

"And the girl's name?" I said.
"Oh! don't ask me that, child. I can't tell you."

"Why not, Dada? What's the harm now that Gaston is gone?"

"Ah! it is not that. But the girl belongs to a family which is never spoken of by us; that is, by none of all your kin."

"You don't mean the Paladines, Dada?"

I threw out this name half doubting, half fearing whether I was aiming well or not.

"What? You know them? Who told you?"

"Never mind that, now; only answer my question."

"Well, yes, the girl belongs to old Paladine, and they call her Toinette."

If Dada, instead of being so preoccupied as she was, had noticed the play of my features when she made this reply, she would doubtless have read there a mixture of joy and terror. Joy at the point of information gained; terror at the new indication of the concentration of danger which threatened me. This danger had ramifications, certainly; but it proceeded all from one centre. I therefore eagerly continued:

"Do you know the Paladine coloured people, Dada?"

"I did know the older people well," she said, "but they are almost all gone now. The young folks I don't know and don't want to know, on account of the family."

By "the family" the nurse meant all our family, of which she considered herself a member.

"But don't you know anything about them?"

"To be sure. One can't help hearing things."

"Don't you know that they are all Voudous?"

"My gracious!" exclaimed she, clapping her hands together. "I never thought of that. How stupid! Of course, they are. And Toinette twisting around Gaston! That would explain it. Oh dear, oh dear!" and she burst out again into lamentations.

This was enough for to-night. I dismissed Dada, and soon fell into a deep sleep.

IV.

DEVIL-WORSHIP.

On this subject I am not going to indulge in theory or adduce facts on hearsay. I shall write only what I know.

There are thousands of Americans who ignore the existence of heathenism in our country; there are thousands more who refuse to believe it. Many of those who have been the best friends of the black race have thought they were doing right in exaggerating its virtues, and making light of or denying its inherent vices. In the interest of this race which I love and pity, I believe the best policy is to tell the truth.

Speaking generally, the American negro, notwithstanding his contact with the white man for over a century and a half, rose very little above the state of nature. His native savagery was partially flogged out of him, but nothing more. Two things he retained—lust and superstition, both results of the ignorance in which he was allowed to wallow. The negro slave was terribly lascivious. With him, fleshliness was not a mere passion, but a rage. His superstition, too, was something more tangible, more practical, than the innocent fancies of white peasants. It went to the very root of things. It gave a ghastly simplicity to religion. Two spirits reigned in the universe—the good and the bad. The bad prevailing, and not only so, but constantly manifesting himself. These manifestations impressed the simple, credulous imagination of the negro till he came to believe that the evil spirit had possession of him and of his destinies. A species of fatalism led him to regard himself as abandoned of the powers of light, and given over to the powers of darkness. Hence the blackness of his skin, which marked him out for the devil. To appease the dread god, he invented a worship. This worship, which in the African wilds is a perfect system of horrors, was transmitted to this continent only in fragments, or, if it came whole, partially died out in the course of years. But in the South it assumed a hideous feature of its own, being mixed up with certain forms of Christian worship and propped up by some of the sublime and most striking passages of the Bible. Fear is the ruling virtue of this religion. Propitiation is the only motive of its prayer. There are few ceremonies among the most sordidly debased and ignorant, but among the better class of negroes frequent meetings are held with formularies of incantations, burnt offerings, prostrations before the fetish and interrogation of his oracle. The better class of all goes by the name of Voudou, and its more elaborate system of religion is called Voudouism, though at bottom it is nothing else but devil-worship. These Voudous wield an almost supernatural influence, due chiefly to the invisible secret and mystery in which they envelop all their buffooneries. They are a terror more particularly to the Christian negroes, who, being only imperfectly instructed and naturally weak in the faith, are almost afraid to uphold the cause of their white God against the black god of the Voudous. This sect is governed by queens, or at least to every important circle there is a queen attached, who is generally a slave belonging to the most influential family of the district. It has many celebrations, but the principal festival—lasting during two days—is held in the middle of July, and its object is to commemorate the fall of man. On

that occasion the Voudous plunge into the most abominable orgies, a fair counterpart of the Saturnalia among the civilized Romans.

I have heard it asserted that they sometimes go the length of human sacrifices and drink the blood of children. But no instance of this has ever come to my knowledge, even remotely, though I have made diligent inquiry. I am not inclined, however, to disbelieve the charge, aware as I am of the ferocity of unbridled instincts and the incredible extremes to which fanaticism can drive impulsive natures. We have examples of these abominations among the free negroes of Jamaica and Barbadoes and even among our own Indians.

