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MASTER and SLAVE By... T. H. THORPE Copyright, 1901, by T. H. Thorpe.

the remainder, in many stacks,

The young man sat at a distance

"No, I don't know that," replied

sell him, I didn't want to sell him, and,

tiste. He was the best judge of horses

watchfulness I should never have re-

you to have complained to me of any

"I admit that," said Quillebert, "but

was so enraged that I couldn't help

"But had not the dog bitten the

"It was a fact," insisted Latiolais

"and the wounds inflicted by the dog's

teeth were found upon the dead man's

quarrel now. Of course, when you de-

nothing to do but leave it to a jury,

so I brought the suit. I was willing to

The young man sat at a distance from

abide by the award of the jury, al-

"that you both made a mistake by let-

tween us."

that you shot him dead."

whip?" Latiolais inquired.

"I have heard something

soft," said Quillebert curtly.

same.

conversation was not audible to him.

before Quillebert.

hantering tone had said:

CHAPTER I. AMITY.

ORACE OAKFELL, representative from the parish of Avoyelles, was the youngest member of the Louisiana legislature of 1857. Of 'medium height, broad of shoulder, deep chested and brown mired and brown eyed, with a countenance brave and frank, he was regarded as the Adonis of the house. His dr s of milk white cassimere, ruffled shirt and deep Byronic collar gave warrant to the poetic appraisal of the women. But his colleagues set a different estimate upon him. To them he was known as a well trained lawyer, a close student, a young man much given to philosophic research and meditation, one of learn-

true, courageous, but of a seriousness bordering upon melancholy. He was a forceful debater, though his years were but 24, and his utterances were always heard with sincere respect. Though himself a slaveowner, he had

from motives of humanity eloquently but unsuccessfully opposed the bill which enacted: "That from and after the passage of

this act no slave shall be emancipated in this state." His speech had been published in full

by the leading journals, and its peroration was long remembered. "Can it be," he exclaimed, "that in this part of Christendom, in a time of profound peace and tranquillity, an American legislative body will from the black cloud of slavery tear the narrow fringe of hope and in its stead inscribe by statute the frightful legend proves at once, strength | seen by Dante over the portals of hell? Can it be that enlightened citizens will

forbid the reward of liberty to the slave who serves the state? Will the lawmaking power deny to the master the exercise of the noblest virtue of his nature by prohibiting him from conferring the boon of freedom upon the slave who has stood between his life and the knife of the assassin or safely borne his fainting wife through the flames of the burning mansion or plunged into the down sucking Mississippi to bring back the fair haired child to the frantic mother? Can it be that the flower of civilization will make unlawful that kindness to a faithful human slave which it approves to a dog or a horse? I cannot believe it. But if I mistake the sense of the house then let me say that the logical consequence of this measure will be the stifling of moral growth in the master, the removal of incentives to loyalty

perate and ferocious; the sense of justice of other communities will be shocked and their righteous anger will be provoked; a decade cannot fail to bring some frightful catastrophe on our state as the fruit of this unholy measure. I protest against it. I ap-All collections have prompt atten- peal to my colleagues to be true to their better nature and prove by their negative votes that the white race in Louisiana can defend itself and yet be not ungenerous."

in the slave; the one must become

more narrow and cruel, the other des-

His appeal was ineffective. The bill was passed by a pronounced majority, was approved by the governor and be came law.

After the adjournment of the legislature Oakfell returned to the parish of Avoyelles, taking passage on the steamboat Red Oneen. The vessel was one of those popularly called "floating palaces," of which a score plied the lower Mississippi and its tributaries during the decade preceding the civil war when no railroads had been laid in that part of Louisiana lying west of the great river. She was a side wheeler, with high pressure engines, capable of great speed and with accommodation for over 150 passengers. There were a profusion of white paint upon her exterior and a plenitude of gilding

and low hanging chandeliers within the cabin. The boat carried some 60 passengers, many of whom were planters returning from their annual spring visits to New Orleans factories to settle accounts of peal yesterday and employed a city white about his neck discovered the the past planting year and arrange companied by their wives and daugh-

closed and run together, and while mu-

sic, dancing and conversation engaged

the women and young folks in the la-

dies' cabin the tables in the forward

the barkeeper's business day.

