

The Voodoo Queen



MRS. LACERAZ gazed anxiously across the table at the colonel, who nervously toyed with the food before him.

"Aren't you feeling well?" she asked, solicitously. "You look worried."

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed the colonel, rousing himself from his reverie. "The fact is," he added, frankly, "I am a bit worried. Until lately everything has gone well with my new project for the manufacture of paper bags from bagasse, the woody fiber of sugar cane. But now the darkeys appear discontented—both those in the fields and the workers in the mill. Why, even old Uncle Toby, who is usually as open and cheerful as the day, is moping and sullen. The hands seem to think they deserve higher wages, although formerly they always were contented. I don't understand it."

LOUIS EXPLAINS

Louis and Marguerite listened to this conversation, of course, without saying a word. But when breakfast was over, and they were trudging toward the stables to have their ponies saddled for the usual morning canter, Louis gave expression to the thoughts which troubled them both.

"I knew something was the matter," he muttered. "And, do you know, I think it's all on account of that nice-looking darky girl they call 'Handsome Sue,' who came here to work about two weeks ago. Her people all believe she can do all sorts of wonderful magic through her voodoo charms. She has a great influence among them—an influence which I don't believe will make for any good."

"Did I tell you of what happened to me last week? I was paddling in the bayou toward Lake Pontchartrain. It was about eight miles from Pecan Grove. If you measure the distance as the crow flies, when I crew up under an overhanging cypress tree a moment, all at once there came to me the sound of voices, mingled in a kind of chant. That started me investigating. I paddled along as quietly as I could. It seems that they had some one on the watch; for just as I was about to come in view of the group there was a silence, and when I scrambled up the bank I found a great number of foot-prints, but no one was there. Yet I'm sure when I was in the boat I heard among the voices that of 'Handsome Sue.'"

COSTLY SHOOTING.

Expense of Entertaining the King is \$50,000 a Week.

Shooting, while a capital sport in England, is not recommended for those whose purses are limited, especially if they have ambitions to be the hosts of royalty. That season just now in swing has cost several notable families in English society at least \$50,000 apiece for the

Marguerite nodded her head thoughtfully, as she replied, "Yes, there's something strange about that girl. I wish we knew more about her."

"I have it," cried Louis. "Today, of course, is a holiday, being All Saints' Day. It's ten to one Sue is holding a meeting out there in the bayou. Suppose we take the two hounds, and pole down the stream in the little scow. We might be able to break up their jabbering and do a good turn for father. Because if they believe he knows what's going on, I'll wager they won't be so anxious to hold their council, again to plan mischief. Are you game?"

His sister recklessly whispered, "Yes."

And soon the two were stealthily making their way toward the boat landing. Louis secured the two bloodhounds without being observed by any of the stablemen. They quickly cast off the painter. In a moment the turns of the bayou hid them from view.

A long voyage it was to their destination. After winding for a full hour through the tortuous byways of the Louisiana bayou, they came to the island. Over this they poled; then past fields of cotton and rice and sugar cane and sweet potatoes; then again into the bayou, traveling silently along the gloomy watery paths, shaded by thick-growing pine and cypress. Turkeys and snakes would splash off dead stumps of trees at the boat's approach.

Beneath them catfish, drum, crapple, buffalo-fish and black bass disported themselves. But the adventurers were not to be tempted today. They were after greater prey.

"Aren't we almost there?" whispered Marguerite, when for hours they had steadily progressed away from Pecan Grove, in the direction of the lake.

"Almost," tersely responded Louis. "Then he raised his hand.

"Did you hear that?" he asked in a low voice.

Marguerite nodded. From afar off there came the sound of a quavering chorus, rising and falling in mournful cadences. Afterward there was a minute of quiet, then came a succession of quick, savage yells that fell confusedly on the ear.

Louis again bent to his work of forcing the punt through the tangled brush, while Marguerite set about quieting the hounds, who had become exceedingly restless. At last they rounded the bank. Louis had described that morning. No one had witnessed their approach.

"You stay in the boat with the dogs, while I reconnoiter," said the boy.

Carefully drawing himself up the slippery embankment, he sidled from one tree to another.

