a being that ends on the —” She did not say it, but she wanted to say “— that ends on the scaffold. —”

She took her hands from Esperance and covered her face with them. — There arose a deep silence and an unnamable stillness, only interrupted by the falling of soot in the chimney.

58

This inconceivable woman, who at the time was denounced not only in New Orleans but far across the borders of this city as a dangerous witch, in fact had a splendid heart. It hurt her in the depths of her soul to impose such torture on the young man and to reveal to him the fateful prophesies of whose truth she was completely convinced in her zeal for astrological knowledge. But she held it to be a holy duty to tell Bonseigneur everything that had been revealed to her through her way of seeing by the Great Oromasis. She really wanted to distance Esperance from New Orleans forever, and she had already made all the necessary preparations. Only in this way did she believe she could shield this dearly beloved girl from destiny, that she separate the girl forever from Bonseigneur. But she did not want to do this without his knowledge. He should himself swear never to wish to see his Esperance again, and she believed then that she would be reconciled to her conscience in that way.

She had forbidden Esperance to enter the front room this evening, and this child, used to being obedient, also appeared to obey this order. She was in the adjoining building when Bonseigneur came as usual at nine o'clock. At first Esperance held her breath, not to overhear, but so as not to betray her presence.

She did not listen as Madame Rocheblave announced her revelations to her beloved. But slowly she became more aware and heard that her beloved grandmother, as she usually called the clairvoyant, wished to compel Bonseigneur to swear away his love. There she could no longer tolerate it. — Her heart would have burst as she heard this fatal formula of swearing. We already know the rest.

From the papers of Madame Rochebrave, which later after her death were found in an old chest, one sees that she was in an extensive correspondence with either the world-famous Cagliostro or the Count of Saint Germain, and that she appeared to be teaching this great master in many things. She was not only an astrologer, but also an alchemist in the narrowest sense of the word, and in her operations of magnification she understood so many nuances, that one need not wonder if she magnetized Bonseigneur in one of the traditional ways out of the many possibilities.

To episode 58: Mesmerism, the earliest form of hypnotism, was one of several forms of what was called “animal magnetism” in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Count Alessandro di Cagliostro (born Giuseppe Balsamo), 1743-1795, was a courtier, alchemist, and purported magician involved in the “affair of the Necklace” over the attempt of the Cardinal de Rohan to curry favor with Queen Marie Antoinette. He met Benjamin Franklin and others at the court of Louis XVI. He died in custody of the Inquisition in Rome. The Count of Saint Germain (circa 1712-84) was a courtier, composer and confidence man who claimed to be the son of Francis II Rákóczi, ruler of Transylvania. He occasionally claimed to have been alive for centuries, and he was reportedly seen after his death. He was acclaimed an Ascended Master by the Theosophy movement in the later nineteenth century.

Immediately after her death the aforementioned papers were locked up by the lurking father confessor of the Ursulines, or rather they were spirited away and taken to the cloister in order to be burned there. But they avoided their ordained destruction by fire through a remarkable combination of conditions and found their way to the villa of Bonseigneur's foster mother, Madame Choiseul Mumford.

Her method of magnetization, which besides the usual manipulations also calls upon the assistance of moonlight, appears to be entirely unknown to magnetizers of our own day. — At least we have never found anywhere any theoretical or practical precedent.

For this interesting analysis of her magnetization we have the Jesuit Mainard to thank. He speaks of the two-day old flower of the banana tree, the electric red hair of a girl born in the marshes of Louisiana, the fresh sprouts of the *Opuntia* (a variety of wild cactus growing here), and many other things that Madame Rochebrave was supposed to have used in magnetization. This priest described as negative: orange blossom water, the drying or pressing with a sponge in which chalklike materials are present, and lastly a pressure on the cerebral system on any point of this region of the human body, and lastly the rise of moonlight.

In all of these things the truth lies deep below on the bottom. It only needs to be brought to the surface by a capable diver of the spirit and made part of modern knowledge of this object. It arises out of the dark shaft of alchemy, and is not astronomy the illuminated daughter of astrology?

We have remained static in magnetization, and we have not reached half of what was lost in its most inner essence through the death of the famous New Orleans clairvoyant. The notes coming to our time from the old French memoirs are only the outer shell — we search in vain for the spirit.

Whoever could have seen these three persons would have thought them to be participating in the final scene of a tragedy of Sophocles. Here as well old Fate spread his dark wings and permitted, at least for the moment, no further reflection.

All three, Madame Rocheblave, Bonseigneur and Esperance Mumford, were deeply shaken, but each in his own way, and according to the degree of consciousness of the pressure upon them.

And in order to make the antique image even more lively and striking, their exteriors were in complete harmony with the state of the soul at the moment.

Madame Rocheblave, like pitiless fate itself was, as mentioned, clothed entirely in black, and her white mantilla only reduced somewhat the tragic character and gave her face a conciliatory expression.

Esperance, who had stood up in the meantime, had her right arm slung around the neck of the clairvoyant, and her left hand reached forward, as if in silent expectation that Bonseigneur, still seated on the stool, would wish to reach for her and lead her to his lips.

Her large eyes, whose splendid blue could be compared more to the aquamarine color of the ocean than to that of the heavens, her eyebrows cut in an evangelical arch, the peculiar bright yellow of blonde of her hair, the white, almost too white, tint of her oval face, formed a mild contrast with her white dress, which always, where perceived, deeply impressed and dispatched the spirit of the earth to lighter regions. In contrast, her black satin bodice and the black sleeve bands were a warning that one cannot avoid the darker way of life even if one were made for heaven.

Twenty-four years later she bore a daughter also baptized Esperance, who, as we already know, was the unhappy betrothed of Brutus.

But we must be silent about that now and not cut the threads before Atropos herself takes the shears into her hand.

The image of Esperance Mumford from those days of happiness and sorrow still hangs in one of the parlors of that planter's house on the Bayou Terrebonne, whither we have already once led our readers.

So far as concerns the young Bonseigneur, the Abbé de la Tour in a letter to the Cardinal Secretary of the Pope at the time when he reported in 1813 on the religious and political condition of the French families in Louisiana reported him to be the most handsome man of all times. This would be saying a great deal, but it is certain that Bonseigneur, had he been a Don Juan, would have been able to spread a great deal of evil among the daughters of Eve. Even today the old man preserves those truly divine facial lines, and if the Abbé de la Tour were still alive, he would say that Bonseigneur is the most handsome old man of all times. But we will look back at our group to complete the image with Bonseigneur.

His coal-black hair was combed back in the contemporary mode of the cavaliers of New Orleans, but in a manner that formed a little elevation at the top. He also bore a powdered pigtail, a hairstyle that soon declined, since somewhat later one saw only Titus styles or what was known as "malcontent" wigs.

Only some judges from the old school bore their pigtails until about 1820 or 1825.

His narrow trousers, reaching only to the knee, were of the finest white cloth and formed in combination with his silk stockings, a white very deep vest and the dark blue coat, whose wide tails were hemmed and joined on their ends made a passable ensemble. Such a coat resembled roughly that of our Continental Guards and was an entirely American wardrobe, for the true Frenchmen dressed entirely differently.

He only wore a sword when he was meeting the officials of the city or state, for at this time anyone who always wore a sword was taken to be an adventurer or — an Englishman.

In the clothing described, Bonseigneur made an excellent appearance, particularly when he suddenly arose and revealed his tall, thin and powerful form in its full freedom before others' eyes. His ideal forehead, under which the two flaming pitch-dark eyes shone, was genuinely enchanting, and one could think of nothing more splendid than when he met those of Esperance.

He was first to break the silence by standing up, grasping Esperance's hand and, lightly bowing, pressed a silent kiss on her forehead.

To episode 59: Atropos was the last of the three Fates who spun, measured and cut the thread of individuals' destinies in Greek mythology.

60

On receiving this kiss, Esperance fell to her knee and folded her hands as if to pray.

“Oh my beloved,” she said in a tone torn between pain and happiness: “You love me more than the Great Oromasis — — may he not be wrathful to you and rob me of your heart!”

Bonseigneur raised her up by her folded hands. She fell on his neck. Her bright tears mingled with his collar frills.

“Esperance!” Bonseigneur cried out, “you know that I love you more than anything in the world, and my life is a cheerless nothing without you, an existence without light and warmth. My Esperance! I feel that my heart would stiffen to cold marble if it ever ceased to beat for you. — — My dear Esperance! As the planets circle around the sun and complete their eternal route in undisturbed harmony, so all my thoughts, desires and hopes eternal as your pure, good heart that all the glory, all the power and passions of the earth are not able to lead you away from their paths, my dear, dearest Esperance — —”

Bonseigneur had wrapped his left arm around Esperance and pressed her so to his heart. His right arm was free and raised itself in the air. The hand of this arm appeared for a time to fight with itself — but in the end two fingers extended themselves, one taking an unusual position to the others. The clairvoyant was immediately aware of this movement.

She seemed to feel the superhuman effort this man had undertaken, who was, after all, only a mortal, like so many thousands who had loved before and after him. She drew herself together and like a cold stream it ran through her heart as he saw him lift his fingers for swearing. This scene had something ghostly, if one considered the conditions under which it occurred and if one thought back on the previous scene.

That he did not lift his hand to swear his Esperance love and fidelity, the clairvoyant knew full well, for it was not even necessary. His eyes had already sworn a thousand times, and the beating of his heart, if she thought of the long evenings with her head on his breast, sat next to him, told a thousand times. When Madame Rocheblave sat with the lovers at the round table and both, still as a mouse, listened to her words, when she told them of the power of Oromasis and the Seven Salamanders, and spread out the horoscopes before them, stressing the constellation of Jupiter and the love star. As they contemplated the Pleiades and saw in misty flecks the footsteps of those who once had wandered loveless on earth, and then as a punishment were placed in the furthest corner of the universe — at such moments, Bonseigneur and Esperance had already silently exchanged the hottest oaths.

What then did it mean to raise his hand and swear to her, the eternally beloved, that he loved her?

That would be a profane act against the Holy Spirit of Love, and the feminine sense, that Madame Rocheblave possessed in a high degree, permitted her to foresee that Bonseigneur only could raise his hand to swear to do freely what she had tried to accomplish by compulsion — that is, out of love for Esperance never to see her again, to destroy the dreadful prophesy that hung like the sword of Damocles.

And that was also how it was. When Esperance fell on his neck, moistening it with her tears, then a good genius took control of his love-sick, confused brain and whispered these words: “Chevalier Bonseigneur! Has the clarity of your spirit so completely departed that you are no longer in condition to distinguish true love from the satisfaction of the senses? You know the destiny that awaits your Esperance, and yet you have refused to reconcile with the Great Oromasis by swearing to separate yourself forever from her. Do not imagine, Chevalier Bonseigneur, that the fulfillment of this oath and the grief for a lost lover will kill your Esperance. Do not deceive yourself, in love pain does not kill, but rather bestow happiness. Rise up, Bonseigneur, and punish the *arrogance* of your spirit. Leave Esperance and drive this selfish sense out of the vestibule of the temple of your heart!”

Bonseigneur granted a hearing to these words of his good genius. But he had to gather all his forces together as he removed himself from Esperance's embrace, as she watched him with her great blue eyes. Madame Rocheblave had meanwhile arisen from her tall armchair and approached. The foresighted woman properly feared a scene where her help would be needed.

“My dear Esperance — — —” began Bonseigneur, and his gaze took such an uncanny expression, that Esperance wondered at it, and her head moved to the side where the clairvoyant stood.

“— — beloved of my heart,” Bonseigneur continued, “— — the Great Omomasis wishes that we — — separate forever — —”

Bonseigneur was as pale as a corpse when he said the last words. He wanted to press Esperance for one last time to his heart, but she stepped back, emitting a short, penetrating cry and fell as if dead in the arms of the clairvoyant.

In those days, when social life in New Orleans was still on its first stage of development, and there could be no talk of a stable, well-organized police, since its entire operation relied only on a loose spy-system, which was all the more perilous because it was more or less handled by persons who were, if not literally refugees from the galleys of France, were at least related to them in spirit — in those days New Orleans was the Eldorado of adventurers of all varieties, as only the wind could gather from the most distant corners of the world to such a receptive terrain.

One such adventurer was Amadée Labarre, who was called “*Doctor Glasseye*” in New Orleans, since he boasted of the art of being able to install glass eyes with which one was supposed to be able to see as well as with a natural eye, assuming that one followed his prescriptions precisely, requiring one to pay for his tinctures at enormous prices.

This Doctor Glasseye, who understands the great secret of speculating on the gullibility of people, plays a not unimportant role in the annals of our city. His contemporaries portray him as an unashamed prevaricator with fine, over-sugared manners, behind which lurked a raw, even gruesome character. Also, he was not without talent, possessed extensive knowledge of languages, and a tireless entrepreneurial spirit.

He had only arrived six months before from the West Indies island of Guadeloupe, and all his pockets were filled with gold and letters of recommendation, two things that made for great respect in the eyes of the Governor of Louisiana and city officials.

Since he proclaimed that he was being persecuted by certain jealous members of his profession because of his famous art, the city leader had placed two police agents at his disposal, who were to remain at his side and protect him against all sorts of hostility.

These servants of justice soon became his most intimate friends, and that was precisely what the sly cheat wanted.

We will later see that the true purpose of his presence in New Orleans was an entirely different one from inserting glass eyes into blind people. But despite this, he pursued this business with all the zealotry of a trained eye doctor.

For this purpose, he had built on the place where today the new Customs House stands — thus in those days directly on the river — a sort of pavilion, in which he fabricated his glass eyes, as he claimed, cutting them with a large solitaire that he continually wore on his finger, and which was said to be of enormous value, to promote himself.

At the start, this nonsense was not only believed, in fact they read in a so-called municipal address:

“The citizens and all the residents of New Orleans are hereby most warmly encouraged to give to the famous and most enlightened Doctor Amadée Labarre, in his great and noble work of giving eyes to the blind, as much of their support as possible, etc.”

So entirely respectable people at the time allowed themselves to be duped by a shameless quack, who gave not a single testimony of his qualifications, but only on innumerable testimonials of persons of high standing (overseas, of course), who had been blessed with seeing eyes.

But the hour would soon arrive when a stupid bird would be caught in his yarn and would have to pay Doctor Glasseye a heavy tuition.

A wealthy young merchant who had lost his right eye had long had the idea of getting a seeing glass eye inserted, but due to greed had always avoided it, since he had heard that Doctor Glasseye demanded an amount that was so large that it would hurt him, even if it would leave him with an eye of his own.

Then it happened that he fell in love with the governor's daughter and he believed that the only reason she preferred another to him was that he had only one eye rather than two like his competitor.

Vanity on one side and jealousy on the other finally won out over miserliness. He set out for the pavilion after the closing of his business house. Doctor Glasseye received him with the greatest sympathy and shook his hand as if he were an old friend.

He had instantly recognized in this late visitor a wealthy merchant whose office he had often passed, and on whose wealth and miserliness he had already been informed. He had somehow even spied out that he was in love with the governor's daughter and feared a competitor.

He had him settle on a splendid sofa: like the pavilion itself, it was not paid for, for Doctor Glasseye was no friend of paying bills, but he also did not harass anyone who owed him.

"You have lost your right eye?" he addressed the young merchant, without first waiting until he until he brought forth his first inquiry, "Since when, for how many years, sir? — — Pardon me — — these are details whose knowledge is of the highest importance for the treatment of your noble eye!" Then I have to undertake my optic corrections and cause the light to fall on the proper corner on my solitaire," then pointing to the ring on his finger, which he immediately hid again. The young merchant appeared to have forgotten that he had not yet told him the purpose of his visit, and answered him at once, "I lost the eye two years ago in a duel with Bonseigneur the advocate, who had felt his honor injured, because I had accused his friend and patron, General Wilkinson, of things that are known to everyone in New Orleans in any case."

At the name of Bonseigneur a demonic joy flashed from the eyes of the adventurer, and he grasped his bright yellow moirée dressing gown together and stared at the carpeted floor as if sunk in deep thought.

"Bonseigneur? The hothead! He is supposed to be a dangerous man, this Chevalier Bonseigneur — I don't wish to have any dealings with him," he said in a tone that inferred a certain interest in the named person.

"Incidentally," he added, "Bonseigneur is supposed to be an excellent advocate, and as someone told me yesterday, the President of the United States has considered him for a seat on the highest court."

"Foey!" cried the young merchant, "the President does not consider him, but General Wilkinson convinces himself to be able to make it happen for his darling — and he does not even have the required age for such an important post — outstanding advocate? Foey! If Bonseigneur or his foster mother Madame Choiseul Mumford did not have such an enormous property, they would marvel at him for his pretty face alone, for, truth to tell, Doctor, there is nothing in this windbag! Everything through money,

connection! No illusion — and he is also a dumb wastrel and has a rude advocate's mouth — that is all!”

“That is not all,” Doctor Glasseye continued: “Bonseigneur has also recently gone astray in ways that, when they reach the public, would soon undermine his good reputation forever. —”

At this point Doctor Glasseye stopped and looked questioningly in the face of the French merchant, as if expecting a certain answer.

“How do you mean that, Doctor?” the merchant asked.

Doctor Glasseye, seeing instantly that he *alone* was in possession of his secret, was capably avoided the question of the young merchant by answering, “I mean because of the means Bonseigneur applies in order to satisfy his ambition. You understand me, Monsieur?”

“Oh, I understand!” was the merchant's answer, and he assumed a superior air. But in truth he did not understand it, for Doctor Glasseye understood something entirely different from Bonseigneur's ambition under “gone astray.”

“But, sir,” the adventurer began again, “if we now have to interrupt our conversation on Chevalier Bonseigneur, it is only to state my admiration for your attention in visiting my pavilion, so far from your own villa. Have I not had the pleasure of informing you about your unfortunate noble eye?”

“Correct, sir, that was it! So, two years have passed since you were wounded in a duel with that characterless person? — That is in any case a long time, but with God's help I will still succeed in getting you to see — but only one point restrains me — it is not worth the effort to talk about it.” —

“And this point would be?” the other interrupted, who could barely get a word in due to the Doctor's volubility.