lawyer to argue his cause for him in credits for the new. Some were ac- the supreme court." "No, it is not too late," Quillebert exters, and a sociability prevailed among claimed; "It is never too late to do the company which is wholly wanting good. Let us have another toddy, and in the commercial travel of the present when we drink that to friendship I day. will make a proposition to you." Three were planters in Avoyelles, one

Their glasses were filled and drain ed with expressions of good feeling. ness of a physician to that of cotton "Now," said Quillebert, with a know ing leer in his eyes, "you say, Latiolais Marais des Cygnes, in the Avoyelles -at least I have heard you say many prairie. The second was Constant times-that you are the best old sledge Quillebert, a low browed, long nosed player in the parish of Avoyelles. I Gascon Frenchman who had lived on know you play that game better than Bayou des Glaises for 20 years, but you do poker." And he significantly had never married or become an Amerglanced at the bare space on the table ican citizen. The third was Leonidas in front of Latiolais, then at the piles Latiolais of Bayon Rouge, a man of 60, of red and blue chips on his own side, whose hair was white and whose blue and continued: "I will offer to play eyes and short chin bespoke a kindly you 11 games of old sledge. If you win but weak character. Of the three Lasix out of the 11, I will pay you \$2,000 tiolais alone threw any warmth into as soon as we reach home. If I win the salutation of Oakfell. The others | six out of the 11, you will give me a rereferred to the legislative incident in a celpt in full for the judgment and purely polite manner, as if tenderness costs in your suit against me for killfor him required that it be quickly ing Baptiste. If you agree, I will now passed over. Latiolais, however, spoke write to my attorney in the city inregretfully of the result, but rather out structing him to withdraw the appeal of sympathy for the young legislator than for the cause he had championed | be mailed when the boat stops at Ba-

Oakfell received their different exvou Sara." pressions with apparent unconcern and "That certainly is a liberal proposievinced a preference to avoid any dis- tion," said Dr. De Roux. "You would cussion of the supposed merits or de- do well to accept it, Leonidas." merits of the bill.

Latiolais looked down, and his face After the evening meal had been par- assumed an expression of doubt and taken of in the long saloon, with the trouble. Oakfell watched the workusual clatter of china service and scur- ings of his countenance intently. "Let's have one more toddy before I rying of the numerous yellow and black

waiters, the extension tables were decide." "Agreeable."

and a new deck of cards, Quillebert swishing the rain from his broad felt speedily occupied by the older men New Orleans, passing it to Latiolais to and some of the younger, gambling be- be read, addressed, sealed, and handed ing an unfailing feature of the steam- it to the captain of the boat, with the tables were in close neighborhood to The cards were shuffled and the game going to bappen." the bar, and this was the beginning of was begun, Dr. De Roux keeping score.

evening reading in the captain's state- other through ten games. The eleventh | you." room on the hurricane deck. Returning was close, but by turning a knave as half drained glasses of liquor were on cipal, interest and costs which he had lie there until morning and no one fair the godmother of the bell will be the table. None of the chips was on obtained for the killing of his negro know of his suffering." the side where Latiolais sat. Some man Baptiste and gave it to Quille- "I have just heard some one drive up being waged by a number of our girls first appointment to a parish in Louisi-

\$300, representing his loss in the game of poker they had previously played. Forcing a smile, he ordered three more glasses of whisky, and when these had been tossed off bade his companions good night and retired. Quillebert and Dr. De Roux strolled to the hurricane deck to soothe their nerves with cigars before seeking sleep. Oakfell repaired to his stateroom soul sickened by what he had witnessed.

