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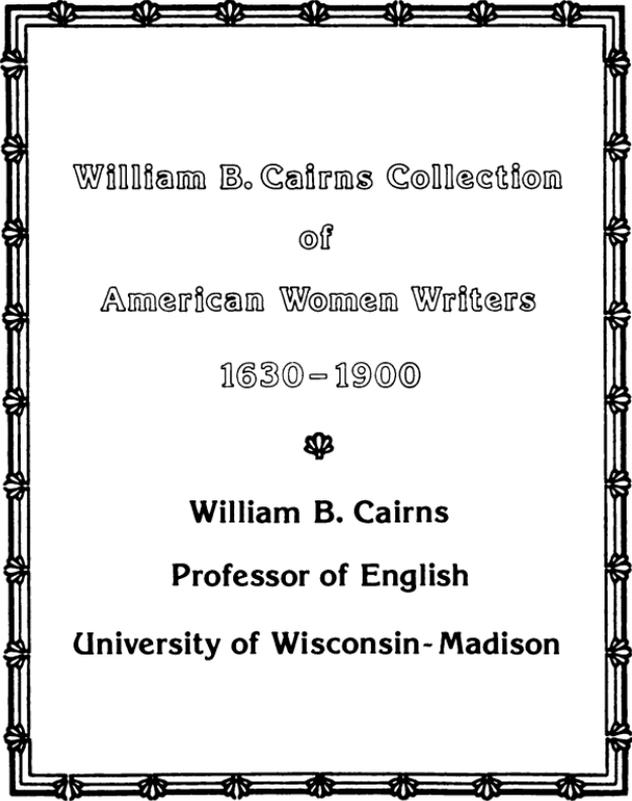
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# *An angel by brevet*

Helen Pitkin



William B. Cairns Collection  
of  
American Women Writers  
1630-1900



**William B. Cairns**  
**Professor of English**  
**University of Wisconsin-Madison**

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# AN ANGEL BY BREVET

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AS HE HAD SEEN HER IN HIS DREAM

# An Angel by Brevet

A STORY OF MODERN  
NEW ORLEANS

BY  
HELEN PITKIN

Soleil levé là ; li couché là  
(The sun rises there ; he sets there)

—LOUISIANA MAXIM



PHILADELPHIA AND LONDON  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1904

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TO  
MY MOTHER'S MOTHER  
I BRING THESE  
FIRSTFRUITS





## FOREWORD

IT is believed that the following story, the main incidents of which have been delved from the unchronicled mysteries of old Creole families,—the most jealously self-defensive of all races,—is lacking in adequacies rather than accuracies. It is astonishing that scenes of voodooism and warlockry still prevail and are not merely traditionary in Louisiana, though there is a judicial prohibition of these practices. Evil and mystery love the dark, and it is not improbable that the law sometimes sleeps. It is generally known hereabout that on St. John's Eve, the twenty-third of June, the most hideous cabala are enacted on the banks of Bayou St. John, the sluggish stream inflowing from Lake Pontchartrain and bisecting the outer demesnes

## FOREWORD

of old New Orleans,—rites that are frenzied into orgies in which the real inducement to assemble is forgotten.

Marie La Veau, long the “Voudou Queen,” is dead, her hovel in St. Ann Street, with its superb votive offerings,—among these candelabra presented by Louis Philippe himself during his visit here,—razed in the new progress. There is no longer a leader among voodoo unregenerates, but there are countless “Wangateurs” or “Doctors,” the names of whom, given in the story following, are authoritative—weird mystics with brains turned by their own odylic powers. The Congo religion is another Mafia whose measures are with the drug rather than the dirk; and while some of those who are not afflicted with superstitious apprehension of its fetiches may enjoy immunity from harm, yet undoubted harm has been wrought upon others through the use of noxious herbs and roots of the swamps. Their grim magic has descended from unlettered negroes of Africa,

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Hayti, and the Indies in amalgamation with semi-tropical Creole superstitions.

New Orleans is yearning upward through Northern lights and is losing by degrees the peculiarities that have given her "color" in high relief against even Southern cities. But for many years to come the traditions of the Congo precincts of demonry will cling to her, till, mayhap, her noisome marshes are converted into foundations for "sky-scrapers," and the supine alligators of her bayous, trapped daily by the hunters' baby-imitative appeal to their maternal instincts, have furnished their last outer integument to the vanities of commerce.

H. P.

NEW ORLEANS, 1904.



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# AN ANGEL BY BREVET

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## I

### A COMPLETE QUADRILATERAL

*“ Dans la Louisiane yè trouvè bon calas,  
Des huitres, tchoupique, et bomboula.”*

—CREOLE NEGROISM.

(In Louisiana one finds good fried cakes,  
Oysters, mud-fish, and dancing.)

THE air filtered through the old appliqué lace curtains in attars of myrrhy fragrance ; a late rain had distilled the very blood of the acacias and roses. There were definable breaths of jasmynes, too, and the pervasive, aromatic notes of the oleander through the ambrosial harmony. The curtains were scarcely fluttered withal nor was the air so heavy as to affect the vibrancy of discourse

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sustained by the four convives at the large, round dinner-table.

All belonged to the territory of which the Southern boundary seems dearest and the upper one indecisive ; for the Southron is sure of lower border-lines and does not feel pregnable, as at the front door of his domain, to the innovations of the stranger. The fashion of the men and women about the stately board on this March evening was at Nature's best—no matter what they wore.

Madame la Marquise de Marigny was in high relief against the massive *vaissefier* that stood at the upper length of the spacious room ; in relief, it has been said, though the great object minified the slender figure, since her name much outweighed her. Madame belonged to a race and a period which did not account the form Junonian feminine except as applied to the Olympians. In stature and breadth she was a kind of mini-fer-pin, but her dignity was her preponderating characteristic, so that if she were not

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conspicuous she was impressive. Her hair was marbled black, her skin mellow-brown, and her sombre eyes a trifle too severe if considered exponents of her nature.

While pride seemed dominant among the allures of Madame de Marigny, hers was in reality the pride of self-respect, though her rank was no matter for disfavor. In her love-life she had learned that a woman's existence is less a thing of turret, hall, and escutcheon than of generous companionship, forbearance, and interchange of heart. This realization had made her home a castle and her familiar relations of a rare quality.

In contrast with her rigorous deportment Madame Euchariste de Marigny wore a crown of sorrow between eyes and silken hair that lent her face an expression of challenging interest. In her prime lustrum of maidenhood she had been a famous beauty. There were still evidences of this, though time had filched the pigments of hair and cheek and lip which showed the record of

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having accepted woe not altogether ungraciously and known the sweetness of accomplishing the disagreeable duty: thorns in her crown whose imprints were far from unbeautiful. The pride inseparable from her for her family, her name, her race, and general entourage, as attested by her aquiline nose and slightly fluted nostrils, was displaced to a great extent, though in later years and too late to make an especially striking mark upon her featural cast, by a pride above all others, a love beyond boundaries, for the young granddaughter, her vis-à-vis at the carved round board. Love sent rays from her sharp eyes as she looked at her, and she looked often. When she spoke the girl's name, her voice leaned upon it in unconscious emphasis of tenderness, unwilling to let the sound pass.

Angèlique was indeed pleasant to see, quite the springshine on a life now grown wintry. There was a paler brown in her firm young skin than in her grandmother's ;

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her eyes, too, were less dour, and her lips more apriline. Her hair was like ramie-fiber though more lustrous, and her brows and lashes were as dark as swamp-rushes. Her torso was delicate but symmetrical and suggested height. In truth, she was a head taller than madame.

Colonel Daniel Dabney at the moment was mixing condiments towards the dressing of a salad. Pouring sweet-oil upon a deep platter containing mustard, he added sugar, vinegar, and sherry in which bird's-eye peppers float, and rubbed his implements with garlic. Into the dish he turned slices of tomato, with shavings of onion and several cones of sweet pepper. The colonel emitted a rife satisfaction throughout his employment, addressing the others from time to time, but never looking up through his eyeglasses. Angèlique leaned leftward intent upon the liquid mosaic—globules of oil and patches of scarlet and green in the amber vinegar.

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The colonel was six feet tall despite the bow in his shoulders, strong and hoar, and had blue eyes that were always gentle save when he remembered the Cause that was defended and lost. The colonel had offered service in forty battles and was fighting them over again every day of his life—battles in which he never capitulated ; and he worked still upon maps and charts to prove to himself that nothing could have wrenched victory from his country's forces had they not been outnumbered. His was a handsome face, regular in feature, every outline denoting vigor of physique, of intellect, of pride. His beard was fairly short and gray, and his eyes were shaded by jutting tufts of brow ; his head was covered with a plentiful growth of white. Colonel Dan remembered everything he had ever seen or done, and would forgive all things save two : an aspersion upon his war record and statistical reference to his age. "Thirty and some months, sir," he would answer the impertinences of the ques-

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tioner. He was scarcely so old in worldly experience, veteran though he was.

The fourth member of the dinner-party was the Rev. Martin Paradise, a man who lived a well-ordered life and therefore looked at peace with the world and a decade the junior of his years. The doctor's features were cast in a mold permissive at once of strength and refinement; and his eyes, deep as the scholar's, were often merry with the banalities. His brown hair was flecked at the temples with gray, but his lips and chin were smug and boyish. His was one of those large natures that anticipate confessions and are helpful and generous in judgment, so that, had it not been for his cloth, he might be unworthily accused of committing all the errors he condoned. Dr. Paradise lived a gracious gospel out of his pulpit, which he declared to be his shooting-box. He saw practical piety in applied potatoes and new courage warmed by chops and coals. While he had the appearance of an exquisite, he stole into all sorts

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of unsavory places and was rather blunt in telling his people that each, as a rule, had the Lord's pound under too much napkin and in too small a basket.

“*Mais!* It was a day of *chagrin* I assu' you,” Madame de Marigny was saying, looking at Angèlique through reminiscent eyes. “My daughter Elphée had den but four year' an' I was de one w'ite woman on de *habitation*. Victorine came r-runnin' in my r-room an' tol' me de Yankee' were comin' up de r-road f'om Plaquemine fas' as deir *possible*. *Retraite* was *impossible*. I took Féfé in my arm' an' went at de portico for meed dem. Victorine was all de slave w'at stay wid me; de odder' took hastely to de wood.' De Fed'ral *soldats* fill' de lawn an' *jardins*, trampin' evert'ing onder de foot. Such a *tristesse* to see, *mon Dieu!* Général Herron approach' me wid de manner of a Sodern *soldat*. ‘I r-regret to mek you troubl’,’ he say, ‘bod we mus' 'av *quartier* at once. You shall not be moles’,’ Me, I knew well how it was de cus-

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tom to behave among ou' women! *Heureusement* my par-to-san-sheep 'ad no spite an' I r-respec' de Fed'ral *principe* as much as I adore' my own."

"Brava! Brava!" explained Angèlique. "Mémère, it is wonderful!"

The colonel snorted like a wicked horse. He did not approve of madame at that moment she described.

"I made a *geste* of entire willingness. 'Sir,' I said, 'be at ease in my 'ouse. You' *nécessité* compel my 'ospitality.' As fo' me, I will not lie. I cannod say I was at all offend' durin' dose t'ree day' dose Yankee' r-remain at my 'ome. It is true de plantation look' like a crevasse jus' go down, *mais*, de général mek his bes' to keep order."

"A woman will do more for a sentiment than for a cause," sighed the colonel, too nettled for further speech.

"But, Mémère," said Angèlique, eagerly, "tell us how Uncle Alexis entertained the Yankee officers. You remember that, don't

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you, Colonel Dan?" Colonel Dan remembered. The same stories were being told over and over again at the weekly dinners at Madame de Marigny's, but they never grew stale, because of their common interest.

"Ah, as for that," said madame, "Victorine know' it as well as I." The rigid figure of an aged negress standing behind Angèlique's chair made a slight flexure. "My brod'r Alexis d'Aquin did not expec' any visit' f'om stranger' an' so he give a fine lit'l dinner on Mulatto Bayou to his *officiers*. Jes' as dey were to sit at table, Despinasse, de body-servan' of Alexis, r-ran in, pale as h'ashes, an' tell 'im de *ennemie* was comin'! In a moment dose Confedrick *officiers* deseappear in de garrick upstair', hidin' so well, beyind empty bottle', under carpet an' clothes, till it was impossible *même* to suspicion dem. Alexis met dose Yankee' at de foot of de stair', jus' in time. You know Alexis; what a manner! He insis' dat dose *officiers* come in and eat dinner wid him; he

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was sure dinner it was almos' r-ready. But de général insis' dat his men mus' search de 'ouse. My brod'r assu' him he was to feel absolutely de liberty to do as he wish. But also he insis' dat firs' dinner mus' be serve'. Dey sat down at de feas' prepare' fo' ou' poo' soldier', an' Alexis was always charming, giving his bes' wine, like water, an' *bon-homme* wid all. It was t'ree hour' befo' dey lef' dat table, an' my brod'r has tole me dat you could not see de furnitures t'rough de smoke, for his Havana' also were dispense', *en prince*. Dey give one look t'rough de 'ouse,—dey did not mount dose stair' to de garrick, for I assu' you dey was in no state to mek risk,—and dey r-rode away de bes' of friend' wid my brod'r. *Cher Alexis!*"

Nothing was said for several moments, not to intrude upon the tender memory recalled at mention of the dashing officer who had shed his blood shortly after the incident recounted, on the field of glorious vanquish-

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ment. Victorine took from the negro boy, who was in waiting, a long dish and placed it before Madame de Marigny.

“A fres’ cod, Co-lo-nel Dabnay,” said madame, bringing herself together and putting a broad silver blade in the tender sides of the fish. “It was specially r-recommend’ by Bartoloméo in de Frens Market.”

The colonel looked up, very red and terrible, and his eyes seemed to see danger ahead and his nostrils to smell battle from afar. The bullet souvenir of Pickett’s charge at Gettysburg itched him when he became angry. “You must excuse me, madame,” he said, with undue resolution ; “but if I were in the throes of starvation I wouldn’t touch fish from those execrable Yankee waters. I am surprised mightily at your serving it in a Confederate household !”

Madame was neither shocked nor offended. Personally she was very fond of delicacies, as she knew him to be, and she did not permit her spleen to revert to herself.

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“All the same, Docteur Paradise, you will be serve’? Bébé?”

The doctor would, but Angèlique pretended to unequivocal alliance with the colonel. She told him she was grieved that Mère had been so disloyal to her people and her flag; and the old man, believing her, was appeased.

Madame, with the tact that had stood her family in good stead always, soon resumed the subject of the war and fought one or two one-sided battles with the colonel. Dr. Paradise, too, took active part in these, though he had been but a stripling drummer in the last year of the war and had only seen actual fighting. His father had given his life for his principle, however, and he had himself lived through the troublous times post-dating the internecine strife of 1861-64. He had stories to tell as well as the others; but, like Madame de Marigny, was too liberal in his treatment of the enemy to accord with the views of Colonel Dabney, who was as leal in

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friendship as in foeship. Dr. Paradise was tolerant, however, save when he thought the colonel uncharitable ; he dreaded the ungenerous effect upon Angèlique.

He had known the girl from her babyhood, held her in his arms, and romped with her when she was at the pretty age of naïveté and frilled frocks. He had formerly made a necessity of meeting her daily in his walks, stopping to tell her fairy-stories and to advise against the ugly tales she had drunk in from the kitchen gossips ; awesome tales of *gri-gri* folk and voodooism entirely too rude for the pretty convolutions of a maiden's ear. When she had come to him in her white organdie gown and smiled up out of pure eyes from beneath a snowy wreath and a dry mist of tulle veiling, he had not allowed his thrill at her bridelikeness to gain more than momentary control of him. He felt that her acceptance of another creed than his was almost as formidable a barrier between them as his increasing years ; he did not question

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whether or no he touched her spiritual side ever, or merely the secular one. He was wise enough not to divide himself into spiritual and secular sections, and he thought of her only as Angèlique, promising rare beauty, wise for her years, gifted, but, above all, with a youth lit by her rare and unusual soul. He had never felt it his duty to show her the shadows of the Inferno nor the beauties of Paradise, for the Inferno was out of her line, and she had enough of the other to un-Paradise the lieus understood to be uncompromisingly good.

He often found himself wondering how she would shape her life—she was not one of those, he foresaw, who would be plastic to the molds of others—and what compensations she would find in it, and how she would value it. Her humaneness and freedom from sham gave him his greatest delight ; there was only soul, not sect, in this. She was wise by intuition, and different from girls of her commonplace age—he thought this at all stages of

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her young life. She was the oldest young lady he ever knew, and the youngest old lady he had ever seen.

Of course he realized later that she flattered him, in his office of referendary, almost as she flattered Colonel Dan. There is a kind of flattery that makes us suspicious ; there is another kind that makes us offer the very best we have—the latter was Angèlique's. Dr. Paradise knew she drew his best from him ; and when he said "best" he meant that which few of his parishioners were given, not because it was too good, but because he didn't believe they would understand it.

And then Angèlique let him talk to her, whether he had anything to say or not. Sometimes he was so full that it was talk or die. And then the little girl would grow suddenly into a woman with tactful sympathy and phrases so fitting that the man would wonder how the elfin creature could feel his joy or pain so humanly.

Angèlique was always gay, because there

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were no lees in her years, and she was a spoiled miting, resolved to have her own way, which, as it seemed, was everybody's choice. Madame de Marigny could never be responsible for herself in her commerce with Bébé, and the colonel had ever surrendered to her tyranny with more grace than could have been expected of so doughty a soldier. In fact, he was weakest at the young girl's attack, for he had passed through disastrous summers at the Greenbrier White with a heart which, fortunately, had the faculty of evolution. So marked was this qualification that the colonel, after sighing half a dozen summers away because of the refusal of his suit by Miss Sallie Fairfax, devoted himself to several generations of débutantes until he found himself, one blithe morning, proposing on the bridle-path to Miss Sallie's granddaughter. So the colonel had never married, but neither did he relinquish his title to eligibility. He was the beau by nature, most content when "waiting on" ladies, and vowed he would consider him-

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self affianced to Angèlique till she refused him past peradventure—or until she had passed her seventeenth year. When that anniversary had made a veritable young woman of the child, the colonel acknowledged that she didn't look her age, and he would extend her three years' grace!

The colonel had never offered himself to Madame de Marigny, for the reason that she was a brave soldier's wife when he had first met her, ten years before the war, and she had left behind her all her relationship to the seventeenth yearage since her widowhood. He admired her openly, quoted her at his club, and stood ready to protect her from Federal or devil upon occasion. Sometimes he went to the opera just to bow broadly over her small hand and to show publicly his pride in her acquaintance. It was his custom to dine with her Sunday afternoons, and for some years Dr. Paradise had assisted in forming these *parties carrées*. There was rarely any other participant; when there was, the

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colonel resented the intrusion, unless the guest happened to be one of Angèle's girl friends. The presence of the young and of the feminine was always tolerable to him.

Colonel Dabney had composed himself from his sudden rage at the serving of the Yankee cod, had relished his gallimaufry of a salad, and was now intent upon the interesting performance in progress at his left. Angèle, like a young Vesta, was brewing a *bruleau*,—kindling a flame in the upcurled half of an orange-skin with the fuel of a lump of sugar and a generous spoonful of old cognac. The *bruleau* was for himself, he knew, for the rite was no precedent. Dr. Paradise was obliged to forego it because of the intimate officiousness of the prim virgins of his congregation rather than through any principle he entertained against it. Angèle always offered the oily tincture, just to be provoking, and spiced her own ochereous cup, hoping he would not approve. She remembered a long-ago day, when she was

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merely three or four, sipping absinthe from an uncle's glass before dinner, and her little *cousins* and *cousines* growing pettish over the delay of their turn. Dr. Paradise had looked different, then,—much younger and full of rigid zeal,—and he had dared to doubt the discretion of Mr. Livaudais. It had made a feeling for a time, but the little Angèle had acted disgracefully and insisted upon being taken to see “Saint Martin,” as he came to be called thereafter in pleasantry, and of her own accord invited him to dinner. He had continued to feast there hebdomadally ever since.

It was cool enough and warm enough to sit in the court into which the dining-room led, and the little party removed there after dinner to partake of the joyance of the established spring, which was giving sap to the broad colladiums and banana-trees and milk to the brittle Japan plum. The figs were putting forth tender but perky sprigs of green on the gnarled brown boughs, the sen-

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suous odors of magnolia fuscata and sweet olive perfumed the close ; the pomegranate's blossoms were vivid in their foliage, the myrtles were bursting everywhere, red as the heart of a watermelon and not unlike the fruit in their crapy substance ; and Angèle's especial pride, to which she at once drew the colonel's attention, were the beds of sprouting mint and fresh-planted peppers, intended to tease his palate.

“This mint reminds me,” said the colonel, offering a wrought-iron chair to Madame de Marigny, that she might sit just where the last sun-ray would slant upon her, “that when General Early and his staff were in Canada,—I was an *aide* at the time,—he was quartered at a noble estate belonging to an English gentleman, in sympathy with our Cause. The house reminded me of your ‘Cypremort,’ madame, but it lacked your fence-rails of black walnut ! This gentleman had married a Virginia lady, which may have been one reason for his ardent support of

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our South. The owners had gone abroad, and given us charge of everything,—the key to the wine-cellar,—in fact, showed their interest in every way. But we were not absolutely happy, for while the larder provided every delicacy and the cellar rare vintages, we were too true to the tenets which we had been brought up to respect not to long for that savor to our whiskey which fresh mint, and fresh mint only, can impart. One day, as we were longing for home and for the surrender of the blue-coats to a man, my body-servant, Isaiah, the smartest nigger you *ever* saw, announced that dinner would be ready in half an hour, and asked what we would have for an appetizer. ‘Mint julep!’ shouted General Early, with an oath. When Early used that particular oath in that particular voice even his officers trembled, madame. ‘What have you for dinner, Isaiah?’ I asked. ‘The fattest, juiciest young shoat you ever see, massa,’ said Isaiah, ‘and a Brunswick stew, like they are

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servicing right now in Old Virginia.' 'Then,' said I, 'nothing will do but we must have a mint julip to smooth the way for such royal fare.' Said I, 'General, let's take a walk.'

"We started down the hill towards the woods. It was a splendid place, that estate, a good sixteen hundred arpents; fit, madame, for a daughter of the South, if she must live north of Mason and Dixon's. There were flowers and fruit-trees and a vegetable-garden and poultry that made you happy to see. The general and I walked on silently, forgetting our blessings in the biting thirst for the beverage of the Commonwealth of Virginia. I suggested that we go back several times, thinking the young shoat was losing its juices by the minute——"

"As de American say, 'A bird in de hand is wort' two in de cage,'" remarked madame, sympathetically.

"General Early swore that he was going to cover every step of ground on the place

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till he found, or didn't find, a mint-bed. Just then a light breeze blew up to us, conveying the pungent aroma, unmistakable to people from my country ; our noses led us down to the likeliest spot for reward, a well-shaded marsh, towards the edge of the woods. Presently we stood before the greenest, thickest, sauciest bed of mint it was ever your pleasure to see. General Early wa'n't much inclined to be religious, but if he didn't take off his hat and invoke a blessing, albeit a profane one, I'm not a gentleman. Then he looked at me with contempt. 'You might have known that a Virginia lady would know how to live decently,' he said. Isaiah made the juleps out of the best Bourbon, and we thought we'd never get enough. I hope that Virginia woman gets her reward."

"Your eyes are watering in remembrance, colonel," remarked Angèle, "and no doubt your mouth is doing the same thing. It isn't the time for it, perhaps, but I'll make you one."

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“Thank you, my dear, but I won’t drink just now; besides, you ought to remember to be sparse in your dealings with mint juleps. You know the story about the man who rode along and came to an inn and showed the inn-keeper how to mix the sugar and water and bruise the herb and add the whiskey, all in proper proportions, don’t you? He rode back that way two months later and asked for the inn-keeper. His nigger told the stranger that his master was dead. ‘I’m sorry to hear that,’ said the stranger; ‘what did he die of?’ ‘Well, boss, dey ’lows a stranger come along heah a couple mont’s ago and showed massa how to put greens in his liquor, an’ den he jes’ kep’ a-drinkin’, an’ he drunk hisself to death.’ Moral courage is required, my dear, to keep any man from doing the same thing.”

At this moment there was an interruption caused by the entrance of two women and a boy: Madame Ernestine Livaudais, the only living child of Madame de Marigny, her

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daughter Carmélite, scarcely older than Angèle, but of the type that reaches maturity earliest and old age last, and the son of Madame Livaudais, Marcel. Carmélite was a small girl, very round and graceful in figure and exceptionally pretty, with a skin of delicate bistre and eyes and hair of murky blackness. Both ladies spoke Frenchly, which seemed to be a provocation for Angèle's unexpressed amusement.

"Ah, co-lo-nel, it is long time I hav'n see you!" cried Madame Livaudais, after embracing her mother warmly. "I knew we would fin' you here; an' I say to Carmel, 'Carmel, we go'ne pass at Maman, for see dose gen'leman, Maman, an' Angèle.'"

"I am sorry to be obliged to leave so soon," said Dr. Paradise, rising, "but I am almost due at evening service. I cannot invite you, I suppose," he added, with a smile.

"*O mon Dieu!*" cried Madame Livaudais, and then words failed her: it was too awful to entertain the thought of entering a church

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of "Protestants." She had known the doctor "in society," and they had continued good friends after her marriage and widowhood, but they never made a common topic of religion.

Angèlique entered the house with the doctor, and, as she had always done, fetched his hat and stick.

"What are you intending to do this evening?" he inquired, just before offering his hand.

"Perhaps we will go to the *opérette*,—or a *réunion* at Corinne's,—I have not decided," answered Angèle, tossing her head.

"Why won't you realize that neither is right?" asked the doctor, ruddy but calm.

Angèle turned slightly away from him, smiling, and began to hum provokingly, "*La Dame Blanche vous regarde. Mais ses affaires ne vous regardent pas!*" \*

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\* A usual aphorism among the Creoles, in interpretation, "Friendship does not justify your over-zeal in the affairs of *La dame Blanche*."

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

“Angèle!” exclaimed the doctor, as if surprised.

“Why, Nénaine says you danced with her, often, when you were both young, you two,” cried Angèle, feigning not to understand. “*Ciel adorable!*”

“On proper days, proper events,” replied the minister. “Oh, Angèle, I want you to be yourself, your glad and gladdening self, but I want you to see the unwisdom of disrespect,—and there is no disrespect equal to your present purpose. I am not narrow, I think, but your choice, the choice of your friends, for a day of mild dissipation jars my every ideal. I don’t like to think of you as at a theatre or party on the Lord’s Day. You never have been taught it, of course; but I chide myself that I am indifferent to your welfare in letting you continue——”

“But I am young,” cried Angèle. “What am I to do with my spirits and health and longing for life? You love me for what I am,—isn’t it so?—and if you try to make

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me over I shall be not Angèle any more,— the colonel's Angèle! Come. I don't want you angry. If you will promise not to scold, I will place myself *en pénitence* a week!"

"And you won't dance to-night, nor go to the opera?"

"Not if you'll love me," answered Angèle, frankly.

The doctor kissed her hand and went to his duty.

The colonel always found an excuse for his absences from attendance at church Sundays. It was either too warm or too cold, or his gout, which he termed "growing pains," prevented. He dilated upon the subject, assuring his friends that he believed in regular and prompt church-going, but—— And then his reasons were specified in self-extenuation, to suit the circumstances of the Greek kalends, dates that never come. "I am a member of the Presbyterian Church," he would say, expressing a strong belief in the respectability of possessing a creed. The only

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occasion on which he was ever known to make light of his truancy was when he told about his cousin, and he spoke often of him, a potential individual most of the time and no respecter of persons. When this cousin, "a Randolph, sir," was informed one day by his wife that he had three marriageable daughters, and that he must sober up and rent a pew in the church, he rounded off his wicked career without compromise, and took her advice. Every Sunday thereafter found him starchily in his place, flanked by his wife and blooming daughters. Several months later he was accosted by one of his old partners in dissipation and asked how he liked his new life. "There's something to be said on both sides," replied the veteran, thoughtfully. "I've tried drinking, an' I've tried gettin' religion. Goin' to chu'ch is a heap mo' respectable—likewise, it's a heap mo' expensive."

Numa Déléry came in upon the heels of the doctor, and Angèle greeted him with

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pretty coquetry and led him into the salon, the evening having come down to chill the gray and green courtyard. Carmélite was seen also to receive the young Creole with modest effusion, and Angèle left the two presently to fetch a decanter of *vin Madère*, her absence setting the pair at perfect ease.

Angèle stopped in the dining-room, where her grandmother and aunt were in close converse. "The colonel is gone?" she asked.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Madame Livaudais. "You have left my child alone with Numa. Rejoin them at once, Angèle."

"Mémé is very well there," said Angèle, pulling up a chair. "Now, I want to know what you are talking about."

"*Quelle insolence!*" ejaculated Madame Livaudais. "*Maman*, it is but a spoiled child you have there. To tell her! The idea!"

"I am going to know anyhow," observed Angèle, quietly; "and don't worry yourself about Mémé, who is discreetly in an arm-chair, with Numa four feet away. I *computed* the

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space, I assure you. Of what are you afraid? Is he in love with her? Would he eat her? I think not. Now tell—— You were speaking of Calline.”

“It is useless,” said Madame de Marigny, resignedly. “She would get my confession, anyway. It is true. We were speaking of Calline.” But in madame’s soft French she spoke the name Cahlene.

“She hasn’t come! No? Then she has had some one write for her?” asked Angèle, anxiously, though never forgetting the couple in the salon whose good behavior was a matter of as much concern to herself as to her aunt.

“Not a word,” sighed Madame de Marigny. “And Zèbre continues to send word every day to watch for ‘the voudou call-out.’ Colonel Dabney was right to advise us to send Zèbre off the place; but neither he nor the doctor knew that we would be subjected to this annoyance. It is a daily crucifixion. What to do!”

“Ah, if we had never gone so far as

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Alabama," said Madame Livaudais, almost in tears.

"*Ciel adorable!* It is not the fault of Alabama that we are worried," cried Angèle, pettishly.

The voices in the salon were now too low to overhear.

"*Sois respectueuse, chérie,*" soothed her grandmother.

And here there was an interruption.

A tall, gaunt negress, with a fixed expression which was almost indefinable because of the swarthiness of her features, strode into the room without a sound of foot-fall and with her a nigrescent, pervasive odor. Madame de Marigny sank back in her chair, her pale *écru* face growing pallid. Madame Livaudais held herself together only by the most strenuous self-control. Angèle seemed transfixed.

The creature stood long before speaking.

"Where is Calline?" she asked. Her Madras coif of saffron and red tweaked out

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in little ends over either ear. She looked very formidable.

“Where is Calline?” the ebon statue repeated. She was uncomfortably close to the little group.

“Where is Calline?” she asked again, her voice clamant with threat.

Victorine entered behind her, holding Marcel by the hand.

“I have told you all there is,” said Madame de Marigny in French, supporting herself with her accustomed dignity. “We treated her as usual—you know well that we liked Calline, and Marcel was desolate when she went away. She told us one day that she intended to leave with a white man whom she loved. We did everything to restrain her, even locking her in her room at night. She escaped by a window that was so high that her life must have been endangered. Victorine, your own sister, was with us; she tried to influence Calline. She was a hard-headed girl. No one is to blame.”

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Zèbre folded her arms, her features never relaxing. "Mah Calline was bewitched," she muttered, her eyes still fixed upon her old mistress. "I bore twelve chillen, an' mah ole man never could say dey weren't all des de same color. 'T'aint ou' nature ter go wrong. Where is Calline?"

"But it is foolish, Zèbre, to ask us where is Calline when we have told you she is an ingrate and not worthy your affection for her," urged Madame Livaudais, tentatively, for self-assurance.

"Ef you don' fin'e Calline, look out!" cried Zèbre, her arms upraised and her eyes set wide.

The boy Marcel felt the strain, and his youth called out against it. Instinctively he knew that Zèbre was the cause of it. He turned to go away, but finding the woman between him and the door, kicked at her, calling her "*Polisonne*," and "*Vieille gribouille*." Madame Livaudais fell back, fainting with fear.