Meanwhile, his sister waited with growing impatience. It seemed a full hour had elapsed when the lad returned.

"Bring the dogs," he articulated with

preliminaries account for the better part of the amount. Something like \$25,000 is paid as rent for the moors and coverts and at least \$5,000 for the mansion called the shooting-box. The moors generally extend to at least 20,000 acres and the modern hosts of English royalty would hardly dare to invite King the lowest estimate of the cost of Edward to anything smaller. Such entertaining his majesty is not all an enormous piece of ground spent in the week when he is on the quires a dozen keepers costing \$8,000 a year and the preservation of

game, food, repairs and incidentals will account for another \$5,000. For the keep of the mansion itself an enormous figure is required, especially as a little army of servants is needed, frequently numbering as many as 35.

Then there is the question of the fellow-guests. The King is invariably consulted in this respect and in almost every case a full dozen are invited to meet and amuse his majesty. These dukes and lords and generals arrive in their motor-cars each with his own chauffeur, footman and valet, while each lady brings her own maid and private secretary, and many of them their own private hairdresser. The King and some of the dukes go so far as to bring with them their own favorite gun-leaders and royalty is always accompanied by its private butler. It is not overestimating to say that each guest averages five servants, and the host of a shooting party of a dozen guests would, therefore, not have to provide for twelve, but for 72 persons.

When the enormous cost of one of these royal shooting parties is taken into account, it is not surprising that the hosts of his majesty calculate that each brace of birds will cost him something like \$50 and that to get the cost as low as that, the moors will have to be plentifully stocked and his guests

his mouth, though making no sound, and beckoning with his hand. With the dogs held in leash, they traveled with little difficulty toward the open space among the trees, where the negroes were holding their voodoo meeting. There was no fear of being detected now, for the darkeys were so dilatory that they could not have heard a cannon above the uproar.

Peering through the screen of bushes, the eyes of the two grew big and round. Upon a large box in the middle of a clearing stood "Handsome Sue," garbed in clothes and scarfs of brilliant colors in which red predominated. Round and round the box she whirled in a peculiar sort of dance, while about her in a great circle danced negro men and women with queer, jerky, convulsive movements.

THE NEGROES FLEE

Then, with a sign of warning to Marguerite, Louis released the dogs. Right into the center of the meeting ground dashed the two huge animals. One glance, and with cries of alarm and terror, every negro was in flight. So sudden was the disappearance that Marguerite and Louis could hardly believe their eyes. They recalled the dogs, who were about to pursue some of the negroes.

So excited were the boy and girl that they could hardly accomplish the journey back home quickly enough. And when they burst in upon their father, the colonel, you can imagine how interested he was in their story.

"You shouldn't have done that," he said, when the tale of their escapade was concluded. "Nevertheless, I'm glad, indeed, to learn of these doings among my hands. I believe I can now go about remedying my troubles in the proper way."

As a result of the children's discovery, "Handsome Sue" was discharged on the morrow. She it was, no doubt, who had incited the darkeys to make such unreasonable demands. There was a general murmur of protest and somewhat of defiance when Sue was told to depart. A few of the hands, left with her, but the rest, now removed from the influence of the voodoo queen, soon became the capable workers they were formerly, and all discontent seemed to vanish.

Marguerite and Louis often recalled "Handsome Sue," and wondered whether she became the queen of another body of voodoo worshippers. Marguerite was just a teeny, weeny bit afraid that perhaps the "queen" might cast some horrible spell upon them, as was intimated by her old nurse. But Louis scoffed at the idea and declared he was ready to meet any number of voodooes, and at any time.

"PEERED THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH"

FROM BONNIE SCOTLAND

NOTES OF INTEREST FROM HER BANKS AND BRAES.

What is Going on in the Highlands and Lowlands of Auld Scotia.

Dundee is not to proceed with its trackless trolley car system.

An adder measuring close on 20 inches has been killed near Eccles.

At Aberdeen about 1,700 have applied for forms to claim old age pensions.

The Edinburgh and Leith Millers' Association have advanced the price of flour 12 cents.

There have been over 200 applications for old-age pension form at Hawick post-office.