The devil-worship is atrocious enough without adding these further cruelties to its account.

V.

OPHIDIAN.

Have we ever reflected on the role of the serpent in the world? It has been associated with some form or other of worship from the beginning to our day. There is the serpent of Moses, the serpent of Mercury, the serpent of the Egyptian hierophant, the serpent of the Hindoo juggler, the serpent of our Indian Meda or medicine-man. Oriental, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Gothic literature is filled with allusions to it in the various relations of religion and society. The serpent formed one of the glyphs chiselled on the pyramids. It was one of the elements in the intricate scrip of Cabala. The magic of its eyes, the undulations of its tail, the flashes of its scales constituted as many chapters in the marvellous science of divination. There is no genus in the whole range of natural history which has a greater number of species or whose individuals have a more rapid and varied reproduction. Their properties are so wonderful and striking that they have entered into the romance and superstitions of all ages. The fascination of birds by snakes, though denied by zoologists, is universally believed by the people, and nowhere so fully believed as by those who have spent their lives amongst serpents. The acuteness of their vision, the sharpness of their hearing, the elegance of their gyrations are among the first wonders we learn in our little story-books. Of all combinations of poison it is theirs we dread the most, though, singular to observe, that poison has no terror at all for the wild man of the wood or the desert.

The serpent was regarded as the herald of the gods, both for evil and for good. It was sacred to Apollo. The grand story of Laocoon has been preserved in song and in marble. When the Lacedaemonians defeated Mardonius at Platea, they attributed their victory to the serpent. The triple snake set up at Delphi was afterwards transported to Constantinople by the Mohammedan conqueror. Many a great name and deed of history is associated with this reptile—Medea, Hercules, Cleopatra.

There can be no question but that the serpent of Eden has glided through all religious schemes and thoughts among all nations—Christian, heathen and barbarian. It crops out everywhere. That first great tradition of our infancy is the real secret of the repugnance and fear which all civilized beings entertain for every species of the ophidian race. But it is noteworthy that the observation of this same tradition in the minds of the uncivilized has produced the contrary effect. These have neither fear nor disgust for the serpent. They capture him, handle him freely, play with him, devise infallible antidotes for his poison. Those who consider him to be the emissary of the devil, as erst in paradise, go still further and worship him. The Voudous are of this class.

VI.

THE MEETING IN THE CABIN.

I resolved on having an interview with Toinette. For that purpose I at first tried to get Dada to act as intermediary, but she would not, partly from repugnance against the girl, and partly because she would have nothing to do with anything belonging to the Paladines. She went further and warned me against the step. On her refusal I got her sister Hiacinte to supply her place. The plan was that Toinette would be got to visit at some common friend's—a free negro's house being preferable because less liable to be spied—that there Hiacinte should call upon her to talk about Gaston, and inform her that she had heard of a person who was willing to interest himself in the case of the poor boy. Hiacinte who knew me well through Dada, and perhaps exaggerated my power to help her son, entered heartily into my views.

The very next day, on my going to the city for the purpose, she told me that the meeting was arranged for that evening. I was punctual to the hour. The house I repaired to was rather an equivocal-looking cabin, in a retired spot, on the southern outskirts of the city, and inhabited by an aged couple, well-known to me, who had bought their freedom by over half a century of hard toil. When I reached there old "auntie" was sitting on her door-step, smoking the stump of a pipe. She looked like a big bundle of dirty clothes. There is nothing so hideous as a toothless, grey-haired and wrinkled negress. On my asking after old "uncle," she told me he was out for a walk, but if I wanted to go in, Hiacinte was there and waiting for me. "Auntie" hardly noticed me, looked very indifferent indeed, and I understood that the word had been given her.

I walked in. The room was dark, but by the dim light of a far window, I distinguished two figures seated at a little table. I advanced toward them.

"Good evening, Mas'r Carey," said a voice which I recognized to be Hiacinte's, as she came forward to meet me. And handing me a chair, she continued before I had time to reply to her greeting: "Here, Toinette, is the young gentleman I was talkin' to you 'bout. He's one of my sister Pelagie's chillun—that is, she nussed and reared him like one of her own. She told him 'bout poor Gaston and he is anxious to do all he kin for him. Mas'r Carey, this is Toinette, the young gal that my boy coted when he was sold off."