Zèbre did not dart forward to catch him, as

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the others feared she would, in their anguish of apprehension. Instead, she faced about and pointed her gnarled finger at the child.

“Boy!” she said, in measured tones, hot with vindictiveness. “Boy, you’ll never make a man!” Then she seemed to be murmuring an exhortation, and the gloom of her presence brooded a solemn moment that seemed long. She glared upon the group, terrible, ominous. “*Mo souhaté que malédictions layé possédé vous !*” She turned and left the room.

Madame Livaudais regained her forces, pulled Marcel upon her lap, and covered him with impassioned kisses.

“What did she mean?” asked Angèle, tremulously. Then, catching sight of her grandmother’s distressed face, she rose, and with a frozen laugh clapped her hands to dissipate the appalling silence.

“*Vogue la galère !* It is all right, Mémère,” cried the girl. “We will never let Zèbre into the house again. We will ask the colonel and the doctor what to do ; they will tell us

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the best for our good. How I adore you,  
*Tit Mère!*"

Victorine, brave old soul, strove to palliate the effect of the episode.

"Ef you buy some *incense* and burn it in de house, dat mek bad luck pass," she ventured, herself fearful of all the deviltries of which Zèbre was capable. "Ev'y time *l'incense* mek bad luck pass. We go'ne buy dat, Têtesse. Don' you min' nottin. You go to baid."

But Madame de Marigny had received a shock, and age does not rebuff shocks easily. She retired to her room and to the little altar above her *prie-Dieu* for relief in meditation. Madame Livaudais and Angèlique went back to the young couple, who had seemed to have less to say to each other than would justify the length of Numa's visit. They were so little disposed to conversation, indeed, that the eyes of motherhood were deceived; not so the eyes of rivalry. Angèle found herself hating her cousin and yearning humbly for the slightest recognition from Numa; and

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when her aunt and cousin rose to continue on their way to vespers, the young man asked leave to accompany them, suggesting to Angèle that she come too. The girl resented this impertinence. "What!" she thought, viciously, "you must have *une araignée au plafond, monsieur*, if you think I will keep Nénaine engaged, *hein?* Am I then here, a *marmotteuse*, to fill a mouse-hole, while you spill your nonsense into the ear of my pretty cousin-german? *Quelle dérision!*"

Angèle helped Carmélite with her jacket, blushing with rage the while.

"Is he not charming?" asked Carmélite, evidently very happy. They had always confided in each other.

"*En aucune façon,*" responded Angèle, aloud, with regal indifference. In her youth of love she had not counted on bruises and missteps.



## II

### GRI-GRI

“ *Quand to mangé avec diab' ténin to cuillère longue.*”

(When you eat with the devil, see that you have a long spoon.)

THOUGH the De Marigny household rose betimes, the world knew it not, for there was never a betrayal of the interior stir behind the façade of the fine old brick mansion in Bourbon Street. It is a sectional belief that the early air is miasmal, so many of the *habitans* take in life with mincing breaths rather than thrive by the full draughts that are offered albeit in an old stone close. The house generally wore the unoccupied seeming from the street, even when *soirées* were in progress ; it is of no account to the Creole that the world should know his home life.

So, at an early hour Madame de Marigny

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was awake, awaiting the morning token, the cup of coffee-essence dripped by Victorine herself. Madame was awake earlier than usual, indeed, for she had not slept well, rather in a drowse induced by her years, in which the gaunt and ebon form of her old tirewoman had been a lively disturbance. The little marquise was unrefreshed and oppressed with unseen auguries when the decent figure of Victorine, very gay about the *tignon*, and with ear-rings of swinging gold dollars, appeared at the bedside with a smoking cup on a bit of old silver. Madame addressed her, as usual, in French.

“Is Bébé up, 'Ine?”

The gold pendants swung backward and forward in acquiescence.

“*Oui, Têtesse.*”

“You carried her coffee first?”

Victorine admitted she had done so.

“How unusual,” murmured madame. Then she looked at the old negress. “What is it? Is there anything?”

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At that moment Angèle came into the room with a radiance not of the sun.

“*Bon jour, bonne maman !*” she cried. “It is warm and glorious. What do you say if I go with you to seven-o’clock Mass, *hein ? Fais vite*, ’Ine, dress Mémère, and I have but my hat to put on. I did not make you my confidences last night, Mémère. Well, it was better that you should sleep, I said ; so I went to bed with my sins. *Dieu me pardonne !* Now I am going to confess myself.”

Madame noted the girl’s nervous exaltation apprehensively. “Youth requires more sleep than age. Why are you up before me, Bébé ?” she inquired. Instinctively she knew the feel of the air was omened.

“I tell you, it is because I carried my sins to bed for a pillow. It is this, Mémère : I took the idea that Carmélite was luckier than I, and I hated her for a quarter of an hour yesterday. She certainly is very pretty, and that is something I could never pardon any one. And, then, she was admirably

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dressed—did you notice, Mémère? Such taste Nénaine has for that. But I slept well towards morning, because I remembered that my little Mémère loves me more than she loves Carmélite, even than Nénaine, even than Marcel, even than all the family and Victorine thrown in for *lagniappe*. Is it not so, Victorine?"

The girl's laugh was almost sincere, almost solacing to madame. Angèle sat on the edge of the bed watching the various stages of her grandmother's toilette, fearing to leave the room; she trusted Victorine's discretion with any one in the world save madame. If the old slave loved Angèle much, she loved madame more.

When the simple toilette was complete, Angèle accompanied her grandmother downstairs, beyond the garden close, and into the street. She looked about rather furtively as they passed over the door-stone, but once clear of it, her good spirits returned, and she brought the dim color into her grand-

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mother's cheek by her brisk badinage and eager, though restrained, step.

Angèle was as devout as buoyant youth which has no dependence upon religion as an expedient may be ; she was respectful, at least, whether or no Dr. Paradise believed this ; and now her young face looked anxious in the glow of the wax, relieved of the espionage of madame, who was absorbed in the technique of her beads. The old Cathédrale St. Louis was cold and the stone flagging hurt her knees ; she was beside the venerable precant before the left altar, imploring solace from the blue-and-white statue over which the aureal device was inscribed, "*Je suis l'Immaculée Conception.*" This was her favorite shrine,—she was a natural if inconstant Mariolater,—whither she had borne her infant woes and conventual trials, such as young girls will make for themselves in the chastest environs ; so she felt a sort of sisterliness to Bernadette Soubirous, the humble little

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peasant of the Hautes-Pyrénées, especially when she felt lowly herself and needful of help.

The water, simulating the mountain runnel, trickled down the small boulders purringly, soothing Angèle somewhat, which is the intention of all symbols, doubtless, and she could not resist the growing calm within herself, though she had filled the moments with no relevant prayer. Madame de Marigny was lost in a transport of devotion, and her annoyances had been shed as if they had been exterior and not interior disease. The clinking of "earnest pennies" in the alms-box, "*Pour les Pauvres*," did not disturb the upward, incessant trend of madame's prayers. Angèle was calmed but not inspirited, for she questioned her rights to peace, remembering conditions that opposed it. Her genuflections were perfunctory,—she would not for the world have failed in her outward service to the church; first, for superstitious reasons; next, because

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such disrespect would have wounded her grandmother. But she was relieved when the blessing had been administered and she could air the incense out of her clothes.

The grandmother and young girl strolled through the French market to buy a bouquet and fulfil a commission for Victorine for snuff. During this commercing Angèle amused herself listening to two rotund colored cooks who met in the crowd, stopping in the very midway of the throughfare and conjesting traffic for some moments.

“Good-morning, old woman,” said one. “To-day is our meeting-day—I’m going, and you?”

“Yes, sister, if I can make twenty-five cents jump out of my market-money to pay my dues without it’s hitting me too hard; and that which can scare me isn’t the President of the Republic (of France) neither the President of the United States.”

“Will your madame give you Sunday evening? If mine won’t, and I can’t go to

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the seance like my other society-sisters,\* well, I'll quit my job ; that will make a pretty finale. I'm leaving you to run and make my marketing. *Au Revoir !*"

Making a détour, scanning the funeral-notice on the telegraph-poles, the couple presently turned homeward at the pace suggestive of madame's dignity and years. Arrived at the old mansion in Bourbon Street, Angèle left her grandmother in the dining-room with *L' Abeille*, the morning newspaper, and herself went to the out-house back of the court, where the kitchen was situated, in the style of old Spanish residences. Victorine, and Achille, the man-servant, were relishing potations of coffee, which stained their teeth,

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\* "Societies," of which there are many in New Orleans, give relief to members in time of sickness, furnishing a doctor, drugs, money, and the services of other members as nurses, and burying all who die "in good standing." The dues, usually "two-bits" (twenty-five cents) a week, are generally deduced from the market-money of cooks.

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and Céleste, the sloe-colored cook, was singing to an accompaniment of sizzling fat :

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

System 1:  
Vocal: Vous en con - nin 'tit 'la mai - son, Qui  
Piano: Accompaniment with chords and moving bass line.

System 2:  
Vocal: proche cô - té l'église, Quand mo 'oir li, ça don' -  
Piano: Accompaniment with chords and moving bass line.

System 3:  
Vocal: moi fris - son, C'est la mai - son Den - ise. Mo'  
Piano: Accompaniment with chords and moving bass line.

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cher cous - in, mo' chère cou - sine, Mo

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line in G major, with lyrics 'cher cous - in, mo' chère cou - sine, Mo'. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, and the bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment. The music is in 2/4 time and features a simple, rhythmic melody.

l'ai - mer la cui - sine; Mo manger bien, Mo

*crescendo.*

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line has lyrics 'l'ai - mer la cui - sine; Mo manger bien, Mo'. The piano accompaniment includes a *crescendo* marking. The system ends with a double bar line.

*riten.*

boire du vin, Ca pas cou - ter moi a - rien.\*

*riten.*

The third system concludes the musical score. The vocal line has lyrics 'boire du vin, Ca pas cou - ter moi a - rien.\*'. The piano accompaniment includes a *riten.* marking. The system ends with a double bar line.

\* You know the little house right next to the church. When I see it, I begin to tremble; it is the home of Denise. My dear cousins, I love the kitchen; I eat well, I drink good wine, and without costing me anything!

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“It is nine o'clock, Céleste,” said Angèle, quickly; “serve the breakfast immediately. Achille, tell grand'mère I will be coming.” She waited a moment till the *grillades* and *saccamité* were served. “Céleste, make up my room at once, *hein?* Mamzelle Carmélite is coming at any moment. Hurry yourself.” Céleste demurred. “Victorine will make the *beignets*, isn't it so, 'Ine? Not even Céleste can make them better.”

The old nurse reflected her insistent nod. “Quickly.”

Céleste went up the back steps and along the gallery, lost in a moment by the pots of plants placed successively along the broadened top railing. When Angèle was certain she was out of hearing, she said: “Tell me, 'Ine, who took the coffin from the step—Achille?”

“*Non*, Chuchute, Missieu O'Brien done it.”

“You must wash that *banquette* with 'red'nin,' *hein?* There is trade for *Zozo la*

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*brique*,"\* said Angèle, in awe. "What was in the little coffin, 'Ine?"

The nurse reflected, working at the up-starting ends of her head-handkerchief.

"De firs' t'ing dis mawn Ah see dat black clot' over somepin, an' Ah wou'n' tech it. *Hèpe*, Ah say, voudou! Achille, he look and den he cut an' run. Ah d'in wan' ma ole madame to be scare wid dat, but God know Ah wou'n' tech it!" Victorine's head-handkerchief perked at its twisted corners. "Ah di'n know what to do, me, an' all the cooks goin' to market stop' to look at de black clot' and to make sign o' cross on deyse'ves. Dey was twen'y people dere, Ah tell you, w'en Missieu O'Brien come to fin' out de troubl', an' he lif' de clot', an' dey was de black coffun——"

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\* A character who sells pounded brick for pavements in the streets of New Orleans. Brick used thus is supposed to be a specific for voudou charms by ignorant whites and negroes.

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“How big?” interrupted Angèle, her eyes like stars.

“Like dat,” answered Victorine, inspired by her hearer and stretching her arms to a signification of two feet. “Dey was a cross on de lid mek of silver tack’, and de policeman try to read w’at was wrote in w’ite chalk. He say, ‘*L’appé vini, li Grand Zombi;*’ an’ me, Ah know w’at were de res’ o’ de writin’, dough Ah can’ read.”

“What was the rest, ’Ine?” begged Angèle, putting her arm about the old woman’s neck.

Victorine looked very superior. “Ah got no bus’ness fillin’ you’ haid wid all dat,” she replied. “You’ grand’mère would whop me good ef she jus’ fin’ it out.” All the same she repeated the regulation voodoo chant :

“*L’appé vini, li Grand Zombi,*  
*L’appé vini pou to gri-gri.*”

Angèle shuddered. “Oh, I am cold, ’Ine !” she exclaimed. “I could cry with fear. Is there no revenge for us? Must we sit by

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and let them put *tracas* on us like that? What can we do? What was inside that coffin? Tell me all. I must know, so much I am curious, and afraid!"

Achille entered the kitchen just then and told mademoiselle that her grandmother was at breakfast and was asking for her. "*Tout de suite, Achille Bel-Air!*" cried the excited girl. The boy disappeared, and Victorine continued, in a whisper :

"A piece o' *gazette* was in it, full o' *gri-gri*, Chuchute."

"But, yes, *gri-gri*. And what kind?"

"Dey was gunpowder to mek fight; and dere was yellowin' to mek you move, an' sawdust, an' can'legrease, an' piece' o' broke' glass, an' moss, an' eart' all mix up wid in-shoance-oil an' vinegar, it smell like, an' all kin' o' *cochonerics*. In de foot o' de coffun was two lit'l sack' o' red flannel, an' inside was de breas'-bone o' chicken an' t'ree piece' hair tie' wid black ribbon, layin' on some ash'—— But do'n keep all dat on you'

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mind, Chuchute. Ah knows one ole cunjer who kin tek off dat work."

"They can do anything, those voudous, *hein*, Ine?" asked Angèle, thoughtfully.

"Ah lay dey kin. Dey got ev'yt'ing for mek work, yass," answered the nurse. "Dat ain' no inyorant bus'ness; you got to learn dat good. Den, too, dey got *zhèrbes marrons* for mek *tisanes*. One of dat dey calls *plante de benzine*."

Achille, entering with his tray, caught the word and grinned.

"What you stud'in' 'bout dat for, mamzelle?" he asked.

"What is that, *benzine*, Achille?" inquired Angèle, in turn.

"But, yass, I know that plant, in which its leaf are green," the fellow explained. "On the top there is black seed'. The *benzine tisane* is to be made just as you make Injun tea. But let the water boil and put in the *plante de benzine* in which a person would like to kill some one they would feel against

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to them. Then they would also get a seed called *monchémoi*. This seed is sometime' white, but when it is of that color it must not be taken. When it fall' on the ground it become' black like tar. Then you take it and drop it into the tea of *benzine*. A *monchémoi* seed will poison that tea. If you get one seed into the cup it will not kill any one, but it will make them a bad sickness. But three seed' of that tea in a cup would kill him. When that *monchémoi* seed come into the *benzine* tea it sweeten' and your bad feeling become' known just about two hour' after. Your good time to work with that is after dinner. If absolutely a person would eat a great quantity of meal at table and drink that *tisane*, no one could identify who kill her in the party." Achille delivered this lore in the officious manner of the half-educated negro.

"O aïe-aïe!" exclaimed Angèle. "I hope Céleste is not voudou, her!"

"Huhn!" grunted Victorine, put out that

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a young rascal of color should be so wise. "Du'in' my time dey was an ole man use' to live nex' de *cabane* of ma sister Roséma. He was call' de name of Zizi; an' dat ole man could mek any one like him or unlike him, or mek dem move f'om de place or leave dey spot on any ways. If he could git a chance to git as far as fi' feet towa'ds you, he could t'row a powder on a person in w'ich dey was two diffe'nt color', mek up by himse'f. Ole man Zizi was in good will in spen'in' his money wid any one, an' he call' at Roséma' one night wid two mo' old men in company. Den he mek a trick: he took a hat an' a spool of t'read an' pose' de spool un'er de hat an' said to de spool, '*Lévé-toi, Joe, v'là vieux nomme la qu'appé vini pou batte toi!*' De spool was layin' flat, an' w'en he say dat de spool was stan'in' up. Af'er dat Roséma was feared o' Zizi."

"I should think so," remarked Angèle, entranced and eager for more.

"De nex' trick-work he done at her resi-

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dence," continued Victorine, conscious that she was superseding Achille in every quality that would suggest an interest to "*Tit Tétesse*," who was now sitting upon her nurse's knee. "De nex' work, it was wid a chair an' a tin bucket. Zizi put de bucket on de bed an' put de chair on de fi'place. He tol' de bucket, '*Mo dit toi*, Hell!' an' dere in dat room dey was on'y one candle bu'nin' w'en he say dose word'. De firs' t'ing Rosite know de chair an' tin bucket become togeder on de washstan', an' de tin bucket on top o' de chair, an' on dat night de candle was bu'nin' ve'y deadly light to her seein'. Soon as he done his trick, Roséma quitely put him out her house, f'om dat night."

Céleste returned at this moment, curious to know what had transpired. Reluctantly Angèle left the old nurse's lap to rejoin her grandmother in the dining-room, where she knew the best behavior would be expected of her spirits.

"When you put me to bed to-night you

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must tell me some more," she whispered, as she left the kitchen.

Angèle summoned her roses, and tried to keep madame entertained during the meal; on her part madame was bravely acting a mood of ease far from her real feelings. The air seemed thick with omens, and the threats of Zèbre re-echoed in her ears.

The day wore on as usual, Angèle busying her fingers with an oval of embroidery, receiving young girls, chatting to her grandmother, and asking questions about girlhood days of the fifties and the stirring era of the war, which had always charmed her more than fairy-tales. The brooding sense of the air seemed to grow weightier towards bedtime, when Angèle and Victorine assisted in madame's preparations for repose, brewing the nocturnal toddy of which all partook; each was trying to keep the common oppression within bounds.

The taper in the lamp on the little "oratoire" in the corner nearest the bed gleamed

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

like a rufescent eye in the dusk, serving at once as a symbol of faith and a night-light. Angèle followed her grandmother's devotions as one will the details of a picture, and they had, as always, touched her ; this vicarious service did her more good than her own, because she depended absolutely upon madame's perfect faith. Angèle had prayed so much at the convent, and had been obligated by that influence to the commission of so many penances, that it tired her to remember all she had done for her soul, and she was so frankly accustomed to religious dealings that she had lost her awe of them. She had a dread of positive disobedience, but she had no compunctions about scalloping into the prohibitions of a not too rigid conscience.

Victorine had left the room in a black shadow, and Angèle leaned over her grandmother to make sure that the rhythm of her breathing meant sleep. Then she slipped down before the statute of the Mother of

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Sorrows amid the spiritual aura she knew Mémère had left, and rehearsed her prayers in French as she had been taught them long since. Though she spoke English with only an occasional trace of her vernacular, there were certain habits of speech she could not perform in English. Her orisons were of these.

Her own room was not cheerful, though Victorine had lighted the gas and half a dozen tapers in the great bronze candelabras on the mantel-piece ; the apartment was so vast that the illumination was insufficient save within a radius of a few feet, the light swelling a little from reflection in the mirrors, but paling and darkening fitfully as it diffused into shadows. The carved four-post bed, with its crimson damask tester, was almost lost in the denser twilight, and the huge pair of mahogany *armoires* were discernible only occasionally as an aspiring flicker caught the brass of their trimmings.

Angèle slipped off her dress and adjusted

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

her *peignoir*, sitting on the bed to remove her shoes.

“W’at kin’ o’ way is dat?” queried Victorine. “But do’n put you’ shoe’ on de bed, Chuchute. Dat’s *mauvais signe*. How many time’ Ah got tell you dat? Neider parasol. You’ll chase all de lover’ out de house.”

“*Eh, bien*, ’Ine, you have nothing to tell me?”

The old woman fell into the Creole patois easily. “*A-rien*,” she answered, dishearteningly. “Toussine came to dress the hair of Tétesse, and she told such a history that I was commanded to stay by Tétesse all day. Every time I started to leave, you saw how it was. Tétesse would not let me move.”

“What is the story Toussi told to Mémère, ’Ine?” asked Angèle, anxiously.

“She said Mamzelle Petitpain, kind of cousin to Clotilde Dupré, and a fine girl, was combed on the day of her wedding by Zulmée, a friend of hers, Toussine’s, who is now old. Mamzelle Petitpain was going to marry

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Arnaud de l'Isle, who loved her well, but he had first loved, and *placée*, Zulmée, when Zulmée was young and fine. So Zulmée became foolish when they told her it was true Missieu Arnaud was going to marry the beautiful girl whose hair she had combed every day. So she said nothing to him, and she was always pleasant to Mamzelle Jeanne and wished her great happiness in her marriage."

"Yes," remarked Angèle, by way of encouragement. "What then?"

"But on the wedding-day Zulmée brought a big bunch of flowers and called the attention of Mamzelle Jeanne to their sweet smell. Mamzelle Jeanne agreed with her they were sweet, and put them aside and bade Zulmée make haste. Zulmée would make a frissette, and then she would say, '*Pardon*, Mamzelle Jeanne, but see that rose! Such a perfume! I picked that rose expressly for you on your wedding-day. Smell it, how sweet it is!' And mamzelle would gratify the *coiffeuse*, and then turn her regard to the mirror again

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

to see how Zulmée was getting along with her hair. 'Make me beautiful, Zulmée,' she would say; and Zulmée, nearly crazy with jealousy, would curse her in her heart and beg Mamzelle Jeanne to smell once more the jasmynes and the oleanders. Well, Mamzelle Jeanne was at last ready, and she kissed all the family and got into the carriage with her papa, and they drove to the Cathédrale St. Louis. Once she put her hand to her eyes, but Missieu Petitpain told her 'Courage!' and she smiled and said she was feeling very well, but giddy with excitement. 'So much I love Arnaud, papa!' she said, and she never spoke another word. She got out of the carriage, and walked one, two, three steps of the church, and fell back dead right there! It is true, yes, but I had forgotten the story, long time."

Angèle shivered and came closer to the candelabra, sitting before the Swiss-draped *duchesse*.

"Sack of paper! but you have a way of

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

telling a story that gives me chills!" cried Angèle in English. "How do you want me to sleep to-night with all that *gri-gri* turning in my head?"

There were several moments of silence in which Victorine stroked the lengths of the girl's crazy hair. As usual, Victorine accompanied her occupation with a song :

*Allegretto.*

O Su - zette chère, . . . pou'quoi toi veut

pas chère . . . Su - zette, chère l'a - mour .

# AN ANGEL BY BREVET

..... to veut pas l'ai - mai moin?

The first system of music features a vocal line in the upper treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with a dotted line followed by the lyrics 'to veut pas l'ai - mai moin?'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands.

Ma pé cou - pé cane, mo chè - rie, ...

The second system continues the musical piece. The vocal line has the lyrics 'Ma pé cou - pé cane, mo chè - rie, ...'. The piano accompaniment features a more active bass line with eighth notes and chords.

Ma pé - sié boi mo l'a - mie, ... Ma

The third system concludes the visible portion of the music. The vocal line has the lyrics 'Ma pé - sié boi mo l'a - mie, ... Ma'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "AN ANGEL BY BREVET". It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics "pé fé plein l'ar-gent, Pou' cou - ri donné toi.\*" are written below the notes. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

\* Oh, dear Suzette, dear love Suzette, why wilt thou not love me? I am going to cut sugar-cane, my darling; I am going to saw wood, my friend; I am going to make plenty of money; to run and give it to thee.

“Are there ghosts in this house, do you think, 'Ine?” interrupted the girl; “because, you know, I wake up sometimes and I hear such noises!”

Victorine looked wise. “Dey is some colored people w'at won' live in dis house, but Ah can' say it's for no reason. But we *is* live in *maison hantée*. Tétesse went at Mandeville one summer,—dis is true fac',—an' she took us wid her. De firs' night we hear sound'! *Ah, sèke!* Voudou seem' like to break plenty chain'. In ma kitchen all

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

ma pot' turn capsiz; no use to put you' han' on not'in'. *La vieille* Rose was *nourrice* o' Mamzelle Fifine. She go to Tétesse, an' say, 'You don' b'lieve voodoo, but w'at is dis? Ev'yting is capsiz'. An', Tétesse, ef you don' b'lieve in voodoo you'se'f, how come you so skeert you'se'f? Tétesse say 'twas somebody in de *quartier* who mek us some farce, an' she went once mo' to her baid. Fear tek all de house. *Vieille* Rose hol' fas' to the skirt' of Tétesse an' affirm' dat it is nigger, not w'ite person, voodoo want'. 'It de devil' house!' say Rose. 'It voodoo w'at drag dem chain f'om hell to here. W'at! You *never* hear' no infernal noise like dat noise.' Tétesse cou'n sleep no mo'. *La vieille* Rose wait till day, den she say, 'Tétesse, you got good senses, do'n believe in no fooliness like dat, *hein?* Well, me, Ah believe, because Ah know, and it's nigger dat ketch' it ev'y time, not w'ite. *Adieu*, Tétesse, me, Ah quit!' De nex' day we fin' out 'twas raccoon w'at buil' nes' in de skiff, an' de

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

skiff't tie wid chain on de water w'at mek Borum-Bourru du'in' all de night!"

"Me, I don't believe," said Angèle, encouraged by the issue of the story. "You see, the voodoo explained itself. That's all *bétises*."

Notwithstanding the assumed bravado of the girl, the quadroon knew by her large-irised eyes that she was excited. Victorine strove to distract her thoughts.

"You never done hear o' dat polison Joseph tell dat sto'y o' his, *hein?* He say, '*Un jou' mo té sou sans le sou.*' *Tout d'un coup mo voir Fine: premier quichose li dit moin, to serait pas capab' pretté moin un sou? Ça vous té croire? Li garde moin en disant; to sou et to pas capab' donné moin un sou!*'"

Victorine's gold-dollar ear-rings swung about as she laughed at the witticism.\* It

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\* The play on words is untranslatable save in clear French: Un jour j'étais sou sans le sou: Tout d'un

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

was an immense satisfaction to repeat the tale of the humiliation of such a *coquin* as Joseph—"one o' dem new kind o' niggers" as he was. Victorine always maintained the opinion that Madame Livaudais's man-servant did not belong properly to *bon-temps* folks.

"One day," continued Victorine, stroking Angèle's hair when she remembered to do so, "Fifine was goin' to ball, mo' dan ever paint' up f'om head to foots. Ah know Fine *well*, me! De firs' t'ing she run an' mek *conquête* o' Jean Marie Pierre. Ah, ha! You wan' know who is Jean Marie Pierre? He was de husban' o' Fine' *intime*, so' *l'amise*. So' *l'amise* was so mad agains' Fine to see her husban' in love wid her, *hein?* So she watch' one day, an' w'en she pass in de

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coup l'idée me prend d'aller voir Fine. La première chose qu'elle m'a dit, le croirez-vous? "Serais-tu capable de me prêter un sou? Qu'est-ce que vous croyiez fut ses mots suivants, en me regardant avec insolence?" Tu es sou et tu n'es pas capable de me donner un sou!

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

street wid Jean Marie Pierre dey meet Fine, all paint', *depuis la tête jusqu-aux pieds!* An' her, she stop befo' two house', one ole, one new; one fres' paint, one in ruin. She say, 'Jean Marie Pierre, you see dat? It is Fine goin' to ball, so well paint; *que li té belle! li comme maison neuve là!* Dat ruins 'mind me her w'en she come home f'om ball. *Mo cré ben!"* (I believe it!)

The garrulous old creature scratched her head reminiscently through her bandanna. There seemed to be much more to her simple recounting than she was inclined to disclose.

Angèle tried to grow sleepy,—her nurse's stories had rarely failed of that effect,—but she felt strangely afraid, and the twilighted room seemed animate with forebodings—invisible bats with odors of great terrors. She moved splenetically, like the spoiled child she was, sitting on Victorine's lap and fretting a little, a proved means of gaining sympathy all her young days. Victorine

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

began to rock backward and forward, and sang a lively measure :

“O, aïe, aïe! Compère La - pin, C'est 'tit

The first system of music features a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: “O, aïe, aïe! Compère La - pin, C'est 'tit

bête qui con - nin sau - té, O, aïe, aïe! Compère La -

The second system continues the musical piece. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are shown. The lyrics are: bête qui con - nin sau - té, O, aïe, aïe! Compère La -

pin, C'est 'tit bête qui con - nin sau - té,

The third system concludes the musical piece. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are shown. The lyrics are: pin, C'est 'tit bête qui con - nin sau - té,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

C'est dans bal, dans bal, qui connin sau - té, . . .

C'est dans bal, dans bal qui connin sau - té."\*

\* Oh, oh, dear Gossip Rabbit! It is a little beast which knows how to jump; it is at the ball that he knows so well how to jump.

The gay refrain distracted Angèle to laughing—the singing of it by the quadrone was so droll! Victorine entered quite into the spirit of the little beast who knew how to jump about at the dance, for she had undying recollections of herself as a star dancer at the famous balls where white missieus

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

pleaded for favors and fought to the death later for jealousy aroused in the old hall in Orleans Street. The scene of these tragic rollickings has undergone complete purification and now is the Convent of the Holy Family, an organization of irreproachably devout colored sisters: one of the daring jests of time. Victorine, too, had been redeemed by years, but had a store of precious memories you may believe. And she was at once as morbidly jealous of her reminiscences as of her self-respect.

She drew the mosquito-bar and opened the covers at one side for inviting admission. Angèle crept in, and Victorine tucked the bar taut all round. She was moving noiselessly—the Creole *savates* are velvety in sound no matter how harsh they may be in feeling to the unaccustomed foot—to the bronze candle-branches, when Angèle spoke.

“You know something, 'Ine?” she said, her eyes fiery in the half-dark and piercing the

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

bobinet mist like poniards. "To-morrow you must go to the *wangateur* on Prieur Street. Yes, and I will go with you!"

Victorine stood stock-still, affrighted. "*Mo réponde!*" she said, shaking her tignon.

"Then I will go alone, *va!*"

"Dat yaller gal been oughter gone 'fo' she ever come," muttered Victorine. "It's her been tellin' you dat foolingness, you, ma onlies' chile, w'at been kep all de time in box o' cotton!" Then she grew resolute. "Ah don' wan' see you mek no such foolingness. You oughter be 'shame' to talk like dat; you' Mémère 'sleep, too, w'ere she can' y'ear you. Ah don' know who raise you, nohow." She shambled about the room, righting the girl's personal belongings. "'Sides dat, ef you wan' to call luck, all you has to do is to fill a slipper full o' salt an' bu'n it on a fire. Ah does dat all de time."

"And when you wanted a nice young man to love you, 'Ine, what did you use to do?"

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Victorine's skin looked darkly bloated in the half-light; in truth, she was pursing her lips and swelling her cheeks with inward laughter. "Dey tol' me dat ev'y time you kin mek dat work yo'se'f widout payin' no money to *ensorceleur*. You ketch lizard, an' leave it die an' come to dus', dey say. Den you rub dat dust on de haid o' one you wan' an' he come by you, sure." Victorine chortled. "One time Ah ketch lizard, an' Ah di'n feed him none, an' week an' week de lizard never die. Ah di'n give eat or drink. He come feeble, yass, but not die, till, one mont, an' mos' two mont, he die. Min' w'at Ah'm tellin' you, in one year on'y he is stiff, not dus'. It must be *pétrifié*, dat lizard. Dat sign Ah don' have husban'—dat is to say Ah don' marry wid nobody."

"Would that trick bring me a good husband, 'Ine? The one I want?" asked Angèle, snuggling down in the covers.

"You don' wan' no husban', none," answered the old woman. "It's a true sayin',

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'*Qui prend mari prend pays.*'" (Who takes a husband takes the cares of a country.) "Wher' is ma key'?" she asked, fumbling in her capacious pocket.