“But let us leave it aside, it must — we could also speak of it another time —” the adventurer responded.

“Not at all, Doctor — as a merchant I am used to begin and end everything in a businesslike manner — I do not like conditions after the fact — —”

“Now, this single point deals with the costs of the treatment of your noble eye — it is in fact a principle only to have half paid in advance — I will only demand the rest when the patient has been completely set up and able to marvel at nature with two seeing eyes — — but look down at the river, sir! This splendid yacht — it comes immediately up from the passes and bears the name of the daughter of our esteemed governor — Leonida! — There! Look there! —” When he said this, he opened a wing of the great window looking out on the Mississippi and fed with visible pleasure on the young merchant's straining eye. The name Leonida had made him so excited that he could hardly restrain himself.

“A splendid yacht!” the young man responded, entirely entranced, but he could not see anything, because there was nothing to see.

“Isn't it? Divine, a true carriage of Neptune — — see how the fine boat so elegantly leads around the turn, and the golden letters on a bright-blue background!”

The sly cad saw that the right moment had come when he could successfully make a great demand. — Without further ado, he demanded ten thousand Mexican dollars, and he brought it to the point where the young merchant promised to pay 5,000 dollars the

next day, and to sign an exchange drawn on his banker in Havana, payable in three months.

62

On the following morning, Doctor Glasseye arrived punctually in the French merchant's counting house. Money matters were quickly settled, and the adventurer set out in his carriage to the merchant's home, a half-hour away. He then took him immediately to his pavilion, where the seeing glass eye was to be inserted.

In an old box that once might have held jewelry, the amazed merchant saw glass eyes of various sizes and colors. There were even red eyes for albinos.

The confidence man had him settle into a cushioned armchair, and having first inspected the healed eye-hollow, he then looked at the corner of the eye, into which he pressed small ivory picks so far that the patient cried aloud.

“It is good that you cried out,” Doctor Glasseye remarked, “for I judge from this that it is not a matter of inserting a new eye, but also to give it the power to weep, since you can admit, sir, that an eye without tears is as good as no eye at all — what is more, I must confess regretfully that your *organa lacrymalia* are not in order. In addition, the external part of your *ductus naso-lacrymalis* is also not in order.”

Then, as it so often happens nowadays, quacks and medical windbags are wont to use heaped-together Latin words when speaking with laymen, words that even they usually do not understand. By using such a nomenclature, they easily cover their ignorance and achieve at the same time the advantage of being seen by the public as greatly learned.

Doctor Glasseye did understand the Latin language, so that he also understood the sense of the words he used, but he had no idea about ocular medicine. In fact, he lacked even the basic preparation for it, as may be seen from the diagnosis he just made.

The young merchant was very surprised that his eye doctor enumerated so many problems of which in his opinion he had had not the slightest idea. But how his amazement grew when Doctor Glasseye told him that he, the merchant, had misled him by not mentioning this problem with his tear ducts before the price was decided. He sprang up in shock and assured the doctor that he did not need to be upset about the problem with this organ, and he did not care whether he would get a weeping eye. He would be entirely happy to have a seeing eye, and that was what he had paid for. For that reason, he would not give another dollar.

Doctor Glasseye presented himself as very offended that his patient conceived it in that way and could believe that he would demand an additional payment, and he showed him in the most-polite terms that he would count it an honor to bring his tear organs into order for nothing. With this, the merchant was not only mollified, but he even expressed his regrets about misunderstanding the doctor.

The sly confidence man now dictated an internal cure process of several weeks to the humbugged merchant, there could be dangerous results for his good eye, since the tear organ in the other eye was in such a poor condition that it could damage his good eye as well.

The confidence man made all of this so plausible that the young merchant found it to be entirely natural to wait a few weeks more.

On parting, the merchant also had to promise to hold precisely to his prescription, since in the opposite case all his efforts would be fruitless.

63

Hardly had the young merchant departed, when a jovial, somewhat older man appeared on the threshold of the door, which was standing open, and he addressed Doctor Glasseye, who was gazing down, through the window opposite the door, at the water.

“Good evening, Doctor! I thought I would not see you here — — how is business, Doctor?”

At this well-known voice Doctor Glasseye quickly turned around and called joyfully, “Oh, Your Excellency! I have just been thinking of you! — How is your family? — — what's new on the political horizon?”

“Nothing we didn't already know,” the new arrival responded, who had settled next to the Doctor on a sofa knit of straw.

“But tell me,” the first continued, “how did it come that the young man who just left your pavilion paid you a visit? He would not be such a wastrel as to have an eye inserted — — I would give you good advice not to be so involved with him outside of business ...”

“For what reason, Your Excellency,” Doctor Glasseye asked, “he is not unreal, or a scoundrel? It would be very sad for the house of which he is the partner — — but tell me, what is it then? Have you perhaps learned something?”

“Enough to be able to have him arrested at any moment,” the other responded.

“Then it must be something very serious, Your Excellency — he has never issued a false bill of exchange, or otherwise broken the laws of civil society — but it is true! Things are constantly getting worse in New Orleans, and one cannot act sharply enough — and this young man, of whom no other failing has been known other than that he is a miser — — — I cannot understand it — —”

“I will tell you, Doctor — I believe myself completely justified to hold him to be a traitor — —”

“That would be terrible!” Doctor Glasseye cried out, with affected horror.

“It is so! He is thought to have given the English certain information. Do you understand me?”

“That I do not understand! Such a creature should be hanged from the nearest good tree — they should guillotine him, garrot him, have him broken on the wheel — — instantaneously! In my fatherland, one would make quick work of such a beast. — — Such lowness! Unheard of! — —” the Doctor enthused, who could hardly refrain himself for joy in his heart. Then he continued, “Your Excellency should take steps at once, arrest him and put him away — — in such a case one should have no restraint, and you should not consider any sort of bail! — — He should at the least be imprisoned until the war with the English is over. — —”¹²

The Governor of Louisiana, for that was the person Doctor Glasseye was addressing as “Your Excellency,” could not restrain himself from laughing out loud at the adventurer's juristic mental leaps. “You are too fast with the hand, Doctor!” he declared, “even though I am governor, I do not have the power to exceed certain legal norms — — in any case, just be calm — — I will bring the matter to a conclusion.”

The man who was then Governor of Louisiana was a man of unsullied justice and rare goodness of heart. He thought much of Doctor Glasseye, who he held to be a highly competent and learned man. In addition, the Governor was unusually credulous and loved to gamble.

The Doctor had access to him night and day, and until now had understood well how to remain on excellent terms not only with the Governor but with other influential persons in the city. — Yes, they held the Doctor to be very rich, which in those times was the greatest virtue. — —

The Governor as well believed that the Doctor was a wealthy man, although he also knew of his great debts. It also was known to him that he still owed the entire creation of his pavilion, including its construction costs. — But he attributed this casualness about meeting the demands of his creditors to a certain chivalric nonchalance, which the Doctor knew how to exploit in the highest grade. Since a man, who had even advanced money to the Emperor Napoléon as he set off on his campaign against Russia, could not be embarrassed by such trifles. This had been told to the Governor with the greatest arrogance, and he had confidentially shown him the Imperial document of indebtedness, complete with seal and signature, which had not yet been paid, and the Governor believed him. But in doing that, Doctor Glasseye slyly received the promise from the Governor not to let any third party know, since he wanted more than all the goods in the world to see the Emperor embarrassed.

The Governor was later ashamed when the full swindle of the Doctor came to the light of day, but not enough to confess openly that he had been so shamefully cheated and that he had believed everything the Doctor told him.

In the biography of that governor that Marigny¹² unfortunately only half finished, the related details are told with the most intense interest.

We have already mentioned above that the Governor of Louisiana also enjoyed gambling. He was, obviously, a member of the famous “American Club” that in the beginning pursued purely national as well as scientific goals, but later deteriorated into a pure drinking and gambling club. It went to its ruin ten years after its creation. The Governor did not play out of passion, but only to please his friends, by whom he was still often significantly fleeced. So it had been, the previous evening, when he was actually compelled to make what is called a debt of honor, which he promised to resolve the next day. That was also the reason why he was visiting Doctor Glasseye, on whom he naively relied, and it was the first time he called on the goodness of the adventurer in this respect.

“My dear Doctor,” the Governor interrupted the previous conversation, “would you like to show me a small favor?”

“What hesitation would I have to grant you a favor that you ask of me — presuming that my honor does not suffer as a result,” Doctor Glasseye replied, who with his fine swindler-nose smelled the roast at once.

“You would help me out of a great embarrassment — — —”

“But Your Excellency, how could you be so hesitant? Does not our friendship guarantee that I will be helpful in everything within my poor powers?”

“You will not find it strange, Doctor, that even a governor often has an empty wallet, particularly where he only — — —”

“Entirely good, Your Excellency, an entirely natural situation — — how much does Your Excellency need?” Doctor Glasseye shortly interrupted, stood up and went to his writing desk.

“I am most beholden to you, Doctor— Unfortunately I need a thousand dollars — —”

The Doctor did not say a word but took a pen, wrote and handed the Governor of Louisiana a note for his banker:

On sight, pay to the bearer of this a thousand Mexican dollars and put it to the account of Chew and Reif.

— Amadée Labarre

* * *

As the Governor departed the pavilion a few minutes later, the two police agents that the adventurer had acquired from the city officials for his personal protection, entered the Doctor's room with excited faces.

64

“You frightened me, my friends!” cried Doctor Glasseye, who was deep in thought contemplating in advance what advantages he could gain from the favor granted to the Governor of Louisiana.

“I could have slit my throat right away!” began one of the police agents, a small man with a flat, snakelike forehead, coarse, pitch-black hair and a face completely covered with pockmarks.

“You would probably have earned it, Gayenne, but before you seize such suicidal thoughts, I would prefer that you try to redeem the errors you committed, for on your face I can read that the plan went wrong — — nothing but your stupidity is to blame — —” Doctor Glasseye said in an agitated voice, hastily pacing the room up and down. Then turning toward the other policeman, he continued, “And you, Jacques, do you also wish to get fired for your stupidity?”

“As little as Gayenne would do,” responded the man questioned, “Incidentally, I have a better plan to propose, that is also much more secure and without being tied to so many conditions — — you understand me, Doctor?” As he said this, he drew out a five-inch stiletto that he always carried at his breast.

“That would certainly be the quickest way, and it was also originally my idea — — but you must consider, my friend, that it must take place in such a way that they will just believe he has disappeared, for otherwise the noble lady will have to alter her will in favor of another person, and my high friend on Guadeloupe would not be properly served that way,” the Doctor said, and he leaned toward the window as if he could gather his thoughts better there.

The two police agents were left for a moment to themselves.

“A dumb idea, even dumber than the other one,” Gayenne began, moving his chair next to the other and laying his hands on the other's knee, “we cannot kill him without leaving traces that indicate that someone was killed, and once this fact is established, they will soon discover who that someone is, and you know yourself, from experience, that

with a judicial investigation, even the smallest facts always become the most important, and besides — our doctor's friend on Guadeloupe will want proof, and he will provide time to fulfill his promise punctually — — as was said, your proposal can never be carried out securely and in keeping with the purpose — — and in the end the gentlemen of the court will figure out that we were the culprits and it will not be so easy to keep our heads out of the hemp sling, as —”

Here the police agent stopped, shoved back the sleeve of his right arm back, and holding it out to his colleague, he said to him in a repulsive accent, “and this would not serve as a recommendation?”

“Child of misfortune!” Jacques replied, “on me one sees only a blue spot — — everything has worn away, even my arm, and we could swear we only met one another in New Orleans.”

“Otherwise the Doctor is so smart,” Gayenne said whispering, “but he does not understand that.”

“He does not understand the other,” Jacques said very quietly, and he winked toward Doctor Glasseye, who looked like a pagoda in his bright yellow dressing gown in the pose he had taken at the window.

So far as his figure and face went, this Jacques was the precise opposite of his partner. — He had a height of almost six feet, blond, thin hair and a clean, entirely beardless face. — His small, dull eyes were gray and always half-closed, even when he spoke with someone. While his partner had a broad nose, his own was well proportioned and of an almost Grecian cut. His voice always sounded rather hoarse, and when he laughed one could not hear anything repellent. — He carried rings on all his fingers, both silver and gold, with large, fake stones that he got from Doctor Glasseye, who always had a large supply of such pretties available, and which he was eventually able to beg off him.

Doctor Glasseye suddenly turned around and left the window.

“You have little education, my dear friend!” he said to Jacques, slapping him on the shoulder. “I had earlier taken you for an enlightened man, and I find myself actually surprised to discover exactly the opposite — —” and turning to the other police agent, “And you, Gayenne, should long since have understood that I took you into my service and allowed you to ruin my cash drawer because I believed you had a good heart and a solid sense of gratitude toward your friend — — I would never have believed — — it is the first time in my life, that my friendship has been *so* repaid — —.”

The two police agents looked at one another in shock.

“But Doctor,” Gayenne responded in his dreadful Gascon dialect, “what are you thinking to deliver us such a penitential sermon — — to what do your words relate?”

The other was silent at first, since he discovered on the spot where Doctor Glasseye heard the last words of their conversation, despite the fact that they had whispered. Then he said forthrightly:

“We said it with no further purpose and not thought about it, Doctor. We wished only that you would leave the window and come back and deal with us.”

“I must believe what you said, my dear Jacques,” Doctor Glasseye responded, with a pretended air of reconciliation, “for I know you cannot speak anything but the truth, and that you are ready to bet your life on it.”

The Doctor knew both the police agents quite well, and he also knew that they were uneducated, raw men, but since he often lifted them out of their lowliness, he had won a certain moral power over them.

He paced back and forth in the room while both the police agents stared with shamed faces. Then he began in a seemingly entirely peaceful mood:

“Now tell me finally how this dumb unfortunate affair ended? Present it as briefly as possible, for my time is short.”

As he said this, he stretched out at length on a sofa, holding his hands over his head.

“We had not expected that he would take a carriage, for usually he goes home on foot,” the two began at once. —

“Jacques, tell me,” the Doctor interrupted, “when two are speaking one never receives a clear picture.”

“Yes, it is true,” Gayenne inserted, “Jacques tells it much better.”

Jacques began:

“Since we knew that he went to the cathedral every Friday evening and went home regularly by way of St. Peter Street, so we stationed ourselves behind Black Tom's hovel, to attack him with his help, beat him, and take him to the schooner between eleven and twelve o'clock. It would have gone well, since last night was very dark, and Tom had forgotten to light the lanterns on St. Peter and St. Cloud Streets as a precaution.”

“That would not have been necessary,” Doctor Glasseye interrupted, “but go on, my friend.”

“We had already waited for two full hours when Tom brought us the news that a carriage had come up and our man had entered it. — We ordered Tom to place himself at the corner of the Government Building and to rush back to us when he saw that he was coming out of the cathedral.”

“And for this splendid news you made me wait the whole day? I thought all the time that everything was in order and you could not allow yourselves to be seen because you had done your entire duty — I mean about the inconvenient black witness.”

“You guessed correctly, Doctor!” Gayenne interrupted, “It cost us much trouble to put him out of the way.”

“So even without me you had enough understanding to see that the black rascal after the failed affair was as dangerous as if you had had success in your operation — Jacques, Gayenne — you are two extraordinary people, and you will remain in thankful memory in my wallet.”

The two scoundrels felt extraordinarily flattered with these words, especially about the last matter, since even Doctor Glasseye was possessed by the evil spirit of greed.

“And how did you do it?” Doctor Glasseye asked.

Jacques pointed to the place at his breast where the stiletto was placed, and he motioned with his arms to indicate that they had thrown Tom into the water after the deed was done. Doctor Glasseye, who understood such pantomimes profoundly responded,

“And you are certain, my friends, that no one observed you? For you know, that in such cases assumptions are made. — How will the owner respond when he hears of this theft?”

In those days, a murder committed against a slave, if it were not committed by the owner, was only regarded as theft, and whoever committed it was overlooked if he was in the position to pay the purchase price of the Negro, and was not further bothered by the court.

Doctor Glasseye now arose from his sofa, took a chair and sat down opposite the police agents: “I have to concede to you, my friends, that I am rather satisfied with the entire history, although it was unsuccessful, and you have again won my entire confidence — — — but tell me now how it is possible that men like you could forget yourself so far as not to show a trace of excitement — since you literally terrified me, as when you entered my room. — — —”

“Oh, it was not because of that,” both of them spoke almost at the same time.

“Then why was it, then?” Doctor Glasseye asked, and as the police agents shuddered with their answer, he said in a laughing manner, “Speak then — — — or are you keeping secrets from me?”

“Not at all,” Gayenne declared.

“I want to tell it to you! Doctor!” Jacques seized the word, “when we were hardly more than a hundred paces from your pavilion, suddenly the old witch of Conti Street was in the way. — — —”

“Yes, and most fortunately no one was nearby — — —” Gayenne added.

“Quiet!” Jacques interrupted him, “the Doctor wants me to speak — — — Look, Doctor, we had never seen her before and yet we knew at once who it was — — — so she stepped into our path, stretched out her long arms into the air and cried out, “Be happy, New Orleans, that you have raised these two escaped gallery slaves into servants of justice!”

“And these words of the old witch have put you into such a state, my friend?” Doctor Glasseye laughed and blinked in a malicious way with his little pop-eyes.

“Not because of the words,” Gayenne inserted, “but because she spoke so loudly.”

“For that reason, we rushed head over heels to your pavilion, Doctor — — —” Jacques said.

These people lie as often as they open their mouths, and since they have advanced to being police officers, they lie ten times more. Yes, it lay in the character of their position to compete with one another in lying. This time they were lying in a sympathetic way, since they were displeased by the words of the old woman, spoken so loudly, but they were thrown into such a terror by the old witch, as they called her, that they at first had no idea whether they should turn around or head for the Doctor's pavilion. They preferred the latter, since in any case no time was to be lost reporting the failed attack. That they sought to hide their fear from the Doctor is easy to explain, and in the next chapter we will see that he compelled a proper confession from them with a new proposal.