> CHAPTER II. THE FERRY AT BAYOU DU LAC-

Red river, to Pointe Midi, on the Bayou Claire, near which "L'Esperance," the Oakfell plantation, lay, was a distance of some 20 miles. The dignifying from the three, but not so far that their name of fort was given to a small earthwork which had been thrown up by direction of the United States gov-Ouillebert in a half jocular and half ernment under the supervision of Colonel De Roussy at the first rise of "Leonidas, if I were not a man of ex-Avoyelles prairie abutting on the low traordinary good nature you and I alluvial river bottom. Four miles inwould now be at outs instead of sitland from the fort the highroad ran me to kick you? Now, sir, they won't ting here over a friendly game of pokthrough the little town of Marksville, bite. They know I am here. Who is it er and clinking our social glasses, the parish site or seat of justice. The I see?" because it wasn't neighborly in you to courthouse and two magazines for sue me for \$2,000 for that old negro of cotton were the only brick structures yours when you know that you couldn't of which it could boast. All the other have sold him for \$700 even on credit." wood, painted white or yellow, ranged sir. . Come right in." And he grasped Latiolais. "I could have sold him for on either side of a long main street | Oakfell's hand and shook it warmly. \$750. But that isn't it. I never tried to and two lateral and four cross streets intersecting at right angles. The sitalthough he was 50 years old when you uation of the village was a gentle dip shot him, I wouldn't have sold him for in the prairie, the two sides of which, \$2,000 cash. I was attached to Bapwhen the thick foliage of umbrella china, pecan, fig and oak trees was at among my negroes. He was faithful its full and softened by the sprinkling and nursed me and my son through the of rosy flowered myrtles, gave the reyellow fever, and, although my son semblance to the trough between died, I have always believed that had waves of a great green sea. The popit not been for Baptiste's care and ulation of 600 or 700 souls was almost entirely Gascon French and French covered. Therefore I never thought ? whom but few spoke Engcreole that \$2,000 could have at all repaid me lish. The exceptions were the families for his loss. Moreover, it would have of four American lawyers, who had been the act of a good neighbor in acquired the French language and used it more frequently than their mother offense Baptiste had given you and

tongue. allowed me to correct him. Instead of Nine miles southward from the village the smooth surface of the prairie broke suddenly and the land declined when he struck my pointer dog with sharply to a broad belt of stiff soil, that ox whip and I saw the blood redincalculably fertile, bearing a thick den the white skin of the poor brute I growth of cypress, gum and oak and terminating at Bayou du Lac, wide and shooting the infernal negro down in his deep, on the farther side of which lay tracks, and you would have done the the Magnolia bills. These latter were a series of gentle undulations, rising somewhat above the general level of negro before he struck it with the the alluvion and extending quite eight miles to the fine, sandy soil of that perfect agricultural country formed by the network of bayous Rouge, Huffpower, Bœuff and Claire. Here the stately magnolia tree dominated, its evergreen leaves of olive hue and varbody. But, as we never quarreled about nished freshness preserving to the that." Latiolais continued, "let's not landscape throughout the year the warm sylvan tints of summer and its stroyed my property you owed me big blossoms of creamy white loading something, and, since we couldn't the air with the fragrance of comagree upon the amount, there was bined jasmine and lemon and imbuing with sensuousness the luxuriant spring. Robed in gown of woven vines, which trailed to the ground and flowered in yellow, red, blue and white, the mag-

nolia was truly queen of the forest. The day had been sultry, overcast by low hang' g clouds, from which fell a steady, saking rain from noon until nightfail. An intense darkness succeeded the day, and the rain became fitful, while the lightning was frequent and blinding in its lurid brilliancy. The public road leading from the rope ferry of Bayou du Lac to the Magnolia hills and which constant use had worn to a

deep gully in the soft ground was reduced by the rain almost to a state of ooze, rendering travel arduous and slow. The dwelling of Valsin Mouillot, the ferryman, stood in an inclosure near the road and 50 yards from the bayou. Valsin was short and muscular, of middle age and scant education, but blessed with a cheerful mind. He was a widower, with three little girls dependent upon him, and his resources were the public ferry and the yield of 30 acres of cleared land, which he operated with the aid of three slavesan old man and woman and a boy. though it was only \$1,200; but you This last drew the ferryboat along the have seen fit to carry the matter on wide stretch of rope more frequently appeal to the supreme court and pro- than did the ferryman and on such long this only cause of difference be- nights as this occupied the lookout shed on the bank to respond to the "I think," Dr. De Roux remarked.

calls of travelers. Notwithstanding the warmth of the ting the matter go into the courts. Lit- night and the open doors of the house, igation always begets bitterness. The a bright fire of cypress bark burned longer it is drawn out the more invet- on the hearth of the largest room to erate becomes the ill feeling. I think resist the moisture with which this yet you ought to take it out of court low region reeked. In front of the and settle it as friends and gentlemen." | fire sat a stout, broad faced, dark skin-"I am afraid it is too late," said La- ned man of advanced years, whose garb tiolais, "as Constant perfected his ap- of black and turned down band of



In front of the fire sat a stout, broad faced, dark skinned man.