"Pray to St. Antoine de Padoue to find out," Angèle recommended. "And good-night. I am *assoupie!*"

The girl turned over and simulated sleep, and Victorine sat down awhile to make sure she would not be recalled for some service, amusing herself, as she was wont to do by the hour, recollecting the romances of her youth, stealthily, but keeping her paling eyes upon the statue of Angèle's oratory lest she drag anchor too far.

"'Ine! Are you going to sit there with that rosary an hour? I know you, *commère!* Little bead, big bead, it is to you Ave Maria and Pater-noster. Which is which, *hein?* I heard you the other night, after I woke from my first nap; still sitting there you were, half asleep, but working always for that crown in heaven, working, working. But you were

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not saying the Ave or the Pater-noster at all ! You were holding the *chapelet*, so ; and your eyes were closed, *assoupie* ! and you were passing your finger slowly on it, and saying, ‘ *Piti grain—gros grain—gros grain—piti grain——*’

“ *Piti insolente va !*” cried Victorine. “ *To ein n’ingrat !*” \* She rose testily, extinguished the last candle, leaving only the *veilleuse* on the altar-shelf, and without a conciliatory word she passed into the shadows and to her own room on the rear gallery.

Angèle did not go to sleep, but, having much to think about, asked the protection of her tutelary saint and lay abed quietly and unhappily. She summed the situation thus : it was *affreux*, of course, about Calline and the threats of Zèbre ; but it was more important that Numa Déléry be brought out of his fantasy concerning Carmélite—and the sooner the better. Carmélite had always been willing to yield to her ; that understanding

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\* “ You insolent child ! You are an ingrate !”

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was as germane to both as their relationship. To be trained to have what you wish was wholesome enough, so Angèle reasoned, unless you check the prerogative suddenly ; so, as Carmélite had been more or less trained to denial by the over-partial Grand'mère de Marigny, it was but natural that she accept that rôle to the end. Besides, she, Angèle, was motherless ; and though she had never felt the need of a mother, whenever she reasoned on this pathetic line, she remembered that she was fatherless, too, and therefore eligible to special indulgences.

So it was for the purpose of seeing what might be done by black magic in this uppermost cause that she had announced her intention to seek that mysterious old negro who works his charms in the vapors of a *pot-au-feu*, from which he daily feeds a thousand devils on rank poison, though they never die !

Angèle commanded, cajoled, abused, and was saucy to Victorine, but she offered her

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at the same time a reverence as sincere as that she gave her grandmother ; indeed, the girl's obedience to the quadroon servant was in the spirit more entirely implicit: less an impulse than a precept. She knew she had been a closer study to her nurse from the hour of her birth and beyond to her mother's birth; the intervening days between and since those events had been pondered over, weighed, investigated, revealed by instinct that is the sixth sense of the negro whatever the leavening strain may be.

When Angèle had told fibs in her babyhood, Victorine proved their falsity ; whatever the girl's strivings for good or ill, she had found Victorine waiting at the end of her formulations with the effect of what she had intended to do. Angèle came to believe her nurse dual in being, in league with the devil for the purpose of staying harm from her charge, and yielding complete service of both to herself, Angèle. Some of the negroes believed Victorine to be a priestess of voodoo,

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a rumor that gratified her ; it certainly kept the servants under her control. Though the nurse had taught Angèle's baby lips to pray against the works of darkness, the girl, by some paradoxical ratiocination, considered the absolute denial of voudouism as blasphemous as the denial of Christianity. So she did not dread anything evil of Victorine—she would as soon have disbelieved in the efficacy of carrying a wee St. Joseph in a metal capsule, and that would never leave her purse or pocket till it had brought her a good husband. And of course that husband must be Numa.

Angèlique lay for a long time ruminating upon ways and means and the possibilities to be wrought in her behalf by the necromancer of Prieur Street. She was tenderly and despitefully thinking of Numa when a feeling, rather than a sound, aroused her to an abrupt fear. She shivered down under the counterpane and began to pray, holding her blessed medal and scapular very tight :

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*"Marie, ma bonne Mère, hâtez-vous de me secourir, prenez mon cœur et mon âme!" \**

A distinct but subtle sound reached her in spite of her solemn thought, and a curiosity possessed her to see what was going on about her. The room was in obscurity, the denser for the one beam of the lamp on the altar throwing all else into icy shadows ; but the pervading presence of the Mother of Sorrows encouraged her in her effort to rise from the bobinet, and tread in her bare feet to the close-shuttered window. She pressed open one half, and, unmindful of the friskiness of the air fresh from the river, she placed a foot on the narrow, jutting gallery and leaned far over the grill railing.

A mass like a low, black cloud was just below, indefinable at first, but its elements were dispersing and centralizing noiselessly, and as if vaguely because of the gloom of the street. Angèle discerned one and

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\* Marie, my good mother, hasten to help me, take my heart and my soul.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

another black-robed figure ; the movements of some being feminine she saw by eager and fearless descrying. The sound that had aroused her was scarcely more distinct now that she was in aural touch of it, for it amounted to nothing more than a croon, as if sung with closed lips.

The blending and unblending forms swung their arms above their shoulders and moved about in a great orbit, and upon losing this device they marched in serried files after the leadership of a tall woman who bore a lighted candle. Two small figures, those of children, carried something carefully between them which forbade imitative gesticulation. Angèle could not define their burden, but noted that it was carried on a cautious level. The children presently laid the parcel on the door-stone leading into the De Marigny court, and almost at once a light sprang upon it, twitching in the trepid air, a streak of blaze. The leader became like the others, only a patch of ink on the wet, gray scene, and like

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

scurrying bats all disappeared, merged into the neighboring darkness. The impact of a police-officer's baton came quick and clear through the silence. O'Brien was faithful to his watch.

Angèle forgot that she was cold, if, indeed, she had realized it, and waited, her hands over her tumultuous bosom, for the approaching steps with the feeling of friendliness with which she had heard them often, their owner trying the door of the court which was just under her window, and passing on to sound another wooden beat at the corner. She liked O'Brien: he had gallantly helped her from the carriage often, and Madame de Marigny, too, as they returned from the opera or *réunions* just before the dusks of the morning, and Angèle had frequently commented upon his qualities of manner and tongue. He was a rough-looking fellow, burly in figure and with a chin covered with brisk blue hair, but he did not lack suavity for all that. Once when Madame de Marigny

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had accepted his polite assistance she had thanked him as "Monsieur O'Breaun," and her granddaughter had corrected her, laughingly, feeling sure he would be jealous of French interference in pronouncing so sterling a Celtic cognomen, he had answered in a noble brogue: "The old lady is right, miss. Me name wor O'Brien, I'm proud to say, but I've had to change it to O'Breong under the new administhration in ordher to hold me job!"

Angèle, in dangerous flexure over the high railing, sent her voice down in a carrying whisper so that no one in the house should hear.

"Mr. O'Brien!" she called. "Look up a minute."

The big officer backed towards the gutter, trying to focus the source of the voice. "Sure, ut's Miss Angel," he said. "An' whut may this be?" pointing with his stick to the object on the door-step.

"That is what you must tell me—if

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you're not afraid to touch it, Mr. O'Brien. I saw some negroes dancing there on the banquette, a perfect *can-can*, acting like something foolish, and they disappeared when they heard you coming. If you're *not* afraid, Mr. O'Brien, tell me whatever it is and then take it away."

The officer lifted the object to the level of his eyes and deliberately inspected it with intervals of ejaculation that were trying to the curious waiter overhead. She was beginning to feel conscious of the chill night wind from which her body was scantily protected. She was awake to the practicalities again, too, and wondering if Mr. O'Brien would observe or suspect that she was wearing only her night dress.

"What is it?" she whispered. "Please tell me at once."

"Hoodoo again," said the man, shortly, holding high a square, tawny body beslobbered with pitchy streaks. "It's nothin' but a loaf o' bread, which I'll not eat, you may

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make sure, for it's slathered over with"—he smelled it tentatively—"with some composition or other. That's all, 'cept some rags and the bit o' common tallow candle jus' stuck in. It cud'unt harm nobody in outside applications like this; but ye don't be wantin' to make pan paddy (*pain perdu*) for breakfast with it."

"And the voudous put it there!" the girl whispered again, terrified and her teeth chattering with cold.

"Certainly, it must be thim, as this ain't April Fool's D'y. I'll take the article to the Fourt' Precinct Station, an' you go to bed, my young lady. It can't hurt you, though the blaggards meant it should."

"You are very kind, Mr. O'Brien," said Angèle, softly. "You've kept my grandmother from knowing anything about it by taking it away. You know, Victorine nor Achille nor Céleste would never touch it! You found something in the doorway yesterday, too, didn't you?"

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"An' did they tell you thot?" exclaimed O'Brien, in disgust. "The nagurs!"

"Well, Grand'mère doesn't know about it—it's all right. I can't blame 'Ine or Achille, because—— I hope you won't be afraid and lay that thing down again, Mr. O'Brien."

The Irishman chuckled cheerily and assured the young woman vaingloriously that he feared God but the devil never; and then he, too, vanished in the thick, misty vapors of the narrow street.

Angèle suddenly felt awesomely alone, yet dreaded to re-enter the house. Outside there seemed to be a chance to reach some one by a call if necessary, and she knew that there were only her grandmother and Victorine within, and she would die to save either; but she didn't want to die! Like many who rejoice in youth and strength, she deemed her courage and philosophy sufficient to protect those she loved, but the sense of personal peril intimidated and sent her in search

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

of consolation and quiet from the only possible source.

From the turbid blackness below loomed milk-carts and wagons of produce trundling to market long before dawn; their lights, prescribed by law, were flickerings of candle-ends in open-top paper bags. Each signal shone through a nimbus of golden cloud. These activities gave her an accession of courage, and she re-entered her room, looking about her one frightened moment, and then struck a match. When the gentle light had overspread its widest possible radius in the great room, Angèle began to breathe regularly. But she paused in her progress across the floor when she heard her grandmother's voice.

“*Bébé, c'est toi ?*” she asked.

“*Oui, Mémère,*” answered the girl, cheerfully.

“Are you up? I thought I heard a noise.”

“*Parbleu !* So did I, and got up to see.

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It was but persons talking together in the street.

“*Bon soir, chérie. Dors bien.*”

“*Bon soir, Mémère.*”

Angèle extinguished her candle and dropped upon her *prie-Dieu* under the ivory rood above her altar. And there fear led her, trembling, to prayer.



### III

#### ANGÈLE BOTHERS ABOUT THE FUTURE

“ *Ca va ’rivé dans semaine quatte zheudis.*”

(That will happen in the week of four Thursdays.)

DR. PARADISE, conventional as he hoped he was, waived the opinion in Creoledom that there is something unseemly in the day visits of gentlemen, and called the following morning at the De Marigny home. He was obliged to see Angèle twice a week at least; he had done so always, and he could not concede that she was less charming now than ever before. In the evening there was a likelihood of interruption, for he could never keep track of the days when the *cousines* and *tantes* came around to pay their stated visits, and he did not trust himself in

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

an entirely French-speaking company. Angèle had taught him a *baragouinage* in her infancy, when English was unknown to herself,—a cant that would one day come easy to him again if he could make up his mind to shock his classic investigations in French literature by such rudeness. His tongue and his ears were at defiance regarding foreign languages.

The doctor looked around him, as he always did upon entering the great drawing-room of Madame de Marigny, such a glance as is an invitation to calm. He went into houses during his parochial visits that were so utterly unlike this: houses where the deities were too humble to be called gods even for tradition's sake; houses again in which series of gorgeous rooms affected him as will the indiscriminate mix-up one may see in art exhibits at State fairs: rooms in which things do not compose, and where are crowds of pictures, hung, like as not, three-  
ply on the walls!

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The De Marigny drawing-room was vast and, it must be confessed, a trifle cold; one felt that the last kicks of the winter were in storage there; and, indeed, it was tolerable in August, whatever the temperature elsewhere. But despite the tomby atmosphere of this salon surprised without a fire, it was a spot to linger in, and Dr. Paradise lingered, as will the idealist who is above the ordinary sense of human discomfort. The tarnished mirror-frames of ornate Empire pattern over either chimney-piece won the admiration of the spectator without challenging it. The mantel marbles were broad of shelf, Doric in design, and in the centre of each panel, just over the grate, a woman's beautiful head was sculptured, scarcely recognizable now as that of Madame de Marigny in just ripening youth. General Pierre de Marigny had ordered these mantels at Rome on their wedding-journey, and it was his fancy that his beautiful bride sit for them.

On these marble shelves massive bronze

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clocks were placed with their accompanying vases and candelabra ; on the walls right and left were Louis Philippe sconces set to illumine the dull canvases of the portraits, kit-kat size, of Madame de Marigny's grandparents. There was a fine painting of madame herself in the room, sitting at her harp on the portico of her early plantation home—a tiny figure in flounced organdy, with jasmine in her hair ; and one of Pierre de Marigny, a young blade of the fifties, with a goodly display of bullion on his coat, a very vain goatee, and a deathly-white skin. A portrait of a piquant young girl was there, too, with a mantilla over her head, in which a rose was enmeshed—a halo to her sombre hair ; but the eyes were not sombre, though dark, for there was a catch-light like a spangle in each ; and her lips, just an upcurving thread of red at the corners, but full and luscious where they parted to smile, seemed still sentient with life. The young girl held some impossible roses in an anadem in her long, aristocratic

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hands—the roses of the portrait-painter who scorns all but featural detail ; and this portrait, like the others, was enhanced by a contemporaneous wine-velvet frame, wearing bald amid its traceries and astragals of gilt moulding. This picture was most fascinating of all to Angèle, though she had never cared to be alone in the great rooms, for the eyes of the portraits followed her about and frightened her. But she liked to go in with her grandmother, to love the *svelte* little figure and *insouciant*e face of her who was known in the house as Elphée ; who had met René Le Breton while in Paris, and been bewildered. Whether she loved him or not there is no doubt, for when she married him her devotion and patience gave place to resentment within a short time, and she saw no way out of her difficulty save to give way to her weariness and die. This is why the name of René Le Breton was never spoken in the house. Whatever Elphée's caprices were, her hus-

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band should have put up with them, her mother, sister, and nurse believed, but they did not consider those caprices as positive at all. So, as they could not praise Monsieur Le Breton, they spoke only of him in whispers,—for he was the father of Angèlique.

There was a Buhl cabinet under Elphée's portrait,—a rare thing that kept in condition surprisingly,—and there were specimens of fine French bisque, pieces of Vernis Martin and marquetry here and there, an Empire card-table and scrutoir, bronzes and alabasters, and a set of carved rosewood furniture, upholstered in brocade of intense smaragdine hue, which was not often disclosed, however, from beneath flower-bedecked chintz covers. The reverence Madame de Marigny felt for this furniture and its original brocade was a matter of obligation, and not of option,—for, as she expressed it, "Dat furnitures had see me marry!"

Dr. Paradise looked last at the chandeliers, which were like stalactic icebergs, glittering,

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quivering prisms, each upbearing more than an hundred sockets for candles. The sockets were empty now,—had been so, indeed, since Angèle's début *soirée* two years ago, for the tapers were wont to grow distorted, like the fingers of a gouty victim, by the changes of heat and cold and damp.

There were girandoles of dripped crystal at intervals about the room, besides, to assist in the effulgence of illumination at special feasts. There was state and ceremony in the set of every article in the double rooms and little of homelikeness ; rather was the general aspect that of the palace than of the hotel. Everything belonged to past eras and had been faithfully preserved. There was nothing piebald in the gathering, no aggressively shining mirrors to mock the mildews of old quicksilver and florid brocades. The bright touches—and there were vivid ones here and there—were harmonious, for they were of a quality that had stood the ravage of years by reason of doughtier natures. Dr. Para-

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dise noted a basket of opaque viridity, of the seeming of malachite, set in brass, in the interstices of which verdigris had formed, just a note deeper than the tone of the glass itself. The basket and handle were intertwined with a vine and leaves showing ruddle currants brilliant against the mellow brass and green. There were other blotches of color visible from where he had seated himself, among vases of faience never meant for use, gaudy enough in themselves to detract from the most showy mosaic of natural flowers. A technical decorator would have relegated the portraits to the dining-room and applied draperies to the softening of many angles ; but it would have been desecration to put out of place a single object in the room. Convention and traditions of past decades had frozen the entire scheme compactly ; it was all as pure in style as a Pavane by Mozart to which modern translation wrecks inharmony.

Angèle came in within a quarter of an hour ; she had been indulging her indiligent

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bent all morning in a camisole, "*en souillan*," and been obliged to make a hasty toilette. She broke apart the batten shutters and admitted a shaft of sun less luminous to the doctor than the presence of the girl; her beaminess always affected him like the silent entrance of warmth and light into a dull room.

"Your home is such a contrast, Angèle," he said, "to that of our friend, Mrs. Carter Trezevant. She is the most modern creature! But I must add she is always most enjoyable to me, and she is certainly inspiriting. She is so new herself—not in any uncomplimentary sense, you understand—that she has taken to buying up all the old junk she can get out of the shops and ringing people's door-bells to ask if they won't sell things with indiscriminate incaution. I found her early this morning parleying a woman out of a huge iron knocker in Royal Street. She didn't get it though, and on our way to her home she had the assurance to confess to me that while she was haranguing the owner of the

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knocker she was using her eyes to see how readily it might be removed. 'I shouldn't steal,' she said, easily, 'but when I wish for anything I must have it, even if I determine its value and send the dross mintage by dumb messenger after the article has been surreptitiously abstracted.' She has no patience with the sentiments of owners of the things she desires, but contrives to excuse her own on a plea of diletantism. I inflamed her this morning by calling her vagaries 'vulgaries.'"

"It isn't vulgar to want to have nice old things, is it, *m'ami*?" asked Angèle, looking around her. She wasn't sure she liked the old things herself, save those with which she was familiar, and she was not sure that she possessed *la nature diletante*.

"Oh, my dear, no," answered Dr. Paradise. "But this room assembles its fittings and seems all of a piece. I wish Mrs. Trezevant would put some of her own cleverness into the arrangement of her home; but it is quite extraneous to it. For she is amusing!

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She was wishing to-day, mock-seriously, that benzine were good for the soilure of souls."

"And what did you tell her?" asked Angèle, smiling.

"I told her possibly it was for so volatile a soul as her own," said the minister, smiling too.

"Talk to *me* about the soul," said Angèle, thoughtfully. "I do not respect you as I do Père Mignot; I should never tell him anything but my sins."

Paradise laughed. "Your sins, Bébé! Shadows of the Archangel's wings! Why do you bother your head about sin? And as for the soul, it is enough for you to know, and every one to know, and about all that any one really knows, that the soul is the spirit of the brain, of which Conscience is the agent. But all the moils of Conscience, child, cannot affect the color of the soul. What is your idea of it, Angèle?"

The girl hesitated, measuring her thoughts carefully. The doctor was the only person

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to whom she had ever showed a serious side, though she had avowed she did not respect him. With her, respect meant dread, as is too often true with us all in our commerce with religious authority. "I don't know *théologie*, dear friend, but my idea is that the soul—— I could so much better express myself in French."

Dr. Paradise made a gesture of negation, for he preferred to hear the pretty apocopations and slurs of his vernacular as she made them, familiarizing herself more and more with English. He had, indeed, been the first and most frequent converser with her, and took unto himself the credit of bringing the language within her ken.

"Well," continued Angèlique, obediently, "could the soul be conscience on its death-bed? You know, reformed, made spirit, as Tante Léontine was before she died. Or is it the shadow of the body turned white?"

Dr. Paradise smiled encouragingly. "Don't worry your pretty head. Your deliberate,

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cold-blooded, well-thought-out simplicity is refreshing. Ah, Bébé!" He sat back and contemplated the slender young woman posed in the carved arm-chair, as if she had been a picture.

He sighed. "I was born too early," he said. "These dreadful, dreadful years count. Had I been born later—well, complaining is useless—but the loss of a great happiness is tragic. Still, I hav'n't lost you, and I don't think I could make you know how much I have idealized you, and deified you, and woven you into musing and wide-eyed dream, where the years count not, and the shadow which haunts is not, and the heart bounds with a great joy."

Angèle went over and sat beside him on the sofa and took his hand, holding it within her own with something very like reverence.

"Sometimes, Angèle," the doctor continued, looking down into her kind eyes, "sometimes idealism is truer than the reality we touch; and when I touch my angel by

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brevet, I am sure I would be willing to answer to the Judge above without a common man's shame or fear."

Angèlique pressed the large, white, scholarly hand, keeping it all the time within her own.

"I wonder how it will be up there, or over there," she mused.

Dr. Paradise laid her hands gently on her lap and rose.

"The theosophists have gripped one truth," he said; "maybe the reincarnationists another,—but all subjects become abstruse, child, when they veer away from yourself. In your angelhood you should be prepared to enlighten us without the employment of theories. Without realizing it, Angèle, you are consecrate, and your soul has been wrought on an anvil of truth." He paused in his walk, as if pondering some weighty matter, then looked up, questioningly.

"We have been very talky this morning, hav'n't we, my dear? And I bored you a bit.

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And what I came to say especially I had forgotten. Mrs. Trezevant wished to know at what hour you are to dine Sunday, as you omitted stating it in your invitation. So like you, Angèle, to forget an item of such scant importance !”

“Oh, I shall write her immediately !” laughed Angèle, blushing, apologetically.

Dr. Paradise twirled his hat in his hands.

“I think Mrs. Trezevant will be a wholesome friend to you, child, in spite of many things. She is a cultivated woman, by books and travel, quick to see the secret of any question, and ready with fluent ease to discuss it. We are good friends, but we have never yet agreed on any subject. Though she comes regularly to church, she is a heretic in doctrine and a saint in practice. She tries to shock me by free-thinking—which shows, as you know, how little she knows her rector. Sometimes she acts on my intellect like rare old wine—then a dissonance comes, because her notes are false. Yet I don’t believe she

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is false, only that to keep up an interest, and maybe show ability, she brilliantly goes too far. I am not a saint in my ideals ; but, my dear, there is a certain though subtle line a woman cannot cross, even in argument, without repelling me. At those times, in some way, I feel my mother at my side."

"Ah," murmured Angèle, "what it must seem to be instructed ! And does she grieve for Mr. Trezevant?"

"Her sorrow is three years old, and traces of it are growing less—she is beginning to peep !—though, indeed, propriety could not be more careful than she. During this phase she has had all the more time for study, and her reading has been wide. She has a wonderful memory, and can quote any book, giving page and chapter. She knows Tennyson intimately, believes in Swinburne, and says Emerson is a fool ; St. Paul is her hero, a man whom she thinks the preachers misrepresent, and from whom Hegel took his whole

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philosophy. I have not met a more daring thinker."

"You interest me," said Angèle, rousing her own creeping ambition, "but I shall never be a woman like that ; there is no use trying. Once, I longed to be Madame de Staël. Now I want to be Mrs. Trezevant ! Doesn't she get frightened to make arguments before you and other student men ?"

The doctor shook his head.

"A few weeks since, one of the professors in the Mississippi University, a Baptist, and a widower, and a jolly good man, though a trifle narrow between the eyes, called to see her while I was there. It was her first call in the sense the professor intended it. He will never call again. She caught him on church history ; told him when and where his church was born ; showed they had no authority, and proved her church was the only church in the world that was a real Church. Such an evening the professor never had. Angry, disgusted, yet infatuated, he left, and has

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not been seen again. I enjoyed it immensely!"

"But she shocks you sometimes," Angèle claimed, with a sort of wistful interest.

"Well," the doctor answered, "I have not tried to convert her—it is too delightful to hear her; then, I have a strong sympathy for much she accepts. I told her she could go on—I was not shocked, but am watching the experiment of a woman trying to live with no faith. The next evening after that discussion with the professor," Dr. Paradise unconsciously allowed his voice to grow tender, "I had a burial. As I passed her late husband's tomb, a fresh floral cross was there. Every week fresh flowers, and until last Sunday always a cross. Last Sunday it was a star."

"And why is that?" asked Angèle, watching him narrowly.

Dr. Paradise leaned back and looked up thoughtfully.

"Romance and tragedy are blended in her," he said; "her bereavement was a mys-

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teria, and that, my dear, is the crown of a sorrow. Hysteria is a divine madness which ever shadows feeling. A deep grief cannot moan ; it can only endure, dumbly wait, benumbed by the ice that gathers round the heart. So, Mrs. Trezevant ; a draped figure, the sign of a broken life ; sad, mournful, melancholy—and a pose followed. There has been an emergence from these—and an interesting young woman has come forth to shine again.” The doctor laughed. “She now thinks it was ungallant in her husband to die.”

“She is in love with you, is it not so?” asked Angèle, steadily.

The minister looked long at the girl before answering. His expression was rather of certainty than of satisfaction.

“That is absurd, child. She likes an audience, and I am the most appreciative she has, probably. She is less a daughter of Eve than a daughter of Adam.”

“*Eh bien!*” Angèle ejaculated, with

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spleen. Mrs. Trezevant had consumed the length of his visit and she was not pleased. "You cannot believe how I am *incrédule* ! I am worse than St. Thomas !"

Dr. Paradise either did not or pretended not to understand. Perhaps his thoughts were still with the fair problem of whom they had been speaking.

"I shouldn't mind *your* incredulity in the least, child," he said, presently. "Mrs. Trezevant's negation is something just more than a little unwomanly. A woman is not in her orbit as an unbeliever ; there is something profane in unbelief to women, for, more than men, they throw their souls into their faith. If their faith is doubt, something is gone ; instead of a ring sweet and musical as a silver bell, there is the clear, distinct, vibrant clang of steel. Steel is made into rifles ; rifles are meant to kill."

Dr. Paradise rose again, took the girl's hand, and held it a moment. He never kissed her any more, because he conscientiously

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acknowledged that she was a woman and to be treated with the reverence due all women.

“My best love, my always love to Madame de Marigny,” he said.

“*À Dimanche!*” said Angèle.

When he was gone, Angèle returned to the salon, brought-to the batten windows again, then closed the door after her. She went thoughtfully upstairs and retailed the conversation as she remembered it, after a dutiful fashion, to her grandmother.

Then some aunts and cousins arrived, many of them the poor relations which fringe every old Creole family, paying court, desiring favors, bringing welcome tidbits from the gossip’s laboratory where trifling properties are combined for noxious purposes. There was a great chatter in madame’s bedroom, where Toussine, the visiting hairdresser, was performing her daily duty and contributing emphasis to some more or less harmful *on dit* from time to time. Victorine

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was passing orgeat in goblets bearing the De Marigny crest in fading gold.

As Angèle entered, the population of the room swung upward, aimed at herself.

The girl submitted to the depositing of dabs of moisture on her cheeks. It was useless to speak greetings; enough cordiality was being expressed, not a pin-point apart, for all. The relatives longed to hear of the Valeton reception. Was it true Mathilde Daboval was engaged to Amedée de l'Isle? Had Angèle a new ball-dress? Let them see! Ah! ah! ravishing! What it is to be young and well-built and reared as in a box of cotton! And who had been attentive? Think, then, a millionaire!

"They have spoken to me of a hymn of Hymen on her account," said a pretty and jealous creature named Louissette. "*Pardi!* Angèlique had always good luck more than other girls."

"*Bavardeuses!*" thought Angèlique.

"Ah! she will be very well in the immacu-

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late robe of her nuptial apparel," said the cousin, who prided herself on her English.

"Ah, my dears!" Noélie de Marigny, a favorite niece of madame, was calling her listeners to order again. "Have you heard about Madame Eugène Lapouyade? Such a scandal! She says her husband is leading a life *pas trop régulier!*"

"*Si c'est pas terrible!*" announced Louissette, who should not have been present.

"*Pauvre chou!*" sighed Madame de Marigny.

"And me, I was at that wedding," remarked Margot, in a tone of wonderment. "How she was well!"

"But it was not a big wedding," commented Noélie. "Were you there?"

"Yes; though there was a limited number of the bride' and groom' parents there. And to think! *Such* bother come to Clémence!"

Noélie resumed her story. "*Oui, même!* Clémence took up the gazette and she see

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‘Madame Eugène Lapouyade with a daughter!’ her child has already two mont’. Immediately she is crazy! She call’ Eugene. ‘Who—who?’ she ask’ him. ‘For who is this child of Madame Eugène Lapouyade?’ ‘But,’ say Eugène, ‘it is your child, only now register.’ ‘*Mon Dieu, non!*’ say’ Clèmence; ‘it is the child of another woman. Ah, but who? *Ah! mon Dieu,* if I had known!’ ‘But, yes,’ say Eugène, coming angry. ‘But has not my child already six week’ going on two mont’?’ argued Clèmence, in tears. ‘Hold your tongue,’ answer’ Eugène, seeing her rage, ‘your milk will turn sour.’ ‘And will I believe you?’ say’ Clèmence. ‘And what are you that I should believe you? Hah! I will *not* believe you. *Du tout, du tout, du tout, du tout, du tout!*’ But she think it better not to separate themselves, as Eugène has not grand means, him, and he would have only moral to give her. He has eaten a fortune!’ She say’ she could learn to short-write, but——”

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“Where do you come from? That is an old story from the time of Artagnette!” cried Lucie Livaudais, with scorn. “That child of Clémence has now five months!”

“And me, I have heard that history galore,” announced another.

Louissette prevented further discussion on this point by giving a slight scream and putting her hands to her head.

“*Dieu de mes pères!* What a *migraine!* Titine, I tell you some one is having *séance de gri-gri* for me. If I don't look out I'll make a sickness. I *must* look in my pillows.”

“And me, my dear,” answered poor Titine, despairingly. “Why is it my poor children die? Two left out of thirteen! Some one is making *maléfice* for me.”

“*Baste!*” exclaimed Noélie. “What do you expect? You married a man with one lung!”

“Gossipers!” muttered Angèlique, under her breath.

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“ *Quant à ça——*”

“ *Tandis que——*”

“ *Plutôt que de——*”

“ *Je parie——*”

“ *Elle se trompe——*”

“ *Je t'en prie——*”

The confusion of voices and banalities and the click of spoons in the glasses annoyed Angèle as they never had hitherto; so, assured that her grandmother would be entertained, she went into her own room, was hatted and jacketed in a few moments, administered a *duvet* to her oval cheeks from the Bohemian-glass powder-box on her *duchesse*, and sat on the upper step of the staircase quietly until Toussine would come out. Without any well-defined intention, she had the impulse to speak to the hair-dresser, whose wisdom in certain affairs she greatly respected. Toussine's tidy figure issued from the second room. She gave a little cry at sight of the young mamzelle on the steps. “*Toujours en bambauche?*” she asked.

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“Toussi,” the girl began, rising, and speaking low, while making a sign towards madame’s apartment.

“I’m goin’ home, me,” said Toussine. “I’m hongry.”

“Get something to eat downstairs. Céleste will give you some cold jambalaya from breakfast, and then you must come with me. Have you made your round for to-day?”

Toussine was surprised, but said nothing ; her work for the morning was finished, and she would have several hours on her hands before the evening duties would begin for rout and opera.

“*Bien,*” said Angèle ; “you go to the kitchen, and when you are ready, stop at the parlor door. Where is ‘Ine?’”

“I donno w’ere she passed,” answered Toussine.

“Not a word to ‘Ine, above all ; nor, for that matter, to Céleste or Achille. *Fais vite !*”

As the moments flew, and with every word she uttered, a plan was forming in the mind

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of Angèle, one from which she shrank, but which she could not resist performing. It was as if a personal Judas was betraying her to the self that Mémère and the colonel and Dr. Paradise and Victorine loved. But there was a dull enthusiasm in her that impelled her actions even while her conscience disapproved them. The ten minutes she waited were unending to her impatience, but at their expiration Toussine came cautiously to the door with an expectation visible that stoutened Angèle; there was that savagery in the griffe\* still which was fascinated by the mysterious and the supernatural, and she scented this manner of business from afar. Angèle was aware of this spirit in the woman by the tales she told and the strange abracadabra she wore, irrespective of her scapular, the symbol of enlightened faith. The Congo element was innately stronger in her

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\* The offspring of a negro and a mulatress, with, perhaps, a drop of Indian blood.