65

In the meantime, it had become evening. The watchmen on the river, of which there were only two in those days, had lit their pitch-pans and then withdrawn into the sailors' bar located on the corner of Bienville and Royal Street, where through the night they

made noise, gambled and drank. From time to time they went out they went out to the river, but only as an act and not to stand watch, for the office of a watchman was no more than a sinecure, since the watchmen on the ships in the harbor, so long as they were not asleep or carousing in the sailors' bars, provided adequate oversight. A few years later it had already changed. But we do not want to wander too far from the pavilion of Doctor Glasseye.

This pavilion offered a remarkable sight in the late evening hours. It was pentagonal in shape, had two upper stories from whose almost entirely flat roof a *monopteros* emerged, from whose pinnacle the French and the American flags waved. Between the slim columns of this *monopteros*, at about half height, there hung on a barely visible wire network an enormous glass eye, in whose interior several small lamps were so placed that the white remained dark, and only the iris emanated a far-flung shimmer. Under this eye swayed a banner, on which one read the words:

Dr. Amadée Labarre, Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, gentl. homme honoraire de la chambre de Napoléon I., Officier d'ornonance de l'empereur et gouverneur de Sénégal.

“Dr. Amadée Labarre, Officer of the Legion of Honor, honorary chamberlain of Napoléon I, officer of artillery of the emperor and governor of Senegal.

This high-sounding title of course had little impact on the few educated Frenchmen in the city and the Catholic clergy, who mostly belonged to the Jesuit Order. Doctor Glasseye knew that quite well, but he did not concern himself with them, for the entire “show” was for the Yankees, who really held the adventurer for what he said he was, particularly because it was not unknown that he was on such a trusted level with the Governor of Louisiana.

One must consider that this pavilion lay entirely free, and that there was then not a single house for a thousand yards in any direction. All the more did everyone's gaze direct itself there on evening promenades from the area of the city on the "crescent" extending to this region.

A great mass of wax candles burned all evening in the rooms of both upper floors and competed with the intensive light that came from the glass giant eye in the interior of the *monopteros*. Only one room in the second upper floor, whose three large windows were supplied with blinds and awnings and opened on the river, constituted an exception. Here only one lamp burned, standing on the writing desk.

It was the room in which Doctor Glasseye ordinarily stayed and where we also saw him in the company of the young French merchant and the Governor of Louisiana, and we now see in conversation with the police agents.

“Are you strong enough, Gayenne?” Doctor Glasseye now asked suddenly, and it seemed as gradually a logic entered the conversation. “Would you promise to kill him only in extreme necessity?” he stepped out and went to a fine wall cabinet in which there were some crystal bottles and glasses.

“I am strong enough to carry you and Jacques for a mile without tiring,” Gayenne responded, looking curiously after the Doctor.

“But before everything else, my friends, build up courage — —” at these words, the adventurer set three glasses on the table and continued, “You drink sherry, Gayenne — — and you, Jacques, perhaps rum — am I right?”

“I would prefer rum, Doctor!” Gayenne inserted, “sherry always gives me throbbing on my temples.”

“You must excuse me,” Jacques said, “I drink nothing!”

“You drink nothing, my dear Jacques?” Doctor Glasseye asked in amazement — — up to now I believed the opposite — — that is troublesome, my friend! — — have you never heard what a certain great somebody once said when talking about drinking? — — he said, ‘Beware of a man who does not drink, since he has the devil in his body.’”

“If that were the case,” the bandit responded, “then you and Gayenne are the best people in the world, particularly Gayenne.”

Doctor Glasseye could tolerate nothing less than if someone said the truth. Without actually intending, with these words the bandit had hit him hard, and to punish him, he raised his glass, which he had filled to the top with rum, brought it in ringing contact with Gayenne’s and called out in artificial pathos:

“To your health, dear Gayenne! May our friendship last forever and penetrate our entire inner being like this rum!”

Gayenne had never before been so honored, and he was so confused that he spilled half of the rum even before the glass reached his lips.

Jacques, who pretended deep indifference at this extraordinary drinking maneuver, quietly remarked, “You are like an old virgin, Gayenne, who falls into confusion when one pokes at her.” Then he laughed aloud and while leaning against Gayenne said softly to him, “Now the devil will come out of your mouth and eyes, Gayenne, and you will forget that we were shackled together for fifteen years.”

Doctor Glasseye, who like all bad men, had the hearing of a lynx, also heard this.

He understood that it was precisely now that serious steps had to be made to successfully carry out his intended conspiracy, or more like a harmonic understanding. And to bring this about again as quickly as possible, he used his old trick that he had always used successfully — he accused himself before his companions. This took the form of making an accusation against himself and at the same time reconciling Jacques’ injured rascal feelings. This self-accusation was brought forth in a euphemistically very original manner. He said:

“Dear friends, only once in my life has it happened to me that I have been held capable of committing a crime that, if I had really done it, would have destroyed my moral existence in human society forever. In those days, I was already a *medicinae doctor* or at least said I was, and it happened that someone wanted me to examine a corpse. I believe it was in Paris — or if not, it was in any case in a city where much French was spoken — to be brief, my large diamond ring, which I always wore, accidentally fell from my finger and ended up in the corpse, and after I found it again after much effort, it was said that I had never owned such a ring, and had stolen it from the corpse — what do you say to that, friends?”

“We do not believe that you could have done such a thing, Doctor!” both of the bandits declared, and Jacques with an even stronger accent than the other.

The latter had no more reason bear ill will toward the Doctor, since the crime of which he was accused was worse than had once brought Jacques to the galleys. On another occasion, however, Doctor Glasseye was again ready to assert his moral influence.

They now came more closely together, and Doctor Glasseye began, "Gayenne, I have already said to you that you are to kill only in extreme necessity — for, openly confessed, murder is repugnant to me." With this renewed moral flourish, the Doctor was only trying again to gain moral power over the two bandits, since it was indifferent to him whether he would commit a murder or not, if he could merely advance his goals.

"And you feel yourself strong enough, my friend?" he continued, "Listen now, listen Gayenne — pay attention, Jacques! My plan in this situation is as follows: I have learned through an extremely strange accident something that neither you, my watchful servants of justice, nor any one of your colleagues in the city knows — —"

"And that would be, Doctor?" the police agents fell in impatiently.

"I have learned that the so noble, so rich, so well-educated, so handsome and also so moral and pious Chevalier Bonseigneur, who visits the cathedral every Friday and escaped from you so stupidly yesterday, often passes time in a certain house until late in the night and then — returns on foot to his villa on Rampart Street. You know the house and if you lurk behind the grass promenade about two hours after dark — —"

Here Doctor Glasseye halted for a minute and looked questioningly into the eyes of the police agents, for on naming the grass promenade they wrinkled their foreheads and looked around in fear.

"But, Doctor, tell us precisely what house it is that you mean?" Gayenne asked, and a pale color passed across his ugly face like a stroke of lightning. So far as Jacques went, he turned his little gray eyes in such an uncanny way, as if he found himself in the hands of the hangman. He mechanically repeated the question posed by the other.

"I do not say that you have to enter this house," declared Doctor Glasseye in an annoyed tone, for it he suddenly became aware that this well-developed plan that he was in the course of describing to the police agents might fail on the deeply rooted superstition of these bandits.

And it was so. These instruments of the Doctor, who were caused no more remorse by the murder of a person than killing a dog or a cat, went pale and trembled at the mere thought of being near a house that superstition stamped as the asylum of a dangerous old witch. In the next moment, cold sweat was dripping from their brows.

Doctor Glasseye now rose quickly from his chair, looking thinner than he really was because he had drawn his yellow dressing gown close to his hips, placed himself before the police agents and said in a drawn-out tone:

"Then do you want to pull me and yourselves forcefully to ruin, gentlemen! If the Chevalier Bonseigneur is not taken care of within three days, so that I can inform my high friend in Guadeloupe in right and conscience, I will depart at the next opportunity and you will again have to eat the meager bread of your hungry civic officials — do what you wish, gentlemen!"

After he had spoken, he laid himself lengthwise back on the sofa. — But when he saw that the two, still sitting like poor sinners on their old place, made no effort to commit themselves, he raised half his body and, giving them a signal with his hand to depart, he

said: "Tomorrow early in the morning, gentlemen! Just pull the bell on the private entry; my Negress will have you come in!"

Without replying even a word, the police agents left their seats and after bowing numbly to the side where Doctor Glasseye lay, went down to the door.

They were barely a hundred paces from the pavilion when they happened on one of those river-watchmen who had just come from the sailor bar already mentioned and right across the edge of the river to check formally whether everything was in order.

"A pretty story," the watchman said to them, "down there they have just taken Black Tom out of the water, and the people say he was bored through by at least twenty cuts — five on his head, ten on the breast, and the other cuts God knows besides. You know that Black Tom belonged to Mr. Relf, of the firm of Chew and Relf, and he will offer everything possible to find the culprit. They say that the Negro was stabbed with a five-inch stiletto blade — —"

"We will want to find it quickly," the police agents remarked, speaking in an important, official manner.

"But if the culprit has no money, not much will come of it," the river-watchman responded.

"A matter of indifference, Ramos! If all persons thought that way, our protection of justice would be all the worse," Jacques said. The watchman bit his lip and already regretted having made such a statement.

On the same evening and almost at the same late hour, that heart-shaking scene took place at the house on the corner of Conti and Burgundy Streets, which was brought about by the heroic decision of Bonseigneur to separate from Esperance forever.

66

The reader will allow us here to turn our backs on New Orleans for a time, to undertake an interesting journey. Because this is absolutely necessary to understand the previous chapter, we encourage him to accompany us in spirit to the intended goal.

Once the imagination of the reader used to New Orleans has taken on this discomfort, we will lead him to the new theater of events so long held in shackles until the "Thousand and One Red Threads" have run out, and he finally returns happy to the Crescent City.

We first set out on a southeastern direction once we have reached the water of the Gulf. We come to the Yucatan Channel, so we set out for Cap San Antonio on the western end of Cuba, so that we can see the lighthouse there. Having passed this cape, we sail along the southern coast of the island of Cuba, but deep enough to be able to greet that little island group that Christopher Columbus discovered and ennobled it with the name of *Jardines y Jardinillos del Rey y de la Reyna* (Big and Little Gardens of the King and Queen).

Close to the southern coast of Haïti and Porto Rico we follow almost exactly the longitudes and feel with a holy thrill the total power of the equinoctial current. Here, where in the middle of the Caribbean Sea springs of sweet water break out through hydrostatic pressure, we linger a bit, so that we erase as much as possible the memory of the cistern-water of New Orleans. We then find ourselves between the fourteenth and fifteenth north parallel and contemplate with inexpressible pleasure the continually increasing fluorescence of the ocean. The shining mollusks, the neirides and medusas are

our companions by night, and by daytime the argonautilus with its shimmering rainbow garb passes us.

Electric fishes, which pollute the water and can magnetize steel needles, are now seen in masses and at the stern of the ship, so we hope that we will soon be to the goal of our travel.

Then suddenly we hear, without the flash of lightning, the continual and previously unheard roar — it is the so-called thundering clouds swaying over a small island ringed by coral, warning us to caution. Our compass needle spins in a surprising manner, as if we have crossed the magnetic equator.

But this illusion does not last long, for we know that we are far from the equator and between the meridians of Washington and Labrador.

From this island with the thundering clouds, which was marked by three crosses on old sea charts and has entirely vanished on the new ones, we have only seven more flights of a flying fish until we are in the waters of that crescent-shaped archipelago that joins on its north side to the Greater Antilles and reaches the British island of Trinidad with its southern end. We mean the Caribbean islands.

Because of the high and crossed waves near the island of Dominica, we follow a northern course until we reach 15°40' North latitude and we see the expected goal of our travel, *Guadeloupe*, spread before our amazed gaze. This French island lies between the British possessions of Montserrat and Dominica, and boasts of an entire entourage of smaller French islands, of which we only name Decada and Marie Galante. After Martinique the largest French possession, the island of Guadeloupe, first settled by the French in 1634, at various times in the possession in turn of the French and the English. — At the time of our story, it belonged to the French and has remained from that day to the present in the same possession. It had a colonial governor, who was assisted by what was called a colonial council and a select military, whose officers were inferior to none in the motherland so far as bravura and worldly habits. This island was then occupied by nearly a hundred thousand Negro slaves, who despite the great decree of the French Revolution that declared all Negroes on French possessions to be free, remained in unconditional conditions of service many years afterward. — The colonial council eventually handled the emancipation with remarkable tact and there was no talk of hypocritical extremes. They were free of slaves without really noticing. There was no notion of a freedman's bureau, and woolly, colored politicians would certainly have been treated with ridicule and contempt by the colonial population. Even ten years later, two merchants resident in Guadeloupe from Hamburg took their former slaves to Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro, where they voluntarily chained their destiny to that of their masters a second time. So, the curse of slavery actually only affected those who were slaves of their heated imagination and did not wish to see that to move happily and contently through life, the black race had to have white leaders.

67

We must now go almost seventy-five years into the past until we arrive at the point when we left New Orleans and arrived on Guadeloupe. Just as Christopher Columbus baptized that charming island group that we have seen from afar as the "Big and Little Gardens of the King and Queen," one of the old French seafarers who visited the island

of Guadeloupe, called it "*the Garden of Bonseigneur*." But by that name he did not wish to immortalize a family name, but he was thinking of the "Good Lord" in heaven, who protected the sailor's fragile vehicle through a stormy ocean night and led it into the harbor of this island. The island still bore this name when a young nobleman of Marseille and ancestor of a famous family on this continent settled here in 1739. He called himself Chevalier Theodule de Bonseigneur, *marquis de Grammont* and *maréchal de France*.

This Bonseigneur was a grandiose and beloved man who, though at the time of his arrival on Guadeloupe was as poor as a church mouse, bringing with him from *La belle France* nothing but a pair of lovely coal-black eyes and a moustache, immediately attained such wealth that the settlers opened their eyes and secretly sent a Carthusian monk to Rome to place an accusation before the Holy Inquisition that ran that the French citizen Chevalier Theodule Bonseigneur had secret contact with witches and sorcerers, in fact had bragged that he could have the pope turned into a codfish or an ass,

When the pope heard of this, he was very upset and wrote to the king of France that, since it did not lie in his power to have a certain Chevalier Theodule Bonseigneur sent across the ocean to the Inquisition, he would excommunicate him, and he, the king of France, should do the pope the favor of change the name of his island *Jardin de Bonseigneur*, since it was not proper that the name of Most High should be identified with such a godless person.

The king followed this last request of the pope, removing the name of the "Garden of Bonseigneur" from his maps of his Catholic state and changing it to the "Island of Guadeloupe."

When Bonseigneur heard of these new paragraphs of the Territorial Edict, he only laughed about it and pursued, as was believed, even more intensely his consorting with witches and sorcerers, building palace upon palace, and while others went to church, traveled in his brigantine, outfitted with oriental luxury, to Decada or Maria Galante, where he associated with the captains of slave ships, who allowed him to buy their living freight for a solid price.

Unless the sources we are using, by old French memoirists, are not distorted by exaggeration, Theodule de Bonseigneur was the richest slave owner ever to live in the New World, for he was supposed to be the owner of five thousand slaves. Near the city of Guadeloupe, actually named *Basse Terre*, he laid out the first coffee plantation, to which he soon joined five sugar- and two indigo-plantations. Since he was arrogant to everyone and did not tolerate the slightest contradiction, he had an army of enemies, despite the advantages that the island reaped from his universal trade connections, partly due to envy, partly through deeply offended pride, so that many secret intrigues and cabals sought to injure him as much as possible. Only the governor and the president of the colonial council appeared inclined to him, and were involved in a constant competition for his friendship.

These gentlemen lived with their families on a grand scale, and since their expenditures often exceeded their incomes by tenfold, the gold of Bonseigneur was always welcome, raising their feeling of friendship to the boiling point.

When the king of France had the strong Fort St. Charles, and the governor and his luxurious colonial council had used up the greater part of the money they had intended

for building and arming, it was once again Theodule de Bonseigneur who covered the enormous deficit and helped these gentlemen out of their problems.

But soon a new epoch began that completely upset the previous way of things on the island of Guadeloupe. The English conquered the island, deposed the old French colonial council, and banned Bonseigneur from the island because of his decided hostility to the officials established by the British government.

His palaces, plantations and slaves were confiscated, and the latter largely sold to Virginia and South Carolina.

Theodule de Bonseigneur did not, however, leave the island, but went secretly with the daughter of one of the earlier colonial councilors, Edgar Rocheblave, who had recently died of Yellow Fever along with his wife, to a then entirely unexplored part of Guadeloupe, where surrounded by wildly romantic so-called *terrains ardents*, a volcano nine-hundred fathoms tall arose, sending a never-ending column of smoke toward heaven.

This daughter of the colonial council is described by a French memoirist as being as beautiful as a star and as classical as Iphigenia on Tauris. He added to this, "Mademoiselle Rocheblave already possessed no small prophetic gift despite her youth, and nature gave her a great magnetic power."

68

The location of Theodule de Bonseigneur would probably never have been discovered if there had not been a volcanic eruption in 1750, whose expelled ash covered like snow the whole land for miles. An English naturalist who was then on Guadeloupe and visited the scene of this dreadful event in order to collect its volcanic products was no little astonished to encounter human beings in the midst of this lonely, ruined region, which everywhere exposed terrible ruin. He saw a woman deep in her thirties, still bearing the traces of former great beauty, and a young man about twenty, who were covered, like the woman, in a remarkable costume of banana and palm leaves. On approaching them, both were mightily shocked and appeared undecided whether to stay or to flee. They were of a very troubled and pale appearance, particularly the woman, in whose back-combed hair stuck the high comb so common among the rich in those days. The comb was entirely of gold and set with the most costly diamonds, which contrasted dramatically with her clothing of leaves.

The Englishman was so amazed at the appearance of this person that in the first moments he did not know he should address her, approach her or withdraw. His amazement was even more increased when he saw that close by was a dark object that he had previously ignored. It had been taken from the ash-covered ground and laid on a bier made of strip-like plaited vines,

Seized with curiosity and amazement, he quickly approached the two persons and saw to his horror that the object they had placed on the bier was the body of a man whom the molten ash must have reached before he could flee it, for his hands and feet, which were uncovered, showed all too clearly the marks of the injuries from the recent catastrophe.

