



FOR THE LAND WE LIVE IN.

### One Christmas Dinner in Louisiana

INA, having just returned from boarding-school for the day, Una was at a loss as to how to entertain her stately sister in a novel way, so after studying for perhaps two minutes upon the all important subject, a long period of thought for mild, kind-hearted Una, she ran into Ina's room exclaiming, "I have it now!"

"Have what, Una," said Ina in a sleepy way.

"An Idea."

"Oh! is that all? I supposed it was the tooth-ache, or some other unpardonable sin."

"Ina, you are so slow of speech and free from mercy, you should graduate with the highest honors. But I have a real idea of eating a Christmas dinner with Aunt Thursa, and am going now to tell her we will be there."

So saying, the bright face was gone, and the clear notes whistled in high G, soon brought Aunt Thursa to her cabin door, saying, "You is de puttyest whistle-bird eber I seed; now what for you come here bodderin' me; you know I 'ee cooking dat possum, an' de ole man er expectin' hees dinner right onto twelve er clock."

"Well, Aunt Thursa, I want you to let me and Ina come help you eat dinner."

"Bress de chile! You es welcome es sun-lite, an' you des' look on de high shelf in de pantry, an' git some pies, cakes, per-sim's an' one dem big bottles er wine, caze de ole man do likes Mars Joe's wine to tase on."

Una returned to the house, where Ina assisted her in loading a large basket of "Christmas Goodies," consisting of eatables, and several "Santa Claus" presents for the two dear old servants whom they had always known, and loved almost as much as they did their parents. Arriving at the cabin they found the table spread with a real home-spun cloth, left over from those made during the war, all kind of dishes, from fine China brought from England by "Ole Mars Joe" grandfather of our heroines, down to the heavy blue-edged plates found on all plantations. After helping the girls, with all the elegance of the "finest waiter," Daddy bowed his snowy head and said, "Our Hebenly Farder! make us do de will er Goode in all tings, Amen."

Then all began eating, Oh! such food! Real "possum and taters!" No one who

has never ate of that dish, can imagine how perfectly delicious it is. But not every one could prepare a dinner one tenth as good, as Aunt Thursa. Ina asked her how she made the O'Possum so nice, when Daddy said.

"Chile! Thursa dar, don' know one ting 'bout possum, but I'll tell yer, an' den yer can make one for dinner nex' Chris'mas. Go down back er de ginn-house, look up in de 'Simmon tree, an' ef de possums aint come, des' you lie down in de weeds an' go sleep, den when you wakes up, look up in de 'simmon tree, an' see er nice striped possum wid er black heade, caze de white headed possums is ole. Frow er green 'simmon at de young possum so he'll wake out he's deade, den he's heads 'll hang down, while he's tail hol's on tight to de lim' er de tree, makin' out he's deade sho' nuf, but he aint deade do.' Den yer take him by de back er de heade an' brung him up here back er de cabin, an' put him in de cage. Six weeks 'fore Chris'mas, gib him all de sweet taters, 'simmons, milk, 'lasses an' co'u be kin eat, wid salt, an' watah much es he kin drink all de time; den de day 'fore Christ mas hit dat possum er little so he'll make out he's deade; den you take him outer he's cage; lay him down on de groun'; put er ax-han'le cross he's neck; put one foot on one side de possum on de han'le, an de udder foot on de udder side, on de han'le; den yer spit on yer hands and rub 'em togadder; den yer take dat possums tail in yer hands an' pull,—pull des as hard es yer kin till de neck brokes; den yer take him in de cabin, make er hole in de ashes whats hot, cover him up, makes er pine knot fire on him an' go to sleep; den when yer wakes us take dat possum outen dea-hes, pull all his har often him rite dere, burn it all up wid pine knots clean dat possum nice an' white, wash him in strong winegar an' put him up on de roof ob de cabin, till nex' mornin'; den take him down, fill him full er taters, put er tater 'tween his teef's, make his heade, leages an' tail look nat'r'al like, an' cook him in winegar, an' den you's got er possum an' taters."

By this time our girls had finished having enj'ed a most deliciously cooked dinner, and went out to gather lovely, fragrant flowers, in the garden back of the cabin. When they returned, Daddy had his bible, from which he read the XXIII psalm, sang "How firm a foundation," and kneeling in prayer, invoked the blessing of the most High, upon all the ends of the earth and intermidiste places, ending

with the Lords Prayer, in which the voices of Ina and Una joined with fervent interest, after which they all arose, and Aunt Thursa and Daddy taking a hand of each of the girls, joined in a benediction which will find an echo in their hearts, as long as life lasts.

That was the last Christmas dinner those four enjoyed, for ere another Christmas bell rang out, all was different. And never again will either of the four partake of "possum an' taters," on a Louisiana plantation.

ERNIE.

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### Quebec Society, As It Was.

We are indebted to J. M. LeMoine, Esq., the Historian of Canada, for the following extract from a letter written in 1759, by Major Robert Stobo, a famous Virginian Officer,—then a prisoner of war at Quebec,—to Col. George Washington. Mr. LeMoine says that this extract is all he could find of this interesting letter, still there is enough of it show to that "Still to the last kind vice clung to the tott'ring walls" of the French dynasty in Canada.

DEAR GEORGE,—You will find this a lengthy epistle, let me hope, a curious tale of colonial doings. I can put forth no other apology for boring you, than the imperative necessity I experience of occupying my mind: else *ennui* and nothing to do would, I fear, soon drive me hopelessly mad. Four years of prison life for a full-blooded Virginian is rather too much at one stretch.

I will prepare for your eye a startling, but truthful record of court intrigues, elegant profligacy and public plunder. Some years ago, on my visiting London, my kind protector, Lord Bute, procured me an *entrée* to the fashionable society of the metropolis. I saw its great men. I saw their vices. I have not forgotten my disgust at seeing the vices of some of the painted jezabels surrounding our king—around virtuous Queen Caroline. I noticed those visions of purity and loveliness, the Bellendens, the Lepells; my friend Smollett introduced me to the patriotic Pitt, the brilliant Walpole; one figure especially did I loath, that Royal favorite, Lady Yarmouth, she who sold a bishopric for £500. Peg Wollington is a marvellous creature, but what say you of her *preux Chevalier*, Edmund Burke?

Hampton Court was not a bit worse—nay, in fact, it was much less dissolute than Versailles. The Hanoverian King had La Walmoden; the French monarch, La Pompadour; his Minister of Finance at Quebec has la ——. If vice and profligacy flaunt in open day at the French Court, amidst *le beau monde*, do not imagine that the *beau monde* of Quebec is free from it.

There are of course here several exceptions: Montcalm, Vandreuil; several of