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than that of Christendom. Together the slender aristocrat and the ignorant griffe slipped out of the house and down the quiet street. When they had passed the corner, Angèle told Toussine to look behind them, and then, assured that no one had observed their departure, she said she wished to be conducted to the wizard of Prieur Street.

“*Mon Dieu!*” cried Toussine. “An’ is it for that you mek me come wid you? Yo’ gran’ma would kill me!”

Angèle did not show any feeling at this threat. “Mémère will never know; or she will know in time, when everything comes out as I wish. It can do no harm, Toussi; we will see the *ensorceleur*; he will talk to us, and he will give us a little charm to prevent harm—*voilà tout!* Come, Toussi, you must have something to ask him for yourself. We will ask together!”

The girl’s tones were persuasive and soft, and her large-irised eyes were fixed upon the hair-dresser, wakening all the demonology

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of her negro mind. The griffe wavered and found a justification of the prospective indulgence in the assurance of her companion ; then she sent her thoughts backward to stately Madame de Marigny in her chamber, surrounded by her family, all religious souls, bound by the church and conventions and intolerant of such missions as this, even while fearing to deny their futility. Toussine was aware that the most precious of the old madame's treasures was here, keeping just a step ahead of her as was proper in observance of caste ; and that the girl was placing herself upon an equality with the griffe, herself, which was undeniably a discomfort to both.

Without acquiescing in the plan, Toussine continued to follow Angèle in silence. Once, at a corner, Angèle was about to turn to the left, when Toussine spoke. "*Continuez, mamzelle,*" the griffe said. And thenceforward she designated the route.

Angèlique dreaded what she felt she must

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do, but had the courage to accomplish that which her judgment dictated, and she would not see, votary of the Virgin though she was, that she was doing wrong. The spell that had been cast over the home she loved, jeopardizing the lives, perhaps, of them all, must be removed by the same means that had placed it there. A "work" would save them,—save Grand'mère, Marcel, Victorine, herself. Then, too, if Numa would be perverse—— Her zeal quickened her step. Of a sudden she halted.

"Deh's no use to go see Sonny to-day, Mamzelle L'Ange," said Toussine, coming abreast of Angèle. "We mi' as well go on back home. Look at dat fun'ral, right in ou' way. If we got acrost it——"

"Does it really matter, Toussi?" Angèle asked, feverishly. "There is no time to lose for *bêtises*."

The cortège was very long: first the carriage with the priest, crucifer, and acolytes, another carriage following with the pall-

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bearers, then the hearse, encompassed with black tarleton, and a carriage conveying the family of the deceased ; on the sidewalk the members of the "Si'ety" and friends,—the women walking together in twos, the men following in the same order. There was much dressing among the followers in the women's lines, and their conversation made a confused murmur as the procession passed along, two squares in length.

Toussine shook her head. "No use goin' to-day," she affirmed. "Better to go back an' start again." She was so resolute that Angèle, who believed in the griffe's knowledge of black magic, was convinced. Almost with anguish Angèle turned and retraced her steps.

"Come for me Monday night at ten o'clock," she said. "It is too bad about to-day, for it is not often I have a chance like this to get away from Mémère and Victorine without their knowing all about what I'm going to do. After they are in bed I'll slip

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downstairs and meet you at the courtyard door. Be there, mind!"

Toussine went towards the woods and Angèle riverward; and then the girl discovered that she was trembling and cold despite the long walk. She was not any the less determined to pursue her former intention to engage the ghostly mediation of voodooism, but she was glad of the delay. The sun was so brilliantly yellow, and the sky so flawlessly blue, and the river air so exhilarating that black measures would have struck dissonances,—just as it is so much harder to lay away a friend on a day that smiles. And, however wilful she might have been, Angèle was exquisitely organized, and discriminated even in her precipitances. So she went home blithely, as if relieved of a shoulder-burden, but not once during the remainder of that day did she raise her eyes to the serene face of her statue of the Immaculate Conception on the altar in her room. For her purpose was growing rigid and deliberate.



## IV

### MRS. TREZEVANT DINES À LA CRÉOLE

*“Soleil brille pou' tout mounne !”*

(The sun shines brightly for everybody.)

MRS. TREZEVANT came to dinner at Madame de Marigny's with an eagerness that never would have been suspected from her bearing ; she was animated as usual, yet as usual, too, bearing herself steadily, all the while painfully uncomfortable lest she should not comport herself according to the practice of the Creole household—so unswerving in its ethical economies ! At the same time Mrs. Trezevant recollected that she had been a Dandridge, and that if she had had rather an empty girlhood, and no money at all for trimmings, this was because her people had suffered a war. Now that she could afford more

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extravagances than ever before,—Mr. Trezevant's widow was realizing that in every sense his relict was better off than his wife,—she was plunging somewhat wildly with the intention of surrounding herself with all she had not hitherto possessed.

This dinner-occasion was a fine opportunity to get ideas both as to what she wished and as to how she should dispose of possible *fac-similes*; and the well-poised creature was very nearly in a tremor when she stood in the high-ceiled salon, every article in which her quick eye began to appraise, as it had been accustomed to do in the second-hand shops. Dr. Paradise had walked with her from church circuitously, for the pleasure of sauntering in so serene a day, and to consume the interval before the afternoon dinner. He noted the glowing anticipation of his charming parishioner.

“If I should absent-mindedly begin to bargain for any of these things,” murmured Mrs. Trezevant, when she had seated herself in the

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grand old salon before the hostesses had appeared, "please ask a blessing, however malapropos, and I shall realize that you are giving me a cue. I am woefully tempted."

"I should rather see you steal them, as you suggest doing with the knocker in Royal Street," replied the doctor, laughing. "At least Madame de Marigny would not be so scandalized. She is bound to think you a little *gauche*, anyway, because you are an American! That militates against you."

An hour before dinner, Toussine, who had dressed madame's hair, slipped into Angèle's room with something wrapped in an old newspaper. "*Deh's fleurs de champs.*" She spoke with caution. "*Fleurs de champs*, fern an' savage grass. Tek it in yo' han' an' put it yo'self in de middle o' de table. W'en de las' t'ing is eat, put it in de fire an' burn it up. Dat's all fix', it goin' mek good work. Missieu Numa——" The woman stopped and looked expressive, as if divining much. "An' me, w'en I wan' keep a man I mek tea

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o' *basilique*, an' sprink' on *banquette*. Dat mek him sho' to come."

Toussine pulled the girl's hair more loosely on her brow; it was all her *supplice* that Angèlique would not permit hêr the service of hair-dresser for herself. "You is all r-right! *Tu es dans ton trente-et-un.*" Angèle walked some steps and turned, half-ashamed at her pride and consciousness of loveliness. This spirit was one of her effective defects. "*Suis-je belle, Toussi?*" she asked, already gratified. The griffe rolled her eyes and nodded as a means of expressing speechless admiration. Angèle understood. "*Flatteuse!*" she exclaimed, smiling happily. "*Je connais ton numéro! Cesse ton commérage, va!*" \*

Madame entered the salon with her granddaughter, looking very regal, albeit diminutive, in black satin and yellowed *point Aiguille*.

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\* Flatterer! I know your number. Cease your prattling.

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Her manner was a trifle gracious, such deportment as seemed proper in the middle of the last century, and Mrs. Trezevant, taking that fact into account, did not in the least mind ; but Angèlique was frank cordiality itself. Colonel Dabney came soon after, and later Carmélite and Numa Deléry, who had been with her to Mass. Angèle learned this with a twinge, and Dr. Paradise, perceiving it, wondered.

Achille presently appeared with a massive tray of old Sheffield, bearing that delectable alloyage known in New Orleans as Ruffignac, which Angèle had herself "shuffled" with crushed ice, as she termed it, after mixing the cognac and mineral water with lemon-juice. In another moment dinner was announced.

"I wish I had gone to the Jesuits' this morning, Miss Le Breton," began Mrs. Trezevant, when she found herself seated at madame's right hand and opposite her rector and the two young women. "Doctor Paradise did

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not preach,—he is unconscionably dronish at times, and brings into our midst ministers whose general cut reminds one of last year's fashion-plates. Of all professions, it should be incumbent upon ministers to grow modern."

Dr. Paradise shot a reproachful glance at the fair banterer.

"Fancy *my* feelings, please. That solemn, unpopularly truthful, old-time parson, with that awful rasping voice, has been staying with me three days. I am two hundred years old. The antiquated questions that have been propounded to me, and the five hundred-year-old talks I have heard, modernize Methuselah and his grandfather. He confided to me, almost with self-pity for his daring, that he is verging on theosophy and believes in the doctrine of re-incarnation. Great heavens! If that doctrine is true, and that voice must live forever! No wonder there was war in heaven and Lucifer preferred downstairs."

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Madame de Marigny feared her friend the doctor had shown too much levity. She knew him to be a moral man, but her heart refused to deem him a priest. “‘*En bien mangeant, l'âme renouvelée,*’” \* said madame, with a kind smile. “Co-lo-nel, it is Spanis' mack'rel to-day; you r-remember, we *con-quer*' Spain.”

Angèle recalled the incident of the cod and sent a glance at Dr. Paradise. The colonel was in a very good humor and made no reference to his former ebullition of spleen.

“Ah, madame,” he said, “Spanish mackerel and Spanish onions should have their names changed were they not too delicious to tamper with save in the way of kindness. But I'll take my revenge out on the fish, madame, for wearing such a name. Revenge is truly sweet—— Was there a good congregation, doctor? I couldn't get out in

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\* In eating well the soul renews itself.

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time for church this morning because of my growing-pains."

"Mrs. Trezevant, the co-lo-nel goes to church never, never," simpered pretty Carmélite, with her accustomed lack of tact. "It is his family who is to save himself."

"I have a Christian brother, Mrs. Trezevant," said the colonel, addressing the guest of honor with a bow, "who will indeed uplift the rest of us, if there is anything in prayer, as of course we must believe. My friend was, I am sorry to say, a hard-drinking man—he never could drink like a gentleman, as, well, for instance, our preacher-friend here can do. Joel joined the church to please his wife, quit drinking, rented a pew, and began to subscribe to funds for missionaries and Sunday-schools and picnics and parish aids, and the Lord knows what, on everything they could think of to tax him for. Joel went right on signing checks, and never complained or backslid. One of his old companions around the tavern met him one day

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and asked him how he enjoyed his new life. 'It's all right,' said Joel, 'an' my wife's happy. It's a heap mo' respectable, but, Mat, it's also a heap mo' expensive, too!'

"There wasn't the audience there should have been," answered Mrs. Trezevant to the colonel's original question. "Madame de Marigny, your creed has the hold upon our community. Why don't our people make a showing, Doctor Paradise?"

"I have often felt," answered the doctor, growing serious, "at St. Elizabeth's, like a soldier sent to fight a skilled antagonist with only a rusty musket and no ammunition. The theatres utilize the artistic element in man or the Ritualistic side of human nature, light, scenery, music, and costumes, and *succeed*. Given a fine choir, a bright altar, rich vestments, a good orchestra, and such accessories as my experience deems useful, I can pack any church with people. And these are not wrong. God uses these Ritualistic elements in nature; the mountains, the hills,

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skies, oceans, and flowers prove it. The Jewish Church, attended by our Lord, appealed to the Ritualistic element in human nature."

"So you would make our churches merely monuments to our architects and settings for display," cried the colonel, who believed the Presbytery the anteroom to heaven, and simplicity desirable as the most inviting influence in religion.

Carmélite dreaded a discussion of so little interest to herself, so she interpolated her own thought. "Anyway, churches are lovely places to get married in."

Mrs. Trezevant shrugged just a little. "*Do* you think so? At weddings particularly, their quiet is *so* quiet! With all the pranking out in flowers, and the men and women bedight in their best, and the joyance of the hour, the chill of the church at my own wedding struck at my marrow. I felt that I had done a stunt and missed my applause."

"I suppose," said Angèlique, "that Dr.

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Paradise must feel so when he has poured out his feelings in a sermon and there is no response, audible at least. If I were a priest, I should need the '*bravos*' and '*encores*' they give at the opera when the tenor takes the *ut de poitrine*."

"Is not vanity the inspiration of all women who succeed?" asked Numa Déléry.

"We will obtain in time," was the doctor's outspoken thought, holding Angèle in his mental eye. "All things come to him who waits. Life itself is a waiting game; still, I don't think it is gambling."

Angèlique looked at her doctor disapprovingly. "I thought you were a genius at toleration and zeal," she said. "The old priest you have been talking about would be distressed to hear you."

"Genius," said the doctor, musingly. "So few have the royal insanity, and those who have, God help them! the Devil always does. As for the old man I seem to be disrespectful to, he has gotten into a way of

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telling himself over, and the years have not brought him any new secret or augmented his power to tell the old. Spent waves reach the shore."

Mrs. Trezevant laughed her dissident laugh, challenging her pastor. "I am sure you will agree with me that, in the pulpit as in literature, we are just now in a dead calm, Dr. Paradise. In the silence some soul is growing. When the silence is broken, we will know one more has the power to cry; and we will hear the cry, be moved by it, and then go on wondering and doubting, afraid to cry ourselves, lest we should shock the small conventionalities of our little world. For in our day,—is it not so, Madame de Marigny?—even babies are taught not to cry."

"All in our human lives," said Dr. Paradise, nodding, "and the world grows more serious and more comic, and we love it and grow with it and would not change it. The garments of God are out of style. God is an expression in the past tense. Hades is a

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burnt-out volcano. The Devil is the fashion ; the dear, bad old Devil whom we fear a little, whom we serve a great deal, and to whom we don't want to go in our moral *déshabillé*. Just now we need moral tailors."

The doctor suddenly realized that he was meeting, and naturally so, with the disapprobation of his stately hostess ; she was very pinched about the lips, and she sent sharp glances at him several times without speaking. He saw the last of these, and smiled at her his same boyish smile that she had loved in his first youth.

"The coat does not create the friar," quoted madame, interiorly. She had never approved of the adoption of the ministry by young Martin Paradise.

"Shall we have him excommunicated?" asked Numa Déléry, understanding that Dr. Paradise had made several heretical statements.

"No," answered Angèlique promptly ; "canonized. It is all very well to hear him

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here, now, among friends, but you have no idea what a scolder he is when we are alone. A mere little harmless *soirée* on Sunday night causes him a crisis of nerves! A *matinée* at the French Opera on Sunday——”

“Entails my absolute displeasure, my dear child. I am a dotard, no doubt. Often I say to myself, ‘Thou hast had thy day. Why shouldest thou deprecate so-called evil for any one? Dost thou dread the coming night?’ . . . No, child; as long as *mémères* and angels by brevet live to keep the world sweet, I fear no night.”

Madame was placated. Angèlique was fearful that he would resolve back into the over-scrupulous mentor.

“With all this light speech,” remarked Mrs. Trezevant, naïvely, “you see Dr. Paradise is a precisianist—at least a Sabbatarian.”

“Ah, I know his disapproval,” Angèle said, pouting. “But after my Mass on Sunday what is there to do? My friends all go

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to the French Opera ; certainly I go, too—that is, I used to go all the time ; but there was such an *embarras*, such an *ennui* about it whenever I went to confession to this Protestant that I gave it up ; not for my conscience, no, but because of the penance of telling Dr. Paradise. Carmélite goes, all the same.”

“ But, yes, I go,” chirped Carmélite, with a brilliant smile. “ Numa went with us there to-day for two acts, after Mass. The opera was magnificent, I assure you—a unanimous success! *Mon Dieu, that ténor! Tout ce qu'il faut!*” Carmélite rolled her black eyes and raised her shoulders in a transport of memory.

Numa agreed with her. Then the colonel, who was stoutly religious in effect of early training, asked the doctor seriously why the New Orleans Sunday is so generally desecrated.

“ This morning, as usual,” answered Dr. Paradise, laying his fork in his plate, “ the steeples cried out like muezzins their call to

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worship, and some per cent. of the town sought the different tabernacles, but the larger per cent. found pews in cars bound for fishing-grounds, the theatre, and Pont-chartrain. Homilies, some cogent and all sincere, let us suppose, were pronounced from the pulpits. Some folk testified their love for God in the morning, others for their neighbors this afternoon, and yet others for themselves all day.

“The real hindrance to common worship is, I think, the squabbling between sects. Not that churches ever lose their dignity, but the levity of our people is encouraged because they make an eclectic religion from the two or three great creeds that obtain here, accepting that which is most convenient to themselves. The bells mingle their notes harmoniously, as if those they summon share a common aspiration and are in so entire concurrence in respect to creed as to feel no rheums of sect. But the unanimity rests with the bells.”

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There was a silence of some minutes, it seemed, as the doctor's words were weighed in the mind of each guest. Then the colonel spoke.

"I agree with you, doctor. Your reference to the bells reminds me of a verse or two I wrote in my salad days—I regret to tell you, Mrs. Trezevant, that I have reached the age of thirty and some months—which I will repeat if my memory serves me. I used to write quite a deal of poetry, but mostly to the fair sex. But this I wrote on hearing the bells ring out over Lynchburg, Virginia. Let me see—

"Come, hasten to church, all you sinners down there,  
But with caution to note unto which you repair,—  
For that is all false, and that partially true,  
But this can alone be of service to you.  
And thus I shall bellow aloud from my perch  
Till all other churches succumb to *my* church.  
For there's no Christian unity till they recede  
And adopt as their own my particular creed ;  
And my sect invites all to fraternal accord  
On this simple basis—to worship the Lord."

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“Admirable!” cried Angèle, clapping her hands. The colonel had recited the stanza haltingly, and with an amusing sing-song, but there was general acclaim, and the author flushed with pride.

“You must write me some love-verses, colonel,” and Angèle beamed.

“I could not, my dear; you are too old. I never could glean inspiration from a woman over seventeen.”

“As I am not eligible, though very appreciative of Colonel Dabney’s muse, I naturally suggest the resumption of the former line of discourse,” said Mrs. Trezevant, with feigned embarrassment. “I am slightly older than you, sir.” Then she asked Dr. Paradise what remedy he could suggest for Christian languor. The priest assumed the state of mind he usually slipped on with his cassock.

“The difficult effort being made by clergymen of various denominations to ascertain what they can accept as a common basis for actual fellowship without surrender of what

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they esteem essentials is too well known to be rehearsed ; but to the average lay mind it is a marvel that in the sweet, simple Gospel of the Master," here the speaker's voice grew distinctly softer, "so many reasons should have been discovered to segregate His followers and quicken alienations in them. And so on the waves of sound surging from the bells across the upper calm we may perhaps hear His voice, as on the lake when Peter was sinking, 'O thou of little faith.'"

"But, sometime', *docteur*," urged Madame de Marigny, "I have de idea dat you *actuellement* sugges' absence from Mass. Is it so?" She was never quite sure of her dear Doctor Paradise and his *entente* with the saints.

"Far otherwise," answered the minister ; "but worn bread-winners, every day of whose secular tasks is needful to their households, may remember that the Pharisees, not Christ, held the Sabbath too hallowed to forbid the healing of a withered hand."

"I agree with you," said Mrs. Trezevant,

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heartily. "The respite is a joy in brackets but a wholesome boon to the week."

The doctor went on: "The question is not all one-sided by any means. To those who love their church, are steadfast attendants, and live between Sundays in harmony with its tuition, society owes unbounded gratitude, whatever their particular tenets. Those who go with regularity to church as to breakfast or to the opera, and with no zest for the motive of worship, but sustained by the respectability of deference to form or by the comfort of revealing a new gown, are of quite another sort. The wage-earner who is sprawling with his or her babies in Audubon Park or at Biloxi has no reason to apologize to such folk for being absent from church. The Salvationists can win him and his to religious exercises not only on Sundays but on week-day evenings, and this fact should convey a cogent lesson to certain churches whose Great Exemplar found His path where there were souls, however lowly."

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As no one spoke, the doctor followed out his thought :

“ Perhaps our mellow bells are prophesies of a more catholic spirit under their roofs when sects shall exhibit in their outreach something of the yearning with which the peals of the bells melt in tremors.”

Achille was offering the colonel the condiments for his salad ; he never permitted any one, not even Angèle, to intermingle them.

“ I do’n know whedder de co-lo-nel will eat dat *dinde*,” said Madame de Marigny, glad to note that Dr. Paradise had worn off his seriousness in the graceful task of carving a turkey.

“ He refuse wahnse w’en Sunday fall on T’anksgivin’. But it was no fault of me dat we ’ad turkey dat day.”

“ For the same reason, madame, that I declined your cod !” The colonel was almost irate again. “ The Lord A’mighty never intended the turkey to be eaten by Southern people ; and in proof of it, why do you have

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to buy Western turkeys? Not even in Virginia—God's country for everything under the sun—are turkeys considered by those who eat them as succulent as the Northern product of the kind. Personally I am set against eating, on a day a Federal President ordains, the bird that is Northernly designated as National. I think you will all agree with me that we are not deprived of the fruits of the earth in foregoing the emblem of the Yankee government, for so it might be. Myself, I prefer a young shoat or a good mess of jowl."

"The unreconstructed war-horse!" thought Mrs. Trezevant, not restraining her smile, which Angèle caught and made mutual.

Dr. Paradise, whose knife was skimming through the breast-meat of the fowl, ventured to differ with Colonel Dabney.

"There is something rather grateful in the carnal delight of partaking of a turkey by Executive order," he said, "at least to some of us. It is like reassuring ourselves that we

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are all one people from the Canadian to the Mexican border, and that, however different our views in divers respects, we have declared an armistice by the protocol of a menu. The turkey is an exaggerated dove, and brings a moral olive-branch. When it enters the dining-room on a platter, as did this kingly bird just now, delightfully browned from the tropics of the oven, we recognize a new national escutcheon,—although we soon attack it like Russians, and as if the table were a new Constantinople.”

The colonel had all the instincts of a gentleman, so he had the grace to be ashamed whenever he was proved ungenerous; the cause, however, of which this subject was a ramification, was too sore a point for the making of concessions. So he raised his brows and mixed his condiments vigorously, as if he had not heard. Presently he remembered the pause was as good as a capitulation, so he essayed a new theme, irrelevant to the old.

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“I’ve got a receipt here, madame,” he said, fumbling with his trembling hands in his waistcoat pocket, “from my sister in Lynchburg, Virginia, for the making of the most delicious dish you *ever* ate! Angèle, take it and read it : it’s good literature. My Lawd! It makes the mouth water. Maybe Céleste could make it sometime.”

Angèle took the paper, sending a mischievous look across to Carmélite, and began to read: “‘Brunswick stew.’”

“That’s it,” said the colonel, “Brunswick stew. It beats the world! It can be found on any Virginia table at least once a week.”

Angèle pondered over the message on the sheet long before attempting to read it; the writing was spidery and pale,—the hand that traced the lines must have been delicate and old.

“‘Take two chickens or two squirrels,’” began Angèle, and the colonel, who had read the paper a dozen times himself, laid his salad-spoon beside his plate, and his eyes

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watered from remembrance and his mouth in anticipation, “and three or four slices of fat bacon. Cut them up and put them on the fire with about six quarts of water. Take then four ears of corn, cut up, ten tomatoes, a pint of butter-beans, and one onion chopped fine; put them in with the chicken, or squirrel, and let them all boil half-way. Take care to remove all bones of the chicken, or squirrel, as far as possible, then add a quart and a half of boiled Irish potatoes, mashed, a large spoonful of butter, a stale loaf of bread, broken up in small pieces, and season all with pepper and salt to your taste. Then boil the whole a little while, taking care to stir often lest the bread should burn. The bread should not be put in until about a half-hour before you are ready to serve the stew. Red pepper must be used as well as black.’”

“That sounds auspicious,” smiled Mrs. Trezevant. “Colonel Dabney evidently possesses gastronomic acumen. I’m some-

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thing of a *belle fourchette* myself and may pilfer that recipe by memory. But, Madame de Marigny, I should really like directions for a *courtbouillon* according to Creole methods ; it is the most fetching morsel !”

Madame de Marigny was pleased ; she confessed to a pride in the knowledge of occult cookery with which her race is familiar. “*Faites entrer Céleste,*” she commanded Achille. Within a few moments the black woman came in, adjusting a fresh apron over the gown that bore the moil of the kitchen.

“She cannot speak English much,” explained Angèle, “but you will probably understand her *patois*. *Madame trouve que tu n'es gargotte,*” she continued, turning to the self-conscious Céleste ; “*donne lui recette pour un bon courtbouillon.*”

Céleste looked down, then remembered to acknowledge the cordial greetings of the colonel and the minister, whom she knew quite well, and young Déléry and the handsome lady in the mauve gown. In a rich,

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guttural voice she gave her formula, using her hands freely, as if the components of the dish were being employed in illustration.

"I'm afraid Mrs. Trezevant cannot understand such argot," said Déléry, who, like all Creoles, enjoyed the *patois* of the "nèg Créole." Céleste's was the language of kitchens and nurseries, that of chaffing among Numa's own friends.

"I caught a word now and then," said Mrs. Trezevant, "and, oh, I *am* absorbing atmosphere!" She had listened attentively, the strangeness of the tongue charming her, astounding her from negro lips, familiar as she was with the full-throated plantation race.

Céleste bowed herself out as if she were at court, satisfied with her own share of the entertainment; she might be said to have blushed with pleasure, and her features showed abashment. She had heard her *gombo filé* and her *omelette soufflée* praised, and had been appealed to as an authority on the gentle art of evolving a *courtbouillon*.

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Truly, these were "*bon temps*" folk.

Angèlique made the *café bruleau* in a silver basin, and the gentlemen smoked, Déléry, of course, preferring a cigarette. Then they repaired to the drawing-room, where Angèle sang, as hundreds of other Creole girls sing, with a pretty, flexible soprano, essentially a drawing-room voice,—for New Orleans is a nest of singing-birds. She sang "*Tu ne m'aimes pas*" and the "*Stances*" of Flègier,—songs that were as usual as the voice, and her hearers were charmed. Perhaps she sang really well, notwithstanding the fact that she had dined, for she was meaning to compel the admiration of Déléry. Carmélite played her accompaniment, and tried to quicken the *tempo* and lessen the effect, but Angèlique maintained her prerogative to sing in the time she chose and succeeded in making Carmélite seem a very poor pianist indeed.

Later, Dr. Paradise was obliged to leave, and he communicated this fact to Mrs. Tre-

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zevant, who said she would go to evensong with him. The priest took occasion to steal a moment with Angèle, who was flipping some sheets of music on the antiquated piano.

“Do you like Mrs. Trezevant?” he asked. “Does she improve upon acquaintance?”

“Yes, I like her; but she is like all Americans, except you and the colonel. She seems always to be throwing one up like a *marchand* does his coin to discover whether or not it is counterfeit. What makes me say that? Well, doesn't she? See. She is amused now at Mémère, who is discussing ‘*L'Hermite au Provence*’ and ‘*Lettres Vendéennes*,’ all on one side,—for, of course, no woman of this day would read either. She has been watching me, too, for *caractéristiques*. As if I am not an American! Me, I have been conventionalized till I wonder I can remember I am a Creole. Mrs. Trezevant should pay attention to Mémé. *She is a typical type!*”

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“I shall ask Mrs. Trezevant what she thinks of you,” said Dr. Paradise; “but if it is so little complimentary, I shall not tell you.”

“As for that,” Angèle smiled at him, “you may tell her I like her, if she asks you, even if she is the kind of woman who is so active that the good nuns would parse her as a verb!”

Dr. Paradise took her hand in his in reluctant farewell, unobserved, and rejoined his beautiful parishioner in the entresol.

When they had regained the street, Mrs. Trezevant turned rapturously towards him. “Such a museum! How I have enjoyed it all! That adorable, stilted old marquise and that stunning girl! And so it is she you have reared in the way she should go—and in which she shows such supreme independence? Such a pretty child! I don’t wonder you love her.”

The doctor could not remember ever having said he loved Angèlique, even to himself, but he disregarded the remark.

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“It is a most lovable family,” he said, with gentle conviction. “Madame, with all her dignity, is kindness itself; in fact, I know her means are incommensurate, at times, to the extent of her benefices. You know, the old families are all more or less reduced in circumstances.”

Mrs. Trezevant slackened the pace.

“How she adores that granddaughter! She seems always to be worrying about her; though I couldn’t see the sense of it this afternoon, unless it were that she indulge in gluttony during that quaint dinner. Don’t you think we fancy a certain amount of worry is necessary in tribute to those we love? Merely in tribute? Of course, there is the spontaneous worry that has no motives,—the mother’s, or grandmother’s, I should say. But oftener worry is a sort of pledge against remorse.”

“You are a cynic,” said the doctor, shortly.

Mrs. Trezevant held him within her eye.

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“Well, if I am, there is sincerity in the admission.”

“But you should realize that a cynic is a pessimist, and is taking only one perspective.”

“An optimist is one who exaggerates aspects through a prism.”

“A pessimist is invariably afflicted with meiosis.”

“I don’t know what that is,” retorted Mrs. Trezevant.

“A hyperbolic diminution. But you sha’n’t make a pedagogue of me, madam,” added the doctor, with mock severity. “Tell me why it is we have a higher law for one’s self and a lower one for other people?”

Mrs. Trezevant answered promptly: “Because one’s self is always in the foreground and seems larger and clearer.” She looked up at the white clouds that were like great cotton-bolls, and she noted that they were scudding home before dark. But Dr. Paradise had caught the pace she had set and

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was striding alongside, evidently not thinking of the evening service.

"Anyway, I enjoyed all those people there this afternoon," Mrs. Trezevant said, eyeing her companion. "They were studies to me."

"As you are looking for types, there is Carmélite Livaudais," returned the doctor. "She has more of the Creole coloring than her cousin, and she has not been so ambitious in English."

"Oh, sweet as a stream of molasses,—sugary, slushy sweet, I should say," commented Mrs. Trezevant; "like a little fluff of suppressed dog at her cousin's heels. And how badly she plays, though the piano was not such as to inspire her best effort. Miss Le Breton sings charmingly."

Dr. Paradise noted the inclination to revert to Angèlique and acquiesced.

"I think she likes you all the better for your—ethicism. Really, you were very bad to-day, and light." But her expression was not of displeasure. "Were you out of

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humor? And is Miss Le Breton engaged in any degree to that handsome zany, Mr. Déléry?"

Dr. Paradise continued to walk erect, his eyes set some yards ahead.

"I should know in all probability if that were so," he said, quietly, "for I am almost a member of the family. My father lost his life, you may have heard, that General Pierre de Marigny might be saved for a mad duel one month later, in which he was sacrificed in the staccato of a sword-point. As my father was an Englishman with Southern sympathies, madame is all the more *reconnoissante*." The doctor ceased speaking and walked on, his eyes still upon the ground. "And if I was light to-day, make mention of it only in a whisper. Cork floats longer than full-rigged ships. . . . There are the bells—only they are *our* bells this time. It is the hour for prayers. The mood is on me. It is good to pray away from one's self."

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

They quickened their steps and entered the church.

“If you have not seen too much of me to-day,” murmured Mrs. Trezevant at parting, “run in this evening for a cup of chocolate.”

She was almost wistful, but in his abstraction he failed to see it.

“I have a parish report to make ready and would be too wretchedly busy,” he said, thanking her. Then he entered the sacristy to don his vestments and to pray.

Mrs. Trezevant observed by her timepiece that services were fifteen minutes late.



## V

### THE WANGATEUSE

*“Où yé geignin charogne yé geignin carencro.”*

(Wherever there is carrion there are buzzards.)

BOURBON STREET was mantled in a sullen murk, the weather having turned suddenly warm and set the spongy sub-surface of the pavements to muggy oozing through the crevices of the bricks.

It was the night for an assassin's carnival. Angèle looked out upon it between shutters, and felt that her dark intent was being furthered providentially. The day had worn slowly, notwithstanding a sunny visit from Mrs. Trevezant, who had come to ask Angèle to serve at a prospective reception. Angèle studied her all the while she sat in the lofty salon, realizing why she liked her so well, and, what was more important, why the

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

doctor should like her, too,—jealously corroborating his opinion as to her comeliness. There was the smart air about Mrs. Trezevant that bespoke good health and good taste. Her gown was severely fitting, and the mould of her figure and her poise suggested a compactness that Angèle, in her *svelte* grace, envied as something she had not.