"Who are you, shameless one?" the woman suddenly called out in a tone that cut through the Englishman's marrow and bone. Then she continued, "You are British, sir,

true? — — oh, I see it in your cold, accursed face, your thieves' eyes, your murderer's hands, your long, common feet that so enjoy stride the entire globe!"

She stopped for a moment, and while the Englishman stood there as if made of stone, she turned to the young man, who now let his hands slip from the bier and followed the words of the agitated woman. As she stretched out her arms pointed toward the Englishman and spoke, so bitter, so cutting, so obsessed: "Look here, my Theodule! Look there, my son! That is a Brit! That is one of the nation that robbed your father — — that drove your father into this wilderness — — that killed your father!"

At these words, the Englishman's hair stood on end.

"Look, my son," she continued, "twenty years we have lived in this wilderness and been happy! Oh, you do not know people! Other than your mother and Theodule de Bonseigneur, your father, you have not seen other people — — you perhaps think this Brit is a wild animal and you would like to jump on him to revenge your father — — but just let it run away, the poor anxious little beast! Look how it shakes — how his legs wobble!"

She said this because she had heard her son's threatening roar.

"She must be insane!" the Englishman thought to himself, and he held it to be wise to get out of this person's reach as soon as possible, and to abandon utterly the purpose of his excursion in the ashy remnants of the crater, hunting for pretty examples of trachyte, lava, obsidian and leukolithic granite.

69

Here our memoirist, whom alone we have to thank for casting some light in the darkness about the earliest history of the Bonseigneur family, suddenly breaks off, and it is painful that a gap opens when his revelations begin to awaken deep feelings in the hearts of our readers. On the other side, we may wish ourselves luck to having passed so quickly over the rocks, whose mere approach would cause us to stumble. On the other side, it can serve to calm us to know enough as is necessary to pursue the red threads that run from New Orleans to Guadeloupe, and from there back to the Crescent City.

Specifically, we have learned that the daughter of the colonial councilor, Edgar Rocheblave, who followed Chevalier Theodule de Bonseigneur into the volcanic regions and passed twenty years in solitude with him, that she bore him a son in the first year, was none other than the prophetess and clairvoyant Madame Rocheblave, who so successfully magnetized that Chevalier Bonseigneur, who in our portrayal emerges as the true hero, and dedicated him to the service of the Great Oromasis. — For this reason, should we now admit that the Theodule Bonseigneur, born in the volcanic wilderness, is the grandfather and Mantissa Rocheblave, the New Orleans clairvoyant, the great-grandmother of our Bonseigneur? This premature confession contributes all the more to our pacification, as the "Bonseigneur Book" which was written by Madame Rocheblave on that island with the thundering clouds, where she lived for ten years to increase her magnetic power before she came to New Orleans, remains sealed with seven seals until her prophesy received from Oromasis and the seven salamanders comes to pass, and the entire Western Hemisphere is lifted off its political and social foundations.

Until then we will support ourselves hopefully on the anchor of our ship, cutting through the Caribbean Sea, and are happy to return to the point where we left Doctor Glasseye in New Orleans and came to Guadeloupe.

“A mirage!” we hear the reader shouting, and we do not wish to contradict him.

70

Almost at the same time that Doctor Glasseye was meeting with the two police agents concerning the planned assassination of Bonseigneur the advocate, a young man sat on the verandah of a house located in Guadeloupe City, also called *Basse Terre*, which because of its rundown and neglected condition would have been given a sad glance by passers by if it had not been improved somewhat by the delicate transparent green of the banana plants in great masses and the olive trees.

The young man had this forehead pressed in both hands, and only occasionally, when the wind blowing from Maria Galante Island passed through the long, wide banana leaves, rattling them together, he would look up and look tensely out the garden gate, as if he were expecting the arrival of some person.

He did this time and again, always returning to the same thoughtful position. Suddenly two cannons were fired from the side where Fort Saint Charles lay. That was the sign for the arrival of a ship.

“Already the second ship since this morning!” the young man said aloud to himself, stood up and went with swift steps back and forth on the verandah.

“Perhaps he is coming with this ship, Hilaire,” he heard a female voice from the open window of a room opening on the verandah.

“If he doesn't come today, I do not expect him until the end of winter,” the young man remarked. Then he sat down.

“In New Orleans, they are starting to live, and I am afraid that this person addicted to pleasure will not bring himself to leave the city in the middle of the season to ship off for our Guadeloupe, which has become so empty.”

“Then he should at least have written,” the female voice responded, “he knows full well the disturbance his silence has caused us, and his well-being as well as ours depends on a clear review of the situation.”

“In any case, despite his strong letter of recommendation, a considerable time will pass before he is in a position to present himself adequately before Madame Choiseul Mumford, for both she and General Wilkinson have their own peculiarities, and to win the trust of an old lady of such a degree to allow a look at her family life, will not be so easy even for a person with the flexibility and knowledge of people proper to a noble. I am always afraid that he will not learn much,” the young man responded.

She who spoke with the young man through the open window now stepped out on the verandah, and as she advanced toward him, she said in a flattering voice:

“Listen, dear Hilaire, in case our friend the notary had the luck to entice some important points of her family relationships, and if our friend Doctor Labarre is able to entice his namesake to come from New Orleans to Guadeloupe — listen to me, dear Hilaire and don't make such a nasty face — — if our plans are punctually carried out— would you promise to love me again as you did earlier?”

“Perhaps,” the young man coldly responded, “but I believe we now have an entirely different thing to consider than love — — incidentally, I have never entirely ceased to love you and would love to see the man on Guadeloupe who would be capable of seeing such a basically ugly thing as you at his side for two long years.”

“Oh, what a poor memory you have, my dear Hilaire — we have been married for precisely three years — —”

“Already three years?” the young man responded, “all the worse — — I never believed that I could be able to stand it for so long — I do not wonder when my friends, all of whom have such beautiful wives, make fun of me — — but let's be silent on it — — you are an ugly thing, a true goblin, and that you remain, whether you dress in rags or lace — —”

“But when I still had diamonds, the lovely horses and the fine carriage, you found me to be beautiful, right my dear Hilaire? For I cannot believe that you married me only because of these pretty things?”

“I cannot give you an adequate answer to that — — For your riches might have contributed to my taking up your yoke, my love — — but then I was even more enchanted with your boundless ugliness — — for my silly Platonic philosophy told me that the greatest beauty exists in great ugliness. And in a certain way this is entirely correct, and I really was curious to get a glimpse into your heart; if they dissect you, assuming that you die before me. — — The only thing that calms me is that you have obtained from me, without even being aware of it, deterioration of your soul so that you have even exceeded me greatly in the creation of devilish plans — — since, to be honest, I would never have arrived at ideas such as you have concerning the Chevalier Bonseigneur in New Orleans.”

“Say about that whatever you wish, my dear Hilaire, only don't throw my ugliness at me so often — for it is this alone that causes me pain, along with our current poverty, and didn't you say only yesterday that I have hair as beautiful as a mermaid's, and that if you were Neptune, you would want to make me your queen? — —”

“Don't tell yourself that I said this in earnest. I only complement you with these words to be free of you for a few hours, and hair hardly matters.”

These two persons, who at heart mutually adored one another, could often be heard speaking to one another, and anyone who did not know them would take them to be a dissatisfied and combative couple. That was, however, in no way the case. And so far as the wife's ugliness went, it was also something entirely different. Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur — for that was the young man's name — did not have the ugliest, but rather the most beautiful wife on the entire archipelago of the Caribbean islands, and the young men in Guadeloupe actually envied him because of this costly gem and thus did not make fun of him over her ugliness, as he had said.

This young man, who had run through the entire wealth of his wife in the short space of barely three years, so that nothing remained of all its splendor but the old, fallen-down house and a pair of Negroes who, although freed, still worked for their old master, had understood how to manipulate the originally flattery-seeking spirit of his wife through his better tactics, so that she perhaps loved him more than when she was a bride.

On the other hand, he spoke only the truth when he said that he had perverted her. But this must be understood correctly.

In those dark hours of poverty that followed the splendidly-enjoyed days of wealth and genuinely royal luxury, the young bridegroom's head often became heavy when he thought of new resources that could revive his ruined finances.

Good by nature, but extremely frivolous, in lonely hours he had sketched many plans at which he at first shuddered, but always, since they rose again in his brain, finally took on a solid form and eventually fell into a labyrinth of evil combinations from which he himself did not know how to rescue himself.

Since he never kept his thoughts secret from his wife, he unconsciously placed in her the kernel of an evil deed. Since she was accustomed to hold whatever he said and did to be good and proper, in a short time she made rapid progress and applied all her moral strength to bring herself and her husband out of bitter poverty that had been beating on their door for many months.

Around this time both of them became acquainted with Doctor Glasseye or Amadée Labarre, brought into contact by a notary from New Orleans who had been stripped of his commission for forging sales documents by the previous governor of Louisiana, and who had come to Guadeloupe to seek new friends with his fraudulently-obtained moneys.

When this notary first saw Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur, he thought that he actually had the Chevalier Bonseigneur before him, and it cost the young couple a great deal of trouble to convince the notary that he was in error.

The similarity of the two Bonseigneurs was so great in their exterior appearance, but even voice, gait and gesticulation.

The young woman, who had already spent a considerable time using her sense of ingenuity in seeking new sources of help, was the first to come to the idea of using this truly terrifying similarity that, if carried out, would place them in expectation of a splendid future. Both the notary and Doctor Glasseye were initiated into this secret, and soon the conspiracy was constructed to the complete satisfaction of the persons involved.

71

Doctor Glasseye, who was not able to gather the necessary means through his medical practice in the town of Guadeloupe to be able to appear make a worthy and respectable appearance, since the local physicians already had all the wealthy residents under contract, could hardly wait to launch his mission to New Orleans. His seeing glass eye project had suffered a dreadful fiasco right at the beginning, and he properly hoped to be able to launch this business with greater success. Further, he learned from his friend, the notary, that New Orleans was a truly golden land for any physician, presuming that he started out with the necessary pomp and, at least until his existence was secure, covered with a false nimbus. Doctor Glasseye attributed his misfortune on Guadeloupe entirely to his having neglected this rule of life.

But in order to make his fortune in New Orleans, he needed money, a great deal of money.

His friend the notary had always given him the best advice, but there could be no talk of pecuniary support from him. His capital obtained in New Orleans through fraud was soon consumed, and very soon it achieved the same level as Doctor Glasseye — he, too, had nothing.

The two thus applied their entire persuasive gifts to get sent to New Orleans as soon as possible to set all those levers in motion needed to carry out the described plan.

Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur and his wife sold their last horses and jewels to provide the two scoundrels with money and promised that, in the case of success, a significant sum, which the careful Doctor Glasseye raised at once in the form of debt shares.

When they departed Guadeloupe, each of them was in possession of a thousand *Napoléons d'or*, and even before departure, Doctor Glasseye forged several letters of recommendation that were signed by the highest officials of France and Guadeloupe.

So Doctor Glasseye came to New Orleans, where we first met him when he promised to insert a seeing glass eye in the young French merchant and defrauded him of ten thousand Mexican dollars.

To episode 71: Although the *Napoléon d'or* was minted in various denominations, the usual one was 20 francs or \$3.75 US. The coin contained 0.1867 troy ounces or 5.805 grams of gold.

72

The young married couple often had experiences such as we have described on the verandah of their half-collapsed house, and as often as the cannon on Fort St. Charles signaled the arrival of a ship, they hoped for the appearance of the notary or at the least a letter.

So passed several weeks. Then, on a rainy, unpleasant winter evening, when they had withdrawn to the innermost of their house to take their meager evening meal, the postman of Guadeloupe appeared with news from New Orleans. Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur opened the letter in feverish excitement, and his wife let the meal sit, arose from her place and looked eagerly over his shoulder. Before they read the beginning, their gaze moved at once to the end of the letter. — It was — not from the notary, but from Dr. Amadée Labarre.

Dr. Glasseye, as we call him, wrote:

My Dear Chevalier!

Nothing but misfortune, stupidity, laughable acts, even acts of scandal! These days one cannot rely on anyone anymore.

Just consider — our friend the notary has not been seen even once by Madame Mumford Choiseul, as I now know for certain, and he is even no longer in New Orleans but in Havana, where he has a good reputation, using my name which, thank God, still is good, to contract debt upon debt. — Since I have made the rare decision never to pay these, I will forgive him this.

But, what I can never, nevermore forgive is that since he repaid the confidence placed in him so poorly and so injuriously undermined.

But let him go. Without energy, without any entrepreneurial ability and without a spark of any sense of justice, he is useless.

It only bothers me that we have revealed our secret to him. But he will not be dangerous to us or our plans, and will not upset our plans in any subversive way, since he lacks the necessary intensity and persistence. The only thing that we will

hear from him again will be when he demands money from us. If he ever makes such a test of his dependence, I will take care of it.

In the worst case I will open a credit for him of a few hundred *Napoléons* with my banker in Havana. With this money, he will either still go completely to ruin, or he will choose a new career where his sense of honor will restrain him from making any further claim on our funds. — We are done with this unfaithful friend.

Now to the main matter.

The project to spirit the Chevalier Bonseigneur out of New Orleans has totally failed. The paths of Providence are wonderful to behold, however, for through this failure our prospects have only been improved.

You will ask why, for what purpose and how? Hear me, Chevalier! The two police agents I wrote you about a few months ago, and who as initiates appeared potentially dangerous, are fortunately no longer alive. They were stabbed to death during a fight in a sailors' bar by one of the river watchmen. This river watchman has also been taken by God to Himself. Specifically, he was killed the same night the police agents were murdered, strangled by two Spaniards (or rather Havanans) as he was walking to the river. This murderous story aroused some interest, particularly in my neighborhood. The next day there were people coming and leaving my place — all friends who came by to express their sympathy because of the murdered protectors of my person. Even the Governor of Louisiana honored me with a visit for this reason.

The esteemed head of the city also appeared in my pavilion and offered me two new police agents for my protection. I declined this offer courteously, remarking that the peril had passed of envious or ambitious colleagues of my profession seeking to get me out of the way — the truth is that I no longer wish to have such ruffraff around me.

Chevalier! To describe the way in which the first conspiracy with the Chevalier Bonseigneur failed — would take too much time — I will describe it to you the next time in detail.

The main purpose of these lines should be to make the current situation clear, and once more I repeat, the Ways of Providence are marvelous! — “Now what is it, Doctor?” you will impatiently ask — what may we hope? How can we call the Ways of Providence marvelous, since the project failed? — Do you have patience, my noble Chevalier? Wipe the sweat from your brow and thank God that He has chosen Doctor Amadée Labarre as His instrument.

The Chevalier Bonseigneur, who otherwise has such a clear and bright head, has suddenly given such obvious evidence of madness that he has been placed in a solitary cell in the cloister building of the Ursulines below the city, where he has been committed to the control of the father confessor of the blessed nuns. And if you consider, my noble Chevalier, that this esteemed father confessor has become my most intimate friend through a small monetary donation and *other* services, you may easily imagine how positive things stand for us.

The cause of his insanity is an extremely unfortunate infatuation with a seventeen-year-old angel by the name of Esperance Mumford, who in fact is a true paragon of beauty.

This angel had fled to the owl-nest of an old witch, known or rather infamous by the name of Madame Rocheblave, and the infatuated Chevalier Bonseigneur somehow came to know this angel.

People whisper remarkable things about this in one's ear. Some simply assert that the beautiful Esperance granted his expressions of love no hearing.

Others add that as often as the Chevalier entered the house, the old witch magically placed devil's horns on his head to excite the girl's revulsion — again others say that the Chevalier, would depart at midnight, but instead of using the door of the house he would always pass up the chimney, and that the old witch then always sent after him terrible fumes that filled the entire neighborhood with the most dreadful smell.

All of this brought him so out of balance that he appeared to fall victim to an incurable madness.

Now we get to the main point.

“This angel Esperance is currently in the house of Madame Choiseul Mumford, and evil tongues assert that the girl derives from an illicit relationship with General Wilkinson. That would be an entirely nice story, but it would sound even nicer for you, my noble Chevalier, if I tell you that Madame Choiseul Mumford has become so obsessed with this angel that she has undertaken legally to adopt her and to make the Chevalier Bonseigneur healthy in body and soul by raising no objection to test his tender inclination through an engagement — do I need to explain it further, my noble Chevalier? Let me alone take care of your insane namesake in New Orleans, and you should come here in about six months — — do you understand me? You are the recovered advocate Bonseigneur — — enter the house of Madame Mumford Choiseul, see Esperance, throw yourself on her neck — — I would bet my head that she will not discover the fraud! When together in quiet hours with her, the conversation turns to the past, then you can give many confused answers, but that will be attributed to your earlier insanity. — You leave your wife on Guadeloupe and marry Esperance — — —”

“The infamous man!” the young wife suddenly interrupted her husband — — — You are to marry her! Listen, Hilaire, how low!”

“Just let me finish the letter, my dear!” Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur responded, and then he continued:

“— — marry Esperance — — Madame Choiseul Mumford dies soon afterward — then your wife dies, and you are in possession of the enormous property — you then go on a vacation to Guadeloupe, bring your wife along and make Amadée Labarre happy through your presence.

“I will make preparations as if she has already made a positive reply. — Your lovely wife will of course make some trouble when you acquaint her with the

contents of these lines — but she will in the end comply with necessity. — The woman is not angel enough to be secure against the devil —”

So closed Dr. Glasseye's letter. Madame de Bonseigneur was beside herself. — “The infamous man!” “This filthy murderer!”

Then there was shaking on the garden gate, so intensely that it could be heard on the inside of the house despite the torrential rain.

“See who that is!” Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur commanded the old maid, who was waiting by the table and had thrown a man's jacket over herself due to the cool weather.

The old woman went and came back immediately into the dining room with an unsealed note in her hand.

“Dear friend! Come this evening at twelve o'clock with your dear wife to the Redoute — — my carriage will await you at the garden gate

“We will then go to Negrofoot and White Chimney — the short Englishman awaits the two of you especially.”

Then he passed the note to his wife to read.