Francois Grhe, cure of Mansura, whose | interests." ecclesiastical dominion extended south-With this aid Latiolais accepted the of a lightning flash, had discovered her mother, and Latiolais, I am sure, is proposal. Calling for writing material nothing. Valsin entered the room honest."

boots upon the floor, said:

playing, but cards, ivory chips and a receipt in full of the judgment, prin- Magnolia hills on such a night he may build and paint a new belfry. At the

few were in front of Dr. De Roux, and | bert; also an I O U for the sum of from the ferry," observed the priest, who are ambitious of that honor. Es. | Ena.

"and pass on toward the bills. Who was it, Valsin?" "I do not know," replied Valsin. "I did not go to the ferry. The boy

Pierre is there tonight. But come, father; your supper of chicken, eggs and coffee is ready. You must be very hungry after driving so far and waiting so long." "Thank you, Valsin. I have an ap-

petite, you may be sure, although I am not impatient, for, you know, I am practiced in fasting.

As the priest rose to follow his host to the supper table a voice came from

ROM Fort De Roussy, on the | without, calling: "Hello, Valsin! Hello! Hello!"

The dogs of the yard set up a furious barking. Both men stopped, and Valsin, stepping out on the veranda of his house,

responded: "Hello voursel?! Who is it? Come "I can't until you call your dogs off." "Wait; I will be there in a minute. Here, you rascal, Jacques; get away!

And you, Rosa; go off! Do you want "Oakfell, Valsin. I have to claim shelter of you."

"Why, bless my heart, Mr. Horace! edifices, including the church, were of How do you do? I am glad to see you, "What's happened? Where's your bug-

"Never mind the buggy, Valsin. Let us get out of this rain and mud," said one ballot." Oakfell, "and then I will tell you what has happened."

"To be sure, to be sure," said Valsin. at the gate to tell me about it when you can just as well come inside and get dry and comfortable and then tell me and take your own time." And he led his unexpected guest into the house.

Father Grhe gave Oakfell an affectionate greeting, but, observing that his face was scratched and his clothing torn and smeared with mud, manifested anxiety and asked with an air of concern:

"Why, my son, you have met with an fell. accident. Are you hurt?"

"No, I believe I have sustained not." rived on the Red Queen at Fort De short time at my office in Marksville, concluded to drive to my plantation this evening. The big black which was recently sent me from Cincinnati had money? No, sir. You voted right, like been stabled in town since I left for a real man, and I honor you for it." Baton Rouge in the early part of the session. I had him put to the buggy to- the priest, "and I advise every man day. Just as I was getting out of the gully beyond Valsin's field the horse read your speech and engrave it on his took fright at the upright shafts of an ox cart tilted on end in front of old manity which was the especial care of Grineau's house, which I in the dark did not see. Before I was aware he bounded to the left, leaped up the bank and started on a dead run into the Magnolia hills. I braced myself to hold him in, but he was beyond control, and, positively, I expected to be killed. Had he got as far as the woods he surely would have dashed my brains out against a tree; but, fortunately, at the edge of the field the left wheel of the buggy struck a thorn stump, and everything went to pieces. The buggy, I

suppose, has been broken into a thousand fragments. I was thrown violently to the ground, the reins left my grasp, and the horse has gone dashing through the bills like some mad crea-

ture. So here I am, all that is left of the cortege that started out so bravely from Marksville, and I may thank my stars that there is this much left sound and unbroken." "The kind God be thanked, it is the best part which has been saved," said

the priest fervently. "Yes, yes," Valsin added, "we could not afford to losé such a one as Mr. Horace, and we must take the best of care of what God has been good enough to preserve to us."

He hurried Oakfell into another room, calling to his aid the old negro Alonzo. cypress chests and armoirs and bustling about like busy bousewives, shorttance was attached to mere appearance.

Valsin urged his guests to the meal that was awaiting them, and after ings, jests and chafferings. The pale grace by the priest the three played at | nuns of the Holy Family convents at knife and fork in the manner of men | Marksville and Mansura chaperoned blessed with good health and quiet consciences.

"Who else of Avoyelles came on the boat, Mr. Horace?" inquired Valsin. "Dr. De Roux, Constant Quillabert and Leonidas Latiolais."

"Constant, I hear, has carried to the supreme court that unhappy lawsuit between himself and Latiolais," said Father Grhe. "It is a great pity that such disputes should arise between neighbors and a greater pity that they should be prolonged."