Mrs. Trezevant had round eyes of watchet-blue that reminded one of a lake under nebulous skies; she had also the "*teint mat*" that is the envy of all Creoles. Her laugh was ready and rilling, and her manner towardly. Angèle marvelled how a woman could express so much without the use of her hands and shoulders. Listening to her, agreeing with her, Angèle was absorbing the admirable personality of her visitor with a keen fascination. Mrs. Trezevant seemed to the Creole the kind of woman who would wear her weeds only the length of time prescribed by the law of fashion.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Angèle began to wonder, sitting opposite her guest, if Mrs. Trezevant admired the doctor as outspokenly as he did herself, for certain expressions of his still rankled in the girl's mind. She believed that when a man spends fifteen minutes in descriptive adulation of an absent woman, her presence—in other words, her possession—becomes only the left-over point of the law.

The charming visitor did speak of Dr. Paradise,—so enthusiastically, indeed, that Angèle was disarmed and began to wish she could see her dear doctor married to some such woman, though not necessarily to Mrs. Trezevant.

“After I have married Numa,” thought Angèle, nodding in acquiescence to some statement of the widow's, “I should not be permitted the same *entente* with him possibly, and we would both miss each other. Yes, the *docteur* must marry, too.”

Mrs. Trezevant had descended to a coupé as smug as herself and waved a fawn-colored

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

glove from the window in intimate gayety, so prettily that even conventional Madame de Marigny, behind the batten windows, could not resent it. As for Angèle, she found herself won over. She was so far reassured, indeed, as to resolve that, upon the occasion of his next visit, she would tell the doctor how sincerely she admired his friend.

Then Madame Livaudais had called as usual to see maman, and to report the children well and Carmélite momentarily expectant of an offer of marriage from Numa Déléry. Goodness knows she had made enough novenas, she, Ernestine, for her child; and Carmélite had made eight in succession, of all kinds. One friend had succeeded so well, going every day to one church at the same hour; another found prayers in a series of churches a better plan; another advised the hour of nine for the petition wherever she would happen to be. They had tried all that. Candles had been burned by the gross, suggesting to Ernestine the

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

wisdom of providing tapers wholesale another time for the sake of economy. Well, Numa was a good boy, certainly; surely a girl would be difficult not to be satisfied with him. True, he was slow to make his proposal, but Carmélite had assured her mother it was coming; perhaps to-night, if she, Ernestine, would leave the room half an hour. Mémé thought she could bring it in that time. If not, before Easter anyway.

It was to be hoped, Madame de Marigny had remarked, that Carmélite would be decorous in her engagement, and never go anywhere with Numa unattended by some member of her family. There were so few *jeune filles* nowadays; manners had so changed! When she, Euchariste L'Hommedieu de Marigny, was getting married, she did not go out of the house for two weeks before; even the dressmaker came to her to fit the gowns at her home. In her time girls were never seen for a fortnight before their marriage,—never!

Angèle listened and chafed at every out-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

burst of untimely enthusiasm, and left the room. It was so long before Mémère's bedtime.

At nine o'clock Madame de Marigny complained of weariness: the day was growing enervating because of the moisture creeping up from the Mississippi. Angèle kissed her grandmother good-night and went to her room, followed by the faithful negress, her anxious spirit sick at the thought of the routine to be accomplished before she could join Toussine: the undressing only to dress again, the talk with Victorine which was inescapable, the hasty simulation of sleep, and hypocrisy of it all! But it seemed a slight task when she remembered her aunt's words and the possibility of Carmélite's engagement. Once she thought to plead illness to be relieved of the care of the ceremonies to which she had accustomed Victorine, but she knew that announcement would be followed by a tea of palms, sugarless and unpalatable, or some soothing drink and an upheaval of the even-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

ing quiet. So she undressed and lay still while Victorine removed her shoes and stockings. She would not encourage conversation ; time already pressed. So Victorine, whose surdities of tone were pleasing to her own ear, after recounting the day's gossip to her unresponsive charge, settled herself in a rocking-chair to sing to the accompaniment of a few drony mosquitoes till Angèle would be quite surely asleep. The girl listened in unavailing impatience, execrating her own childish dread of the dark which had formed Victorine's nocturnal habit of sitting up with her till she would be lost in dream.

The old woman sang low, and with an evident relish for her chant, a lullaby as familiar to Angèle as the "Ave Maria."

Pauv' pit - it Mom - zel Zi - zi

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Li - geighin bo, bo, bo, bo, Dans so' pit - it

cheur à li, Pauv' pit - it Mom - zel Zi - zi.\*

*riten.*

\* Poor little Momzel Zizi has been wounded in her little heart.

The drone ceased, the chair creaked, then Victorine peered through the bobinet at the motionless form in the bed. Assured that the girl slept, she put out the lights and groped her way amid the great furniture to the door. She turned and looked again. The altar-lamp was a blood-red dot in the

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

obscurity. "*Dié bénisse !*" murmured the old woman, and closed the door.

At once Angèle sat up, throwing off the neatly-laid coverlet, and in another instant she had issued from the lacy netting and paused to listen. Reassured, she stepped lightly to the floor and sank down upon her *chauffeuse*, hastily pulling on her stockings. Within ten minutes she was dressed and stood before the eerie light. She would not kneel upon the satiny cushion ; the old *prie-Dieu* was seasoned with prayer as an old violin with melody, and the inconsistency of her present service she fairly realized. "Save me, protect me, dear Blessed Mother," she appealed, stifling her conviction that her request was irreverent in view of her fixed purpose. She tiptoed out of the room, listening all the while, passing down the steps, stopping at each creak caused by her gentle foot-fall, and finally, reaching the end of the close, manipulated the lock in the street door noiselessly. Angèle breathed deep. "Toussi !" she whis-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

pered. There was a faint answer, and the girl stood outside in the shadow, her heart beating angrily and her members cold.

“Hurry,” whispered Toussine. “We are already late.”

Mr. O'Brien turned to look after the two women as they scurried along, but he did not recognize Miss Le Breton under such unusual circumstances. Her head was hung; her hat shaded her face and the collar of her redingote was pulled high about her cheeks. They went out to St. Ann Street and skirted Congo Square, Toussine speaking softly in explanation, preparing Angèle for all she might expect.

“W'en I lef you Sad-day, I wen' to see ooman who call Ma'm Peggy, an' give her firs' six bits and den fo' bits, because she need' money for de arrangement'. You brought yo' purse, *hein?* De leas' work dey make is fi' dollar'.”

Toussine saw by an electric light that

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Angèle was somewhat richly, though soberly, dressed, and she frowned.

“Eh!” she said; “*to chapeau fait tapage!*”\*

Angèle pulled her veil over its trimmings, and Toussine continued:

“I give up Sonny, 'cause one ooman tol' me Ma'm Peggy she alway' succeed, her. She sevent' daughter an' bawn wid caul. Me, I know she kin mek work w'enever she set a table! 'Fo I know Ma'm Peggy I was dat onlucky dat if it rain' two-bitses I'd be in jail. She change' all dat. She brought me back Antoine. His wife had him, but I got him back, *juste ciel!* She can mek good work. One *cunjer* fo' one t'ing, one fo' nudder, but Ma'm Peggy fo' all!”

“Why didn't you save your money and pray to Saint Antoine for your devil Antoine?” asked Angèlique, wise in the lore of the canonized.

Toussine grunted. “I owes him a candle

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\* Your hat is so gay it is noisy.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

right now," she said ; " but I ain't goin' to pay him. You has to stomp yo' foot at him, often,—dat's true. He's a mean saint."

Angèlique was not shocked. " It is true. I wanted to find my little diamond cross when I lost it, and I gave ten loaves to Saint Antoine's poor before I prayed. I never found my cross, do you believe it? When I wanted to dance the Carnival german I was too smart for him, and I promised him ten loaves for his poor if I was asked to dance. Of course, the invitation came, for he wanted those breads. Never pay Saint Antoine in advance."

They walked half a square further in silence.

" All de sem, I'm got de trimbles, an' you, M'amzelle L'Ange?"

There was no denying her nervousness, but the quality that lent Angèle persistence gave her courage, and she would not turn back. Instead, she asked Toussine, anxiously, if they might not be too late ; if Madame Peggy would fail to await them and

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

go to bed. Toussine assured her that Ma'm Peggy had given them the evening, and would wait a reasonable time, which did not preclude their visit so far, and they flew on together through the dense atmosphere, their shoes saturated with ground-moisture.

“It's good we go to-night to Ma'm Peggy,” remarked Toussine. “She don' reciv' Sad-day. She say dere's Monday, Chewsdays, We'nsday, T'ursday, Friday fo' mek work, but never Sad-day. Dat's de day of *la Sainte Vierge*. An' she won' reciv' in Lent no more, neider Good Friday. Not in Lent, 'cause de saint' too busy to work wid her.”

“You know plenty of voudous, Toussi?” asked Angèle, keeping her spirits up with a brisk step.

“*Plein!* Dy's Ma'm Bob, Sonny, Jeansin, Authuriste, Igène de Bully, Sam—he got de voudou face, I'm tellin' you, *laid à faire peur*. He wo'n reciv' negro', but you come firs' de mont'! You see lady f'om up-town in carriage', *plein, plein!* One lady give

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

one hunderd dollar' fo' set a table! She wan' bring a sickness on a ooman 'cause she was jealous. Den dere's Jean Baptiste, an' Oscar—he's *menture*, Oscar! Dey calls him *docteur*, an' he show me to mix salt an' pepper fo' mek troubl' w'enever I wan'. He say you t'row salt affer person an' he never will come back. Victorine know dat ; she mek dat work plenty time' wid yo' comp'ny w'enever she do'n like fo' associate some man wid you."

They met scarcely a soul. The streets were deserted and uninviting for a promenade, shrouded in blue dusks under a weak luminance of stars. "But St. John' Eve—dat's de time!" exclaimed Toussine, rapturously. "Dats a feas'! All voudou has feas' *dat* night an' big time. Dey has turkey an' bile' onion' an' *congri* bean' an' all de wine you wan'. Den dey dances roun' a fiah an' swink (shrink) an' come small, small, small!" Toussine stretched her hand in the darkness, and Angèle could just discern it measuring a foot's distance from the ground.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

“You *saw* that, Toussi?” asked Angèle, incredulously. The statement, positive as it seemed, was a too close correlation of the fictional and the factional to convince Angèle.

“I swear!” cried Toussine, excitedly. “Dey come small like dat, an’ den dey come big again, big like giant’, an’ den we’n de fiah go out dey was like dead on de groun’.”

Toussine felt righteously important that she could surprise her companion with her wonderful recounting of that which she believed she had seen.

“You ain’ comin’ see Ma’m Peggy ’bout dat coffin?” asked Toussine, curiously.

“No,” said Angèle, determinedly.

“Because, me, I kin fix dat if dey put any mo’. Ef I fin’ a coffin on my do’step, I would pay a boy a dime—a dollar, even—an’ tek fif’een cents an’ go wid him on Canal Street ferry to Algier’ an’ drop de coffin overbo’d jes in de middle o’ de river an’ t’row de fif’een cent’ atter it, callin’ to Grand

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Zombi, an' sayin' '*Dieu miséricorde!*' Den I would come back St. Ann ferry. Dat mek de work pass sho'."

They had reached Roman Street, and were continuing downward. Suddenly Toussine stopped before a low cottage giving on the sidewalk, revealing even in the dim twilight of distant electric lamps a disrepair exceeding that of its neighbors. The batten doors were closed beyond any suspicion of occupancy, so that Angèle thought Toussine mistaken in the house. But the colored woman shook her head in silence, and knocked three times at longish intervals. There was quite a delay in answering the summons, so that Angèle's doubt as to their destination was revived. But Toussine placed her foot on the wooden step and held the attitude of waiting with perfect patience.

The doors parted with caution and a young mulatress, whom Toussine greeted at once as Taducine, came slowly into outline. At once the way was made clear and the young

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

woman was obsequious in her conduct towards the guest of the evening.

"*Assite-là*," she invited in the Creole jargon, designating a hair-cloth sofa against the wall. She then left the room, and Angèle began to look around her.

As effectually as she could discern her surroundings by the infirm light of two tallow candles set upon the mantel-piece, the interior of the cottage, as the outside had premised, was rankling with decay. The flooring had been scrubbed through, apparently, with "*jaune*," as the ochre used for such purposes is termed, or perhaps by the shambling old feet of shifting generations.

There was a carved four-post bed in the opposite corner from where Angèle was sitting, and at the side of this formidable piece of furniture a square of smooth-worn carpet was placed in service as a rug. There was a table alongside the wall, and a specimen of furniture of many decades ago that caught and fastened the attention of Angèle for its

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

degenerate magnificence. It was an *armoire*, or wardrobe, of great height and width squared just before her, a pathetic and inapposite feature in the dismal room. The wood was mahogany, its texture grimed with a damp soil, and reared upon four large globes of brass. A broad rod ran the length of the doors, and massive ornamentation of the metal, describing embossed roses and foliage, clamped either side.

Toussine noted Angèle's absorption and the cause.

“Dat was giv' Ma'm Peggy's ma by her ol' mistis dere is sixty year' now. Her ol' man sol' it once, but Ma'm Peggy got it again fo' fi' dollar'.” The instance was not uncommon, Angèle knew, for members of her own family had given in the keeping of old servants, for preservation during the war or long absences abroad, their movable effects,—old glass, silver, ermine, cloaks, furniture, and, indeed, family jewels,—treasures that in the course of events had come to be heredita-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

ments of the humble protectors and trustees.

There were vases on the narrow mantelshelf, porcelain with bisque figures and roses, and these were full of dried grasses. There was some gimcrackery on the shelf besides. Angèle was too preoccupied with fear to fix upon details. The odor of the room made her uneasy, anyway : it was the smell of age and the colored race, and of unaired effects and clothing long in use, distilled by the damp. Presently, a man attired in blue jeans, trousers, and "guinea" blouse, redolent of *carotte*, and two women, all of the negro type, entered and deferentially wished the couple on the sofa a good-evening. The faces of the three were so brown that only the balls of their eyes and the glow of their even teeth could be distinguished accurately in the awesome dusk of the room.

At this moment a woman scarcely older than Angèle herself entered from the region veiled by a limp, red calico curtain beyond,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

and straightway put the question to the young mademoiselle, in a request from Ma'm Peggy, as to what purpose had brought her there. The girl spoke fairly good French, as if service in a refined family had trained her tongue above those of her class. Her complexion looked like a too-floury cookie, or, as the Creoles put it in maxim, "a roach coming out of a flour-barrel."

Angèle now suffered the most strenuous embarrassment she had ever known. To confess she loved unrequitedly, to bring the name, perhaps, of the man she respected into a den of this character, to put herself in the posture of a suppliant, provoked her to a sudden anger. Then, as her position became clear to her, the exactions of the black folk about her, and the scene with its loathsome accentuations and the cause that had brought her there, she let go a notch of her self-respect, gradually, as those things happen. She swallowed hard, and refrained from looking at Toussine.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

"I love where I am not loved in return," she said in a hard voice.

"You may tell me anything," murmured the young mulattress, whom Toussine addressed as Lorenza. "It is necessary. You see, Ma'm Peggy will know nothing when she is through with you—your secret will be lost."

Angèle was never logical, and it did not occur to her to ask Lorenza if she, too, would forget.

The three on the other side of the room wore mournful faces now, as Angèle discerned by the faint candle-light.

"You are afraid?" asked Angèle of Toussine.

"*Oui, mo peur,*" answered the woman, looking, indeed, almost pale in the dusk.

There was another aching pause, Angèle in a fury of impatience all the while, unwilling to give herself up to the petrifying tranquillity that was apparently growing upon the watchers.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

The silence was as packed with mystery as the room with malodor.

Lorenza came in again, softly, and whispered to Angèle that Ma'm Peggy had sent word she must wear nothing black.

"But my dress is black!" cried the girl. "My shoes! stockings!"

Lorenza shrugged her shoulders and smiled with importance.

"Ma'm Peggy can do nothing if there is the least black, I assure you."

"What will I do, then?" asked Angèle, despairing. "I have nothing else at present."

"I will lend you my clean josey," said the woman; "and your petticoat is white, isn't it so? And you must take off your shoes, stockings also; you won't catch cold as long as you are with Ma'm Peggy."

Angèle demurred, filled with dread and shame.

The man and two women yonder in the corner were now almost totally lost to view,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

as the candle nearby had extinguished itself ; their eyes were downcast.

“But those persons,” indicated Angèle, still recalcitrant ; “they wear black.”

“No ; it is brown and blue, *hein z'amis ?* An' Bélisaire will put on a white coat.”

The women were called to form a screen about Angèle while she disrobed partly and slipped on the starchy “josey” that must have been the pride of its owner, for it was of good linen, neatly tucked, and crochet lace of sea-shell pattern was inserted perpendicularly, a jabot falling half-way to the waist from the circular neck-band. A pair of slippers was tendered, but Angèle shivered at the idea, and preferred to be barefoot as an unsatisfactory alternative.

“Now all hair-pins must be taken out of the hair,” announced the mulattress, raising her voice for general enlightenment. “Nothing must be crossed, neither your feet, neither your hands. For fear two pins might cross in your hair, it is best to take them out now.”

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Toussine rose and began to uncoil Angèle's hair, which sprang into a glittering halo ; then she tied her own into a knot, and slipped her feet into Lorenza's brown gaiters. Angèle glanced at her for the first time since their entrance, and was alarmed at the suspense and earnestness of her face, which was drawn down in heavy lines, aging her and provoking new hints of character hitherto unsuspected.

Angèle felt that all tethering to her usual life had been loosed, and she was hideously solitary.

Taducine crossed the worn sill once more to whisper to Angèle not to be frightened at anything she might see in the inner chamber. "And, above all things," she said in French, "do not let go when she wheels you round ; it is necessary, and there is no harm."

Angèle looked hopelessly at Toussine.

"It is going to be dreadful," she sighed. "If I had shoes on my feet I would take the door."

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Toussine glared; her deference of manner vanished. "*Pchutt!* We'n you git dere once dey ain' no gittin' out no mo'. Do'n fo'git! An' de noise like *charivari!* An' it will be hot! About sev'n degree! But dat mek nuttin'. We'n dey starts rampagin' you cain git out."

The preliminaries were over. Taducine spoke to the three in the dark corner, who rose to shadowy heights and melted over the sill into the adjoining room. She then led Angèle by the hand to the portal, and, with a tragic gesture, swept aside the limp calico that had shielded the eyes from the glories within.

As Angèle stood there she emitted an exclamation of surprise.

In the furthest corner of the small room an altar was raised under a dais of velvet, from which depended lace curtains, parted and held back with cords, through which shone the tinsel gauds of cabalism.

There were ancient colored prints and

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

paintings of the saints on the angle of the wall, and on the tiers of shelves many small statues, an altar-lamp, and three candles. The shelves were covered with immaculate cloth, which fell in outline to the floor, where a lace-bordered oblong of linen was spread smoothly upon the bare boarding. On the corners of this cloth brass candlesticks were set, in which blue tapers burned.

“The table,” as it is called, was laid on the floor; plates of apples and oranges, pralines, dishes of candies, a tall nougat, a soup-tureen, and several bottles of anisette, cognac, and white wine. In the centre a saucer was set, in which were white sand, quicksilver, and molasses, apexed by a blue candle—a ritualistic plea to St. Joseph.

The altar gleamed brilliantly in contrast with the sooty walls of the room; and on the hearth were the outlines of a clay furnace and a large black pot, from which there was the whisper of a simmer and a luscious steam. Before the altar, like a priestess of the Stoics,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

stood Ma'm Peggy, her back to those assembled there, her coppery face rising above her white neckerchief in startling relief.

The lines of her mouth and eyes were like gashes in the light that danced upon her, and she kept her eyes fast closed. Her dress was purplish "blue-guinea," dear to the hearts of all her race, and her tignon was saffron and white.

Taducine led Angèle to a chair that had been placed before the altar singly, and designated a seat to Toussine, who obeyed with an exaggerated reverence. The negro "singers" had slipped off their outer skirts, and were kneeling on the floor; the man sat on a bench in the dark.

When the stir of settling had subsided, Ma'm Peggy knelt on both knees at Angèle's feet, and remained thus rigidly for several moments. Then her old voice intoned the "Hail Mary" of the Roman Catholic Church. "*Salve, Marie, pleine de graces,*" she said rapidly, and "*Salve, Marie, pleine de graces,*"

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

echoed the three women on the floor; the "*Ainsi soit il*" was the signal for all to cross themselves.

Ma'm Peggy began to snap her fingers just over the boarding, and in a moment the sharp flapping of other fingers sounded, the women leaning forward with intentness.

"Call luck," cried Ma'm Peggy; and "Call luck" echoed from divers throats, and the flapping continued till Ma'm Peggy began an unmusical recitative with weird repetitions like those of a round, her treble intonations shadowed by the rich gutturals of the negresses and the occasional bass of Bélisaire :

*" Bon jour Liba,\*  
Ouvert la porte,  
Bon jour mon cousin."*

The negresses sat about apathetically, droning the senseless sentences; now and then the clamant note from the man's throat would sound, but the chant continued as

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\* Voudou term for St. Peter.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

persistently and monotonously as the buzzing of mosquitoes :

*“ Bon jour Liba,  
Bon jour Liba, ouvert la porte,  
Ouvert la porte, Bon jour mon cousin,  
Bon jour mon cousin, Bon jour Liba.”*

Ma'm Peggy knocked three times on the board beneath her, continuing her song, while Angèle observed Taducine rising from her sidelong sitting posture, and then lifting a small glass dish from the “table,” inquiring, through the mazes of the chant, “Who has de change?”

Angèle made a sign and dropped a bill into the dish. Without looking at its denomination, Taducine knelt before the altar, slipped the money under the white cloth on the floor, and made the sign of the cross. The inconsonance of the incident, amid the devotional surroundings, did not occur to Angèle, who was now avidly interested in the proceedings.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Ma'm Peggy began another plainsong, in staccato staves, rising from her knees :

*"Blanc Dani,\**

*Dans tous pays blanc*

*L'a commandé*

*Blanc Dani, Dans tous pays blanc*

*L'a commandé."*

The aged woman's treble lowered to a hoarse bass as she sang, when she suddenly interrupted herself by diving forward and snatching the bottle of brandy from the floor-table, and threw half its contents in half-circles around Angèle, replacing it with a wide salaam. Kneeling as Mussulmen kneel, bending her forehead to the bare floor, she gave strange cries ; and the others, following her example, struck their heads and then their forearms resoundingly against the planks after strange gyrations, their song moaning on monotonously all the while.

Ma'm Peggy ceased her cadencing, but the others went on repeating the sentences in

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\* St. Michael.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

minor notes like a threnody, Bélisaire yawning on his own account, accenting a syllable now and then over the wavering trebles, each striking like a bell into Angèle's awed hearing.

The obi-woman moaned, her body in a prosilient swaying, her eyes closed, and her limbs fluttering, under her lank gown, then leaning to the floor, lifted a bottle of wine to her lips, filled her cheeks with its contents, and spurted a shower upon every one, a spray falling upon Angèle's buoyant hair and inspiring an inner revolt that shrunk her with loathing.

Ma'm Peggy's gnarled form shivered and writhed and shrugged.

"*Blanc Dani*," she shouted, grimacing horribly, with new and more fantastic contortions of her frame. "*Dans tous pays blanc——*"

The singers were on a high key, irrespective of her apostrophe, a sing-song that Angèle thought unnerving. "*L'a com-*

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

*mandé*——” Her face grew more and more distorted, and she grinned under the influence of agony rather than of pleasure. Whirling about in a circle, she tried to kick off her *savates*, Taducine quickly assisting her. In a sort of rage she tore the fichu from her breast and the tignon from her head, the matted plaits rising as if surprised and jutting like quills over the whitened poll. She knelt and rose, and knelt again, repeating this office as if frenzied beyond self-containment, perspiration streaming down her face, glazing it like ebony.

“De sperrit’s comin’ strong on her,” cried Lorenza, breathless from the chant, and resuming it once more.

Ma’m Peggy, in a measured shuffle, approached Angèle, who cowered; the old woman grinned with the hideous hilarity of a fiend.

“Do’n be ’fraid!” encouraged Toussine, who, in a transport, had joined in the general plaint.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

"It is no mo' Ma'm Peggy," said Taducine, reverently. "It's de gret sperrit. We'n she turn you, as' w'at you wan'. Anyt'ing you wan' know you can ax her."

The woman's tone was steady, and emboldened Angèle, who rose and allowed the shrivelled hands of the witch to take her own. Peggy raised the girl's arms high above her head and pulled them down with a jerk, which was repeated twice, not without effort and pain. She then retained Angèle's left hand, and swung her in rotary motion six times, when Taducine whispered to Angèle to bow to the spirit.

Angèle tottered with dizziness, but she found herself braced by the spiggoty head placed firmly on her chest, Ma'm Peggy holding her hands, with arms extended.

Now Angèle mustered her forces sufficiently to ask her heart's desire concerning Numa.

"De young man is *coquin!*" said Ma'm Peggy, grinning still.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

The women and man began to sway on their knees, making comments and iterations as the hag spoke.

“He loves brune—mo’ brune dan you, *chère*. Ah—dey is anudder love you! All would be champagne wid him,—but no—you don’ wan’! You prefer *coquin*! Ah, Yout’!”

Convulsions once more shook the spare body, but Ma’m Peggy recovered herself.

“He goin’ mek wid brune like he mek wid you. *Mais, ef* you wan’ ’im fo’ true, gi’ me money fo’ mek *novena*. But it will be a work, yass! He love dat gal now; you can pull a hair o’ dem!”

Angèle signified her willingness to go to any extent to wreak the charm. Ma’m Peggy bolted forward and grasped the bottle of whiskey, taking a deep draught, then placing it to the lips of every one present save Angèle with such vim as to half-choke them in swallowing as she poured; their chins were dripping with the fluid. A sickening smell

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

of cheap whiskey and stale tobacco pervaded the room, mingled with the acid of perspiration. Peggy approached Angèle and spun her around again.

“Mek wish! Mek wish!” shouted the negress. Angèle desired the removal of all obstacles to her love. “*À genoux!*” they cried, and, with the rest, Angèle dropped to her knees.

Again the snapping of fingers as they bent downward with inscrutable eyes, as if seeking the mysteries of the nether world.

Ma'm Peggy moved slowly in a circle on a heel by the momentum of her other foot, spraying anisette from her mouth and sending ringlets of the sticky cordial over her head to the floor. Then she mumbled inarticulate phrases in a coarse voice. “*Guette ça!*” cried Bélisaire. “It is him, de white man himself! Look, how he is strong! It is no mo' Ma'm Peggy!”

Taducine vented an exultant “Whoop-la!” and the others droned with melancholy.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

“Me, I love you w'en Ma'm Peggy mek one novena,” said the coarse voice. “I co'te you six mont', I marry wid you sev'n. I commence already fo' love you. Wait one week—you goin' see.”

Ma'm Peggy placed her hands upon Angèle's arms and made a pass down the girl's sides with more vigor than seemed to be stored in her frail structure, grinning with sinful ugliness all the while. Passing along to the others she performed the same exercise, then edged off towards the gloom, her arms akimbo, shuffling her feet zigzag and yielding her shrunk body to weird flexures, her eyes closed.

The women rose one by one, each like a black phantom, growing taller and more numerous in the shadows, slow-writhing figures emitting ululations like animals from moment to moment. They circled about the furnace, which was sending out rich savors, and Ma'm Peggy lifted the lid and stood like a wraith in the mist that arose. Taducine brought bowls

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

for the *gombo filé* and rice, which were served in generous portions, Ma'm Peggy digging her iron spoon into the mass and bringing forth a snake limply balancing upon it. There was a yell from somewhere ; it sounded far away to the half-fainting Angèle, who checked the scream she would have uttered, but dared not.

The eyes of Bélisaire bulged, and the heads of the women darted from immovable bodies, their mouths open wide. Some one offered a dish to Angèle, who took it, terrified, not daring to lay it down ; the others, even Tous-sine, ate of it with zest.

Ma'm Peggy approached the altar again, stamping her stockinged feet and working her body backward and forward wildly. Plunging to the floor, she caught up two apples and threw them into the girl's lap, she receiving them with loathing. "Mek 'im eat apple!" cried the old Sibyl ; "dat will mek 'im love!" Lorenza then offered the candies, two to each. In transmission one of those to Angèle

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

dropped to the floor, whereupon there was an immediate shout. "Dat's goin' succeed!" was the cry, at which Angèle began to sympathize with the general enthusiasm.

The cognac was placed again to the lips of the company, the anisette and white wine later, and then Angèle was asked to write her name, her lover's, and her rival's on slips of paper which only herself could see.

The slip containing Carmélite's name was placed to soak in a deep dish full of vinegar, salt, and pepper; Angèle's and Numa's were dropped into a bowl of burning whiskey that sent leaping shadows into the dark corners. Ma'm Peggy lifted the candles from the altar and those from the floor, save the one votive to "*Vériquité*" (voudou term for St. Joseph), and handed one to Angèle. It bore seven notches in the blue tallow, and Ma'm Peggy instructed her to burn it seven nights in her own bedroom, only from notch to notch, repeating three "Hail Mary's" meanwhile. The sorceress then gave Angèle

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

a pinch of the "*poiv' guiné*" from the saucer and bade her put five grains in her mouth whenever her lover would come near her,—this to soften him towards her ; also, when he would first enter the house, to make a glass of sugared water, very sweet, and with *basilique*, and throw it in the yard with her back towards the street.

"Put *poiv' guiné* an' clove in yo' mout' an' you kin git anyt'ing you wan' f'om yo' w'ite man," continued Ma'm Peggy, with the authority of a prophet. "An' put one piece o' his hair by yo' cist'en w'ere one drop o' water kin fall to a big splash. Tek dat piece loadstone—dat ambition a man. Put it near w'ere you set wid 'im. Fo' de gal, me, I fix her, yass !"

Peggy grouped the lighted candles on the floor, and lifted the brandy bottle to her head and left it there. She wriggled about in a circle, but the bottle scarcely trembled. Three hard knocks came from somewhere, and there was an excited cry from the women, who

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

crossed themselves, and sidled into the corners and back again into the chiaroscuro of the altar. The room grew very warm and the air sourly fetid.

*"Grand Zombi!"*

Bélisaire shouted, and his voice came back, reverberating through the rafters. Ma'm Peggy with a vault landed in the midst of the burning candles, mashing out the flames that ran in the tallowy mass, muttering incomprehensible sentences and sobbing the sob that is without woe.

The murk was now alarming, for when the last wick had been overcome and expired with a slight supping sound, only the blue candle remained, and, though the room was small, the taper was almost overcast by the obscurity creeping out of the corners.

Bélisaire groaned at intervals, and set his legs in the most fantastic steps, while the women, now mere dim and blurry silhouettes, shrieked in irrational excitement.

A church steeple sounded midnight with-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

out. A cat wailed overhead, and the dancers spun around swiftly, crying responsively, Ma'm Peggy's voice losing sonancy with physical fatigue and taking on brute tones like those of an animal at bay or in great pain. Angèle sat appalled by the frenzy, for Toussine had joined in the incantation, and the girl felt a danger she would not formulate. Her springy hair, unleashed, bounded in the current of air set in motion by the dancers, and her dark eyes, large and intense, were fastened upon the devilish fetichism.

Ma'm Peggy was whirling like a dervish. The orgy was upon them all. Grasping hands, they surrounded the frightened girl and whooping, threatening forward till their bodies touched hers, and then in scuffling regression widening the circle. Loosening hands, they bounded about in kangaroo fashion, their heads in independent agitation, their arms working wildly from their sockets.

"Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!" cried the women, and Bélisaire snorted, his voice surd, finished.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

“*Blanc Dani !*” cried Ma’m Peggy, and “*Vérité !*” shrieked Tadcine in the babel. Bélisaire made an attempt to leap in the air, but his strength was failing him. The cat wailed again, disturbing the loosened tiles overhead to a stealthy slipping. The exhausted women were revived by the sound and capered about faster and sent hoarse whispers, mere words without tones, upon the crepuscule.

