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A DEED WITHOUT A NAME.

ABOUT thirty years since I was at New Orleans. I was there in the fulfillment of my duties as assistant surgeon of Her Majesty's ship *Tiger*, which was stationed there. During our stay I felt myself at liberty to land, and amuse myself like other strangers in the brilliant and lively capital of the South. At least, it was so considered in those days, before strategic reasons assigned the pre-eminence to the then obscure town of Richmond, in Virginia.

Aware, however, of the passionate and quarrelsome character of the white and half-caste population of the city—there was, of course, no temptation to mingle with its black one, three or four times as numerous—and having a very rational surgical dislike to the contact of bowie-knife or revolver, I kept as far aloof as I could from the sort of people with whom an unaccredited stranger was likely to make acquaintance.

I was late, however, on one particular, memorable evening. It was Christmas Eve. I remember well, and I had been to a party with an English merchant, resident in New Orleans, whose acquaintance I made accidentally. But, notwithstanding the profuse and even splendid hospitality tendered to me, I had preserved all my wonted sobriety.

It would have been dark night when I left my friend's house if there had not been a very bright moon that made every

object almost as distinct as by day in Europe, when I set forth on my journey to the harbor.

A considerable portion of the city lay between me and the quayside where I knew I could easily procure a boat for my ship. And it so happened that on this route my host had mentioned to me resided some of the wealthiest, most beautiful, and yet most contemned portion of the female creole population. It was a very usual circumstance, he assured me, for the fathers of half-caste girls to leave them, not merely incompetencies, but considerable fortunes, with a view of preserving them from the temptations to which their frequently extraordinary loveliness exposed them. But the fervid passions of the African race, fed by the glowing sun and the baneful social prejudices which existed against them, had in the end constituted these poor creatures a kind of class apart. They inhabited a line of very fine and even magnificent villas, in a sort of suburb apart from the main city. And through this I was to pass.

Proceeding along the line of moonlit wall bordering the road I had to traverse, and shaping to myself various little fanciful legends of the supposed sultry-brown sorceresses of that locality, I was quite delighted, I remember, to perceive an old-fashioned sedan chair placed before the entrance of one of these paradises.

A sedan chair, though an article by no