"It is deplorable," said Oakfell, "that in a Christian country the very possibility of such a dispute as that should exist, but there is no longer any lawsuit between those two neighbors. It was settled last night in a manner both unique and impressive." He described how the price of a human life had been liquidated by the hazard of cards un-

der the inspiration of whisky. "Most lamentably un-Christian," said Father Grhe. "I am especially sorry that Leonidas Latiolais was a party to such an act. He is a good man at heart. His intentions are right, but he is in some things weak, very weak. At times I am grievously distressed by Catholic priest. His hair was thick apprehensions of misfortune to his and deliver the letter to the captain to and as yet untouched by the gray of granddaughter, Estelle. As her guardage, eyes large and strong, and his ian he controls her inheritance, and countenance, though confessing to good | while I know his love for her is little living, advertised a spirit of benevo- less than a worship, yet his yielding lence and charity. This was Father nature is a continuing menace to her

> "Your fears are in all probability cor ward to the Bayou Bouf. He had rect," Oakfell observed. "Latiolais' imheard a call to the ferry, and later, providence may be hurtful to his grandwhen the sound of rushing hoofs and child in the dissipation of the estate wheels in the road fell upon his ear, which she should inherit from him, but he had peered out into the darkness, he could not without gross dishonesty but, notwithstanding the illumination imperil that which she derives from

"Certainly he means to be," said end were arranged for cards and were wrote the message to the lawyer in hat and, stamping his wet and muddy Father Grhe. "I trust my fears will never be justified by the event. But, "I don't like a night like this, father- speaking of Estelle, my son, I must hot and dripping and heavy. It always give you a bit of news which probably boat travel in the fifties. These card request that he mail it at Bayou Sara. makes me feel that something bad is has not reacted you since you have been at the capital. The new bell pre-"Keep your soul clean, Valsin," said sented to the church by our good The play was silent. Victory went the priest, "and whatever happens on friends at Bordeaux arrived from Oakfell passed the greater part of the alternately from the one player to the a night like this cannot be bad for France last week and will be christened the first Saturday after Easter. On "Oh, it is not for myself-no-that I | the Thursday before a fair is to be held to the cabin at 11 o'clock, he found his trump and scoring a six spot as low am uneasy, but I think that persons at the Mansura schoolhouse to raise constituents from Avoyelles at the ta- Quillebert won by a point. Latiolais traveling abroad are sure to meet with money to pay the expenses of bringing ble nearest the bar. They were not took pen and paper, wrote and signed accident, and if a man is burt in the the bell from New Orleans and to

telle has been persuaded to enter the competition and I am afraid her grandfather's absence in New Orleans has not improved her chances of winning. She is too modest and timid to canvass for herself, and, while I ought not to be a partisan of any in the race, yet I grieve to think that Estelle should suffer for the want of a champion.'

"Is it too late for a champion to be of service to her?" asked Oakfell. "By no means."

"What is the mode of election? "Each vote must be accompanied by \$1. The candidate in whose name the greatest number of dollars are contributed is elected godmother to the bell," the priest explained. "The candidates are, of course, all

young girls?" queried Oakfell. "Oh, certainly," replied the "No matrons are admitted."

"How many candidates are there?" "Six. The lists were closed last Sun-

"Then," said Oakfell, "though I have not had the pleasure of meeting Mlle. Latiolais since her return from the convent, I suppose she is now regarded quite a young lady. I will be her active champion from this on to the close of the polls, but, of course, incognito to

"Good!" exclaimed Valsin. "I will give you five votes for Estelle to begin

"Steady, my good friend," said the priest. "No voter can cast more than

"Well, I will give my own vote," persisted Valsin, "and get four others. I will be good for five anyhow. I polled How foolish of me to keep you here five votes for Mr. Horace to go to the legislature, and I can poll that number for his candidate for the bell christening.

"Thank you, Valsin," said Oakfell. "Our present candidate is more deserving than the other and less likely to disappoint you. "How so?" asked Valsin. "When

have you disappointed me?" "When I voted against the antiemancipation bill, I am afraid," replied Oak-

"Not by a jugful!" declared Valsin. "But you would have done so if you ing beyond a rude shaking up. I ar- had voted for that bill. What! I paid my own money for old Alonzo and old Roussy this afternoon and, stopping for Jeanne and I cannot set them free if I want? I could have thrown my money into the bayon. Then why cannot I free my negroes, for whom I paid my

"And so do I, my young friend," said who wishes to see and do the right to memory. You spoke for that broad huthe Lord Jesus and in which alone lies the ultimate safety of this nation."