Slower and slower the ghostly shapes issued from the formless shadows, growing blottesque and weird, now beginning to reel to regain their poise, striking against the walls, tottering to catch any stable article. Lorenza was the first to gain self-control, holding fast to the mantel, and steadying herself by a rigid tension of nerves.

Bélisaire fell dizzily along the bench ; Tousine dropped to her knees, keeping her eyes tightly closed.

Lorenza touched Ma’m Peggy’s arm, tried to keep hold of her, but to no avail ; the old woman shook her off, lunging beyond her

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

reach, wriggling and trying to free herself, apparently, of something fastened on her back. She shrugged her shoulders and vented sharp cries, more of annoyance than of pain.

“Sit down,” urged Lorenza. Ma’m Peggy scowled and raised an arm as if to strike.

“*Va t’en !*” she said, angrily. “*Mais non —que diabe ça !—Tonnerre !—Ça to geignin ? —Laisé moin !*” She reeled about the room, her face working hideously, with sугent sounds on her lips, her arms contorting to reach her shoulder-blades.

“Mamzelle wishes to speak to Ma’m Peggy,” said Taducine, pulling her to a corner.

“Ma’m Peggy, she is not there ; I don’t see her,” answered the old woman, stumbling and writhing with the unseen discomfort.

Her body undulated with twists, and she fell against Bélisaire, who was prone upon the bench. The women lifted her, though she shook them off. Then she stretched as from sleep, yawned, and stood erect.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

“I mus’ tell her all about that is happen’,” said Lorenza. “She don’ know nottin’.”

Ma’m Peggy folded her hands before her, a type of the decent negress of some decades since, and inquired, with respect, “Are you satisfied, at present, *momzelle*?”

Bélisaire rose, still in a stupor, and re-seated himself on the bench. Ma’m Peggy knelt before the little shrine and began the litany of the Blessed Virgin, in which the others joined, even Angèle herself. This finished, Ma’m Peggy raised the floor-cloth slightly and extracted the money that had been placed there at the beginning of the satanic formalism, and tossed it with indifference upon the lower shelf of the altar, leaving it there inconsequently, as if for any wind to whisk it away. But the apartment was without ventilation !

Then Ma’m Peggy turned and addressed Angèle suavely, her face kind and bland. “Come,” she said. “I show you who mek a work fo’ you : St. Michel. He yo’ saint.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

You see, I put a nice bride fo' you by St. Michel fo' mek novena. Ever' day fo' nineteen day' I mus' put one candle; you mus' sen' me nineteen candle, an' some honey, some holy water, an' orange-flow'r water. I mek dat fo' you fo' fi' dollar'."

Angèle extracted the remaining bill from her purse and laid it with the other on the shelf. Ma'm Peggy was pleased to give further advice with this stimulus.

"You bu'n one candle, *hein*, de firs' Monday an' Friday ever' mont', unstan'? Nex' week Friday you go at St. Roch jus' at t'ree 'clock an' mek wish. Dat sem day you mus' tek hol' sometin b'longin' to yo' *rivale* an' you mus' cut an' sew it. She won' neber leve to wear it. Den rub dat gal pigshur wi' dis dus'. It come off de grave o' murderer-man. Wear dat pigshur capsiz in yo' pocket. She die sho'."

"But I don't want her—any one—to die!" cried Angèle in consternation.

Ma'm Peggy pulled her underlip out like

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

elastic and inserted a pinch of snuff at the roots of her yellow tushes. Then she shrugged.

"You come heah tell me fo' mek work. I mek work. I lay wanga 'ginst her. You don' need tell me nottin' now! Dat gal got to die now, anyhow!"

Angèle felt herself growing faint, and she rose, feeling her way into the outer eclipse, Toussine following, and Taducine with a new-lighted candle. Toussine helped her to dress in silence. When they were ready to go, Taducine looked out of the door, up and down the starless night, listening for a sound in the dark. Assured, she opened the door wider and bade *mamzelle* good-night.

Angèle put her arm through Toussine's and set a quick pace through the streets in silence. A sensitive cock heard them as they passed and crowed for dawn. Then the neighbor-chanticleers took up the alarm, as if a score of Peters were afoot.



## VI

### THE FEVER SPECTRE STRIKES CAR- MÉLITE

*“Vâche li besoin so la queue plus d’une fois pou’  
chasser des mouches la yé.”*

(The ox needs to drive the flies away with his tail  
more than once.)

WITH the morning cup, Victorine opened the heavy mahogany door and came in on noiseless *savates*, looking around her curiously. Angèle’s clothing had been thrown about, two small shoes stood on the *duchesse* before which she had sat, and the stockings were on the floor, indicating a pathway towards the bed. Her dress was in a heap, and hair-pins were promising danger under-foot all about the bed, whither she had thrown them after a precipitous covering-up.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

The girl was asleep, breathing heavily, after a night of wakefulness and reactionary fear.

“Ma dream is out,” murmured Victorine, still holding the tray and the coffee-cup. “Dis room is destruction. It look like it come 'ere befo' it come.”

She set down the salver and began to pick up the garments and set the room to rights, with sundry grunts in expression of her imaginings, now and then stopping to tighten the corners of her tignon, as if to assist thought. A movement in the bed caused her to lift her head.

“Is it you, 'Ine? Mémère—is she awake? Let in the light.” She was waking slowly, without opening her eyes.

“Ah dream a funny dream, yass, Chuchute,” said Victorine, putting out fresh clothes against Angèle's getting up. “Ah had a mis'ry in de back dat answered in de side, atter Ah lef' you las' night, an' a haid-ache. Ah mek me a good *tisane*, an' Ah put

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

*sinapism de suif* on ma temp'es, an' atter w'ile Ah wen' t' sleep. De firs' t'ing Ah dream is o' yong Tétesse. She look jes' like de day she marry wid Missieu René. 'Ine,' she say—Ah kin y'ear her say it now —'Ine, be all de time good to *maman*, you heah?' She was dress' in w'ite, wid a bride-veil, an' she have big bouquet o' jasmine. She smile so putty, jes like she smile wid Missieu René in de fust. Ah got up early, me, an' wen' to ma madame' room to see ef she was all right, her."

Angèle sat up in the great bed. "You didn't tell Mémère anything of your dream, 'Ine?" Her tones were those of alarm.

"Ah nev' said nottin', 'cause Ah know how Tétesse is. Mamzelle Féfé nev' come cep' w'en troubl' come—Ah kin smell dem flow'rs yit."

"What does the dream mean, 'Ine?" asked Angèle, shutting out the sudden daylight with both hands.

"In dis fam'ly it mean troubl', now Ah'm

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tellin' you. Dey's jus' one way out it, ef us plays de lot'ry fer 44-22. Dem's um."

Victorine searched the apartment with her fading eyes. "Now, you tell me straight w'at is de matter wid yo' clo'es w'at Ah smooove an' set on de chair 'fo' Ah wen' out y'ere las' night?" Her tone was coercive.

Angèle cowered. "I got up—up and dressed—I was frightened—I thought I should have to call you, 'Ine—but at last I went to bed and threw my clothes every which way, *là et là*—'Ine, can *ensorceleur* do you anything? I mean when you are asking him to make a work on some one?"

"Dey kin hu't you ef dey t'row somepin on you," answered Victorine, looking very wise.

"What, for example?" questioned Angèle, alive to the subject, and now thoroughly awake. She was feeling so strangely, and had such a headache that she began to wonder if she, too, had been "conjured."

"Dey t'rows powder," said Victorine,

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oracularly. "Ah knows a gal,—but dis is true, yass,—she wen' on escursion, an' a ooman w'at she'd sassed got ready fo' her an' t'rowed some powder on her, an' fo' she got home f'om dat escursion dat gal was barkin' like a dawg an' spittin' lizard'."

Angèle laughed in spite of her discordant mood. "*Quant à ça!*" She shrugged. "You don't believe that!"

Victorine grew very stately. "Ah'm tellin' you w'at Ah *see*. Ah see lizard', an' toad', too, wid ma own two eye'; an' dat gal was barkin' like a dawg!"

"If you know so much, then, 'Ine, tell me what to do to make a young man love. I have worn my Saint Joseph, standing on his head, upside down in my pocket, to bring me a good husband, oh, ever so long. And where is my good husband? Can you tell me that?"

Victorine took the silver tray from Angèle and ensconced herself in the easy-chair; only with her charge did she sit without a pressing

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invitation, for she prided herself upon her breeding by white people and boasted that she was never "*malpoli*."

"All Ah know is dis," said the old woman, squinting her eyes to give import to her statement: "Dey is a powder w'at anybody kin get at de drog-sto', an' it call love-powder—— Is dat Tétesse w'at Ah hear?"

Angèle assured her hastily that no one had called or was coming, understanding that the pause was one of Victorine's ways of pronouncing her significance. "An' ef you mek a cake wid dat powder, jes' a li'l, de one dat mek dat cake kin mek any one love her dat eats it. Ah know dis fo' a fac'. De *intime* o' yo' maman, Nini Montran, was want fo' mek Féfé marry wid her brod'r, Missieu Arsène, but Féfé di'n want. Missieu Arsène was foolish 'bout Féfé an' Tétesse sometime' t'ink she goin' consent. Léontine—Ah don' forgot her name—she was somepin foolish 'bout Missieu Arsène; she mek party; he don' go; she go to de Montran' in

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

de evenin'; Missieu Arsène tek his hat. Nottin' Léontine do mek him look at her. He tell his sister Nini he don' like her frien', an' he *critiqué* Léontine till she heah 'bout it an' cry. One day she go see Igène de Bully, an' Igène give her a little sack o' powder an' tell her to mek nise cake. Léontine mek de cake, an' mek a nise icin' an' put a bouquet in de midde an' sen' it at his house. Arsène ate piece o' dat cake 'fo' Nini t'ink to tell him it was *cadeau* f'om Léontine. Féfé was dere, an' Féfé say she t'ought Arsène goin' choke w'en he foun' dat out. But atter dinner dey was all goin' to *soirée*, an' Arsène change his min' an' dey all go widout him. But him, w'ere you t'ink he go? To his club? He go straight at Léontine', an' she receiv' him nise like nottin' happen, an' min' w'at Ah'm tellin' you: 'Fo' he leave dat house he done *fiancé* wid her. No-body woun' b'lieve. Me, Ah b'lieve, 'cause Féfé was *confidante* to Léontine as to Nini."

"And that is the reason Arsène Montran

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married Léontine, is it?" queried Angèle, very much interested.

"Yass, he marry wid her, an' he reco'nize her ten t'ousan' dollar de day she marry. He crazy fo' Léontine. Right off she mek foot for stockin', an' she have one, two, t'ree chillen. But jus' like Igène de Bully done tol' her, dat powder lasses on'y ten year'. *Parbleu*, ef dat ain' true! Ten year' up, Missieu Arsène gone. He got no mo' use fo' Mamzelle Léontine worse dan befo'— he can' stan' to see her. He sleep back room, on de gal'ry; he eat his breffust, an' he gone 'fo' Léontine git up. As' yo' Tante Titine. Missieu Arsène ain' spoke to Mamzelle Léontine twenty year'."

"But, me. I *saw* him at his daughter's wedding, at Sainte Rose de Lima Church," insisted Angèle. "How do you make out that, 'Ine?"

"Ah!" the tire-woman shrugged as if the conditions were inexplicable. "Ah tells you w'at is true. He walk in de church wid his

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chile ; he nev' say a word to his wife. It is like dat all de time."

Angèle gave a short laugh. "She is an *Agnès*, her, to stand that. Me, I would give *monsieur mon mari* a dose that would last ten years more, and after that I would be old, and that does not matter then, *l'amour*."

Victorine rocked in her chair and smiled knowingly. "But, yass, dat mek matter," she chortled to herself. "Oleness ain' got affair wid forgittin'. An' Ah kin tell you one t'ing—don' you tell Tétesse Ah puttin' dis heah talk in yo' min'—at de drog-sto' you git a root call *Vinmoin*, a savage-root. It is still dere in de drog-sto', but none o' us people kin get dis root ; at leas', it is a doctor by himsel', sendin' zamination by de people who he specify to be sick fo' dat purpose. Some of de person' love anudder too much ; dat person don' love an' it become to mek dem sickly. Dis root shall be rub on de han' or pass on any part de skin. Dose dat

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may not love you, dey will soon becomes yo' on'y lovin' person, dat one."

Angèle was getting up, some of her disquietude gone, though she did not feel normally clear of brain or steady of nerve. Achille knocked to announce the hot water, for there are no bath-rooms in the old Spanish houses of New Orleans, and ablutions are made by expedients in teacupfuls of liquid. Before Angèle was dressed breakfast was ready, and she went down to join her grandmother at the table.

"Good-morning, Bébé," said Madame de Marigny, kissing the girl's oval cheek. "Did you sleep well?"

Angèle was aroused to her former tremors again, though her mirror had given assurance that she was looking natural, if a trifle pale. "Perfectly, *Mémère*," she answered, perching on the arm of the chair. Whatever Angèle's faults, her grandmother's was the last caress in her mind before she slept and the first upon waking; she fondled the

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

old dame now with a tenderness which evoked madame's choicest endearments.

"The news of Carmélite is not good this morning," said madame in French, when Angèle had seated herself in her own place.

The girl paled again and gripped the lions' heads carved on the arms of her chair. "What has she?" Her voice was cold and unusual.

"Titine writes a note and sends it by Marcel to say she has a *tic douloureux*; nothing worse; it will pass. You must go to the reception without her."

Angèle began to make pretenses with her *chorisse* and rice, a dish in the preparation of which Céleste excelled. She ate little, but with ostentation whenever her grandmother's eye fell upon her, and had her cup replenished with the rich Java-brew, for the reason that it is easier to drink than to eat under troubled conditions. And coffee is a stimulant, the value of which she well knew.

"Ah, here are some *pommes de terre à la*

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*diable*," continued madame, smiling up at Angèle. "Achille, bring the plate. It is the favorite dish of my angel, isn't it, darling?"

The moment of silence that followed oppressed Angèle, who longed to ask questions about Carmélite.

"Titine says nothing else—or maybe Marcel had a message. You will go to the reception, my baby?" asked madame. "You could telephone Mrs. Trezevant that you would go with her."

"I shall go to Mémé instead."

"Always sacrifices for others, my adored one," sighed madame.

"No," answered Angèle, assuredly, shaking her head.

She called Marcel, who preferred the company of Céleste's boy, Pierre, in the yard, and who responded to the endearments of his pretty cousin by the cracking of a whip and braggadocio as to his prowess at the College of the Immaculate Conception in tugs-of-war with boys older than himself. But, no, Mémé

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wasn't sick. She had been to a big dinner the evening before with Maman and Missieu Déléry, and they had brought him some painted cards and flowers with ribbons which he had given to Mignon—but, yes, Mignon was his girl; *Maman* knew it, her *maman* knew it, and they were only waiting to be older to get married and have plenty of children to play with.

“Tell Mémé I am coming,—to-day, maybe,” instructed Angèle, leaving him to subjugate Céleste's Pierre—a namesake of Madame de Marigny's general—by the noisy cracking of his whip.

A lassitude possessed her, and, try as she might, she had not the ambition to dress nor the courage to take a step outdoors. Would Mémé think her cruel if she did not go? The god-mother aunt, would she suspect her whether she went or stayed, or which? It was of no use to reason, for she could not rouse herself save to forebodings, and she was still impatient with her cousin. She sat

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about with her embroidery, making minute stitches with the correctness that is part of the curriculum at the Ursulines Convent,—training which her mother had received less tractably, and her grandmother and great-grandmother beside, all within those historic walls.

It was pleasant to look at the girl at her pretty work, thought Madame de Marigny, apparently intent upon the “*Lettres Vendéennes*,” about which Angèle was so sensitive; the crisp hair growing back from a broad, low brow, the smooth oval of her cheek, the delicate tinting and downcast, maidenly eyes. Madame saw Elphée in her, the spirit that seemed dearest because far away, for Elphée had possessed one of those natures that are never quite close, and had withheld herself even from her mother; she was worldly and capricious with all her loveliness. Angèle was infinitely more responsive and tender.

Victorine came in to “make *ménage*,” and

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contributed her counsels to the conversation whenever she saw fit. "W'at time you goin' pass by Mamzelle Titine'?" she asked Angèle, who didn't know. "You min' to tell Titine fo' put *sinapism* on de temple' of Mémé, you heah? Tell her tek brown grocer' paper an' pass suet on dat, an' den sprink' snuff on dat. Dat goin' mek her *migraine* pass."

Madame resumed her "*Lettres*" and Angèle lowered her head over her embroidery. Whether any one listened or not, Victorine enjoyed her monologues.

"Mo' dan dat, ef her t'roat is soled, tell her tek *quarti* parsley, well mash', an' mek *cataplasme*—me, Ah knowed Mémé goin' fall sick 'cause she 'as bad luck. Many time' as Ah is tol' her, Ah see her pin flow'r on w'ite dress yodder day wid black pin. Ah done tol' all yo' parents dat—— Anyhow, dey better look in dey piller. Sometime' you don' know w'at de matter an' you fin' chicken-fedder mek in shape wid string. Once, me,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Ah fin' a rooster mek wid fine twine. Somebody was workin' on me—— Ah had haid-ache *all* de time."

"What an old *Zombi* you are!" cried Angèle, in mock humor.

The quadroon pulled back the mosquito-bar, then stopped suddenly and took in the pallor and dejection of the young woman for some minutes in silence.

"Ah don' know how you fin' her, Têtesse, but fo' me, Chuchute look pale. You slep' bad, *hein*, Chuchute?"

Angèle threw down her work with a gesture of impatience.

"*Sacrebleu!* What have you, 'Ine? I have told Mémère, I have told Céleste, even Achille,—shall I swear to it? I am well, well, well, drunk with sleep all night. *Va t'en!* you are putting your mouth on me to make me sick. Do you not see that I am young? Young and strong, and nothing, not even voodoo, can harm me, just heaven!"

"You are nervous, nevertheless," insisted

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madame, shocked at Angèle's burst of temper, but furtively studying her delicate features, just a shade less *écru* than usual, and lacking the underflow of color. Madame felt the pang that always came when Angèle was indisposed, however slightly. She had participated in the anguish of Niobe, and her daily prayer was that the salt cup of bereavement be spared her evermore. It was that crown of rue that relieved madame's face of the severity of aquiline features ; it impelled one to make way for a grief the garb of which was dolorous motherhood. As precedent meant women should not, the Creole never rallies after the supreme sorrow—the anguish that so many temporal Marys have wept.

Angèle occupied herself killing time, for she could not read earnestly nor appear to interest herself in anything with the rage that filled her soul. She knew her conduct was irrational and suspicious, but she could not seem apathetic, and by the moment was

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caring less that her grandmother was watching her closely.

She was still doggedly intent on winning Numa Déléry, and there was a collusive sympathy somewhere in her understanding for Carmélite, whom she liked, but who seemed far away; and there was a dread, too,—a positive assurance, indeed,—that the sickness of her cousin was occasioned by infernal influences of which she had been the instigator. She moved about or sat about idly, her members cold and her heart irregular in its beating, wondering whether the moment had come in which to claim Numa, and if, indeed, he were more to her than a guerdon she had moved heaven to win; whether it were not rather the hour to undo, retract, and save the unfortunate Carmélite from unshriven death.

Dr. Paradise called in the afternoon and heard sympathetically the tidings of Carmélite's indisposition. Angèle could not resist bringing up the subject again and again,

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though he was only friendly and polite in his expressions concerning it.

“Nénaine will try *sinapisms* and *tisanes* from now till Mémé is in her tomb,” said Angèle, feverishly. “Do you not think it better to have a doctor, and at once, for the slightest sickness? I do always for Mémère.”

“I certainly believe in doctors,” said Dr. Paradise, smiling, seeing no reason for dread in the slight diagnosis presented to him. “They are the greatest agents for human-kind in the compelling of the rest of us to altruistic living. Medicine-men are veritable Robin Hoods of legitimate deeds. A doctor never fails to respond to any cry of pain, and we give him our devotion and gratitude and all the money we can spare—and a doctor usually knows the financial status of his patient before appraising the disease. So it is right, as dispensers of our bounty, that the physician become the factor for our benefices in every community. Doctors, as ministers,

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and more than lawyers, are God's agents in this world."

"Well, Mémé is too young to die; she comes of such an old family."

The doctor laughed at her way of putting it; she meant that her family was long-lived.

"But you are sober, Angèle. Is Carmélite sick enough to worry about?"

"Oh, no," answered the girl, soothed by his healing presence as many another had been. He was a natural soul's physician. "It is Nénaine who is making a great fuss about it. Mémé is sick. Well. Mémé is very sick? Not at all. The *vapeurs*, an *étouffement*, yet, so much Nénaine has the sensible heart she weeps all the time. This affects Mémère. *Ça m'agace!* I think I will take the street." She patted her foot impatiently. "It is the warmth, perhaps, and yet that east wind. 'Ine says it is yellow-fever weather. All the same, I am *d'une humeur massacrate!* I feel as if I had been

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crossed in everything but love. It is for you to tell me what is the matter."

Dr. Paradise looked absorbingly at the pretty creature, his eyes calm, and, when he spoke, his voice was firm.

"I am old enough to say, Angèle, that you have a large dominion in my heart, and any sorrow that ever touches you will touch me, and your joy will be mine also. I've seen much of life in almost all its phases, and have known all sorts of men and women. I know the genuine. You have no sham in your soul." He paused, and though he was gazing steadily at her he did not see that she winced ; it was not in accordance with her mood to be commended. She felt how little she was worthy of it.

"It is nonsense to believe in voodoo, isn't it, *docteur*?" Angèle asked, after a pause. "They can't really do you any harm, can they? And it is only nonsense to see them make a work. Do you think they can do anything at all?"

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Dr. Paradise shuddered. "You have been in the province of the blacks again—in Darkest Africa. In your heart you believe in the obi-man and *gri-gri*, while your intellect appeals against that belief. Oh, Angèle, please don't! It isn't nice to tell you you're too old to do things, but you *are* too old to listen to Victorine seriously when she strikes on those subjects. Come, now, promise."

"But can *gri-gri* really hurt, one way or another?" There was an undisguisable zeal in Angèle's eyes.

"'Ignorance and evil, even in full flight, deal terrible back-handed strokes at their pursuers.' That's Helps. I can quote more to the point than I can reason."

Angèle lifted her shoulders and dropped them, as if something were distasteful, and touched upon a new theme.

"I am thinking that, perhaps, I would better marry, *docteur*." She was not looking at him now, but at the coarse roses fading in the carpet. "It has been in my mind for

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some time. First, I am twenty-two—you know Maman was married at eighteen, Mémère at sixteen. Life is tiresome like this; I have been too—too—*monfoubin*. I am thinking seriously of getting married.”

Neither did Dr. Paradise look at Angèle, but grew very pale, and was silent a moment after she had ceased speaking.

“Mémère—angels, seraphs, and the blessed company of true men and women have been watching for her a long time, expecting her; for our good and the world’s good, she has not gone, and may she not go soon. The Lord blesses her as she has blessed many.” He was apparently scrutinizing the carpet’s conventional roses. Angèle held the calm sacredly, not knowing how she could say anything more on the subject of marriage without paining herself, or speaking of her grandmother without bursting into tears. She was very grateful to him, however, for speaking as he did.

“Of course, the time cannot be far when

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Mémère will leave us," Dr. Paradise found heart to say, presently ; "and then will be a question as to what is to become of Angèle. You have numerous relatives,—yes, I know you do not like many of them, and I cannot blame you. But there is Nénaine. Of course, she is always drawing comparisons between you and Carmélite, and that is enough to make her wholesomely jealous of you. So, Angèle, perhaps you would better marry—that is, of course, if your heart has spoken—and been answered. Has it spoken? Then close the volume and begin a new one. The old will be only a reference."

Dr. Paradise rose and began to walk the length of the room. His face was resolute, but there was a film about his eyes and a moisture in his voice.

"Marriage is a great mystery, child," he said. "The change it brings you will know, and the mystery—no one can describe the mystery. It is a divine law ; not a cold,

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harsh, imperious law, unless we make it so. It is the law of love."

Angèle followed him with her eyes, yearningly, though she did not realize it. His back was towards her now as he traversed the long room. She listened with keen interest.

"When you marry, you will marry a man ; you are too well-balanced to think him a god. Because he is a man, trust him to your heart's depths. In open loyalty trust him, and, whatever else may come, your trust will always save both you and him." He came near her now, standing where he could see her in the strongest light. Angèle dropped her eyes. The man he described did not seem to be personified in Numa Déléry.

"When you marry," the doctor went on, "I should like to solemnize the nuptials ; but, of course, this sad pleasure will be denied me. When you marry—— I don't know whether I want your whole soul to

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awake before or after. If a man can stand the flash of the eyes of your soul on his soul, he is a man, and you will be a woman with a joy."

The doctor turned aside, but Angèle spoke, recalling him.

"Would you miss me were I to marry?" she asked, lamely, realizing that their relations could never be so free after such a step, and feeling vaguely how much she needed him.

The doctor came towards her again, and, taking both her hands in his own, looked hungrily into her face.

"Shall I miss you, Angèlique?" he said, with wistful questioning, as if he hoped she would answer and make their lives simple and clear. "You seem already to have become a memory, but as beautiful a memory as a battered man was ever worthy of." He released her hands and spoke gravely. "I have a great hope for your future, dear child; it must be full of the best we have, and rich

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as your soul can interpret. And I know you have a noble soul, not yet awake, but capable of the best things in soul life. I do not want to see you an angel by brevet when I can see you my own, our own, Colonel Dan's own, by nature." He did not see the welling tears through her eye-lashes, for his rigid gaze was upon her lowered head and iridescent hair. "And don't you ever suppose, child, that you can altogether lose the old man out of your life."

He left her, shaking hands, and not speaking again, feeling an oppression that aged him beyond his two-score years, took the activity out of his limbs, and bowed his shoulders as with a burden. Her youth, her loveliness, her inexperience, seemed to mock him; and, alas! he was obliged to bear these mockeries away with him. His patience and spirit were overborne, and his resentment seemed, most of all, aimed against his years. Youth, he knew, was a bestowal of Time,

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the "Indian giver,"\* as the children say, yielded but to be taken away. Why, thought Dr. Paradise, do we not appreciate youth till it is merging, nor old age till it is dying? It is one of the perversities.

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\* New Orleans children use this expression in contempt, as those of the North would—

"King, king, give a thing,  
Never take it back again."



## VII

### MALÉFICE

*“ C'est devant tambour que yé reconaitre Zombi.”*

(It is before the drum that one learns to know Zamba.)

MADAME LIVAUDAIS stopped at her mother's the next morning on her way from her daily visit to church. She was very ill at ease and almost grudged the time spent away from her daughter, but she never failed in the filial duty, realizing the four-fold service she owed to replace that of the sons and daughter mourned.

She had not been to communion at Saint Augustin's, she told her mother, in a voice strained with anxiety and a lack of repose, but had stopped in to make a little prayer that all might be delivered from calamities. She had been up all night with Carmélite,

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but the adored child had fallen asleep at dawn. Not so sick, no. *Clopin clopant, comme çà comme ça* ; a slow fever. But how unusual for Mémé to have anything! She had gone at party, enjoy herself, and come home ; eat her nice *fricot* ; put her *camisole*, and sat down to take a good rest before sleeping, when she complained of *migraine*. It had kept her in fire ever since. Marcel, too, would not play, but complained. What could it mean ?

Madame de Marigny asked Angèle to fetch some orange-flower water to soothe their nerves ; they had been talking interestedly for ten minutes in the bedroom of madame. The girl left the room on the quest, and her light foot had scarcely ceased to resound upon the long stairs when the door of the room opened again, a few inches only, and, in the midst of a burst of thunder, two tall black figures sidled in, one bearing an infant in her arms.

Madame was transfixed with terror, but

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Ernestine cried, "Ca'line!" and fell back in her deep chair, her hand on her heart. Neither form made a sound, but glided into chairs directly opposite their unwilling hosts, facing them with their indeterminate masks, sending long, slow regards up and down the rigid women. When the silence had become unbearable, Zèbre began to croon softly, not so much with the voice as with the throat, her lips clenched.

The mystery was oppressive, and brave little Madame de Marigny tried vainly to summon her forces to send the wretches from her presence. Her efforts were inutile; she was dumb, terrified, and she could only watch the movements of the two sombre figures and hope wildly that Angèle would not return. Roll upon roll of thunder passed over them. The room was in a deepening gloom, the corners almost midnightly.

Ernestine, still lying faint in her chair, importuned the women to speak; but they

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answered no word, maintaining the melancholy minors that were neither song nor vocals.

Zèbre sat upright on the edge of the chair, staring straight into the eyes of Madame de Marigny, her sable throat rising out of her black gown, her head surmounted by black and white plaided Madras. Calline's sun-bonnet had fallen back, still held by a string, but revealing her swart face growing turgid under wisps like dried moss. She moved her knees sidewise under her calico skirt to lull her waking infant. Presently Calline joined her mother in the strange chant that was rising momentarily more dolorous, harassing, excruciating. Madame de Marigny was growing yellow and more stern, but was still unable to utter a sound. Ernestine made no further attempt to question, but lay back frightened into chill silence.

Suddenly Calline rose, and with gyratory movements, slowly, like a reptile upright, she conveyed the infant across the room and,

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stooping, slipped it dexterously beneath the sofa. She writhed back sidewise, still crooning in the same key, but never on the same note as her mother. Letting fall at her feet a mesh of string, she began to work with it, her bare, brown feet thrusting forward and back, and in and out, the chant rising higher, as if the singers were in ecstasy. The white women watched Calline avidly, noting that, without touching the string with her hands or looking downward at it, she soon had bound her ankles tight with the strands by a circular motion of the toes and an adept shuffle of the feet. When Calline sat quiet again, save for the horrifying staves she joined with her mother's, Zèbre performed the same device of machination, her naked feet slipped out of her *savates*, her long toes writhing as if with independent and voluntary life. When Zèbre's ankles were thus gyved she rose and shuffled crab-wise to the sofa, and, stooping, lifted the baby on splayed hands and moved laboriously to the door, followed by Calline

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humming loudly, as if trying to vent a choking wail.

A ponderous clap of thunder sounded as Zèbre reached the sill, and in a great hieroglyph of lightning Angèlique appeared. A glance at the faces of her grandmother and aunt, together with the stoic seeming of the negresses, gave her swift assurance of the situation. "*Fichtre!*" she broke out with the courage of rage. Madame de Marigny stretched an arm in pleading for silence lest the girl further provoke the departing demons, yet she could vouchsafe no word.

"*Va t'en, va, sempiternelle!*" commanded Angèle, trembling, but not with fear, and pointed to the door. A blaze of lightning caught her for an instant and blotted her out again, with the sinister negresses perilously near. The glare had been sudden, but it had, in its instant, revealed the hate and revengeful meaning in the eyes of Zèbre in contrast with the compelling virtue of the

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girl's gesture. But Zèbre did not quaver, looking luridly still as she bore the child away, shuffling edgewise, Calline following, tortuously, and with intrepitant stare.

Angèle turned slowly to answer Zèbre's departing look with intentness and determination, pointing outward always, and keeping close behind the women, down the hall and out upon the back gallery, impelled to make sure the fearsome guests had gone. At the rear gate Zèbre paused and shot a last glance, the very lust of hate.

Victorine was innocently issuing from the kitchen, Céleste near by. Both called the name of Zèbre, hesitating to advance, thrilled with the awful oppressiveness of the witches' presence, conscious of a thousand nameless, unspoken omens.

When Calline had vanished, Angèle was aroused by a familiar exclamation.

"*Que diab' !*" cried Céleste. "*Mo peur, oui.*"

Angèle noticed that both women were of

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the sickly color which brown skin takes on in fright.

“W’at she mek wid you, Chuchute?” asked Victorine, anxiously scanning the girl’s face.