73¹²

As the young wife came to the passage of the note where it said “— — We will then go to Negrofoot and White Chimney — —” she clapped it in her hands and fell on her husband's neck.

“My God, today is Mardi Gras!” she cried out and laid her finger on Bonseigneur's lips, who also must have been pleased, since he chewed at his wife's finger and held it fast for a moment without actually biting on it.

“So the Little Englishman is still thinking of us, my dear Hilaire, where do we find our masks? — — Oh my God, why did he not write earlier?”

“We will go under all circumstances!” replied Jesus Hilaire, who had released his wife's finger, “our costumes for last year are pretty enough, and if we exchange them carefully, no one will know them anymore.”

“That cannot be missed for any reason, since for all the treasures in the world I would not want anyone to say afterward that Madame de Bonseigneur and her husband wore the same costume twice — — — no, no — that would be too insulting!”

She was silent and suddenly seemed to be thinking about something that must have distressed her, since her look that had been brightened with joy now suddenly darkened.

“People can say what they want,” Jesus Hilaire said in a calming tone, “that is entirely indifferent to me — — — but I am going because — —”

“Isn't it to give me a little joy for once, my dear Hilaire?” the young woman inserted, tensely looking at her husband, for she could not let loose of a thought that unexpectedly ran through her head.

“Why not, my dear, to make some fun for you? That did not occur to me in sleep — — we will go to the masquerade because it gives me the opportunity to gamble. Also, I am convinced that this evening we will be graced with luck — — and risking our two *Napoléons d'or* is not much. In any case, the president of the colonial council keeps the bank and I will place myself so he thinks Croesus himself is before him. I will bet all my

money on the first round — — if it loses, I have just lost, and we are no poorer than we were to begin with.”

“And if you lose, then we will still have a really entertaining night — isn't that true, my dear Hilaire,” the young woman declared.

“I don't want to think about it now — — let us first of all look at the old rags we want to hang on ourselves — —”

Both of them pulled up chairs, and Madame de Bonseigneur ran as if possessed through the corridor of the upper floor, dragging the old maid along, carrying the keys to all the armoires and chests that had not been opened for months. Outside the rain descended in torrents, and the sharp, thick leaves of the palms that reached to the rooftops caused a noise like bayonets at war.

“But my God, this terrible light!” she shouted to the black maid, who followed her by paces, “you can hardly see — come — give me the lamp, Ulke, — run down to Monsieur de Bonseigneur — — bring it here — hurry, so you come back up here again — —”

“What am I supposed to say?” the Negress responded in confusion, staring at her mistress in astonishment.

“Didn't you hear me, Ulke? Tell Monsieur de Bonseigneur — go, tell him — no, better for you to stay here — — but no — run down and find a pair of large wax candles — hurry, Ulke! hurry! — —”

“Madame,” the Negress responded, “you certainly don't mean that I should light the consecrated wax candles?”

“You're right, Ulke, stay here — — But my God it is raining in here — —”

Madame de Bonseigneur had now come to a large armoire of rosewood reaching almost all the way to the ceiling, whose finish had long vanished in the moisture that prevailed in this hall. — In the deep carving hundreds of spiders were making themselves comfortable and running in all directions down to the floor whenever Madame de Bonseigneur touched the armoire and opened it — Ulke had enough to do to protect the light through holding her hand to shield it from the exodus.

Let us leave the young woman with the black maid and look after the Chevalier.

When his wife was rushing to the corridor, he went directly into a hall next to the dining room, in which the most ingenious disorder reigned that one could imagine. Around on the walls hung guitars, guns, hunting packs, old and new sabers, broadswords, and pikes, along with flowered, silk and satin sleeping gowns, and discarded hairpieces. Among the latter there was a massive snow-white wig, whose locks had all fallen into disorder, since it was attached to its pigtail, hanging on a black silk rack. There were cards, dice, and silvered and gilt gambling counters, broken champagne glasses, the overturned cover of an enormous punchbowl of rock crystal, all lay scattered about on the carpet, and chess pieces of mother of pearl stood on a little table in a niche, waiting in vain for the battle to continue that was begun a year earlier and was suddenly interrupted. — Turkish pipes with genuine golden tassels, and carmoisine-red boots reaching over the knee, lined with satin, lay at the feet of a divan of dark-green velvet, whose decorations were fixed with golden pins.

The large Venetian mirror that filled the entire wall between the windows, was covered with spider-webs, and over small divan of bright pink silk damask was laid a poignoir that one could see had not served for a long time.

On the sugar-bowl of a tea service there lay a silver tong that still held a piece of sugar that once had been broken to drop into a teacup.

The fact that this hall had long been neglected could be read from the thick dust and the spider-webs. From the way and manner in which so many things lay intermingled one could conclude that something had happened to cause the residents of this house to leave everything behind as it was when they left the hall.

The mouth of the Chevalier formed into a bitter smile as he walked through and over these things, belonging to an earlier era of luxury, staring at him like fossil memories. He opened one of the great arched windows that opened on the back of the garden, since the atmosphere in the long-closed hall was intolerable. But since the rain was coming from precisely this direction, the heavy drops hit his face and chest, so that he felt compelled to close the window again at once. On this occasion, he pulled down the heavy damask curtains that, since the old fashioned windows had no shutters, had tolerated neither the sun nor the moon to look into this hall.

“Devilish weather!” he called out, “but so much the better! If the heavens are so poor, then we do not need to be ashamed of our old masks. — — — And this ugly imp! A truly divine woman — my wife! — — entirely as if made for me! — She would dance in the abyss of a crater if one would only let down a rope! — — This mixture of submission and frivolity, of virtue and criminal gambling! — How the mere thought of Mardi Gras so suddenly has erased her melancholy and lit up her glow of life! And if we only become rich again — — only for a year! And we must, must become rich again! —”

The definition of rich that the Chevalier understood was the achievement of a wealth of at least two to five million *Napoléons d'or*, which, when he included the wasted inheritance of his wife that he actually had not long before. According to his calculations he was a poor, very poor man. But if he had made a calm calculating look around him, and had become used to a purely economic evaluation and summary, he would easily have confessed that he was not too badly situated.

A ruined cavalier in our days would be able to count on his fingers that he could raise the foundation for future wealth through selling the heavy silver candelabra, tea services, the massive silver plates and platters — setting aside a mass of smaller items of worth and the splendid furnishings of the main rooms and be rich to the tune of ten thousand. — But Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur was so much the cavalier that he would rather involve himself in criminal business to swing at once to the heights of a millionaire than to lay his hand to any undertaking that had the least appearance of trade or speculation. Half a century ago there were still many of him, particularly in France and its colonies.

Today there is hardly a trace left of this cavalier race, and on our continent, it could barely flourish.

The naïveté in the economic relations of Jesus Hilaire was that since his marriage the liberated Negroes continued to donate to him some of the money they earned in the shipyards and factories of Guadeloupe in keeping with old practices. In exchange, they received from their master old clothes, some silken rags for their women, shirts, and from time to time gold rings and watch chains, through whose sale the Negroes often made more than they brought their master.

Doctor Glasseye knew his man; otherwise he would not have dared to write such a bold letter.

The Doctor's letter just received, in which the scoundrel in unashamed recklessness launched the newly-hatched plan concerning Chevalier Bonseigneur in New Orleans was in fact written with great understanding of people, since it immediately disdained dealing with moral scruples.

The fact that this letter, in which a great crime was handled like a matter that was obvious, could not fail to have its impact on our young married couple, we will experience quickly enough in what follows. Even Madame de Bonseigneur, who had accustomed herself to be only an echo of her husband, was, although at first offended by the letter, was, so to speak, seduced by the letter. Now, when she was to go to the masquerade, she appeared to be satisfied with everything. So much had she surrendered herself to the perilous magic of the moment.

There is nothing more dangerous for a writer than properly to portray a character such as Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur, for the total doing and driving of this man was so in the manner of Proteus, springing from one extreme to another, that one seeks for the psychological motives in vain. Such a character appears unnatural, impossible, and yet was a constant type, not only of the Renaissance period but also for the whole Middle Ages. Shakespeare often tried to portray such characters, but he never brought it to dramatic perfection, and that is perhaps the only lack in the powerful spiritual life of this greatest of poets, ranking only with Homer and Goethe. A character such as Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur would, if the ability of the artist sufficed, stride the stage with brilliance and effect and place all of the figures of Racine and Corneille in the shade. Our Bonseigneur in New Orleans is already easier to portray than the man on Guadeloupe, because he is a flexible man of virtue, and he follows a certain thread in his course of life.

But we now find ourselves in the hall of the Chevalier on Guadeloupe.

Almost every motion he made was illuminated by flashes of lightning, followed by dull and distant thunder. He set a small crystal lamp, which on his entrance he had placed on the cornice of the hearth, on a round table in the middle of the room, and now he stepped to the side of the hall, where an object enshrouded with black crape sat atop a three-foot tall alabaster pedestal.

The closer he approached the object, the quieter he stepped, as if someone would be disturbed by the sound of his steps.

“You should not be alone today, my poor child,” he whispered to himself, “you should know that your parents still live and have not forgotten you. — You should see her in the same fools’ clothing as when you left her arms — — forgive, dear child, that your parents —”

He heard the rapid steps of Madame Bonseigneur, and when he turned around, she was already on the threshold of the hall loaded over and over with masquerade clothing taken from the armoire in the upper corridor. —

“Great God! my dear Hilaire — what do you think you're doing?” she called out with a strangled breath. Then she let the whole pile fall on the floor and rushed to the middle of the hall, where she remained standing for a moment, as if she had never been there, and everything was entirely new to her.

“What is that to mean? My dear Hilaire!” she continued in an accusing tone, “I believe we would do better to leave our dear child in peace! — — and precisely today, to

awaken this memory in me! — — oh, you are cruel, my dear Hilaire! ——— Tell me, what should that mean that you open this hall and penetrate this place of sorrow?"

"It should mean that we will go to the Masked Ball and will return here. — —"

Jesus Hilaire went to his wife, took her by the hand and said:

"Come, my dear — — if we wish to go to the Redoute, we have to hurry — — consider that the carriage will come at twelve, and we have hardly an hour to dress."

Madame de Bonseigneur made no reply, but left the fatal hall with her husband, who had picked up the masquerade clothing his wife had thrown down.

Then, when he closed the room, they both went to the dressing room to help one another on costuming.

As they entered, the clock in the lower corridor struck eleven. Some cedar blocks that Ulke had placed on the hearth streamed out a comfortable warmth, for it was a very cool night for this time of year, and a strong, penetrating wind continually shook the windows and doors.

Ulke, the personal maid, had set herself down outside the door of the dressing room and hummed continually to herself, as do all old people, without thinking about anything in particular. So, she was like an old, half-blind dog, who only shook when the master was threatened if arguments took place in front of him.

74

An unexplainable fear of offending the reader's sense of decency prevents us from listening to the young couple as they are dressing, and, until we encounter them an hour later we will only remark only so much, that the young woman bound up her beloved Hilaire to give him a cleavage in the Parisian style that he could not have as a man.

On the other hand, it will now be the place to look around at the *Redoute* building, Negrofoot and White Chimney.

These three gathering places or rather theaters all belong to one man, he who is mentioned on the note as the Little Englishman.

Negrofoot and *White Chimney* were two elaborate stone buildings on a lively street of Guadeloupe City, basically filial extensions of the *Redoute* itself, which makes a strong impression with its double row of columns.

Even six years before the Little Englishman only owned an entirely modest café, and through a remarkable series of conditions he managed to build the palace in which the *Redoute* is located.

Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur, who went there often in his grand period, wasted vast sums in this building, in which the host of the house held the bank, and the clever player often took ten thousand *Napoléons d'or* in an evening.

The deeper Bonseigneur sank from his pecuniary high point, the higher rose the host — the Little Englishman.

The masked balls that were celebrated here were the most splendid one could imagine. Yes, a famous crown official of France even asserted that they by far exceeded those in Paris.

Since later the society of the *Redoute* grew somewhat too mixed, so that some of the most respected families of Guadeloupe remained away, the Little Englishman built the

two filial establishments “*Negrofoot*” and “*White Chimney*,” reserving to himself the right to permit entry to the *Redoute* only to those he himself invited. That attracted people. Now the *Redoute* became the gathering place of the most select society, including even the rich planters of South Carolina with their families in season.

When the *Redoute* halls were filled, then one passed to *Negrofoot* and *White Chimney* to see the lower popular life in its fools’ costumes. But no guests of these filial places would have been permitted to enter the palace of the *Redoute*.

Negrofoot was only for the emancipated Negroes, and naturally also their white devotees, and possessed its name from the fact that, at one of its first masked balls, when one supposed a certain person to be a prominent cavalier, one of the society suddenly called out, “a Negro foot! a Negro foot!” The masked man, who wore only thin, white satin shoes, had the misfortune that one of these shoes along with silk stockings, tore to reveal black Negro toes. — That created general alarm, and both whites and blacks did not relent until the supposed high cavalier was unmasked. — Then the amazement was even greater! The masked man with the Negro foot had a white face and was a well-known French general, who had fallen from favor in Versailles since he not only did not defeat rebel Arab tribes he was sent to conquer but had fed them instead. The same masked man also gave the occasion for the name of the other filial, which was built right next to *Negrofoot*.

When the masked man, to avoid the sensation, rushed completely confused into the adjoining building, he was greeted by several black-masked white people with “White Chimney!” The unfortunate general made big eyes when people encountered him in this way, and he could not imagine why they repeatedly called out “White Chimney! White Chimney!” A short, fat *nigger* with a lame leg who was masked as a Newfoundland dog, who ran around sniffing and barking, first called his attention to the cause of this cry. — Then the scales fell from his eyes. Since after his unmasking in the *Negrofoot* building, he was continually being pelted with flour, and since like a young advocate he had run his hand through his hair every ten seconds, the flour flew constantly from his hair and rose on high like a smoke cloud. — A superficial observer would have believed that the brain of the unmasked unfortunate was smoking. — From this time on, the establishment was called “White Chimney.”

Now we know enough to be able to await the moment when the cathedral tower sounds the twelfth hour, and the promised carriage stops at the garden gate of the old villa, in which the young couple are still occupied putting their masquerade costumes in order.

75

If we mentioned in an earlier chapter that Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur sold his last jewels in order to supply the two arch-criminals in New Orleans with money, only diamonds could have been meant. A cavalier of the caliber of Jesus Hilaire will always think first of selling his diamonds before he lays a hand on the silverware and the luxury objects of the household. He will not seek to overwhelm with diamond rings in order to have to eat with tin or silver-plate spoons and forks. Only parvenus are able to do that, or people who only accidentally come on the idea that there is something like good form in the world.

That was precisely his wife, Faustine de Bonseigneur.

After the carriage and the horses had been sold, they immediately felt that it was not chic to continue to show themselves with diamonds. Even their fine trinkets and armbands were put aside for the time being, and they bore only golden earrings, combs and bracelets. An onyx, an opal, garnets, at the most an amethyst, appeared adequate to her to show to the world.

Only ordinary people can display diamonds and at the same time go about on foot or use a rented carriage. For a woman of good tone, diamonds only work when she is in the position to get into her own carriage. We define carriage naturally as no one-spanner, which would be as non-chic as going on foot. Luxury in clothes should never be out of place.

We have presented these rules of good society in advance, partly to kill time until the young couple gets into the wagon masked, and also to put aside every negative prejudice against their appearance in advance.

Rain continued to pour down in streams as the carriage of the Little Englishman halted in front of the garden gate at the proper hour. Ulke, who had already been lurking on the front verandah, appeared now on the lower steps with an enormous umbrella of bright red taffeta. In her left hand, she had a pocket lantern. It was not long before two persons joined her who gathered as closely as possible to her, stepping under the umbrella so that Ulke stood behind them, holding the protecting taffeta hood in front of herself.

These two persons went carefully, with their upper bodies pulled back and on their toes. But they moved quickly until one of the servants from the carriage met them with an umbrella and took them through the open carriage door with a swift movement, as the two had their arms around one another's abdomens. Since the horses had the full rain in their faces, they stiffened their legs and did not want to move ahead. But a few powerful blows of the whip brought them to obedience. They were two splendid Isabellas, and they had once belonged to Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur, who had sold them to the Little Englishman for the sum of four thousand *Napoléons d'or*. If the two people in the carriage had known this, they would have been amazed at the gallantry of the owner of these noble horses, who made them available in such dreadfully poor weather.

Let us look more closely by the carriage lantern light at the two people sitting in the carriage, that is, Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur and Faustine de Bonseigneur.

Faustine de Bonseigneur looked darling in her mens' clothing, and she would have warmed even someone lame, bringing him to attention in all members. Her lovely saffron-colored hair was combed in the manner of a cavalier and tied together under a silver-veined light blue velvet cap that bore a heraldic device in which these words stood: *Estrella de Nuestra Señora de Guadeloupe*. She was also costumed in narrow-legged pants, a short, tight vest, stocking bands with silver fringes and small leather strips, and a fringed belt. Her batiste shirt, which the open vest exposed, was supplied with a jabot of Alençon lace. Her jacket was of light-blue satin decorated with silver sparkles. Her *basite* or mask of black lace had an extraordinarily fine and beautiful tracery. A bonbon purse decorated with pearls lay in her trouser pocket, along with a simple black lorgnette. As a precaution, she carried in her belt a pistol made of English forged steel. She looked like a young page, although without a page's shamelessness, since, at first, she took a rather

distant attitude in her costume, which Jesus Hilaire had to correct in the dressing room. "If you do not become used to this modest restraint," he said to her, "then people will figure out your sex and then there will be no question of going to *Negrofoot* and *White Chimney*, and we will have to restrict ourselves to the halls of the *Redoute*." To deflect this accusation from herself and to give her husband, who was costumed as a woman, a proof of her ability to learn, she stretched her pretty hand toward him, as if to strike him. To test her, he gave her a light slap. She now imitated the gallantry of a remorseful cavalier, seized his hand, kissed it and begged forgiveness.

With this test, Jesus Hilaire appeared satisfied, and moved in keeping with the style from the side of his wife and pressed himself in the opposite corner of the carriage.