"Should all others disapprove these expressions from you, two would suffice to sustain me, for in your sincerity and judgment I have abiding faith." Oakfell spoke warmly and sincerely.

When the meal was concluded, the rain had ceased and the late moon risen above the tree tops of the surrounding forests. The priest announced his determination to push on to Mansura, and, his horse and buggy being led out by Alonzo, he thanked Valsin for his entertainment, gave his blessing and good night and drove on, to be ferried across the water by the

Oakfell's sleep was that of the young man fatigued. At sunrise of the following morning he was speeding in the ferryman's buggy through the glistening, odorous magnolia woods to his plantation at Pointe Midi.

> CHAPTER III. THE MANSURA BELL.

HE fair and election were had as notified to Oakfell by Father Grhe. It was a notable occasion. The quaint little hamlet of Mansura, whose residents were all French and whose and the two, after delving into various verandaed dwellings and shops fronted its single street, broad and umbrageous, in two ranks of unequivocal yelly returned him to the fireside dry and low, was throughout the day denied its comfortably clad in a suit of Valsin's accustomed sleep by noise of buggy homemade and clean Attakapas cotton- teams and saddle horses hitched to ade, his feet incased in a pair of soft its trees and the chatter and laughter moccasins of deerskin. The garments of women, young and old, pretty and were indeed a scanty fit, but they be otherwise, who vended gumbo, roast stowed the desired comfort, and, no fowl, coffee, cake and claret punch at women being present, slight impor- famine prices to the men boisterously patronizing their tables. The concourse was distinctively French. No English word was heard in the greetcoveys of shy girl pupils and stood between them and the bold glances of dark eyed youths, and the priests of Moreauville, Choupique and Marksville lent the influence of their pres-

ence to the interests of their good brother of Mansura. The four reverend gentlemen, smok-



"Good day, fathers four. in which the fair was held, were ac costed by Ouillebert, whose manner evinced but slight respect for their pro-

own wit.

elected, and quite a spirited contest is had served him as a laugh since his street of Mansura.

"Which," explained little Fathe! Chaline of Moreauville, "makes quite plain Father Galotte's frequent and easy victories over him of the cloven heef. One lone devil is no match for him.

The laugh was now a quartet, and Quillebert did not long hesitate to

make it a quintet. "Well, in this encounter of my own seeking I yield to numbers and will pay tribute in forage to my vanquishers," Quillebert said, with a mock air of submission. "It is noon and time for solid nourishment. Come with me, fathers, to old Mme. Goudeau's table and take a stout absinth and anisette, and then we will sample Mother Pierrot's turkey and rice with a bottle of bordeaux." And as host he led the priests into the building.

Mme. Goudeau received her natrons with profuse acknowledgment of the honor conferred, and with great ceremony mixed five glasses of the appetizing decoction.

"Sante to you, fathers, and success to my candidate," was Quillebert's sentiment as he raised the green liquor to his lips.

"Dominus nobiscum," responded Father Galotte. "How is the election progressing?"

"Satisfactorily," said Quillebert. Laure Luneau is a sure winner. My guess now is that she is 22 votes ahead of Estelle Latiolais, and the race was really between those two. It is too late in the day for Estelle to overcome such a majority, as her strength was chiefly from Borodino and the Big Bend of Bayou des Glaises, and it has been voted. I am sorry for her; but, then, Laure's father and I came from the same part of France, and, you know. I had to stick to my clan. I have worked hard for Laure, and she cannot be beaten. How proud the saucy little Gasconne will be!"

Having laid a coin upon the table, Constant was leading the way to Mother Picriot's, when Mme. Goudeau called

"Hold, M. Constant, till I give you your change."

"No change is coming to me, madame, gave you a gold dollar, and 20 cents apiece for five absinth anisettes is cheap enough for a church fair." "No, M. Constant, this is not \$1; it is

a five dollar piece." "Oh, Mme. Goudeau, your sight is failing like that! This comes of reading your prayer book so much. Put on your spectacles, madame, and examine the coin carefully, and if you find it a five I may stop again for the change.' And, bowing merrily, he moved on.

"Well, that is handsome of Constant and will get him two more votes for Laure Luneau," remarked madame to Maximilien Cantonet, an ancient exjustice of the peace, who in religiously intoxicated condition devoutly assisted her with the bottles and glasses.

