

means gone into such antiquated disuse in New Orleans as in Europe—where men, it is to be hoped, have grown to be considered too good to act as beasts of burden to other men—was, nevertheless, sufficiently uncommon there to excite a stranger's observation. Moreover, the thought occurred to me that one of these famous half-caste beauties might probably be the occupant, returning from some midnight revel. Or else was—is such luck possible?—going out in all the glory of dress and decoration to one. I saw that two black men, in a bright orange livery, were bustling about the machine, but whether they were removing or setting in the poles for movement I could not determine at the distance I was when I first saw it.

I hastened my steps, anxious to ascertain. As I did so I observed that I was in my turn noticed. One of the black porters seemed to make some remarks to the other. This other disappeared immediately afterward into the garden at the open gate, and it struck me in an inexplicable but perfectly distinct manner that he went to say inside that a stranger approached.

Far from checking my ardor of curiosity, this conviction quickened my pace. I arrived so fast, that, passing along the wall of the villa before which the sedan was placed, I very plainly heard these words pronounced in imperious, but at the same time liquidly flowing and harmonious accents :

"What matter? A man who is tipsy is not so rare a sight in New Orleans.

"Take Mr. Massingberd to the sedan—take him home to his respected mother. He is not fit to remain under even so despised a roof."

"*Oui, oui, mademoiselle!*" I heard in reply, in negro French, sounding very like "Wooley, wooley."

"A man who is tipsy," I exclaimed to myself, in great disappointment. "But perhaps I may see the owner of that fine tragic voice—who knows? It is worth waiting the chance at all events."

A little reflection might probably have suggested to me the impropriety of lingering about a strange house, solely with the view to gratify curiosity respecting its owners. But at this moment the same rich, commanding tone ejaculated, "Henri!

Louis! come to the assistance of your fellow. You see plainly he cannot bring this disgraceful inebriate along without your help." And I thought I should not have long to play the indiscreet listener, when the accents of utter, irredeemable scorn in which the words were pronounced still more vividly arrested my attention and awakened my interest.

I determined to wait and see the end of the adventure, and halted outside the gate. Everything seemed right and above board. Nobody cared who was looking on. The two black slaves, uniformed as lackeys, appeared, making their way from a fine white marble portal, which I perceived on glancing into the garden, with the drunken man between them.

In good truth, I never did see any creature so helplessly drunk as this one. He made not the slightest effort to assist himself. He was borne rather than led along by his negro supporters. I perceived that his feet only grazed the gravel of the walk without planting themselves at all to assist the motion. I saw that his head hung helplessly forward on his chest, and yet occasionally swayed right back over his shoulders, as if it had lost all power of holding in its proper position.

But my attention, as was natural, was caught at the same moment, and concentrated on the figure of the angry woman who apparently directed the movement. She emerged, in an attitude of the most imperious command I had ever witnessed, even in a stage *Lady Macbeth*, on the threshold of the villa; and the splendidly clear moonlight falling upon and lighting up her countenance, revealed to me features at once so marvellously beautiful in their expression that my gaze became riveted as by a spell and my heart seemed to leap out toward her as to something it long had sought. Her features, her form, were indelibly stamped on my memory. My mind seemed to have taken in the brief glance afforded me an airy but ineffaceable photograph of all the features. It was very brief. Was it love at first sight?

The magnetic attraction the eye exercises when fixed on another appeared to compel the glance of the mysterious mistress of the mansion toward me. I then heard her give a slight, stifled shriek, in which it was doubtful to me whether terror