“Later. Let us go to Mémère.”

Céleste signalled to Achille Bel-Air, who left his dish-water and the crested De Marigny plate and followed, drying his hands on his apron. The ever-cautious Victorine turned the large iron key in the gate and adjusted the giant bolt before leading the way to madame’s bedroom. Angèle found her grandmother bowed and kneeling before her little altar, sending up a passionate appeal with eyes and lips and heart from a dull dread not to be shaken off. Madame Livaudais was swallowing a potation of some calming water, and moving about, restless with apprehension.

“It is frightful!” She broke into tears. “’Ine, what is it? What does she mean? *Ah, Misère!* It was so quiet and so terrible.

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God defend us. Céleste, Achille, pray for us ; pray, pray !”

Victorine shook her tignon as she placed the long chair for Ernestine and entreated her to sit down and calm herself. “Dat do no good,” she muttered. “You got dealin’ wid de devil now, Ah’m tellin’ you, an’ you mus’ mek wid devil like devil mek wid you. Dass voudou !

“Dass sho is voudou,” echoed Céleste, catching at the word.

“It sho is voudou,” declared Achille, looking wise.

Madame rose stately as ever from her interrupted prayer. “Victorine is right,” she said, in French. “Something must be done and at once.

Céleste nodded knowingly. “*Oui même !*” she murmured. “*Y avait une fois dame qui avait treize enfants ; so heureuse avec so’ mari, mais y avait qui l’aimait bien et fait gri-gri sur li pou’ faire mourir*” so’ enfants, et li tou’ mourit——” (There was once a lady who

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had thirteen children ; she was happy with her children ; but somebody loved her husband, and put "*gri-gri*" on him to make his children die, and they all died——)

"Enough!" cried Angèle. "No *cadavres*, if you please ; our own troubles are too much alive. 'Ine, what is your idea?"

"Dey got voudous plenty," answered Victoline ; "but Ah ain' never mix up wid dose bus'ness. Céleste, you know one real ooman, *hein?*"

"What do you mean?" interrupted Angèle, always in suspense. "A voudou?"

"Yass. She got de *gri-gri* face, her, *hien*, Céleste?"

"*Oui, même*," answered Céleste. "She call M'am Peggy."

Angèle started and looked at her aunt, who was listening with fixed eyes on the group of standing negroes ; then she turned impatiently. "Why a woman? A man would make a better work, isn't it so? Answer me, Achille Bel-Air."

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"I don' b'lieve in no woman, me," observed Achille, looking wise. "I don' b'lieve in woman for nottin'. W'en I bawn my ma was 'cross the lake. My father had me."

Victorine was infuriated by the man's levity. "Git out 'fo' Ah chases you," she muttered.

"W'at! chase me? Jes' when you needs me? *Vielle gribouille*, I was intend for make cunjer. My pa said I was bawn with a caul, in the 'clipse of the moon, an' baptize' with the blood of a w'ite pigeon. I jes' has natchully a skeredness an' respeck for cunjers."

Céleste heaved a mighty sigh. "One t'ing is dis," she essayed, "you is good for mek *gri-gri*, Mamzelle L'Ange. Me, I see light' on you one day you come to spik me, an' dat night you come in dream an' tell me to look h'out. Fi' day atter day ma chile die!"

"You don't mean to say I wanted Thérèse to die!" cried Angèlique, wounded at the suggestion.

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“*Non, chère*, but h’it was a warnin’.” Céleste sighed ruefully.

“Somebody put they mouth on Thérèse, that’s sho an’ certain,” remarked Achille. “But me, I wouldn’t never bother about a chile to die. She might turned a vagabone.”

“Dis is good time fer voodoo,” avowed Victorine. “*Menture* never kin mek no harm in de light o’ de moon.”

“How! We don’t want to make harm!” cried Angèle. “Enough of foolishness. Who will we go to see to-night to lift this spell—which voodoo? Answer at once!”

At the moment for action the negroes failed; they shook their heads, at first, eager to appear wise on any subject but this. Finally Achille Bel-Air found his voice and spoke tentatively. “They’s Pastonair Wanager, then. Once he make a work for me—I mus’ say he give sat’sfaction.” A tremor passed over the man’s features which seemed to darken as he remembered the fulfilment of a revenge wrought.

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Angèlique clapped her hands in emphatic decision, as if no further suggestions were necessary. "Achille," she commanded, "go for Toussi and tell her we will want her here to-night at, we will say, eleven o'clock. Go also to your Pastonair Wangateur and prepare him for our visit. Mémère, you have some money? *Tiens*, Achille. Take him this, and tell him to be ready for us; you, Achille, 'Ine, Céleste, we will all go. Nénaine, you can stay with Mémère."

Madame Livaudais was explosive with negations. "And, my poor child! I assure you I am worried about my poor Marcel. And where is Mémè? Is she not sick, too? Never was Mémè taken with such a sickness before. Angèle, you can stay with Maman, and 'Ine can represent the family at Pastonair's."

The old nurse vowed she would never permit Chuchute to leave the house with a pack of niggers unless she were along to protect her, nor would Angèle consent to remain at

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home, urging that necessity had subordinated personal fear, and that she was sure some member of the persecuted family must be at the *séance*, an opinion in which Achille and Céleste loudly concurred. Madame Livaudais stifled her parental impulse and agreed to go home and stay with Carmélite and Marcel till the hour fixed upon to set forth for the meeting. "It is a vital matter," argued Angèle, after assuring her aunt again and again that Mémé was not dangerously sick and that Marcel had only an indigestion, the little pig, making light of the situation. "If something is not done soon what will become of us?" she said, appealingly. "For me, I blame Zèbre for the failure of the cotton-crop. How is it no other plantation suffered like ours? The same weather, the same advantage, no crevasse, nothing,—the first thing we know we will be, like *Zozo la Brique*, in the streets!"

A pathetic worry settled over madame's brows, but she felt that the plan of action

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decided upon was their only redemption from the fate Zèbre had wrought for them ; so she spent the day over her prayer-book and rosary, drawing from Angèle every assurance possible of her safe return. Victorine, too, seemed depressed, nor could the brave rallyings of her young charge bring a responsive smile to her set lips. "What are you disturbing yourself about, 'Ine?" asked Angèle, at last. The old nurse shook her head and grew more solemn. "We got take 'lectric car, *hein*, for go at wangateur? *Ces chars 'lectriques—Y a pas machin pou' conduié, y a pas rien pou' fais marché, y a pé couri tout seul. Pou' vous dire vraie, mo té peur di yé!*" (These electric cars—there is no machine to conduct them, there is nothing to make them go ; they go by themselves. To tell the truth, I'm afraid of them.)

Toussine ran in late in the afternoon, after her "round," to make sure Achille had carried the message aright ; and Achille him-

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self reported that the obi-man had sent for his "singers," and all would be in readiness by eleven o'clock. Toussine said that she intended to pass by the wangateur's to tell him just what Achille had said,—that Zèbre had come with a handful of lightnings, which she sent into every one's eyes to blind them, though it was shingly clear outside; also, she thought Pastonair should know that she, Toussine, had spent a night in the house of Calline, who was still her friend, and her basket was full of chickens, serpents' fangs, and hair.

Madame Livaudais had found Carmélite's *migraine* encouragingly better, to Angèle's unexpressed relief; and, upon her return to her mother's house, she laid off her dress and donned a lawn *peignoir* in the customary impulse of the true Creole to put herself at ease till the pilgrims of the unholy mission should return.

Angèlique, happy at least in the freedom of her movements in that there should be no

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hypocrisy or secrecy about her prospective visit to the conjuror, dressed suitably in brown, with foot-gear of the same color, that there need be no repetition of the embarrassment of discarding black as for the previous impious propitiation. This forethought no one appreciated save Toussine.

Shortly after ten o'clock Céleste and Achille left by the rear gate, with an air of sober mystery ; half an hour later Angèle, having given her last assurance of future welfare to her grandmother, and embraced her warmly, and her aunt repentantly, set forth with Victorine and Toussine, who designated the way. Madame de Marigny had been solaced, but her scruples were not overcome by the plausible reiteratives of the girl, for she had no heart in the excursion of which Angèle made light. After all, thought madame, though something should be done before they were all, the innocent children as well, conjured into untimely graves, Angèlique was the most to care for, and all

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else were counted as little lost were her bright life unjeopardized. Ernestine was tearful and nervously unstrung, but she vowed she would pray for Angèle's safe return and keep up Maman's spirits, if possible ; she thanked the girl gratefully, beside, for venturing on the mission, admitting, frankly, that she would never permit Carmélite to take such a step—rather death and disgrace to them all. This was a felicitous statement from Madame Livaudais ; if she had been more concerned for her godchild, Angèle would have broken into a tearful confession that would have only complicated the situation.

Angèle and her companions walked to Esplanade Avenue, and, after some moments of waiting, hailed a car, in which there were no other passengers, fortunately ; it would have been embarrassing to Miss Le Breton to explain her position at that hour of the night,—in a distant neighborhood from her own and with such escort. When they

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descended from the car they were surprised to find Achille waiting in the shadow of a tree; he knew the dangers of the locality they would visit. They walked towards Lapeyrouse Street as rapidly as Victorine's strength would permit, the old negress usually laboring under bodily decrepitude. Some moments passed, therefore, before the party had traversed the several streets below Esplanade, zigzagged to the left, and stood before the paintless, stuccoed façade behind which Pastonair Wangateur prepared the hellish brew for a strenuous undoing.

The tumble-down was squat in the middle of a large patch of green, treeless sward and seemed to have shrunk away from the humble habitations thereabout,—an ideal lieu for deeds of cowardice and shame. All sound within was confined to its vicinage, and passers-by, unless unrighteously curious, kept at a safe distance if the boardwalk, some yards in front of it, were legitimately used. Angèle noted that the shanty was

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very low and of moderate proportions, and that even her cautious step on the jutting porch sent a thrill through the structure. There was no beacon to aid the seekers; indeed, the silence was so dense and absolute that the entire firmament might have been muffled in thick cloud.

Achille sent a short, sharp glance about him—there is no keener searchlight than the suspicious eyes of a young negro—and placed himself first at the door, which was opened before he could knock. A stout colored woman, with thick, gray hair and the punctulated mementoes of disease on her skin, stood before the visitors, hesitating one instant before admitting them. Céleste sat in a row with four other women, all very solemn, either because they were impressed or because they desired to impress the newcomers, Madame de Marigny's cook by a sudden affinity having become a part of them.

There was a moment's pause, the servants not daring to sit in the presence of their

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“Tit’ Tétesse,” yet feeling that she was almost an intruder in a province by every right their own. Angèle hastily summed up their hesitation, and, foreseeing that there could be no demarcation if unrestraint were desirable, which it was, bade them be seated with a gesture, and she herself sat on a bench next her old nurse. She had bowed with superstitious deference to Pastonair Wangateur as she entered, and now she began to look about her calmly, knowing that she was fortified by friends.

The interior of the shattery cabin was black and decrepid ; the flavor of the atmosphere, combining the indefinable odors of age and color, was negroid and rank. The puncheon floor was rude and scotched with char, and the open fireplace, from which issued downward gusts of pitchy smoke, showed many dislodged bricks. On the shelf above was a mirror covered with a black cloth, as is usual at ceremonies of voudoury, and one or two holy pictures, stained and

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dusty, of that weird school that obtained many years ago among cheap artists in imitation of Michael Angelo, whose every outline seems to describe an ellipse.

The eerie effect of the black-swathed altar at the furthest wall sent aberrant dusks into the corners, the wicks burning yellow from long, black candles. Victorine turned to Angèle to note her impressions as a *commençante* in sorcery, and whispered: "At de holy sto', corner Orlean' an' *Royale*, dey got candle all color fo' voodoo."

The portly woman who had admitted them, and whom some one called Odalie, overheard, and smiled. "Yass," she remarked, amiably, "but fo' or'nary *ouvrage* green is de bes', w'ite an' red. Ef you wan' put cross on somebody, black mek dat."

Angèlique was inspired with confidence with the showing of Odalie's smile and glanced towards the floor where the ambigu was set. "And all that in the plates?" she asked.

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Odalie turned her crisp head away and back again. "Dass *maïs tac-tac* (pop-corn) an' peanut' an' *pain-moisi* (stale bread) an' *dragées* (sugared nuts) an' *pralines* an' fruit', an' dem flower sweet olive. Dass good wine, too, yass. Fo' mek *ouvrage de sorcellerie* you got have good rum, good viskey, an' gin."

Tall among the lights and garniture of the altar and rooted in the centre of the lowest tier was a huge black candle, bristling with countless pins and needles, these threaded with black cotton, the filaments fluttering in the faint currents set in motion by the pallid flames. Now and again a steely splinter would fall as the loosening wax released one and another of them. In the centre of the plateau a mocking skull was poised, a parched clinker—a remnant of human slag.

Pastonair Wangateur was very grave and mysterious. He was a tall man, griffe in color, with unkempt hair dank about his brow; ears and long, yellow throat, attesting to his

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half-breed strain,—Indian rather than pure African. There were fine features in his face, his nose being straight and his mouth not protruding ; but his eyes, those of the jettatore, an esteemed voodoo quality, under beetling, irresolute brows, were far-seeking, melancholy, and ungentle, as if the mysteries he sought often baffled him. Small hoop earrings swung from his thin ears, and he wore several bone rings upon his knuckly hands. He listened while Angèle spoke of the conditions she desired neutralized, bowing frequently, and then fixing her again with eyes that petrified her in seeming not to behold her. She told of the first and second visits of Zèbre, the fetiches that had been found on the doorstep, and of their apprehensions. “We wish to break the spell Zèbre has thrown upon our family and to lay the fever phantom,” concluded Angèle ; “that is all.”

The priest of demonry retired to his shrine and assumed an attitude of deep meditation,

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his back to the little assemblage. Victorine whispered to Angèle again, certain that Odalie was this time out of hearing. "He ogly like a mud-dauber," she said, and grunted. Pulling her lower lip outward so far as to remove any doubts as to its elasticity, she inserted a pinch of snuff at the roots of her teeth; she desired to encourage Angèle by her show of indifference as opposed to fear. "Ah 'members now,—Ah done hear o' Pastonair dere; he frien' o' Matricou, brod'r Marie la Veau, de voudou queen. Me, Ah knowed him, too. He was bad, he fight, he play devilment; dey git him in cote, but dey coun' do nottin' wid Matricou. Dose voudou work on de jawdge an' de jury; dey coun' do nottin' to Matricou."

Angèle silenced her nurse, who was emboldened by the respectability and quiet of the scene, and soothed by the last pinch of snuff, was raising her voice recklessly to a pitch that Pastonair might overhear. Certainly Odalie caught the words, but only

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grinned amiably, as if in corroboration of the averment, flattered that another's faith in the African cabalism was as fervent as her own.

"It is good—we odd number," whispered Odalie, encouragingly. "Don' nobody fer-git dey mus'n cross dey han' or feets."

The wângateur signalled waveringly to the company to desist, requiring absolute silence; then he stood like a statue before the sable altar, its refracting lights throwing yeasty, phosphorescent shadows like a mist before it, in which the conjuror, too, was enveloped. The huddling "singers" moved forward in the posture of prayer, hunching down in a semicircle about the low-spread "table." Odalie stood over the black iron kettle on the hearth, stirring its noisome brew with a long iron spoon, her indurated skin lighted by the intermittent flame below. Pastonair fell upon his knees violently, sending a shiver through the building, repeatedly making the sign of the cross, dedicating his after-works, every one in the room echoing his phrases

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soberly. After a long moment of contemplation, Pastonair struck his head upon the deal flooring with startling force. His abandon stirred every soul present, but his manner became less impetuous at once, and he bent far over, his head dejecting, one hand dividing his weight with his knees, the free hand palm outward at the base of his spine.

*“ Nom du Père, du Fils, Saint Esprit—  
Ainsi soit-il !”*

The singers crossed themselves, shadowing the reverent tones of the wizard close, whereupon Pastonair sang in an idling voice, the strains of the negresses meandering over the wild melody, never in accord, yet always harmonious, with the effect of vapor upon a seascape :

*“ Vert Agoussou,  
Voyin nomme !  
Oh, c'est Vert Agoussou !  
Dambarra Soutons,  
Côté ou yé  
M' appè mandè*

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*Vous la charité  
Côté Maman.  
Tigéla papa,  
Ou c'est Agoussou,  
Ah, y en a qui l'aimé.  
Vert Agoussou,  
Oh, voyin nomme !  
C'est Vert Agoussou,  
Vous yé Agoussou."*

The negroes rose and moved about sim-meringly, fomenting, uttering harsh intona-tions now and then, giving half-strength to their chant. The bamboula livened pres-ently, a drum tapping from a corner. The shoulders of the dancers began to rack and jerk forward as if by strenuous coughing ; there was little motion of the feet, only a slight thrashing, but the hips were swaying in the measure of the mystic tune. As long as "Vert Agoussou" was the theme of their praise the singers showed great respect in their manner of singing, for he was the patron of Pastonair, and they solicited his presence for the subsequent rites. When the last strain

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had died it was evident that Pastonair was impressed that "Vert Agoussou" had arrived for he snatched up a bottle of gin and, after engorging several mouthfuls, he sent a spume from his lips over the shrinking company. Then he began to sway his body sidewise and to snap his long, knotty fingers above the surface of the floor, his assistants doing the same, the ponderous Odalie unsteady upon her knee maintaining her balance. "*Papa Liba!*" cried one. "*Vériquité!*" another. "*Bon la chance!*" "Call luck!" There was much popping excitement among the singers as they filliped their fingers over the puncheon floor, their eyes seeming to penetrate the mere boards and odylic mysteries far below them. Pastonair struck the floor with his wrists again and again, his limber fingers resounding the blow. He seized a candle spluttering in a glass of water on the floor-cloth, encircling his head with it three times, holding it with his left hand, and passing it in the same manner around the

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heads of Angèle, Victorine, Céleste, and Toussine. Then he placed the lighted end in his mouth, extinguishing it, when he gave it into Angèle's hand with instructions.

"Voudou done bless' it," he whispered that all might hear, raising the girl to her feet by the hand that held the candle, and turning her about three times. "Ever' time church-bell ring, light dat candle an' make cross *au nom du Père*. Dat mek luck ; don' let it loss." He shook her skirt and turned her around thrice, and then fell upon his knees, laboriously wheeling upon them till he reached the foot of the altar once more. From the darkest corner of the room sounded the thud of a drum, a horrid, minor note, a vocal portent of evil. Searching the gloom, Angèle espied Achille squatting before the half-sphere, his face wild and set, no longer the debonair man-servant of Madame de Margny's household ; his feet were bare, as were those of the women, and for his coat a checked blouse had been substituted. His

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drum was a foot in diameter and was a cured cat-skin, a detail Angèle suspected with a sort of numb horror. Achille beat an occasional tattoo, joining meanwhile in the weird vocals of this crude and grotesque occultism.

Odalie began to spoon the gumbo from the iron pot down the throats of the singers. Angèle felt that she would be obliged to turn her head were the mixture offered her, looking significantly severe ; though, in truth, she would have accepted it and overcome her queasiness. There was no necessity for her alarm, however, for not even Victorine and Céleste were asked to partake of it. Odalie murmured softly to Angèle in passing, "Dey is lizard in dat pot ; voodoo kin eat, but h'it kill somebody not voodoo."

A fish-platter was next brought forth, upon which a wreathed serpent reposed, swimming in oil, which was shared by Pastonair and his caballers ; after this feast lively potations were indulged in, all drinking from the necks of bottles after their chief. There was

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a zestful partaking of *congri* beans later, in which a black snake had been stewed, and then a cracking of peanut shells and loud crunching of pop-corn. Pastonair filled his mouth full of rum, drinking deep, and spraying each convive in the face and on the chest, and spat in the hands of each, rubbing them mightily with his own, pulling them to the floor and striking them harsh blows, which seemed to be relished rather than resented. Pastonair's draught of gin was followed by the same manœuvres, the men calling lustily upon strange saints, while the women swerved into single file, dragging themselves slowly, in prosilient measures, as if their feet had been attached to ball and chain, describing as large a circumference about Angèle as their numbers and the size of the room permitted of.

A black cat ran across the hearth, losing its natural stealth in its panic, but not swiftly enough to escape the grasp of Odalie, who held it fast, purring it into silence.

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“Black cat call’ luck!” Achille looked sympathetically at Angèle, for the first time meeting her eyes.

A raucous cry seemed to come up through the floor. “*La chouette!*” cried Odalie. “Screech-owl!” burst forth the others, applying an omen to the sound. The sorcerer’s laugh rang out horridly in the cabin.

“*C’est Charlo!*” he shrieked. “*C’est Charlo!*” shouted the negroes, clapping their hands less with delight than with an approved rhythm, dancing to the door in greeting to an invisible presence, stooping as if to welcome a small child. Shaking a hand Angèle could not see, and laughing all at once, without mirth or other inspiration, grimacing till knots bulged on their faces, they sang:

“*C’est Charlo !  
C’est Charlo, vins, vins,  
Côté mo passé  
M’ appelé-toi  
Dans maison autres  
M’ appelé-toi.*”

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*Charlo, 'tit frère,  
Charlo, vins, vins,  
Côté to passé,  
M' appelé-toi répète.  
Ah, mo cherché vous, yé, yé,  
Mo pèlé toi !"*

Odalie stroked an imaginary head, and Pastonair himself brought two gingerbread plateaux, presenting them with low salaams. "*L'estomac mulatte* fer Charlo!" whined Odalie. "Mo' stage-plank! He wan' *baba*. Give *baba*" (a drink), a zealous voice rang out from among the arrested dancers, and sugared water was brought forward.

"Ef he come to yo' house do'n refuse nottin'," said Odalie to Angèle. "Give him w'at you have, but always *l'estomac mulatte* an' sugar-water. Ef you meet li'l boy on street an' he ax you somepin, give, give. He mi' be Charlo. Ef you don' give he go tell all he know w'at pass in yo' house!"

Pastonair now began to work his body convulsively, his shoulders dropped, his head

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hung to one side, and he voiced his apparent agony with hoarse shouts. The singers writhed towards him and about him, answering his measured sentences.

“*Jean Macouloumba, honhé,*” called the demon.

“*Jean Macouloumba, honhé. Laisse qua houmna pi no pou' l' elle bé na !*”

His body jerked alarmingly, and his eyes, glinting like mineral, looked, unseeing, into the fluttering beams of the candles. He dived to the floor, bringing up a great bottle of anisette, from which he drank, the syrupy liquor crystallizing the stubbly growth on his chin as he flaunted it before drinking again. Then he broke into speech in a tone like a child's.

“Fo' sick gal I tell you mek *tisane* of root' !”

Odalie was in a transport. “At las' !” she sighed. “It is Charlo dat spik' !”

“Root', but never parsley,” said the oracle again, beginning to whimper.

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"W'at root', den," asked Céleste, entranced and eager.

There was a moment's silence, and all waited, spellbound.

"Fo' sick gal *racine malot, racine trois quart, racine perci* an' z'*épinards frais*. You fin' dat in swamp. You give dat fo' drink, col', not hot, befo' she wash face in de mawnin', an' at twelve o'clock of noon."

"*Merci*, Charlo!" the negroes answered in chorus, and Achille struck some leaden chords upon the taut cat-skin.

"*Caloumba! Gou-doung! Caloumba! Gou-doung!*" the voodooists wailed, their frames writhing and thrilling.

Pastonair spoke now in asper tones, guggling with renewed potations, a fierce look growing over his features.

"I see de boy come cripple. *Li escropier!* Hi, hi! He cain' walk!"

With surging efforts Pastonair strove to move his feet by lunging, upward resilience of his torso, remaining stable, however, and

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his grisly face disfigured with new grimaces. He emitted slight sneezing sounds.

“*Escropier !*” sounded in a dozen deep throats in horror and alarm. Angèle held her breath, dreading lest the name of Marcel be mentioned.

“Fo’ cripple boy tek six w’ite pigeon— me, I tek dem ; I let dem free. To-morrow I mek dat. W’en dey all done cross water de boy will walk !”

The singers bent their heads together, whispering. “Dat strange, *hein ?*” muttered Odalie ; “ ’cause no voudou kin cross runnin’ water.”

The fiend danced tiptoe among the bowed forms of the women, grinning uncannily, with vague eyes distended wide.

“It’s troof I’m tellin’ you ; de troof an’ no sto’y,” exclaimed Pastonair, exultingly, sending forth a gust of mingled liquors.

“*Zombi !*” the chorus called in latrant tones.

“Mek him fo’ eat *artichaux*, plenty,

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plenty!" the sorcerer commanded, drawing an arm across his streaming brow.

"Ah, *docteur! Bon sorcier!*" The negroes were shifting and shuffling on their feet, their arms akimbo, shaking their hands limply.

A change came over the leader. He ceased grinning and scowled, working his face as if in spasms, stretching his arms forward and jerking them back beyond his shoulders as if repulsing a phantom assailant.

"Dey is tryin' to git piece o' yong mamzelle' hair!" he wailed. "Dey kin mek you come crazy ef dey gits piece o' yo' hair. Ef dey bu'ns it yo' come crazy, sure!" Paston-air howled like an animal in pain.

"She come crazy, sure!" shouted the negroes, stepping softly, in imitation of their leader, encircling the dismayed Angèlique; then leaped in quicker measure, as if coerced by an invisible lashing of the legs.

"*La folie! L'a pallé vini timbrée!*" (She will lose her wits.)

Boum! thudded the cat-skin drum.

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“Pschutt!” Odalie’s finger was upraised.  
“He spik again!”

Pastonair stopped before Angèlique, lifting his hands high and shaking them from the wrists.

“Tek one calf-tongue,—dry her in de sun,—stick her full o’ pin’ an’ needle’.” Every one was leaning in silent listening. “T’read dose needle’ wid black t’read; *fait tasso avec li*. Hang dat in chimley tell git dry,—nobody kin spik no mo’,—as dat tongue dry de enemy tongue dry. Hancefo’ he say, ‘Ba, ba, ba,’ on’y dat!”

“Cross mah soul an’ bordy!” exclaimed Toussine from her corner.

“Me, I mek you present pigeon fo’ cripple. You’s’e’f, I mek you somepin fo’ carry luck fo’ fo’ bit’ an’ one dime,” said Pastonair. “I sen’ it to-morrer.”

“*Caloumba! Gou-doung! Caloumba!*” cried the chorus.

“Magnet draw steel, *hein?* I give you magnet fo’ draw luck!”

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Achille tolled a fearsome note on his drum.

The large, black centre candle bristling with pins had by this time shed an hundred of them, blackened by smoky tallow, in its lace-paper cup.

“He goin’ come standin’! *Croque-mort pas appelé vini!*”

“*La mort, Zèb’e, Zèb’e, la mort!*” The wizard groaned. “*La mort!*” (death!) he repeated. The same accent was struck on the rude drum.

“Name of God!” Angèle was frozen with fear.

“*Ventre bleu!*” “*Nom du pétard!*” cried the men’s voices as one. The women were swimming about, dizzy and half-crazed.

Pastonair gathered the blackened pins and put them in his mouth, whence they fell like minute lightnings upon Angèle’s dark dress. He placed his hands on her shoulders and brought his leering face close to hers.

“T’row dem in cemetery wid a dollar an’

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fifteen cent'. Ef any one pick dem up dey will git sick, but it is on'y Zèb'e who will die!"

"*Grand Zombi!*" groaned the negroes.

"No one must die!" Angèle had summoned all her strength, impelled to intercede for her enemy at any cost. "Just heaven! Pastonair, save my family; lift the spell upon it, and spare all who would do us harm for a Christian penitence." She recoiled from her own voice that sounded so large and bold in the room.

The conjuror coughed violently, swinging himself half-round and back again, and shaking his locks. "It's de onlies' way," he muttered at last, as if not pleased. "Dey put a cross on you w'ich dey blood mus' wash away." He lunged forward and raised handfuls of gray, powdery soil from a sooty pot on the hearth. "De grave-dus' of a murderer," he bellowed over the droning women. He drew his elbows up, holding his hands to his sweltering chest; then, with a

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sudden movement, threw the light particles upon the company.

“*La Mort!*” moaned the wangateur, and the drum echoed the words. Pastonair filled his mouth with rum and spirtled a fine rain in the air. “The singers” fell to the floor, continuing in a circle, stamping about on their knees.

“*Jean Macouloumba, honhé,*” they droned, just audibly, and “*Jean Macouloumba,*” Pastonair appealed, his voice drooling into silence. There was only a sustained and dirgeful whisper when the women sang again.

Outside the hut there was a whirring of wings or winds. The screech-owl sounded its note once more, and at this they struck their heads irresponsibly upon the floor and against one another’s, panting with physical exhaustion, to which the spirit would not yield. The women tore their handkerchiefs from their heads and breasts, the men the shirts from their bodies, retaking the theme

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of song where they had left off in their breathlessness or ecstasy, without regard for unison. The refrain was so slight that there was no acute dissonance, but the creeping wildness of their staves alarmed Angèle, who sat stiff and apprehensive in the midst before the dishonored altar.

“*Caloumba! Gou-doung!*” The men’s voices were growing hoarser. The drum was detoned solemnly at regular intervals like a knell in the metre of the savage cries. With volting steps Pastonair moved round and round; faster the circle flew, fiercer came the groans and oaths. The shanty rocked with the ramping and rearing of foot-steps.

Victorine was on her knees at Angèle’s feet, bowed over clasped hands that held fast, shifted, an ebon rosary. “*Salut, Marie pleine de graces!*” prayed the nurse, in shivering tones. “*Caloumba! Gou-doung!*” voiced the frenzied revellers. Achille beat a dull wail from the cat-skin.

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The fetor of the room was sickening, the pungent emanations from the worn clothing, that had been thrown aside in the fury and heat of the stampede, fusing, with a suffocating odor, into the sour effluvia of nakedness. Pastonair was nude to the waist and shone like wet bronze in the guttering candle-light—even as flame sweats—as he rocked amid the curveting circle. Excited more and more by continued libations, the spargings of his mouth scarcely fell upon the fellows of the bacchanalia, and his actions became horrific with his departing forces. He seemed to be grappling with unseen terrors, boggling, staggering, yet rife with a vitalizing hate, his features wracked and ghastly. His fuming had caused a light foam to issue from his lips; his eyes were mad, his motions frantic; he floundered on scraping feet persistently, singing without voice. Knots stood upon his temple and the wild hairs of his brows were wet, while his snaky locks were pasted in

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streams away from his face. His mouth hung open and his incoherencies came coarsely by means of his teeth and swollen tongue.

*"Jean Macouloumba, honhé! honhé! honhé!"*

*"Jean! Jean! Laisse qua houmna pi no pou' l'elle bé na!"*

*"Caloumba! Gou-doung! Gou-doung! Gou-doung!"*

The shambling, lurching circle fell into units, each summoning his strength to spin about, lunging, twisting as if convulsed, contriving the most unnatural distortions and failing more and more of breath. What remained of their clothing was sticking to their wet bodies.

Some one sounded the dull thunder of the drum. A dozen harsh growls answered.

*"La Mort!"*

*"Charlo, vins, vins!"*

*"Vert Agoussou! Dambarra Soutons!"*

*"Zombi! La Mort! honhé! honhé! honhé! Yi!"*

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*"Oough! Oough! Zombi couri! couri!  
Dis li mort!"*

*"La Mort!"*

With a yell, rather infernal than physical, the conjuror threw himself upon Odalie, who still held the black cat, clutching the animal by the head, holding it aloof and gloating upon it with crazed eyes and the panting laughter of vampirism. The cat wailed in anger and pain, trying to squirm out of the vice that held it, then venting a screech of frenzy. Achille whooped like one distraught and beat a tattoo on his drum. With a groan one of the women swooned into the ashes of the hearth.

The boding Evil grew everywhere manifest.

Pastonair gripped the cat closely, suffocating it, choking it in his clutch to silence, then wringing its neck and cackling in the flush of exultation, sniggering tremulously in the last stages of sensibility. A drop of blood was jetted on his hand, then upon the

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floor, whereupon the besotted conjuror placed the cat to his mouth and sucked the warm and drooling life-blood—a hideous toast to death.