Mother Pierrot bustlingly superintended the carving by her mulatto man and served five heaping plates of breast and back, declaring one gobbler to have been a 20 pound bronze and the other a cream yellow of equal weight and both to have been fed on pecans for three weeks prior to their martyrdom in the cause of the church. A pyramid of steaming, flaky rice flanked each plate, beside which was set a bottle of bordeaux wine of good body. There is no need to discuss the efficacy of the absinth. The fact is, the five portions were disposed of by the five men with every indication of hunger, thirst and appreciation.

"Is our little Laure still ahead, M. "She is and will remain ahead till the poll closes at half past 5 o'clock," Quillebert replied confidently. "Leonidas Latiolais is no politician. He believed he could elect Estelle by simply interesting the neighbors on Bayou des Glaises, while I have electioneered for Laure not only on the bayou, but on the prairie also. She has had votes today from Marksville, Isle de Cote, Le Coigne, Par en Haut, Bayou Blanc and

even Pointe Maigre.' "You have indeed been very active," said Father Grhe. "I am edified to see you manifest such interest in a matter

of the church." "It is not the church-no," Quillebert protested; "it is politics with me. Whoever enters a canvass against me cannot win by sitting quiet and looking amiable. He has got to travel and maybe get mud on his shoes. . Good Mother Pierrot, this will about pay for our refreshment," he added, placing a coin in the old woman's palm. "But this is \$20, M. Constant!" she

cried in amazement. "I said it would about pay for our refreshment, and thank you," said he, walking away.

"Such a generous man! I wish he was on better terms with the church. Certainly I must get some more votes for Laure," soliloquized Mother Pierrot as she dropped the glittering golden eagle into her silken purse. Declining with thanks an invitation

to join the priests in pipes at Father Grhe's house, Quillebert sauntered along the grassy sidewalks of the street and had proceeded but a short distance when he encountered Dr. De Roux and Leonidas Latiolais lounging under a flowering china tree. Latiolais looked bored and worried. He knew garlanded with flowers. A dozen you nothing of the condition of the contest, ger men with silk banners inscribe but he felt he had not perfectly cham- with sacred legends formed a cave ploned his grandchild's candidacy and cade preceding the carriage of Father was apprehensive of the result. Her Grhe, who in black robe and cap, white defeat would grieve him deeply, and he surplice and gilded stole sat between would lay it to his own supineness.

"Ah, my friends, this is a slow affair for full blooded men," remarked Quillegraveyard and take a nap."

any longer."

Latiolais hesitated, then consented, and the three proceeded to the one stofession and who was, truth to tell, dis- ried public house of the village, where pleasing to them by reason of his boast- in the back room they were joined by ed fondness for the literature of Vol- the brothers Tailleur of Isle de Cote, and, supplied by Dede, the stunted, "Good day, fathers four," was his swarthy, pock pitted proprietor, with airy salutation as he approached. "Do cards, chips, rum and whisky toddies, you know a strange thing? Whenever they were soon absorbed in the prob-I meet more than one nun or more than lems of American poker. Quillebert one priest there are always two or was not without ulterior aim in his heads. four or some greater number of them, proposal. He was confident of Laure but never three. They seem to avoid Luneau's election should no especial the number of the Trinity as if they activity be displayed in her rival's infeared it would bring bad luck. Now, terest and concluded that the surest that is even odd, is it not, my good fa- | means to prevent that would be to sethers? How do you account for it?" duce her champion from the field; And he laughed loud and hard at his hence he set about to make the game unusually attractive by betting boldly fold, an acolyte brought from within "That is no more strange than my and drinking freely, and in a measure the church the silver vessel of holy waown experience. Constant." said Fa- his tactics proved successful, for soon ter and sprinkler, the aromatic gums in ther Galotte. "Whenever I have met the attention of the players was so en- the censers were lighted from live the devil he has always been alone." grossed that they were unconscious of coals, and Father Grhe, reading the And, jabbing his pudgy forefinger the night of time and the passing of words of dedication and bathing bell

mitted, the disappointment of Father



Grhe. Oakfell did not appear at the fair. The priest feared he had for gotten his pledge of support to Estelle given at the house of the ferryman at Bayou du Lac on the night he so narrowly escaped death. But he took heart when at 4 o'clock he saw Valsin ride in at the head of seven neighbors from the Bordelon slough and lead them to the poll for Estelle, and ten more from Lac de la Pearle marched up in the same interest, and these followed at short intervals by dozens and twenties from Chounique, Cottonport, Pointe Midi and a company of non-Catholics from Evergreen and the surrounding plantations, and learned that every one of these late comers deposited a vote for the granddaughter of Latiolais.