Jesus Hilaire wore the costume of a French peasant maiden of that time, and he was also coiffed in the same manner. — With high-heeled shoes with glittering gold, a short blue-white jacket laid in a thousand pleats, splendid stocking bands, white hose with red gores and a bosom that would have shamed the Medici Venus, and long black locks reaching to the kneecaps, all made the masquerade so complete that he himself could mistake his sex. Just as well, whatever one could not see was above reproach, including corset, petticoat and many other little things the young wife supplied her beloved Hilaire in the dressing room.

On one arm was a large, fashionable work bag, in which there were rolls of *Napoléons d'or* that Jesus Hilaire intended to sacrifice to the goddess *Fortuna* in the *Redoute*.

This charming page and this enticing peasant maiden had long, gray-linen overcoats that they had brought with them to protect them from the rain and the cool night air that they let fall on the seat of the carriage. Now, when their masquerade costumes began to chill, they put them on.

The carriage did not travel so fast as they had expected at first, for in the continuing rain the horses often shied, particularly going around corners, where the wind hit them with full force.

When they entered the Rue Monseigneur, Jesus Hilaire was the first to break the silence and said, "We will certainly celebrate next Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and we will perhaps never return to Guadeloupe."

"And the Little Englishman will have to sell our villa and furnishings," the young lady remarked.

"If I do not gamble away these splendors tonight," Jesus Hilaire responded, as he nestled closer to the page.

"You must not do that, my dear Hilaire" Faustine de Bonseigneur said. "When you have played away your *Napoléons d'or*, let that be enough, since if you lose once, then you will lose the second and third time. You have already experienced that enough."

She had barely said these words that there was loud pounding on the carriage window. At the same time, they heard the hoof-beats of the horses, entirely different from the Isabellas. The chevalier and the young lady listened.

It was obvious that people were riding next to the carriage, and behind it. When they turned their eyes to the window, a black face looked back, but disappeared, only to reappear at the opposite window.

“They are Negroes!” said Faustine de Bonseigneur. “These people are more shameless and pressing every day — —”

“You are wrong, my dear page!” Jesus Hilaire responded, to whom the appearance of figures at the window appeared completely indifferent.

“Oh, I am making no mistake — I have seen their black faces — — they are certainly Negroes on horseback.”

“Why not indeed! They are not Negroes — they are just whites masked as blacks who wanted to provide us in this devilish weather with a little surprise — — you will not fear, my lovely page? If they make too much trouble and jokes for us, just show them your English fire-steel and they will vanish at once.”

“I don't want to do that,” the young woman responded — “they are Negroes, believe me, the pistol is not loaded, and they will become all the more pressing, but if they are white, they know I will not shoot, since I bet a hundred against one that these masked ones saw us step out of our garden gate and into the carriage — —”

Just as Jesus Hilaire was about to respond with a word, there was a shot fired outside, apparently right by the carriage, followed by a second and a third; he grasped the handle of the carriage door. His wife pulled him back so suddenly that several pleats of his short, white skirt were ruined. — They listened again. The carriage now appeared to be going more slowly. Not long after, it halted.

Jesus Hilaire reached suddenly for his wife's belt and put himself in possession of the pistol.

“Be reasonable, my dear,” he said softly, “we must finally have some certainty what is going on outside and why these masks are following us — stay quiet in the carriage and don't move — — one must impress the rascals, since they appear to be armed.”

At once the carriage resumed its movement, and in the next moment it moved almost at a gallop over the uneven cobblestones.

“Stay here! my dear Hilaire! — Certainly, it is nothing — — we were confused — — those were certainly blanks, like masks often fire off.” — — And as she said this, she slung her arm around her husband's tense waist and pressed the resisting man down to the seat with all her strength.

They resumed listening. They heard nothing but the monotonous splashing down of heavy raindrops, and only once, when the wind was shifting, it seemed to them that they heard the humming of voices yelling at one another.

Then it seemed to them that the carriage was running on sand, and the wind stormed at them from several sides — Jesus Hilaire placed his face very close to the window and listened.

Faustine de Bonseigneur clung even more closely to her husband, and as if anticipating the approach of misfortune, she said to him, “What if something happens to you or me? It seems to me that the carriage is not going to take us to the *Redoute* building at all.”

Jesus Hilaire could not keep from laughing at this evidence of love. Only then did the young woman understand the error she had made in her momentary confusion.

Then she sprang laughing around her husband's neck. She lifted the black blond of his face mask, shoved her own up, and kissed him in clumsy desire, first on the mouth, then on the nose, then on the cheeks.

“You are falling out of your role, my dear page! See how you have messed up my virginal bosom?” And he gave her again, as before when she stretched her hand to him, a slap.

The ringing of spurs on the carriage step followed immediately by the opening of the door and the hasty entrance or rather leap in of two masked figures would soon teach the young couple where they were.

76

The rain had now relented, but the city of Guadeloupe was for a while bedecked with dark clouds that threatened to dissolve any minute into a downpour. — About one o'clock after midnight the heaven cleared and the moon appeared, and it was not long before that only a few small clouds from the west moved softly along their paths.

Toward the long-stretched back of the mountain, whose volcano with its chief face turned toward the coral reefs of Maria Galante opposite the island of Guadeloupe, one saw cloud formations still threatening storm, through whose thinner levels was seen the never-ending column of smoke of the crater, whipped here and there by the wind, and it received the light of the moon over the city of Guadeloupe, sinking as in colored circles into the hollows of the palm thickets.

Now, when the heavens had clarified, the streets of the city were filled with thousands of masks, as if by a magic spell. They were seen in carriages, on wagons, on horseback, and on foot. Yes, some did not disdain riding on donkeys decorated with colorful bands, often breaking their way forcefully through the pedestrians.

A band of black masks moved growling and yelling from Negrofoot and White Chimney, causing no small terror in many by their strange cries.

Here it should be remarked that in this time on Guadeloupe during Mardi Gras the greatest excesses were permitted, both in speech as in deeds. Woe to the policeman, who undertook to intervene on such occasions. He would be instantly cut to pieces by certain masks of what was called the “Black Cavalcade.”

In those days, so great was the mask-freedom, not only on Guadeloupe but on all French possessions.

It is history that even in 1815 several murders took place on the open street during Mardi Gras, and the police did not even dare search for the guilty. So much in fear were they in the presence of the mask-freedom.

The “Black Cavalcade” mentioned was feared and hated in the entire city, partly because one did not even know who they were. It was assumed that these riding masks consisted largely of Negroes led by whites. Many even said they had discovered that the police judge of Guadeloupe with his son and wife were among them. These masks were both men and women.

Cries such as the following can even be heard today sounded like war cries:

“Down with the white scum! Down with all voting in the Jacobin assembly against the liberation of the black race! Down with the white scum without exception, whether they are for or against us! To the lampposts with the colonial council! To the lamppost with its president! To the lampposts with scoundrels opposed to men of the black race being elected to the colonial council! Under the knife of the guillotine with the King of France, if he confirms the election of a white colonial council! To the highest gallows

with all who do not belong to the Black Cavalcade! A ship's rope around the neck of all those who do not regard our wives and daughters as equal in birth to the whites!"

The foreign masks, of which at this time were legion in the city of Guadeloupe, shuddered when they heard such words, and could have come to a bloody massacre if the citizens had not earnestly gathered together and demanded serious support from their motherland.

Now two horsemen separated themselves from this Black Cavalcade and went into a side alley, where they dismounted in front of a bar with the strange name of *Coeur noir*, "Black Heart."

Since they feared that their horses would be taken if they tied them up on the posts outside the door, they led them casually right through the bar in which were a few poor masks, into the back of the house, giving them to the care of a bent-over old Negro, who appeared to know the riders. He took the horses without a word and led them into a sort of stable, which also served as a kitchen and provided the old Negro a place to sleep.

Let us now look around the bar a little closer.

77

Behind an enclosure made quite cunningly of leaves of *Palma de sombrero de la Habana* sat the actual *Black Heart* that had given this bar its name — she was an old, extremely thin Negress, who fifty or sixty years earlier had been the pride of the sons of *Negritia* and broke the hearts of many black cavaliers because of her virtue.

For that reason, and not because of her skin color, she obtained the name of *Black Heart* or *Cruel Heart*. In her bony right hand, she held a large piece of roasted clay, which is called *tuf rouge* or *tuf jaunâtre* on Guadeloupe and known to the Negroes in Guinea under the name of *Caunae*

Like the Otomaki on the Orinoco and other earth-eating people in the tropics of both hemispheres, so also Black Heart ate this roasted potter's clay with a passion. When she had bitten off and swallowed some, there followed a strong pull on a bottle that was filled from year to year with dreadful rum. — In her opinion, she would long since have died if she had not kept such an extraordinary diet.

To episode 77: The consumption of clay and other materials, such as corn-starch, was long seen as pathological and designated as *pica*. More recently it is thought by many to derive from a vitamin shortage rather than causing it.

This clay that Black Heart ate so greedily was originally available on the markets, not only in Guadeloupe but on those of the other Caribbean islands.

But this delicacy did not do so well as it did by Black Heart.

Most Negroes could no longer enjoy this clay over the long term, which had served them well in their homeland in Guinea or Senegal as a main means of nutrition without negative results. They sickened and many died as a result of consuming it, so that the governments saw themselves compelled to ban its sale completely.

This ban did not entirely eliminate the problem, but it only had the result that people had to seek their earthy food secretly.

The owner of the bar of the Black Heart soon obtained the exclusive monopoly, and no Negro who visited her left without taking away a large piece of clay in bags. Even more, our memoirist tells us that two years before the outbreak of the Negro revolution on Haïti, even whites on Guadeloupe ate clay in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the Negro principle.

The entire Caribbean archipelago then found itself in continual uproar, and the scenes of horror that occurred on Haïti were supposed to take place at the same time on all the Caribbean islands.

That this conspiracy failed is known to us from history.

But now we grant the hostess behind the palm screen our further attention.

She wore the same madras headdress preferred by Negroes, which was still almost universal in New Orleans until a few years ago, but which has been replaced more and more by the bonnet.

Colored sisters of course knew nothing about hoops in those days, since most of them, besides a simple striped jacket, wore a skirt sewed together of coffee sacks, descending straight from the hip to the ankles without any folds. — That was also the case with Black Heart. — Her orange-colored, carmoisine and green striped madras headdress, which in height was almost twice as high as her face, the dark blue cotton jacket with white flowers, her breasts like the leather bottles of camel-drivers hanging down to a repellent length, in combination with her seamless skirt made of coffee sacks gave her the appearance of an African idol. Since her hands were very thin, her fingers, long in any case, were not unlike the legs of a large bird-spider. — Her lips protruded and were of a pale blue-red color. Since these, together with her chin, constituted the sole extended part of his face, she in truth had a striking resemblance to a Brazilian forest-devil.

Black Heart was no provincial. She had seen the world, that is, Paris, where she experienced the entire period of the Revolution, from the storming of the Bastille to the crowning of Napoléon as emperor of the French. Since she was too old to be a cleaning lady and could not be a hairdresser because of the filth of her hands, she ended up a laundress.

She was several weeks in Mirabeau's house, but since he only paid by the piece, she could barely earn her daily bread. It went better for her when, through the intervention of the Desmoulines and Fabre d'Eglantine, she came to wash Robespierre's shirts and vests. He found her a position with the chief executioner of the Revolutionary Tribunal, where she had to wash out the bags into which they let the heads of guillotined persons fall.

Then she made money like hay, and when she returned to Guadeloupe a few years later, she bought the not insignificant property on which her bar stood.

She fantasized continually about the guillotine, and it was primarily she who created the Black Cavalcade, modeled on a Paris *sans-culotte* masquerade. Her hatred against the whites was limitless, and according to her opinion America was only created to create an inheritance for her race.

No less was her hostility against the whites in the Black Cavalcade, but she understood that nothing could happen without their cooperation. — Once the goal had been reached, then they could easily enough be swept out of the way. —

One family was particularly the one on which she had concentrated her hostility and her ambition since her youth. — With devilish interest, she was aware how the last member of this family on Guadeloupe had ruined himself by measureless decadence, and nothing could equal the joy when she had first seen the ruined millionaire and his wife walking in the same street through which he had been wont to race in the proudest of carriages.

The cause of this bitterness was that she held the ancestors of this family to be the true founders of slavery in French colonies, and since it was he who had many thousands of her race brought from Africa to Guadeloupe by slave traders.

Her disturbed and malignant nature often drove her to many bitter assaults, and she raged when she was once sold off to South Carolina, but how she had been allowed to run away, since she had continually encouraged the Negroes on a neighboring plantation to disturbances against their masters.

Just as she did it in South Carolina, so also she continued now on Guadeloupe. But all the more, she desired and believed in an extermination of the white race, at least on the islands.

Such feelings and ideas filled the deepest inner parts of Black Heart, along with the sale of clay and bad rum.

78

Once the two riders knew their horses were secure, they went behind the partition where Black Heart sat. They were both costumed as *Pierrots*,¹² and masks of black gauze covered their faces. Of all masquerades, the *Pierrot* costume is the best to hide the motion and form of a person, whether a man or woman.

One of these masks, only a little shorter than the other, leaned over the bar, which was to the side of the palm partition, and said to Black Heart softly:

“Who are these other masks, hostess?” There were only a few masks in poor clothing in the bar.

Black Heart first swallowed down her bite of clay, rolled her tongue, and asked with a shrill, loud voice:

“Do *messieurs* come from The Devil's Pool?” That was a particularly wasted place outside the city of Guadeloupe whither no one dares go, that had such an evil reputation that no person dared to approach it. Since Black Heart posed this question out loud, she showed that she had no secrets from the other masks in the bar.

“They both have been well seized,” responded the other *Pierrot*. “The chevalier remains for the time being in The Devil's Pool and Lady Bonseigneur will be here within an hour and will attend to you, hostess.”

To episode 78: Pierrot was a character in Italian *commedia de l'arte* in the seventeenth century, with a loose-fitting outfit that became a commonplace of mime theater, as with Jean-Louis Barrault in the film *Les enfants du paradis* (1945).

Black Heart broke into a dreadful peal of laughter, and then she said coldly, “Finally in the trap! — — How will the tender little lady wrinkle her nose when we put her on a bed of moss and corn straw?”

“But first she will have to dance with us!” one of the masks called out, who had already been in the bar when the riders arrived from the Black Cavalcade.

“And I want to play the devil's dance for her!” said another of the masks mentioned, and he pulled an old fiddle from under his shabby domino: “And if she does not want to dance,” he continued, “I will smash the fiddle in two on her head!”

“Be quiet, Cocco!” Black Heart shouted at the mask with the fiddle, “you always a big mouth, and when it comes to that, I wouldn't trust you to hit a raccoon over the head — it will be much better to give Madame Bonseigneur a kiss — this proud, educated white frog should learn that a Negro mouth is as good as the white lips of her Chevalier.”

And turning to the *Pierrots*, she continued, “You know what I mean, messieurs, and I do not mean to insult your race, but I am speaking of those cursed whites who hold us to be baboons and think they have done enough by abolishing slavery. Abolish slavery? Hm! Hm! As if we would cease to be slaves as earlier, when people still sold us? Where they can still step on us, they do it, and did not the president in the last session of the colonial council put off social and political equality until we had raised ourselves to the educational level of the whites? Such rudeness! As if we were not as educated, and possess as much understanding and ability! Not to speak of our physical ability — send a few men of our race into the session chamber of the colonial council and throw the whole gang out the windows! It must become different, messieurs, and if we do not send all the white scum on Guadeloupe to hell before next Mardi Gras, I will no longer eat clay and no more be Madame hostess of the ‘Black Heart.’”

As she spoke these words, she gesticulated in the demonstrative manner typical of her race, and she would have continued in this passionate tone if she had not been attacked by mighty coughing that last several minutes, and when it was over, she had cooled somewhat.

“Calm down, madam hostess!” said one of the *Pierrots*, who had seated himself at her side on a camp stool. “Things stand better for your race than you think. Everywhere white men are working to goad black servants in Guadeloupe's families and compel them to secret obedience. — The black servants and maids in the houses of the colonial council have long since been won over, and are ready in a minute to throw themselves on their masters at a certain hour. But we must not be too premature. There are still many simpletons of your race, Madame hostess, who could betray the whole cause.

“In this way our prisoner, the Chevalier de Bonseigneur, still has a mass of servants that are no more than slaves. They still work, as always, for their master in the shipyards and factories of Guadeloupe and Marie Galante, and old Ulke would go through fire and water for her madam.”

“Old Ulke is as nothing to us,” Black Heart interrupted, speaking to the *Pierrot*, “she is old and stupid and would harm us more than help us.”

“Tomorrow she will go to the police judge to make a statement that her masters have not returned from the masquerade,” the other *Pierrot* said, smiling.

“And he will have the house closed and appear to begin a police investigation — the matter is in order, madam hostess — — everyone will believe that the Chevalier leaped into the Marie Galante Channel in his desperation, and that his beloved little fool, whose entire wealth he had run through, had leaped after him — — in six weeks people will have forgotten about the Bonseigneurs on Guadeloupe —” the other *Pierrot* added.

“May I also dance with the lovely white madam, Grandma?” suddenly a voice arose, and at the same time from under the bar crawled a living being that looked more like an ape than a human. After it had worked its way through a literal barricade of stoneware mugs and long-necked bottles, it set itself on the lap of Black Heart and repeated its previous question in a beseeching tone.

Both the Pierrots threw it a few bonbons, which it greedily snatched and swallowed.

This strange being was a Negro boy of about ten years, completely naked, with a huge head and a strongly extended lower jaw. He had large eyes that leaped about like fiery wheels on the coals.

“You will dance with the white lady, my dear little son,” Black Heart said, pushing her disgusting breasts back under her short cotton jacket.

“The poor child is bored,” she then said, turning to the *Pierrots*, “for a long time it has had no entertainment, and yet it is such a good, obedient child. It lies almost the entire day under the bar, and I would not recommend any stranger to touch one of these mugs when I am not here — — see, what lovely teeth he has!”

“Indeed, splendid teeth!” one of the *Pierrots* said.

“And this lovely, shining skin,” the other remarked, “I have never seen such on a white person.”