"Ah!" said I; "this is Toinette, is it? Well I have come down to talk to her about Gaston. I don't know that I can do much, but anyhow I am willing to do all I can. Come, Toinette, I want you to talk up to me like a good girl. Do you think Gaston was very fond of you?"

"I blieh he was, sah; I blieh he lubbed me hearty." She said this all of a breath, pulling up short at the end. It was too dusk to see more than her outline, but I could imagine just how she looked when she spoke. She must have rolled up the whites of her eyes, puckered her thick lips and raised her right foot an inch or two in obedience to some internal shock or other. This is the fashion of the tribe when they talk of love.

"And you, Toinette, were very fond of him?"

"Yes, I was dat, en I ain't ashame to say it. I've had many scrapes with different boys, but he was the best of the lot. We was to have been married honest. I only waited for old mas'r's leab. I ought'er have asked old mas'r's leab before, but I felt a sort o' skittish about it, 'cause mas'r says I'm a wild girl. But I ain't a bit wild now, sah. I got over dat. Ef we'd been married, Gaston wouldn't've been sold."

"How do you know that, Toinette?"

"'Cause then, sah, he wouldn't ev done wat he done."

"What did he do, Toinette?"

"I thought you know'd all about it, sah."

"Do you mean the letter?"

"Yas, dat's wat I mean. He wouldn't ev toted that letter of we'd been married."

"But he didn't know what was in it?"

"Dat's jest it, sah. He oughter ev know'd it."

"I suppose he trusted the one who gave it to him?"

"Ef I'd been his wife I'd a-told him not to trust nobody, not even my own brudder."

"Oh, you have a brother, Toinette?"

"I've a whole lot of 'em, sah, but it's my big brudder I mean."

"What's his name?"

"They call him Nain, sah."

"Can your brother read?"

"Yes, sah."

"And write?"

"Yes, sah. They say he writes beautiful. Nain is a mighty smart feller. Old mas'r learnt him. I keeps all de farm accounts. He was rare, too, with young Mas'r Bonair, him dat's gone and nobody don't know what he is. They used to read out of the same books in old mas'r's library. Nain's old mas'r's pet."

"And was it your brother gave Gaston the letter?"

"I thought you know'd the whole story, sah."

"If I knew, Toinette, I wouldn't ask you."

"Then, sah, I won't tell you anudder word."

This was said in a sharp, decisive voice which, from my knowledge of negro character, I knew expressed a fixed determination. The black race is credulous and easily wheedled, but when it takes up a suspicion, it can become mulish beyond all patience. I evidently had not catechized the girl in the right way and must change my tactics, if I wished to improve the opportunity of information which lay within my grasp. To do this, the mere voice was not enough. I must scrutinize her features and play upon her eye.

"Strike a light," said I to Hiacinte.

This took some time during which a profound silence reigned in the room.

"And drop that window curtain."

While she did this I scanned Toinette.

(To be continued.)

THE GLEANER.

GENERALS Stewart, Roberts, and Biddulph are to be knighted for their services in Afghanistan.

A ST PAUL paper estimates that the farmers of Minnesota will realize \$40,000,000 for their wheat crop this year.

A COMMITTEE of the French Chamber of Deputies have reported in favour of re-establishing the law of Divorce in France.

M. W. G. GRACE, the great cricketer, will this year enter upon the practice of his profession as a doctor, and retire from active cricketing.

A RESPONSIBLE official declares that the cost of lighting Holborn Viaduct, London, with electric light is fully three-and-a-half times as much as gas.

RECENTLY compiled statistics show that Great Britain produces three times as much iron, and almost three times as much coal, as the United States.

THE Duke of Connaught will vacate his command of the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade at the

close of the year, when he will have completed three years' service as lieutenant-colonel.

THE British Government has announced that it will provide money for scholarships and exhibitions for the new Irish University, thus granting an indirect endowment to the Catholics.

THE first steamer of a line of fruit-carrying vessels from the West Indies has arrived at Philadelphia. This line will compete with New-York in the fruit-carrying trade.

THE carpet trade of the United States is simply immense. The manufactures of Philadelphia alone turn out more carpets in a year than all of England in the same period. The manufactures of Hartford and Lowell, as well as those of other places, swell the aggregate production of carpets to enormous figures.