The game at Dede's was running high, and the strong drink had taken possession of the players, when at 6 o'clock a cheer from the schoolhouse fell upon their ears. They knew the priests had counted the vote and announced the result, and the cheer was for the victor. Quillebert doubted not she was Laure, and, hastily gathering in the winnings, which, as usual, had fallen his way, he proceeded with his companions to learn the exact figures. His heavy eyes and purpling face took on an expression of cruel exultation. Latiolais lagged behind as if loath to hear the decision.

Seeing Eather Grhe in the doorway of the schoolhouse. Onillebert called: "What's the majority, father?" "Seventeen," the priest said. "Is that all?" said Quillebert coarse

"At 1 o'clock she had 22 over Es

telle Latiolais." "Who had?" asked the priest. "Laure Luneau," shouted Quillebert "But Estelle Latiolais has now 17 votes over Laure Luneau, and the poll is closed. Estelle Latiolais is elected

with rage, but his exclamation, no doubt profane, was drowned by the renewed cheer from the crowd, while old Latiolais' white face was wet with tears of joy, unexpected and unmerit-The fast falling darkness speeded the

Quillebert's features fairly quivered

was a scored event in the history of the parish. The christening day of the bell was the most perfect of that incomparably

bluish gray festoons of Spanish moss could be seen the feathery fringe which later would be plumes in the crowns of royal cypresses. The soft air was scented with jasmine, china flower and sweet gum and rang with the joyous song of the mocking bird.

raiment, with a broad red sash across The cortege escorting the bell in its progress of six miles from the warehouse at Marksville to the church at Mansura was composed of full 200 persons on horses, in buggies and afoot. It was headed by Eloi Durant, the ancient volunteer sacristan, bearing aloft a banner of blue silk on which was embroidered in yellow the name of the sodality society. Following him rode

Homer Debellevue, holding a tall, slender wooden cross painted white and two acolytes gowned in red and white and carrying censer burners On each side of the wagon six horsemen sashed bert. "You both look as thoroughly de- with blue rode as a guard of honor to jected as I feel exhausted. Can we not the bell and then the fair sponsor in have a small game and hasten this aft- an open conveyance seated beside her ernoon off? Else I will go into the grandfather. She was attired in white, a thin veil over her hair and shoulders, "Yes," said Dr. De Roux, "let us go and held a nosegay of large white roses to Dede Lebrun's cabaret at the coulee in her lap. A sweet, childish face, bridge and swap chips; either that or | brown hair and hazel eyes distinguish-I will go home. I cannot stand this ed the victor of the contest, a girl of 15, gentle, shrinking and blushing. On a roan pony at the side of the carriage a young mulatto woman rode and screened the face of her mistress with a sunshade. The cavalcade closed with vehicles, in which were many women matrons and maidens, and a long line of white youths and negroes marching afoot came after.

Marksville church the bell in the tower, rung by Father Chaline himself, greeted its new sister with a merry peal, while all the men uncovered their

erently lifted and hung in the sheltered [Continued on next page.]

Arrived at Mansura, the bell was rev-

Grhe.

godmother of the bell," said Father

dispersion of the assemblage, and the choosing of the church bell's sponsor

lovely season, the Louisiana spring. The pale blue sky had not a fleck in it. The bosom of the little prairie was spread with velvety green sprinkled with buttercups and violets, and on the edges of coulees bright willows rocked in the gentle breeze. The lanes were bordered by walls of dark cherokee vines, against which white roses glistened in the sunlight. The cones dotting stretching branches of pecans were opening in light hued leaves, while afar in the swamp above the

The bell, secured upon the stoutest of plantation wagons, drawn by six sleek mules, was arrayed in a robe of white swiss, set off with bands of blue satin and bunches of pink roses A string of red coral, the gift of the godmother, encircled its brow, above which was a wreath of white magnelia blooms. The wagon was clothed in white cotton cloth, the harness of the mules decked out with knots and bows of ribbon, and the herculean black who drove them was attired in his holiday

As the procession wound past the

temporary scaffolding which had been provided for it at the church front, and around it the people arranged themselves in a wide circle. Two trays of white roses were placed on the scaf-To the surprise and, it must be ad- sang a sweet "Ave Maria" in a voice so

Bestowed the name "Ste. Cecile."