“That is the actual skin that the great constellation has given us and, you must not take it poorly, messieurs, I believe that a white skin has only sprung from a sick condition — but look at this satin, blacker and finer than the mantillas of the wives of our colonial council. Such a child does not need to be ashamed to go naked — he could show himself this way everywhere, and when we make a few of the laws, he will show himself in public — and how fat the child has become — yet two years ago I would not have believed that my dear Mock would ever become so beautiful. He had been sick then, thinned down and grew a pointed belly — — but through my care he quickly gained weight, and every day he gains more.” As she said this, she stroked the little monster like a cat and gave him a wink to return back under the bar.

“When the white lady comes, I will call you again — be quiet now and let me speak again with the gentlemen,” she said to her darling and resumed her previous position.

79

Deeper investigators who get to see these lines will be inclined to feel that these eccentricities taking place during Mardi Gras in the city of Guadeloupe under the veil of mask-freedom occurred, and that a few years later were made practical through Toussaint Louverture in Santo Domingo, to be only an avant-garde encounter that foretold a powerful attack.

By this I have not yet expressed the actual interest of this portrayal in its full range, and we will never do so. We prefer to leave this to the recognized public characters who seek to make the apparently inevitable movement of events clear to their fellow men. And since we do not doubt that the fulfillment of this is possible, we will proceed to challenge the imagination of the reader.

One has certainly already guessed that the two riders on their *Pierrot* costumes were those two masks who jumped into the carriage in which Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur and his wife were. But the revelation might come as a surprise that the note inviting the

young couple that was passed the previous evening and containing the invitation to the *Redoute* halls was not from the Little Englishman, but rather from a constant guest of the “Black Heart,” who was naturally also a member of the often-mentioned Cavalcade.

But in order not to excite the least suspicion of the young couple, this permanent guest of the black stable servant and carriage keeper of the Little Englishman took his horses, since he knew well that such a complete sportsman as the Chevalier would not be fooled by strange horses. And since the Little Englishman owned no other horses than the Isabellas obtained from Jesus Hilaire, it was not entirely outside probability that the Chevalier and his wife would have been suspicious and perhaps not entered the carriage.

But would the Little Englishman specifically have sent *his* horses, and could the young couple not as well be picked up in a rented carriage? That would certainly be possible to imagine — but not for Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur. As great a bother as the Little Englishman was, still he possessed enough sympathy not to have the Chevalier picked up in a rented carriage, even if fire and brimstone had rained down from the heavens. — Jesus Hilaire had of course expected no less, and when we expressed the speculation that he had recognized the Isabellas, we were entirely correct.

In keeping with the agreement, the horses and carriage were supposed to be returned immediately in good order, as soon as the Chevalier and his wife were taken to the Devil’s Pool.

The originator of this conspiracy was Black Heart herself, and her principal cohort was the police judge of the city of Guadeloupe, who himself had no other motivation than entirely common greed. Since according to the laws of Guadeloupe, he had the right to visit every house and after the visitation to seal it in the name of the government until the colonial council at its next session disposed of it, he hoped to get, if not all, then the greater part of the silver, of which he had been thoroughly informed by an earlier black maid. Two trusted policemen, who along with him and through him stole like ravens and also belonged to the Black Cavalcade, were supposed to help him in this robbery. Also, he was careful to pass some of these prospects to Black Heart.

Concerning the Chevalier de Bonseigneur and his young wife, the agreement was made to keep them prisoner in the Devil’s Pool until the even rumors had vanished and they were declared dead. Only then did they hold it to be proper to put them entirely out of the way, for Black Heart insisted on it in her old hatred of everything that bore the name of Bonseigneur.

This original plan was altered shortly before its carrying out in that Faustine de Bonseigneur would not remain with her husband in the Devil’s Pool but rather be brought in the same evening to the “Black Heart” bar.

This idea also came from Black Heart, since in this way she would have the often-desired occasion to enjoy the anxiety and terror of a young white woman and see her humiliated.

Such maneuvers cannot be carried out so easily these days, and especially in New Orleans, where almost every resident must be his own special policeman, so as not to be so easily the victim of the official special police. — We say, no longer as easy, but how something of that sort could take place now we shall see later.

One should always remember that we are not writing a novel here, neither in terms of form nor content, but a sort of modern epic in the meter of the throat, that is, an epic in prose. If this form is new, it is also the only form possible.

But we continue.

Before we have Faustine de Bonseigneur come to the bar at the “Black Heart,” and before we look after her beloved Jesus Hilaire in the Devil's Pool, we must add something to the understanding of the two previous chapters.

We recall that while the carriage that was to bear the young couple to the masked ball in the *Redoute* halls passed through the street next to the villa, several pistol shots were fired that drew the attention of the page and the peasant maid to a considerable degree, and that the carriage halted for a moment and then proceeded at a gallop over the bumpy paving, and that finally to those sitting in the carriage, it appeared they were crossing sand.

The truth was so:

Two white servants of the Little Englishman, who were also having their shrovetide fun and for this reason went to a disreputable part of the city, had unexpectedly seen their master's horses in front of a strange carriage by the dark glimmer of the street lanterns and the torrential rain. They ran to the carriage, finding two strangers on the drivers' bench, so first they hailed to ask who they were. Since the two coachmen paid no attention to them and instead drove the horses faster and faster, the white servants of the Little Englishman fired two shots without bullets, to discourage them and to get them to halt.

Instead the servants of the Little Englishman were attacked by two masks from behind, torn from their horses, then beaten to the ground and left in the middle of the street.

During this event, the carriage halted for a few moments, then it went rapidly forward, and in a few minutes the carriage was outside the city — where it slowly went through the moist sand pass that led to the Devil's Pool.

Only now the black masks into the carriage, to overpower the astonished ball guests, which would have failed in the face of the decisive resistance of the young couple if there had not been other masks waiting for the two arrivals participating in the seizure.

Why they never returned the horses of the Little Englishman to their stable does not need explanation after the episode with the two white servants.

That very night, they sent the horses to the island of Maria Galante, where they were delivered into the hands of trusted horse thieves who had already served with distinction in that trade.

80

The moon now stood atop the gilded cross on the tip of the tower of the cathedral of Guadeloupe, and since over half of its forward-jutting sickle a dark cloud hung, it appeared like a crow with a gilded tail wanted to spend the night on the top of the cross.

It was three o'clock.

A raw foreign wind wafted fresh through the never-dying leaves of trees of this tropical city and threw itself with true hostility on the masks rushing home on foot, some alone and some in groups seeking to outrun the uncomfortable night air.

These masks on foot were the true martyrs of Ash Wednesday emerging from the intoxication of Carnival.

Most of them had the chilling dew that fell on their faces, still heated by wine and love, bringing them to their senses and perhaps new cares entered their heart and darkened their vision. Perhaps, already before they crossed the threshold of their homes, they had lost their spirit in the shadow of the misery and need of the coming day, for many had drunk away everything, gambled away everything, loved away everything. The cold breath of dawning morning of Ash Wednesday beseeched them about the seriousness of life against which they had so recklessly declared war this very night.

Happier were the masks that sat in their four-horse carriages and felt warm ermine on their chests. They could lay back thoughtless in their soft seats and sleep on, until a soft, dutiful voice woke them, and they rose out of their carriage to be led into their warm bed. They could then slumber on until the sun stood at its zenith and the passing of all earthly things had gone even further forward.

All of these masks, both rich and poor, vanish without a trace before our gaze, and only one draws our attention, turning the corner of Rue Monseigneur and leaning for a moment on the moist iron bars of a palace. She stands directly in the light of the half-covered moon, that crow-phantom on the tip of the tower of the cathedral.

Now she steps out of the shadow and enters into the betraying light, without actually wanting to do so. From her costume, it is easy to see that she was not one of the ordinary masks, and yet she is going by foot, with the wet street under her soles.

The black silk cloak hanging from her shoulders obviously belongs to a different costume, consisting of a jacket of light blue velvet decorated with silver sequins, of tight-leg trousers of light blue atlas, to which we must add the open vest, from which a jabot of Alençon lace rises, and the splendid white silk hose with pinned bands. The black velvet cap with a long, black feather, which is fixed with a diamond brooch, is also out of agreement with the bright-blue ensemble of this masquerade.

She only releases her hand from the wet iron bars to draw the black mantle even closer to herself, hiding her entire costume. Her mask of black blonde hung from her neck and left her face free. It was a perfect oval of blinding white and had the finest proportion. Her large black, flashing eyes formed a dramatic contrast to her saffron-yellow hair, in extraordinary fullness, but confused and seeking peace, falling far down over her body.

This mask looked like Marlborough's page in the old ballad, or like the angel of death of the Caucasian race.

Her careful forward motion and her continuously looking around, stopping again, then advancing, had to cause the conclusion that this mask had lost the way. When one was in the position to see her costume, before she covered her entire figure with the black silk cloak, the thought was obvious that this lonely, wandering mask had endured some sort of extraordinary adventure.

As she took a few steps further, she encountered an entirely unexpected figure that was rolled up at the foot of the statue of "Our Dear Virgin of Guadeloupe" and appeared to be sleeping. The mask stopped.

As she looked closer, she saw from the long spear that lay next to this figure that he was a member of the night watch who, rather than walking his assigned precinct, had sought a place to rest.

At first undecided, the mask finally walked up to him, bent over and lifted the spear from the ground, and gave the watchman, who was really asleep, first a light nudge with the butt of the spear, and then, since she wanted to awaken him, a really sharp poke in the rear. The watchman now opened his eyes, looked up to see a mask covered in a black cloak, with a spear in the hand, standing before him, and he arose into a half upright position, crossed himself three times, and then sprang up with resolution.

"I don't need you to cross yourself, dear man," the mask said, "If I were the devil, I would not have awakened you first, but taken you straight away. Be of good cheer, I am only a mask with a spear in hand, who cannot find her way in the city. Do me the courtesy and escort me to the street where the *Villa Bonseigneur* is located — I will richly reward you for the disturbed sleep."

When the night watchman perceived, rather than his conjured-up Devil, the pleasing tone of a female voice, his heart grew light. He reached for his spear, made a deep bow, and when he saw the mask's youthful face, he believed himself entirely entitled to address her as "Mademoiselle."

This spirit of protection of the city of Guadeloupe had been in other regions for an hour, and had fortunately already slept off his intoxication. Laughing in a foolish manner, he offered the mysterious mask his arm and said:

"If you wish, Mademoiselle, I will bring you to the gates of the Villa Bonseigneur, since if we take the right street, you still have a good half hour to walk, and on the way you could have a misfortune — —"

"But how is it possible!" the mask responded, "am I really so far from the Villa?"

"You are in precisely the opposite part of the city, Mademoiselle — — look here — the palace of the president of the colonial council, and there that of the honorable police judge of our city — — we must go quickly if we are to reach the Villa in three-quarters of an hour."

"Then I am afraid I will not be able to get home," said the mask, "for I am dying of thirst and exhaustion."

"Thirst can easily be helped, Mademoiselle — not five hundred paces from here is a bar that is certainly still open, and if you are too tired to go on, I will carry you on my shoulders."

As unwelcome as the mask thought this offer, she still understood that it was most reasonable for her to go further with security.

She then answered:

"If you could get me a drink of water from the bar, I will be very obliged, and if I am not too heavy for you, you could carry me on your shoulders."

"A drink of water, Mademoiselle? By our beloved Lady of Guadeloupe — that will be of little use to you if you are really so thirsty and tired. A solid drink of rum — that would get you on your feet!" the good-willed night watchman responded.

"Get what you want on my behalf, dear man — but I fear that your rum will only increase my thirst, and if it is bad rum as well — —"

“A bad rum, Mademoiselle? By Our Beloved Lady of Guadeloupe! In the 'Black Heart' they have the best rum in the world.”

“In the 'Black Heart?' That is the name of your bar?” the mask responded, striving to keep up with her companion, who was already quietly anticipating his little glass of rum.

Here we must insert that in Guadeloupe, one of the obligations of a night watchman was that every person, whether a foreigner or a citizen, if his help was requested, had a right to be brought home with the greatest accommodation. This noble police-rule even extended to those who had done too much on behalf of their good mood, and thus required a protecting arm. In those days, they knew nothing of drunks hauled before the police courts, accused of stealing pen knives, postage stamps and "sleeve buttons," and then punishing them at once by compelling them to pay for the deeds of their weak flesh. As great a scoundrel as the police judge of Guadeloupe was, it would not have occurred even to him in his sleep to turn his courtroom into a rebate-shop.

They were now barely twenty paces from the bar.

In the “Black Heart,” it appears that they had given up waiting any longer for the arrival of a certain rider who was to bring Faustine de Bonseigneur on his horse from the Devil’s Pool.

The heavy oak cupboards were already closed, but the door was slightly ajar. The night watchman had noted that at once.

“We are coming at exactly the right time,” he said to his mask, “let's hurry before the door is closed.”

With these words, he went quickly forwards and pulled his companion along. She was barely able to keep up with him.

Even before she had come to the door of the bar, a tall, thin figure with a high madras headdress was standing before the door and was in the process of locking it. When she saw the two heading for the bar, she remained standing in indecision.

“Could you serve us another glass of rum, Madame hostess?” the night watchman called out, who appeared to know the tall figure. — It was Black Heart. — She was silent in the first moment, then as the two were almost there, she suddenly called out:

“You are coming very late, Monsieur Police Judge — — and on foot?” By that she meant the mask with the black silk cloak and the diamond brooch on the cap.

“You are in error, Madame hostess,” the night watchman responded, “I come with a young Demoiselle who has gotten lost in the streets and has asked my help — — quickly give us something to drink — — we have no time to lose, for the young Demoiselle is very tired and we still have a long way to go.”

The lady, who did not seem pleased to expose herself to the view of the hostess, had taken her mask of black blonde that had hung from her neck up to now, and she put it over her face and stood with the night watchman before Black Heart, who so far had not changed her position in front of the slightly open door or to encourage the two arrivals to enter. She examined the mask with the black silk cloak several times from head to foot.

The night watchman, who saw this, grew impatient and said in a commanding tone, bringing his spear, which he held in his left hand, dropping it forwards: “In the name of the law, Madame hostess, permit us to enter, so that my charge may get a drink. — If you have such a bad conscience and take the Demoiselle for the honorable Police Judge of the city of Guadeloupe — I must say to you, you may rest assured.”

“You are a clown, Monsieur,” Black Heart responded, “and I simply cannot understand who gives you the right to accuse me of a bad conscience and to press a spear into my body in front of my own house — — so the mask there is a young Demoiselle?” she asked in an extended tone, repeatedly examining the night watchman's companion from head to foot.

“That is no concern of yours who my mask is,” the night watchman said now, whose patience was vanishing, in a harsh tone: “I tell you for the last time, in the name of the law let us enter and give us a drink!” —

Grumbling, Black Heart abandoned her previous position at the door, and the two stepped into the bar following the hostess.

81

With this and the two following chapters we stand on the eve of events that will return to our own soil. — What takes place in the bar of the “Black Heart” after the mask with the black silk cloak in the company of the night watch entered, we will discover further on. In the same way, we still must visit the “Devil's Pool” and look after Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur. Then we will take our harpoon, which is decorated with endless red threads, from the island of Guadeloupe and throw it at the twisted back of the city of New Orleans and see whom that will hit. But before all that, we must place here a letter that was written on Mardi Gras night in the shabby room of a house at the extreme end of the *Rue Monseigneur*, not far from the *Villa Bonseigneur*.

This mysterious content after a while reached the hands of the often-mentioned Jesuit Mainard in New Orleans, who records the coded text without being able to decode its contents. To give its due to Truth, the sole divinity to whom we pray, we will here give it directly. Decoded it reads as follows:

“You will read through this letter with the greatest attention, and since it, as we see, is composed in the code known to you alone, if it is stolen or lost, it will remain a riddle for everyone.

“Through the invaluable gift that I send you with this letter, I wish to oblige yourself closely to me. This secret consists of the artificial manufacture of gold, the sole object of which you have need.

“When I met you in New Orleans last winter, you asked me to tell you before my departure the secret of how to transform silver into gold. I did not do it then, but now I wish to fulfill your wishes.

“Before everything else, I want to say that you should leave your place as soon as possible and come to Guadeloupe. This is because the operation demands my presence, partly to construct the oven, partly because of the extraordinary rapidity of the process, since the slightest delay of operation would destroy everything. My wish to be helpful to you in this manner would win for me your eternal good will and overcome the prejudice over the wonted processing and enlightenment process of chemists spread abroad.

“Since you cannot work alone, you cannot trust anyone else, since if the operations succeed, then those who would help you would betray your secret. —

If I had silver, I would have been extraordinarily rich for decades — but let me proclaim my secret to you:

“One takes two ounces of good silver that one has dissolved in *aqua fortis*. Then one must precipitate it with a plate of copper and wash with lukewarm water to clean it of all acids. Once one has dried it adequately, then one mixes it with a half-ounce of *sal ammoniac* and put it in a crucible suitable to receive it. Then one takes a pound of so-called "feather alum" and a pound of crystal, the best being from the mountains, on the Arkansas River, as well as four ounces of copper-green, as well as many ounces of cinnabar and two ounces of brimstone.

“All of these ingredients must be ground, mixed together and brought into a distilling alembic of such a size that it never is more than half full. This alembic must be placed on an oven with four vents, since the fire has to be raised to the fourth degree.

“One must begin with a mild fire, which is to remove only the watery portion, and when the spirit begins to predominate, the receiver must be placed under it in which the silver and *sal ammoniac* are contained. All the materials must be properly cemented together and in a mass as the spirit parts develop themselves, the fire must the fourth vent be opened for a moment. Doing this, one must take care that the sublimate does not go over into the receiver where the silver is located, all the more the lifting pipe should be closed with a thrice-doubled blower and placed in a circulation oven, then remove the blower and turn the retort to the middle so it may distill.

“The fire must be increased so the spirit portion remaining in the mass is brought to complete dryness.

“After this operation is done three times, the gold will be found in the retort, then it has to be removed and melted.

“So out of four ounces of silver one has two ounces of gold, of the same weight as gold and capable of hammering.