The Caledon Company, Dundee, are to build a 1,000 ton steamer for Liverpool and Cork cattle trade.

The Scottish Band of Hope Union has been in existence for 40 years, has 700 branches and about 13,000 members.

Mr. James Gardner Millar, advocate, has been appointed Sheriff of Lanarkshire, in room of the late Mr. William Guthrie.

Napier's shipyard at Govan was offered for sale the other day at the upset price of \$300,000, but there were no offers.

At Penicuik a sycamore tree believed to be 200 years old was cut down. It was struck by lightning some years ago.

Berwick Naturalists' Club is proposing to erect a memorial on Floodfield, the scene of Northumbria's greatest battle.

A firm of Leith shipbuilders have received 200 applications in answer to an advertisement for a night watchman at \$5 per week.

Mr. Robert Low Orr, K.C., has been appointed Sheriff-Substitute of the Lothians and Peebles at Edinburgh, in room of Mr. Gardner Millar.

The post-office officials have purchased ground in Clark street and Macgregor street, Brechin, for the erection of a new post-office.

A legacy of \$500 has been bequeathed to the Dundee Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children by the late Mrs. John Earle Robertson, Dundee.

A meeting of ministers and office-bearers of all the churches in Possilpark was held recently to protest against the desecration of the Sabbath.

Edinburgh proposes to engage at a salary of \$750 a lady health visitor holding a medical qualification, who must devote her whole time to the work.

Miss Mary Barclay, matron, Jubilee Cottage Hospital, Banff, died recently from blood poisoning, resulting from having scratched her finger with a fish bone.

Arrangements have been made in Scotland with the view of saving claimants for old age pensions the expense of obtaining certificates of their birth or baptism.

A legacy of \$2,500 left by the late Mr. James Reid has been handed over to Greenock Eye Infirmary. The amount is to be funded for the general purposes of the institution.

Forty-five pension claim forms

have been issued by Aylth post-office, and these embrace a mother and son, the former being 94 years of age, while the son is in his 72nd year.

There is a prospect of public swimming baths being constructed in the Exchange Hall, Hawick, the trustees of the late Mr. Thomas Anderson having offered \$20,000 to the Town Council for this purpose.

CEYLON COMBS.

Men Wear Them But the Women are Innocent of the Adornment.

Perhaps there is nothing in Cingalese customs, writes H. W. Cave in "The Book of Ceylon," that strikes the stranger from the West as so extraordinary as the custom which requires the male population of the low country to wear long hair twisted into a coil at the back of the head and a horseshoe-shaped tortoise-shell comb at the top, while the women remain innocent of the great ambitions of the men of humble position is to possess and wear a huge comb of the finest lustre and most perfect manufacture; and many mark their higher social position with an additional comb, which rises to a considerable height above their glossy coil.

The custom supports a large number of manufactures. The artist in tortoise-shell obtains his raw material from the hawkbill turtle. His methods of detaching the scales were once so barbarous and cruel that a special law had to be passed forbidding them.

The poor creatures used to be captured and suspended over a fire till the heat made the scales drop off, and then the turtles were released to grow more.

The practise arose from the circumstance that if the shell were taken from the animal after death the color became cloudy and milky. This, however, can be obviated by killing the turtle and immediately immersing the carcass in boiling water.

The plates, when separated from the bony part of the animal, are very irregular in form. They are flattened by heat and pressure. Being very brittle, they require careful manipulation, especially as a high temperature, which would soften them, tends to darken and cloud the shell. They are therefore treated at as low a heat as is possible for the work. Thickness is obtained by softening several plates and then applying pressure, when a union of the surface takes place. Under heat the shell is also molded into various artificial forms.

THE WEIGHT AND THE DAY.

"It's silly for anyone to suspect me of cheating," said the tricky coal man; "my weight is honest as the day."

"H'm!" remarked the housekeeper, "the days are getting shorter and shorter as the cold weather approaches."

NEW WAY OF PUTTING IT.

Curious Friend—Is that young lady I saw you with the other day your sister?

Rejected Suitor (loftily)—No, but she told me she was willing to be.

A SORRY DIVERSION OF A TOYLAND SPORT

