

mind in a kind of equilibrium, like that of the patient animal between the two bundles of hay; so that he would sometimes halt in the street, midway between the two cottages, and cast furtive glances, first at the one, and then at the other, as if weighing the balance of comfort; while the increased volume of smoke which issued from his mouth seemed to argue that the fire of his love had other fuel than tobacco, and was literally consuming the inward man.

Such was the situation of affairs when I first visited this village, about the time of the cession of Louisiana to the United States. The news of that event had just reached this sequestered spot, and was but indifferently relished. Independently of the national attachment which all men feel, and the French so justly, the inhabitants of this region had reason to prefer to all others the government which had afforded them protection, without constraining their freedom, or subjecting them to any burdens; and with the kindest feelings towards the Americans, they would willingly have dispensed with any nearer connection than that which already existed. They, however, said little on the subject; and that little was expressive of their cheerful acquiescence in the honor done them by the American people in buying the country, which the emperor had done them the honor to sell.

I remained several weeks at this hospitable village. Few evenings passed without a dance, at which all were assembled, young and old; the mothers vying in agility with their daughters, and the old men setting examples of gallantry to the young. I accompanied their young men to the Indian towns, and was hospitably entertained. I followed them to the chase, and witnessed the fall of many a noble buck. In their light canoes, I glided over the turbid waters of the Mississippi, or through the labyrinths of the morass, in pursuit of water-fowl. I visited the mounds where the bones of thousands of warriors were mouldering, overgrown with prairie violets, and thousands of nameless flowers. I saw the moccasin snake basking in the sun, the elk feeding on the prairie; and returned to mingle in the amusements of a circle, where, if there was not Parisian elegance, there was more than Parisian cordiality.

Several years passed away before I again visited this country. The jurisdiction of the American government was now extended over this immense region, and its beneficial effects were beginning to be widely disseminated. The roads were crowded with the teams and herds and families of emigrants hastening to the land of promise. Steamboats navigated every stream, the axe was heard in every forest, and the plough broke the sod whose verdure had covered the prairie for ages.

It was sunset when I reached the margin of the prairie on which the village is situated. My horse, wearied with a long day's travel, sprang forward with new vigour when his hoofs struck the smooth

firm road which led across the plain. It was a narrow path, winding among the tall grass, now tinged with the mellow hues of autumn. I gazed with delight over the beautiful surface. The mounds and the solitary trees were there, just as I had left them, and they were familiar to my eye as the objects of yesterday. It was eight miles across the prairie, and I had not passed half the distance when night set in. I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the village, but two large mounds and a clump of trees which intervened, defeated my purpose. I thought of Gabrielle, and Jeanette, and Baptiste, and the priest—the fiddles, dances, and French ponies; and fancied every minute an hour, and every foot a mile, which separated me from scenes and persons so deeply impressed on my imagination.

At length I passed the mound, and beheld the lights twinkling in the village, now about two miles off, like a brilliant constellation in the horizon. The lights seemed very numerous—I thought they moved; and at last discovered that they were rapidly passing about. "What can be going on in the village?" thought I—then a strain of music met my ear. "They are going to dance," said I, striking my spurs into my jaded nag, "and I shall see my friends together." But as I drew near, a volume of sounds burst upon me, such as defied all conjecture. Fiddles, flutes, and tambourins, drums, cow-horns, tin trumpets, and kettles, mingled their discordant notes with a strange accompaniment of laughter, shouts, and singing. This singular concert proceeded from a mob of men and boys, who paraded through the streets preceded by one who blew an immense tin horn, and ever and anon they shouted to which the mob responded. I now recollected to have heard of a custom which prevails among the American French of serenading at marriages; and I rode towards the crowd, who had halted before a well-known door, to ascertain who were the happy parties, and soon learned that they were Monsieur Baptiste Menou and Mam'selle Jeanette Duval, of whom I have already spoken.

The door of the little cabin, whose hospitable threshold I had so often crossed, now opened, and Baptiste made his appearance—the identical, sallow, erect personage with whom I had parted several years before, with the same pipe in his mouth. His visage was as long and as melancholy as ever, except that there was a slight tinge of triumph in its expression, and a bashful casting down of the eye; reminding one of a conqueror proud but modest in his glory. He gazed with an embarrassed air at the serenaders, bowing repeatedly, as if conscious that he was the hero of the night.

I retired to my former quarters, at the house of an old settler—a little, shrivelled, facetious Frenchman, whom I found in his red flannel nightcap, smoking his pipe, and seated, like Jupiter, in the midst of