PRINCE Victor Napoleon, the seventeen-year old son of Prince Jerome, and the new heir to the Bonapartist idea, is rather tall, handsome and straight as a dart; dark in hair, cheek and eye; and in temper and temperament a true Corsican-Italian.

HENRY BESSEMER, the inventor, has taken out 160 patents, and one of them, his process for making steel, ranks as one of the most brilliant inventions of the century. Its converts pig-iron into steel in a few minutes, and has reduced the price of steel rails per ton from \$200 to \$30. Ten times as much steel is used in the world now as was used prior to 1856.

OF the Cabinet-Ministers who, on June 20th, 1837, took the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty at a Privy Council held at Kensington Palace, England, Earl Grey, then Viscount Howick and Secretary-at-War, is the sole survivor. Of the entire House of Commons of that time, which was dissolved as a consequence of the Queen's accession, only eight members are to be found in the present House. These are Lord George Cavendish, the Right Hon. W. F. Cowper Temple, Sir Philip Egerton, Mr. Alice, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Christopher Talbot, and the Right Hon. C. P. Villiers. Of these Sir Philip Egerton and Mr. Talbot were members of the unreformed Parliament, having been elected for the city of Chester and for Glamorganshire respectively as far back as 1830.

HUMOROUS.

A MIRROR is the only tolerated reflection upon the beauty of women.

IT is strangely singular how much the boy with a pair of new suspenders hates to wear a coat.

IF a man really wants to know of how little importance he is, let him go with his wife to the dress-maker's.

BOYS who cry because their bread falls with the buttered side down should think of other little boys who have no butter.

WHISKEY is now made from leather, and this may perhaps explain why so many persons who drink it are always strapped.

WOMEN with flat feet are poor housekeepers and bad calculators, and you won't forget it if you marry one. Choose a wife with a high instep if you want a hard working and a shrewd planner.

Boy, to gentleman who has not given him any reward for carrying his portmanteau: "An' please, sir, what must I say if anyone asks me how much I has to thank you for?"

A RELIGIOUS old lady, when asked her opinion of the organ of a church the first time she had seen or heard one, said: "It's a very bonny kist fa' o' whistles; but, oh, sirs, it's an awful way o' spending the Sabbath day."

"John, did you take the note to Mr. Jones?" "Yes; but I don't think he can read it." "Why so, John?" "Because he is blind, sir. While I was in the room he axed me twice where my hat was, and it was on my head all the time."

SPEAKING of boys' compositions, we recall this tragic sentence that closed the effusion of a classmate of our school days: "I once knew a boy whose chances for health and long life were as good as my own, but who was seized with a fever and was sick all summer."

THE story is told that Longfellow and Fields were making a short pedestrian tour some few weeks since, when to their surprise an angry bull stood in the pathway, evidently intending to demolish both poet and publisher. "I think," said Fields, "that it will be prudent to give this reviewer a wide margin." "Yes," replied the poet, "it appears to be a disputed passage."

NEW YORK dealers threaten to put up the price of ice. They say the crop has been badly milled. The next thing you know some fellow will invent a bug or worm that will attack and chew up half of the harvested crop about this time of the year. Ice is about the only crop now raised that isn't injured by a bug or worm of some kind, and it can't expect to enjoy this immunity much longer.

WHEN the robin jumps along the lawn or dies from tree to tree scattering the dew-drops from the leaves; when the bee coquets with the flower; when the first golden beams dart from the sapphire skies, and gild the filmy clouds; when the clover trembles in the freshening breeze, and all nature seems imbued with the charms of paradise; then, ah! then it is sweet to turn over in bed and take another nap.

LADIES ought to enjoy reunions or banquets much better than men, because they can sit perfectly unconcerned and listen to all the good things that are being said without any danger of being called up unexpectedly to respond to a toast and being obliged to wish the toastmaker and all the rest of the company were at the bottom of the sea. And still some women grumble about the hard lot of feminine mortality.

"SEEK here, bub, you'll never catch a butterfly that way," said a man to a little fellow who was thrashing around the grass with his hat in a lively manner. "You want to go up behind one of 'em kinder slow, and swing your hat in sort of easy like, and then you'll nab him. Let me show you." And he fooled around for half an hour in his mild sort of a way, and never caught a butterfly, while the boy in his reckless course had filled both pockets with great nice ones, handsomely spotted all over the wings.