“With proper industriousness, in this manner you can make a weekly profit of four thousand *Napoléons d'or*. Of this gold I will only demand as much as you have the goodness to give me.”

After this detour, which many will see as not related to our theme, we now return to the bar of the "Black Heart" to witness to the shocking events necessary to bringing about the truly world-historical tragedy of the Bonseigneurs.

82

The night watch of the city of Guadeloupe, who in fact had a fine heart, was not really a continuing customer of the bar of the "Black Heart." In fact, up until now he had not set foot in it.

Despite that, he was well known to the hostess and most of the patrons, both black and white, for since he was still unmarried, and he must have had opportunity to warm his heart, he did appear regularly during his nightly working time with every sounding of the bell at the window with its heavy oak shutter and ordered a glass of rum, always filled to overflowing, to take on the street.

This periodic warming of the heart continued until 3 o'clock in the morning, when he then settled down at the feet of the statue of "Our Beloved Lady of Guadeloupe" and slept until the sun arose behind the mountains of the island of Marie Galante, notifying him to grasp his spear to walk home and lay out his tired bones again in the straw of his lonely bed.

Although he was already sixty years of age, he still looked like a man in his forties, and he could boast of still not having a single gray hair on his head or his mustache, reaching down to his shoulders.

The reason for this is that for twenty years he had eaten almost nothing but oysters that he bought from the fishermen of the nearby Decaba island for a very low price. At first, he ate the oysters out of poverty, then, when he had saved a few *Napoléons d'or*, out of miserliness or rather thrift. Then, when he began to see how much eating oysters rendered him youthful, he ate out of vanity and finally, when he had read it out of an old book written by Benedictine monks, that Mary's conception actually arose from eating oysters, he ate out of piety.

Since this good man did not discover gunpowder, one could not expect him to have much knowledge of the Machiavellianism of what had driven the bar of the "Black Heart" for years. He hardly knew the word "politics," and of the socialist drive of the blacks on Guadeloupe he had not the slightest idea.

He did not care a bit about anyone, and his entire personal acquaintance consisted of that honorable scoundrel the police president of the city of Guadeloupe, of Black Heart as the dispenser of the noble fluid, and of a few oyster fishers he regarded as friends.

One does not need to wonder how, although he had been a night watchman of the city for twenty years, even in the same district, he did not know his ward with the black silk cloak whom we recognized immediately. When the mask asked for the *Villa Bonseigneur*, he believed she was none other than a lady's maid who had stayed too late and was now worried not to arrive at the proper time before her ladyship.

But since he was superstitious, on awakening he had thought the mask to be the devil. But when he was convinced of the opposite, he took her under his wings without a murmur and even promised to take her home on his shoulders to the garden gate of the *Villa Bonseigneur*, once she had refreshed herself with a drink on the "Black Heart."

Why the hostess had originally seen his ward at first glance as the police president of Guadeloupe appeared not to excite his curiosity, and it did not surprise him that she hesitated at first to admit them into the bar to receive a drink. He was eventually satisfied that he had created the proper authority with the holding of his long spear. — But we will soon see what happened when the last guests had entered and sat down on the benches attached to the walls.

83¹²

The hostess of the "Black Heart" had gone behind the palm divider and made as much noise as possible gathering the bottles and glasses, and she bent down and spoke to Mock, who lay as usual under the bar, so softly that it could not be heard by any of those present:

"If I kick you, my dear son, then creep to the door, close it and take the key with you!"

As a sign that he understood Dark Heart, Mock showed his teeth and pinched himself on his bottom. Then he laid himself on his belly supporting himself on his elbows, patiently expecting the moment when his grandmother would kick him.

The night watchman of Guadeloupe had meanwhile placed his spear against the wall, and he had smoothed a couple disturbed hairs of his mustache away from his lips in expectation of a full glass of rum with great pleasure. His small, bright gray eyes continually flashed after he contemplated two full glasses already standing on the bar, which Black Heart had already poured on a large earthenware platter.

He appeared not to be unhappy to see the hostess leaving the barroom and go through the opening of a back door that led into the bedroom.

“We must wait a while,” he said to his ward, “but Madame hostess wants to get us the good rum, which she keeps for her best acquaintances and customers.”

“I would prefer a glass of pure water,” responded the mask with the black silk cloak, taking a *Napoléon d'or* from her trouser pocket.

“Give this to Madame hostess,” she continued, “she will bring me water with as much pleasure if she only knew she was being paid.”

“By our beloved lady of Guadeloupe!” the night watchman cried out, “a *Napoléon d'or* for a common drink of water — even a bottle of the best Jamaica and Santa Cruz rum is not worth that much! A *Napoléon d'or*, Mademoiselle? By our lady of Guadeloupe! That is exactly double my monthly wage! That much not even our esteemed police judge would pay! — — and then, then, Mademoiselle, it is mine to pay the bill, since you are my guest. I have no money with me, but Madame hostess always covers me when I leave her my spear as a pledge. I normally redeem it the next morning.”

“Just let me pay, dear man, and show me the favor of ordering a glass of water when the Madame hostess returns and if you think a *Napoléon d'or* is too much for you, keep it for me and remain obligated to pay the bill in the morning,” the mask replied, with such a sonorous voice that the night watchman could do nothing but take the gold piece in his hand and look at it on both sides.

“You are right, Mademoiselle,” he said then, after a small pause, “I will keep this gold piece for me and will be liable for the bill tomorrow morning, but I will preserve it as a souvenir and when I feel I am dying, I will sew it into my vest and they can bury it with me.”

The night watchman of Guadeloupe meant this in full earnest, for mere phrases and flattering words were foreign to him. — Even if he often drank like a brushmaker and froze like a tailor when he did not drink, he still did not know the great tool of misusing language. The night watchman of Guadeloupe never lied at all, not even on behalf of gallantry. If he ever lied, it was not consciously. In this relationship, he could have been a model to all the night watchmen in both hemispheres. Yes, he was probably the only night watchman in the entire civilized world who never lied.

More than five minutes had passed since hostess had left the barroom. Both sat as if on coals. The night watchman, because his gums were getting dryer with every passing moment, the mask with the black silk cloak primarily because she longed to be out of this place and going home. — —

Let us leave the two alone for a few moments and listen to the conversation Black Heart is having with the two men in *Pierrot* costumes, now located in what is called the

bedroom, where instead of beds hammocks are slung and other than a couple stools, no furniture is to be seen.

The smaller of the *Pierrots* lay in his hammock, but so that both legs hung out and his head hung on the side where Black Heart stood with the other *Pierrot*.

“I am not deceiving myself,” Black Heart said to the latter, “the mask is none other than Madame de Bonseigneur, and the black silk cloak and the cap with the diamond brooch and black feather belong to the police judge.”

“If you are seeing correctly, Madame hostess, something extraordinary must have taken place, for it was the police judge’s plan to bind Madame de Bonseigneur hand and foot, put her on a horse and bring her here from the Devil’s Pool.”

“If it is really Madame de Bonseigneur,” the *Pierrot* in the hammock remarked, “then she must have somehow escaped from her shackles and escaped — only I cannot understand how she obtained the black silk cloak and the cap of the police judge — — But you are certain that it is Madame de Bonseigneur — — I can hardly believe it — — have you seen her face? Has she spoken? And is it really the cloak and the cap?”

“Convince yourselves, messieurs, Black Heart responded, “and when you see the yellow hair of the mask, you will harbor no more doubts, for no person on all Guadeloupe has such hair. Place yourselves behind my partition and wait until I need your help. My *urari* will not fail to work. I will press my nail just so in her neck, so that she becomes powerless and then we will have every opportunity to discover who the mask may be.”

“But her protector will sound the alarm, Madame hostess, when he sees — —”

“That old mammal will have no more time to complain of the fainting of his ward,” Black Heart interrupted the *Pierrot*. “I will take care that he does not drink another second rum.”

As she spoke in this manner, she dipped the nail of her thumb in a liquid that was in a bowl that she took from a niche in the wall.

This *urari* of which Black Heart spoke is a poison that comes from the juice of a plant called *Strychnos toxifera*, but in its chemical composition leaves no trace of what is usually called strychnine. Having poisoned the nail with it, pressing it causes instantaneous helplessness and will be fatal when the poison reaches the bloodstream.

Black Heart now reached under her madras-headdress and took out a large piece of that red clay that she so passionately ate. Then, after biting off a good portion, she stuck the rest under her headdress and left the two *Pierrots* without a further word.

After she had disappeared through the back door into the barroom, the smaller of the *Pierrots*, who had been lying in the hammock, to the ground and said to the other:

“I am sorry about Madame de Bonseigneur, but there is nothing else to be done. — And we can still hold it to be great good fortune that accident brought her here, for since she escaped the police judge, her escape would have had the worst results for him and for us.”

This *Pierrot* was a man of middle years, had a black beard and long hair and through the recent political overthrow of the parties had become one of those high state officials in constant struggle against the differential accounting of public finances. Since his head was too filled with other things, in the administration of his office he remained an honorable man. He was one of the warmest advocates of political equality of the Negroes,

and if it had all been up to him, he would have sacrificed the well-being of all whites on Guadeloupe for them.

In earlier years, he had held the office of a court staff dentist in Senegal, but since the entire black court had good teeth and no one was concerned with a little toothache with which some servants of his black majesty were plagued occasionally, they no longer found it worth their trouble to pay him, so one fine morning he turned his back on the Gold Coast and sought a new field of work in Guadeloupe.

But it did not work out for the best there, for the city of Guadeloupe alone had about two thousand dentists, so out of ten thousand residents one of every five persons was a dentist.—(See *Depouilly's Address Calendar of the city of Guadeloupe*, 1815).

For this reason, the political changes that soon followed was to his advantage. This *Pierrot* so committed himself to Negro principles that in many cases he exceeded Black Heart in his hatred against the white race.

Insofar as he raged so much against his own blood, he was struck with the hard penalty of losing his office. Now he became even more raging, spitting poison and gall against the newly-installed colonial council, entered the Black Cavalcade, and excited hostility everywhere, where he stood with that other man who fell out of favor, the general of *Negrofoot* and *White Castle*.

Black Heart liked him a great deal and regretted only that she had not known him in her time of feminine blossoming.

Dirty little Mock always called him Uncle — because he knew no better.

Since he was, incidentally, only bloodthirsty in theory, it seemed to him that the destiny that threatened the mask with the black silk cloak struck his heart. — Despite that, he could not deny that it had finally come to the point to sacrifice a victim for the good black cause. And who would be more suited to that than the wife of the man whose ancestors had been the true founder of slavery on Guadeloupe?

84

“I will enjoy the death throes of this yellow-haired person more than if she had been drowned in the Marie Galante Channel, as was originally planned,” responded the other *Pierrot*, who was known in the city of Guadeloupe by the name of Dorgenois.

Dorgenois, as he had baptised himself, was a son of the famous Jesuit Lavalette, who was then notorious for the great bankruptcy through which the Society of Jesus was ruined in France. Since he was in the possession of a great deal of money when he arrived on Guadeloupe, and he also had a very pleasing exterior, it was easy to blind the eyes of the noblesse of this city and to hold himself at the social heights for a while. He was a competitor of the Chevalier Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur, when three years before he obtained the hand of Faustine de ***, whose fabulous wealth no little tormented the mind of the Jesuit son. When Dorgenois became certain that all hope was gone to obtain the heart and gold of the young beautiful girl, in that the Chevalier had defeated him in the contest of love, he broke immediately with good society, eschewed virtuous women, established a faro bank, lived with actresses, intrigued with the mistresses of the colonial council-members, dominated as a scoundrel the scoundrels and finally tied himself to a dancer, who entertained the city more through her charm than through her talent.

This dancer had earlier been the mistress of the governor of the colony and attracted the customers when her lover held the faro bank.

Although she was Spanish, she still spoke a perfumed French.

She contributed considerably to the fact that Jesus Hilaire de Bonseigneur gambled away unmeasured sums in the *Redoute* building of the Little Englishman, but to the great disgust of Monsieur Dorgenais, the pretty gold flowed into the pockets of the Little Englishman, who always had the bank when the rich Chevalier was playing. For that reason, he soon became an enemy of the owner of the *Redoute* building, and when he established his Faro bank in the filial "*White Chimney*" to lighten the pockets of rich Negro Creoles, the dancer left him and moved her headquarters to the Little Englishman.

His demoralization reached its highest degree, that is, he sank to the infamy of Negro philanthropy, and if he was the right hand of the police judge of Guadeloupe, one could call him the right leg of Black Hand, since he always went where Black Heart neither wished to go nor could.

This Pierrot was a man of six feet in height, of a light complexion and large, dark blue eyes, which had once been beautiful, but now had a cold, metallic gleam and appeared never to move.

His shamelessness went so far that when he joined the Black Cavalcade, he declared himself a *Mestizo*, simply in order to win the full trust of the blacks and to destroy the influence of the white Negro politicians.

It was only to Black Heart that he confessed that he was a robbing sheep — a white man. As a *Mestizo*, he corresponded with Toussaint Louverture even before the rebellion on Santo Domingo broke out and swept the aristocracy of the white race from that place.

Since he had never loved Faustine de Bonseigneur, but only sought her hand due to her great wealth, he quietly was pleased that he would see her collapse and perhaps die after penetration by Black Heart's poisoned thumbnail. Only the presence of the night watchman, the black silk cloak, and the black cap presented some headaches.

Before he and the other *Pierrot* went through the back door into the partitioned area, where Black Heart was uncorking the rum bottles for the late guests, the two tied on their masks of black gauze once more and brought their costumes into order.

85

A she-devil who had already rolled about in the pit of hell for thousands of years and was caressed by Simson, Holofernes and Goliath, could, if suddenly compelled, spring into Holy Water or with half-charred charms fall to Calvary, could draw no more dreadful pictures than the black woman did when the mask with the black silk cloak took off her mask and showed her face! Her long, dry fingers surrounded the neck of the rum bottle in a cramp, as if it wanted to crush it with main force. The left hand first mechanically gripped at the region of the heart, then the temples, and then suddenly at her lower body — where it remained struck as if lamed. From her wide-open mouth fell that great piece of clay that she had already bit in the presence of the two Pierrots; it rolled between the glasses that she was about to fill and lay on its bit-off end. It was obvious that she wanted to move, but she could not. She threw her head back as if she wanted to use it to drag her body away along with it. On this motion, her Madras headdress lost its balance and fell on the floor. Now she looked dreadful.

Since the upper part of her head from the temples upward was almost twice as long as her face, and turned strongly to the rear, so her mouth parts extended even more sharply than before. Now people could explain why she always so stubbornly insisted on her headdress and never took it off.

The dentist, who stood with Dorgenois behind the palm partition so that they could observe everything happening in the bar without being seen, was overcome with shaking and chills as he saw Black Heart, his Gospel made flesh, reveal such a dreadfully-formed head. If an oath could have been extracted from him then, he would certainly have sworn he was white, and since no one could prove that he was a friend of false oaths, he would have been freed for life from his hallucination. But to whom could he give the oath? It would have been possible a half-century later, when creation bore forth Provost Martials, who were so numerous as the sand on the Ivory Coast and in the great Sahara.

Dorgenois, in contrast, appeared not to be bothered by this new visage of Black Heart. He remained calm and cold-blooded as he had ever since he became a member of the Black Cavalcade. But his unshining eyes flared for a moment and he sought visibly to fathom what the cause might be that Madame hostess made such fearful grimaces and jerked her head back and forth.

The dentist, who tore his *Pierrot* costume from his body and tried to flee secretly out of the palm partition through the back door, Dorgenois grabbed him rather roughly by the collar and when he sought to tear away, seized him so harshly by the wrist that went down on his knee. Then Dorgenois leaned down to him and whispered in the ear of the shocked *Pierrot*:

“If you do not remain here, Doctor, and are such a rabbit's foot, I swear to you to prevent your election as a state official when things are in order and our black brothers can vote themselves.”

“Oh, Dorgenois, let go of me, I am unwell,” groaned the *Pierrot*, and so loud that the mask with the black silk cloak turned her head to the side from which the sound came. The night watchman of Guadeloupe must also have heard it if all five of his senses were not occupied with the extraordinary condition in which he saw Black Heart placed. He had no idea what he should think. With all his fingers, he ran through his mustache, sometimes pulling it up, sometimes down.

“Let me loose, Dorgenois,” groaned the *Pierrot*, and even louder than before, so that Dorgenois saw himself compelled to put his other hand on the mouth.

“I do not understand you, Doctor,” he whispered again to him, “you have always the guillotine in your mouth, and you are terrified by a naked Negro head.”

— — — “By Our Dear Lady of Guadeloupe,” the night watchman cried out suddenly, “What do you lack, Madame hostess?” And he stretched his right arm at full length to the serving table, so that his hand was almost touching the rum bottle that Black Heart still held in a cramp-like grip.

“The woman is unwell,” said the mask with the black silk cloak: “she is sick, very sick — —”

“By Our Dear Lady of Guadeloupe! If our Madame hostess is only sick, only very sick, then a glass of rum is the best thing — — — Excuse me, Madame hostess — — give me the bottle — — She should have the first glass — — Let it loose now — —” When the night watchman of Guadeloupe spoke, he looked at Black Heart, paying no

attention to all her jerks and distortions, appearing to have no fear, looking questioning and sympathetically into her face, seeking, first softly and then rather grossly to get the bottle into his power.

“Let us go, dear man” responded the mask, placing her hand on the shoulder of the night watchman.

“By Our Lady of Guadeloupe,” the night watchman assured, “we cannot go without having taken a little drink — — where are you thinking, Mademoiselle! Going? You are thirsty, and if you have not had a drink, then I cannot carry you home on my shoulders. Consider, Mademoiselle, you have not had a drop in your body for two hours! By Our Beloved Lady of Guadeloupe! You will fall from my shoulders, if you do not drink —”

Dorgenois, who in the meantime had looked intensely at the revealed face of the mask, stepped back in astonishment and said to the Doctor, whom he had released:

“That is not Madame de Bonseigneur!”

And without saying another word, he walked forward to the serving table, after he had previously grasped his mask to see that it was still attached solidly.

[There is no further episode.]