There was bibbering among the dancers, ineffectual steps taken by uncertain feet, unfinished gesticulations, drivelling efforts to howl a dirge. Pastonair staggered, drunk of the riot.

Angèle had risen and slid into the darkest corner, near the door, sensible of the most acute alarm. Pastonair grasped at the air with his free hand, the other holding the cat's corpse, and swam hopelessly towards the declining altar-lights. With a hollow croak he fell across the soiled towel at the foot of the shrine of discomfited saints. Odalie, whose excess of flesh had exhausted her in the beginning of the orgy, crawled forward as if to minister to him, but dropped headlong into unconsciousness.

“Chuchute !” Victorine was tugging at the girl's dress. With an exclamation of

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fright, Angèle turned to look into the nurse's face, which gleamed even in the silent, palpable obscurity with a holiness not consonant with the ghastly lethal jubilee. The familiar voice aroused Céleste, whose fear had prevented absolute co-operation in the savage rites, and she stepped across two bodies prostrate in her way of egress and passed out after Victorine. Achille was stunned by an avenging Nature as he lay like a carcass amid a huddle of women. The wangateur still gripped the dead cat.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the silent group neared the De Marigny home they noted a great effulgence therefrom, and upon entering they found the hallway, salon, chambers, and even the rooms in the *dépendance* brilliantly illuminated, though there was a trained silence everywhere. Angèle, breathless, ran into her grandmother's room, to find madame sitting upright just inside. When she saw the girl she wept with sudden relief. Victorine hobbled in, follow-

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ing Céleste. There was a simultaneous inquiry on all lips.

“Such agony!” whimpered madame, folding Angèle in her arms. “They came for Titine at midnight. Joseph said Marcel had been taken very sick. There was nothing for her to do but go. Ah, my poor Titine! She was in such a state! And I waiting alone in an agony, fearing something had befallen my heart’s idol, and my heart strained also towards Carmélite and Marcel.”

Angèle fondled the little sinking figure. “But the lights, Mémère——”

“I was so fearful to stay alone! Before Joseph took Titine away I had him to light every jet in the house. It is less horrible than the dark. How I have prayed! Ah, Marie Angèlique!”

There could be no question of sleep for madame or Angèle, and the servants expressed their determination to sit up with them the remainder of the night. The women sat close together, a common anxiety and the

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recent experiences establishing a sisterliness for the time. They recounted their adventure to madame, Céleste knowing most to tell, having seen far more powerful manifestations of demonry in her time than either of the others ; and pondered, each to herself, upon the possibility of the recent charm wrought counteracting that which the sudden sickness of Marcel seemed to make sure.

Joseph came within an hour with the news that Marcel was paralyzed, and that there were two doctors in the house ; the boy was very sick, and Madame Livaudais was frantic with grief. Mamzelle Carmélite had the vapors as usual, but anxiety was focussed upon the little boy.

Several times during the early morning messages were received, Joseph going back and forth when there seemed to be any change in the condition of either patient. Angèle read prayers to pass the tedium, and tried to inspire her grandmother with courage or induce her to sleep, distracting

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madame's mind from its painful thoughts whenever possible, and maintaining an outward calm she did not feel. The dread continued to haunt her that she had wrought ill upon Carmélite, and any intervening palliative would be too late. The impulse that had dealt with Marcel was clearly not the same as that which had struck down his sister.

Victorine and Céleste, worn with the fatigue of the day and of less sensitive organism, drooped in their chairs and nodded. Thus the hours were droned off deliberately from various clocks in order and out of order throughout the great house. At dawn a cock crew. A milk-wagon rolled over the cobblestones ; an officer's baton struck with woody impact against a post. Céleste roused herself from her cramped posture, looking about her curiously, then, realizing everything, slipped silently out to the French Market. Madame de Marigny, hollow-eyed and sallow, extinguished the gas and candles, giving the apartment a more definite, less

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sickly confusion of lights. Beside Victorine, supporting the old woman as she slept, sat Angèle, her eyes deep-ringed, her skin very pale. The nurse's madras reposed peacefully on the girl's breast. It was Angèle's first office as ministrant to the loyal being who had been her foster-mother and friend, and seeing it, Madame de Marigny smiled faintly and cosseted, with renewed passion, the little image she carried in her heart always.

"You are straining your back, maybe," whispered madame. "Speak to 'Ine and tell her to go to bed and remain there. She is too old for such events."

Angèle placed her disengaged hand to her lips, one finger upraised. She would not speak lest she waken 'Ine.



## VIII

### MRS. TREZEVANT PAYS A MATUTINAL VISIT

*“ Quand la montagne apè brûlé, tout moune connin ;  
quand cœur apè brûlé, qui connin ? ”*

(When the mountain burns, every one knows it ; when the heart burns, who knows it ?)

It was ten o'clock when Mrs. Trezevant rang the bell at the up-town residence of the well-to-do folk who, as enthusiastic parishioners of Dr. Paradise, were glad to accommodate him with a library and chamber in their spacious house. Mrs. Trezevant knew the Barrows quite well, and, upon being admitted, passed the time of day with a member of the family, whom she met in the entresol ; and then, with a delicate determination, she sent her card up by the colored

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man, who was alternately the doctor's body-servant and the church sexton.

Lemuel was one of the most self-respecting persons of color she had ever known, and her acquaintance in this category was wide ; her opinion was not formed entirely through the fact that he wore the doctor's discarded clothes, so that he had acquired some of the quiet elegance of his employer. Lemuel's great-grandfather had been the property of the stern old relative standing in the same relation to the doctor, and Lemuel's father had been owned by Squire Paradise, and, in pursuance to the family tradition, Lemuel's father was a slave to the doctor's father. With the abolition of the actual proprietorship of human beings there came no separation of interests between the white and the colored generations, and Lemuel recognized Dr. Paradise, to all intents, as his master.

He was not servile, but deferential in his manner, leal to the office he loved, and absolutely trustworthy. On his part, Dr. Para-

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dise, who had, as a boy, been a somewhat Tartarous playmate with Lemuel,—they were about the same age,—felt that his kindred had done a great injustice to Lemuel's blood, and was righting the matter to his utmost by keeping Lemuel's son, Cabell, at school and fitting him for his life's chances.

The man returned presently and asked Mrs. Trezevant into the doctor's library, at the portal of which she was met by the doctor himself. He drew her in by the hand, and offered his most comfortable chair; all with a manner that betokened good feeling and unloverliness and a lack of precipitation that caused the charming widow a pang.

She had formulated in her mind a little ratio of grades of feeling, and divided them into the conscientious and the painstaking interests, the latter with and without the elements of spontaneity; it was not hard to tell which she would rather inspire. And in correlation with this vagary she acknowl-

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edged that it is better to be denied in matters of love than never to be desired.

“And what can it mean, this early morning, when Mrs. Trezevant is presumed to be balancing her arrears of sleep?” began Dr. Paradise, reseating himself in his swivel-chair, at the great square desk-table.

Despite his bantering tone he looked preoccupied and worried.

She breathed deeply, not knowing how to begin.

“You prefaced your sermon Sunday with a remark or two about the need of workers in your province,” said the widow, who, looking at herself always from an interior viewpoint, thought herself shy for the first time in her life, “so I thought I should make bold to minister to my egotism, and, under your captaincy, to proffer my best offices—and the widow’s cruse.” She paused and laughed a little. “My self-approbation is my enamel, you know——”

“Wonderful!” exclaimed the doctor. “I

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didn't expect it; but I welcome you all the more heartily for that. And the guilds and the chapters will draw lots for you and be inspired with all uncharitableness towards the one that will claim you."

Mrs. Trezevant had quite recovered from her embarrassment.

"Yes," she answered; "but they are not to be allowed to draw lots for me. To engage in a sort of deaconry would decimate my visiting-list, and to belong to chapters would open the door to apostasy. I simply want to do something which may be qualified as 'good' in a simple way."

The doctor fingered a carved ivory paper-cutter, slowly assimilating her words and prospecting upon her possible motives.

"I remember that I asked you to tiptoe into these projects long since, my dear Mrs. Trezevant, and you refused point blank. All joking aside, what has brought you round?"

Mrs. Trezevant answered promptly.

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“This may be only a phase, so I beg of you to take me at my word while it lasts. Last year I was a sybarite of invalidism, taking my pleasures seriously. You may not believe it in the light of my present amiability, but I was very hard to live with, being headstrong, capricious, just sick enough to make the state of my health an excuse for my selfishness,—like a woman who conceives herself to be absolutely right, and for some particular reason those whom she upbraids all wrong. There is a strange, morbid egotism in this view, and she is unconscious that she becomes to others about as agreeable as is a thistle’s needle imbedded in one’s finger-tip.”

“I’ll not permit it,” expostulated the doctor. “You’re not that kind of woman at all.”

Mrs. Trezevant looked up solemnly, continuing as if he had not spoken. “And people resent her manner as an indignity to themselves,—they mentally bristle towards

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her. The atmosphere which she disrelishes is what she herself brings to them, and the liveliest spirits get under a luke-warm manner, as an umbrella when a storm comes, with and in her."

Mrs. Trezevant leaned back more at ease, as calm as if it were some one else than herself she were dissecting.

"She is one of a peculiar class of women—thank heaven, we are in a minority—who imagine that Providence is recklessly remiss in its duty, and needs suggestions from them. They make an irreligion of their moroseness, and the discomforts they inflict upon others rebound with poetic justice upon themselves. Dr. Paradise, why sour the milk of human kindness and then denounce it for being sour?"

The doctor made a gesture of negation.

"I'll not believe you," he said, shocked, and amused, too, at the inventions against herself. "You reveal yourself too clearly to try and convince me of such frailty. Besides,

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that which one is aware of is only one-half true."

"But it is true!" insisted the lady, earnest again. "And all the time I was rushing tantivy here and there, finding time to be social, though I could not be polite. However, people bore with me,—but that was last year; that is why I am making such a confession. I knew it all the time last year, but I didn't want you to know it. Now I do want you to know it and the creature, too, who grumbled,—and why should she have grumbled when, looking back upon it, she had everything in life?"

The doctor saw that she was serious, and met her mood.

"It has occurred to you that persistent grumbling is profane," he said, "and not less so because it finds vent in no oath. A grateful recognition of all the good in life and of its Giver is of thousand-fold more moment. Why fret over pimples when there are Alps?"

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Dr. Paradise put the question as such ; he hated homiletics if he hated anything.

Mrs. Trezevant nodded her acquiescence.

“That is why I have reformed,” she said, leaning forward again, almost unconsciously. “I want to be something else for a while, even if I prove a Samaritan in promise and a Levite in performance. Your message has reached me, and *I* want to be useful, too—almost as useful as you are. Time and again you have helped me, and I was too proud to admit it. Now I want you to know. ‘I proved thee also at the waters of strife.’”

Dr. Paradise rose and went to her, took her hand and grasped it firmly. No word was spoken ; a sound would have ravished the solemnity of the instant. Then he resumed his chair and listened, cheered that a covenant had been made with a soul that was well worth while.

“So I thought Sunday that instead of wondering how I could help you in your work—I’ve seen you toiling up-hill often—I’d lend a

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hand." As if she dreaded her thought or tone had been too eager, she paused and assumed her usual light air. "Your wishes,—well, I think if wishes were horses you'd have to get up a corner on hay!"

Both laughed in frank good humor, though the doctor was a little disconcerted at her rapid change of mood, but she went back to her original motive as earnest as before.

"I have come to believe that people live too noisily, Dr. Paradise," said the lady. "Even you were noisy Sunday when you averred with bluntness that, while there were grave needs to be relieved, money was not to be shaken from people by the lapel. Your sermon was rather bristling anyway. It made me irritable to have you tell me pointedly—of course every one felt it was aimed at him—not to play Christian any longer, but to try and be one."

"Egotist!" exclaimed the minister. "I was not aiming at you at all. Next to my

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friend Rabbi Rosenfeld, I consider you the best Christian I know.”

Mrs. Trezevant grew brighter. “Ah, I know! You are not meaning in *our* category the people who say grace as a moral pepsin before a meal.”

“You are quite right,” answered the doctor. “And it isn’t giving counsel at bed-sides alone that works good. Let yourself be understood. There is speech in touch alone.”

The paper-knife was for a moment an object of close observation.

“I am glad you have spoken to me like this, dear friend; you do justice to my faith in your sympathetic nature. In designating any particular work for you, I must look to you for suggestions, for no one may claim the best way to approach the poor or the unfortunate. Of course, you want to deal with such people?”

The lady bowed, for some reason her eyes moistening.

“Remember,” the priest continued, “a

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truant bit of sunshine in a dark room is often more welcome than a glaring lamp with a polished chimney. If a flower be borne aright, the summer that yields it accompanies it to the invalid. And the poor are our creditors by Divine endorsement of their claims."

"That is just what I meant," said Mrs. Trezevant, earnest again. "I am at sea when I read theology, and my faith drags anchor. But one knows instinctively one is doing right when one is tending the biblical sheep."

"Their condition is a demand upon us," exclaimed the doctor, forcefully, losing himself, as was his wont out of the pulpit. "We should seek them in a meek spirit, for where suffering is, the Compassionate One goes with us. 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way?' was said by those whom He met after He rose from the dead. He had pity on multitudes lest they might faint by the way, and blessed

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frugal fare to an increase by which all were filled, and He still lingers to quicken devout fellowship, with its manifold hands, to provide bounties for the unfortunate—a different form of miracle, but to the same end and wrought by the same presence.”

“You alarm me!” cried Mrs. Trezevant. “I could do more if I felt that not much was expected of me.”

The minister spoke reassuringly. “We may each have a different aptitude for kind service, but if its illustration be ardent, not mechanical, a fervor, not a fad, and with solicitous deference to the immediate need, be it soup or Scripture, a portion or a prayer, one may be a worthy ministrant. Take, then, these wretched ones flowers or bread; read to them; tease a laugh out of their babies; get for them what they might want and not what they might be told they ought to want.”

“Those are your directions for a weak handmaid like me?” asked Mrs. Trezevant, appalled.

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“Care not for the moment whether you aid any particular charity, but move quietly among the poor ; discover where food, coal, shoes, or what else may be needed, and supply the sore want. Remember, poor people have stomachs as well as souls.”

The priest was fervent again, aware that he was guiding a rich and generous parishioner to independent charity.

“What do the churches for the least of these?” he asked. “Little more than offering them a pint’s measure as a quart’s. To deny them is to devour ‘widow’s houses, and for a pretense make long prayers’ when the rich seek their pews, as a sort of settee, to rest from secular cares.”

“You have right ideas of religion,” agreed the widow. “Tell me more.”

“Practical religion,” said the minister, “is a garment with pockets. It is not intended to hang from your shoulders an hour Sundays and from a peg the other six days. The whole week should be a candle to nourish

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the Sabbath wick. I am frank with you, and always intend to be with the congregation at St. Elizabeth's, or wherever I may be called. A pastor may not misuse his calling as an office to stroke sins and send the sinners forth sleek and reassured. This is my justification for berating my people last Sunday. You may not have liked the sermon altogether, but it has made you think. Did not the Master enter the temple at Jerusalem to deal peremptory rebuke and vindicate its claims? What member of St. Elizabeth's is better than he who had kept all the commandments yet shrank from His injunction to care for the uncared-for? The wise men of the East bore precious gifts to the manger; so do I ask you, dear friend, to seek the hovel yourself and the sick-room, where He awaits you and where your gifts will be precious. In the name of His cherished poor, I ask for your Christianity in bundles, with your heart-throbs behind them."

"To show," Mrs. Trezevant said, slowly,

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“that I am something more than a Pharisee.”

“We give only scant measure when we give our most. You have given me great hope,” answered the doctor, smiling once more. “What you have said of my up-hill work is boundlessly true, Mrs. Trezevant. It is furrowing in fields knotty with problems and folk that have taken root. However, for such encouragement as yours a man ought to be brave indeed. It always amuses me when I come across love and brotherliness defined in the dictionary,—as if one could put their meanings into words,—and then note their application in ordinary usage. Alas! love is found oftener in the letter than in the spirit.”

“And the idea of describing love by quotients!” exclaimed the lady, feeling much more at home in levity than in gravity.

The rector looked at the graceful creature as she crossed the room and familiarly inspected the mantel ornaments, and a thought

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occurred to him that he was only half-conscious he uttered aloud.

“If you don’t fall in love again, my friend, you will be a means of grace to the husband of your future.”

The widow paused and listened, startled, not daring to break the charm of silence. There was only a hint to reckon on and the speaker’s expression was not misleading. He was stolidly gazing out of the window upon the cool lawn.

The lady resumed her tour of the room, glancing at book-shelves with the curiosity to know what he read besides theology.

“You labor under a misapprehension concerning me,” she said. “You don’t understand my loving. I don’t even like the poor; they bore me—you can’t imagine! You do something beautiful, even self-denying, and before you have retrenched in purse or sympathies they are back at you again. I think the reason I am so fond of dances and dinners is because the people

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who go to them try to make one believe they are much richer than they are. That sort of pretense is refreshing after an ordeal of bald recountings of poverty. Poverty is hideous!"

"Oh, we all love the odor of comfort," remarked Dr. Paradise. He was beginning to feel that the lady's dissimulation would bankrupt him; he knew her to be an unthinking, unorganized, and frequent giver, plenary and silent. He filliped his memoranda—he called them his bunch of keys to subjects and events—and he said to himself that he had only to brace himself against jars and let her spend herself. She did that with wisdom, whatever her extravagances of speech.

"A great thinker was Stevenson, but the greater man," observed Mrs. Trezevant, passing her gloved finger across the backs of a series of ruddy volumes standing in the open shelves. "The flight of the Princess Seraphine is the prettiest thing I ever read

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anywhere—the grading from night to dawn and the general scape. Do you remember how she ‘dabbled her hands in the long grass’? It is the most exquisite bit. It has a correspondence in Grieg’s ‘Morgenstimmung.’ How unlike that self he is, Stevenson, when he deals with the Suicide Club. What is your idea of suicide, Dr. Paradise, seriously?”

“One’s ideas can only be serious on that subject,” answered the minister, quietly. “Hume was an arrant coward—he could have told us much about his theories had he dared; as it was, he was bowed to the dust-level by the controversial war he sounded the tocsin for. There can be but one opinion about suicide, Mrs. Trezevant. The act is the expense for imagined freedom; the purchase of a righteous punishment. No suicide is justifiable. It is murder without provocation; it is brute strength as a boast; it is an intolerable cowardice; it is irreverence; it is rebellion against God; it is wrong!”

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Mrs. Trezevant looked her lightness. She was perusing new titles as she moved slowly before the book-shelves, apparently not listening.

“It is never what one does that damages,” she murmured, in her mocking way; “it is that which one does not do and which is found out.”

Dr. Paradise divined her mental attitude and almost hated her for her irrelevant satire. She had struck one of the chords that were always out of his pitch.

“May I ask if you are going to dinner at Madame de Marigny’s Sunday?” asked Mrs. Trezevant, drawlingly; “because my invitation has been revoked on account of the illness of Miss Livaudais and her little brother. Too bad, isn’t it? As you are such a friend——”

“It is my good fortune to be expected there once a week, and usually Sundays,” returned the doctor; “and Colonel Dan is another institution. We are all very old friends.”

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Mrs. Trezevant left the shelves and stood for an instant on the opposite side of the table from the doctor, and then dropped into a chair. Dr. Paradise, who had been standing, resumed his seat. The visitor seemed a little troubled to put her intention into words.

“It would be infinitely pleasanter for the parish at large were you to have a real rectory, don’t you think? I mean a whole house and independent appointments. It may be managed, I am sure. I think it would be a first-rate object for the people to work to accomplish, quietly, without public subscription—do you agree with me?”

The rector was surprised, but answered frankly.

“I am very comfortable here,” he said, appreciative of her solicitude, but not understanding. “The Barrows are delightful people when I wish them to be so, and absolutely out of the world when I am needful of quiet. It is a privilege to live in their home.”

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“No doubt. But”—the widow sought her words—“at least in this I am like the Creoles; I believe in every one having his *particulier*. You will marry one of these days; and if you should marry a Creole, notwithstanding the difference in creeds—I wonder if ever you would commit such a folly!”

“There is no law in the church against it,” answered the doctor, smiling.

Mrs. Trezevant seemed very good-humored again.

“Something like Miss Le Breton?”

“Something—or much.”

Still Mrs. Trezevant beamed, questioning as if impassively curious.

“But you—mental to the tips of your fingers—there are not many Creole girls like that. They are loyal—oh, loyal! and good wives, and—I am supposing these things—*mignonne* and sweet, and when they are pretty——! But—for the long evenings under the winter lamp?”

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Her voice was only slightly inquisitorial, and she shone upon him as if he were a new acquaintance to be charmed.

Her companion thought the turn of conversation was unnecessarily personal, but considered it all in the day's work, as minister's days go, replete with surprises.

"There are exceptions among the Creoles, of course," continued Mrs. Trezevant, steadily. "Every rule is one-fourth exceptions,—but, is Miss Le Breton an exception?"

"I think," said the doctor, flushing, "that Miss Le Breton is rather a fair sample of the immature Creole. She cannot be termed bookish, though she reads. When she has found her niche she will not be a statuette, but a living soul in it. The Creole woman does not aim to shine as a litterateur, but she does not lack charm for that."

"Granted," returned Mrs. Trezevant, coolly. "Miss Le Breton—of course, we are speaking of her even amid our generali-

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ties—is beautiful, certainly, and her smile ought to be done in vermilion for future generations to see. But isn't it the beauty of the Solfaterre, whose bud is completer than its bloom? She is delightful, and really quite ambitious! '*Ah, l'esprit!*' she said the other day, when she was with me, 'If I were witty!' It is too amusing to hear her literalness, isn't it?"

"A woman's growth in our shallow society means isolation," answered the doctor, staid-visaged. "I think the young lady speaks excellent English and with few traces of her vernacular."

"Yes, especially when she says '*Mémère* won't let me read the *gazettes*; they are suppressed from her hand.' Isn't that quite delicious?"

The doctor did not answer. He was busily trying to think of another topic that would be less mutually interesting.

"Convent-trained, most of the Creole girls are, I believe," resumed the lady. "Ah, the

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convents! where learning is served, like food, frugal-wise, and a blanc-mange mold sort of propriety is guaranteed by circular! But I will admit that your Miss Le Breton has other qualities. It is, as she confessed to me the other day over our tiffin, 'My one gift is that I am a good listener—which does not inspire envy in my friends, *au moins!*' I have often wondered," the lady rose and fastened a button of her glove, as if she were going, "why your friendship with the De Marigny household is so old. You have seen Angèle grow up, I hear."

"And our tastes dovetail perfectly," answered the doctor, keeping a grip on his feelings. "It is the Jack Sprat simile, if you please."

The lady looked scornful. "Ah, the fat and the lean." The doctor winced. "It is very well, that, for proletarian persons on an economic principle, but dangerous to the artistic nature. Nothing breathes inharmony between two persons who have to sit

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at a common table like incompatibility of palate."

She picked up her parasol. "Of course, you need not make the application gastronomically, though that one is the truest."

The contents of her words did not reach him, but a subaudition did.

"I should not care to see you married to an absolutely commonplace woman, Dr. Paradise," she continued, always self-collected. "There is one other reconciliation more pathetic than that which follows unrequited love, and that is a five-year-old commonplace marriage. Perhaps there is no being reconciled to a satiated passion."

Dr. Paradise, who had risen too, walked to the end of the room, not answering. Mrs. Trezevant felt a fear tightening at her heart. She had made him recoil when the object of her visit had been to show an eagerness in his work, which, as a member of his congregation, she could do, believing Angèle away out of his sphere of usefulness. She sighed.

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“Half our homes are monasteries for the soul. It is only the idealist who knows when his brain is married. So many marriages are gross sin. So few ideal.”

She could not bear to leave him in that mood, though she felt that she had already exhausted his leisure.

“Lend me a book,” she said.

He bade her choose from his shelves.

“No,” she said, her voicing growing almost tender; “lend me something that *you* like. An intimate book. It is always interesting to know what people read.”

“Would you care for the discourses of Epictetus? they’re fine reading; or Addison’s Essays, though you probably have all these, and Macaulay’s——”

“Give me Epictetus; I want to make friends,” she said.

Dr. Paradise sought the volume.

“I probably left it upstairs in my room,” he said. “It will be only the matter of an instant to fetch it.”

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She would have spared him the effort, but that it seemed sweet to have him do something for her ; it would have been sweeter to have done much more for him. When he had gone, she moved across to his side of the table and fingered the ponderous cut-glass cube that served him for an inkstand, and picked up his pen-holders, woman-fashion, to discover the sort of point he used. Then, quite accidentally, her eyes fell upon an open sheet, the large, white, official kind he used for outlining his sermons. She supposed there was a sermon in embryo, and she did not think it would be indiscreet to get an insight, before the world would know, of his thoughts for the following Sunday. Indeed, she trembled with the joy of sharing so much with him a whole week before his congregation would be taken into his confidence.

She listened, guiltily, and with warm face, and bent down and kissed the expressionless page, dropping into his chair. She looked

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up again, waited an instant, and, with smiling lips, bent her head to the sheet. She read a line in wonderment, forgetting to listen now, zealous with a discreditable interest.

“The last interview taught me that there must be no more like it. The punishment is such that, if you understood it, you would not inflict. Do you understand? There is no resentment, no pique; that would be unjust to you. No change of feeling; no other pleasure so dear to me as that I give up; no blame of you. Whenever I feel that I less want to see you, that I will care less, then I shall beg to see you again. I so fear you will not fully understand—that I love you too much, too much to allow myself to love you at all.”

Mrs. Trezevant glided to the chair she had vacated across the desk. She was pale and stiff and dry-eyed.

“There is another woman,” she kept repeating somewhere in her brain; “two women and one love. Not even a catholic

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sentiment like Christianity can cope with that disparity.”

A great hopelessness engulfed her. She felt weak, as if the air were stifling her, and she passed out of the room and had placed her hand on the hall-door when she recovered herself sufficiently to remember that escape would arouse a mortifying suspicion. So she walked back, sat down, and picked up a little volume of ancient and modern prayers. She fastened unseeing eyes upon the text, and Dr. Paradise entered the room.

“Here is the Epictetus,” he said. “Keep it as long as you wish.”

Mrs. Trezevant rose again and held up the little volume of prayers. “Do you get any comfort out of it?” she asked.

“When one lacks resources of this kind, it is useful,” he answered.

“Then I shall ask another favor of you, on the principle of the woman in the Bible who said, ‘As Thou hast given to me the north well, oh, my lord, give to me the south

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one also.' I want this little compilation of prayers. You remember, do you not, that I have reformed?"

Mrs. Trezevant gave him quite a natural smile, radiant but lacking warmth. She seemed not to want to go, yet there was nothing left to be said, and the task fell to her to weave the dry, gaping ends of the conversation into selvages.

"Of course, one can't describe the emotions of other converts," she said, moving towards the door; "but I feel as if being a Christian means that life is all ember days."

She extended her hand, and in another moment had left the house.

The doctor went back to his table and to his ream of paper. He read slowly all he had written, without a suspicion that other eyes than his had glimpsed the lines sacred to himself. After lighting a cigar, he re-read them, and, with the last tip of flame of a match, he ignited the page and dropped it upon the hearth, a brittle char.



## IX

### IN COMMUNION WITH NATURE

*“Di moin qui vous l’aimin, mo va di vous qui vous yé.”*  
(Tell me whom you love, and I’ll tell you who you are.)

DR. PARADISE, full of strange emotions new to his trained yet supple nature, passed the De Marigny home, the home of his heart and spirit, and continued further into the old *quartier*, inwardly unsettled as to his destination. He desired to be out of doors, under the sky, where a need for large breathing could be accommodated in a sudden blow that he could smell coming up from the Gulf. The jangle of cars, the shuffle of old feet, and the click of young ones had been too steadily familiar in a life with which he began to feel over-intimate. It was the echo in the woods he craved, or, indeed, no breach of

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peace, no sound at all, but most of all no human sound. He had always loved Nature, the forests' deeps ; and even in the pulpit—though he believed he was a man who fitted snug in his avocation—he was like the vine which, in its very joy of being, aspires beyond the geometry of a wooden frame on which one would train it ; the law in its veins an energy one may not arrest, however shapely the trellis. Most of the Master's lessons, he would say, had been taught out of doors, in scenes eloquent with salutary lessons.

The minister's steps led him to Esplanade Avenue, perhaps the choicest thoroughfare in New Orleans, where is less obtrusion of walls to the very *banquette* than up-town, the domiciles standing back as with a modesty learned from her and expressed in a deference to her, and she requites it in breezy calms that bring a sense of leisure and content. Who walking down Esplanade Avenue to-day recalls that Dubreuil, who owned the

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tract through which it runs, built there the first sugar-mill, and vainly attempted to make sugar from cane first introduced to the colony by Jesuits in 1751?

The association did occur to Dr. Paradise transiently. History and commerce are necessary, as is digestion; but a discussion of its processes would not be an especially alluring theme for soliloquy. So he passed on, grimly set about the lips, outward towards the bayou and across it, past the picturesque road to the Spanish Fort, and beyond into the recesses of mossy oaks. He entered the nearest gate to the old park, which was formerly the duelling-ground, popular with the flower of Southern chivalry as it was understood three decades ago. The playstead was deserted, the boats in the meandering lake bobbing idly on its breast.

He walked till he suddenly realized he had travelled far and that his spirit was a sore burden, and even the silence which had

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at first soothed became oppressive. He breathed deep, as if to exorcise the brooding within him. No one, he thought, could endure and overcome solitude, if it were not for the hope of companionship in the future, or for the belief in invisible companionship in the present.

The doctor crossed the rustic bridge and sat down on the tufty sward, taking out a small volume of the *Hydriotaphia*. He did not read, however, but practically went to church, being one of those who substantially believe that the Sabbath is nowhere beyond the call of steeples. The oaks themselves—he was leaning against the bole of one of these—were a stately minster, with heaven's air sifted through a sieve of trees, and he knew that here there was no patent on a special form of worship.

Dr. Paradise picked up a leaf that blew down upon his open book, like an autumn sibyl in forecast of winter, and responsive to the first vernal stirs to predict summer again

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—a contrast to the juiciness of the ripening summer that was already everywhere. The leaf had floated swirlingly, guttate and crisp, and reminded him of his personal autumn and of the summer that had passed him by while he slept. He settled back and sought the laced meshes above of mossy strands and intricate branches.

“Such trees might be both pulpit and teacher to a man,” said the doctor, aloud, though they were laughing just then in their new greens and broad, gray beards. “Noble old Methuselahs!” continued Dr. Paradise. “Grim, wrinkled, gnarled of trunk, yet your voices sound from above, where ye are always young! Ye are as genuine seers as was Elijah, and this, which gives rest for my back, has a noble complacency as an example of conduct. I think of the storms you have battled and baffled, hugging your strength into your frame, and always lustier in seasoned sinew from each conflict. Now, your hoarse roars have subsided to tranquil,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

reminiscent murmurs, and what a spendthrift of smiles you are in flecks! You have none of the unwisdom with which we bewail our past, but you have a firmer brace and a bolder reach because of your ordeals."

There was no use flying in the face of the stodgy problem as to why middle-age, as well as youth, should learn and relearn rudimentary love about the time of the spring equinoctial. Behold, the day was open and green, the black mold of the unfurrowed soil volute with herbage, fresh and germinant from its rest. Even Dr. Paradise, bowed as he was with a brave sorrow, drew in his angularities, trained to meet the demands of the unnatural life we lead, and acknowledged himself a nursling at the breast of the primal mother. His heart began to participate in the common birth showing everywhere; and surgings of another hope, not the dearest one, assisted at the revival of his soul. But all conditions resolved into but one aspiring: the flash of sudden sunlight and the occa-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

sional electric winking of the pink sky over the western seam of trees, the physical vigor yielded through the black pores of the ground, the moisty smell of the grass and the flash of the flower-patches, brought in tremorous majesty—for eager delight brings its own shadow of danger always—a warm intuition. The air breathed Love, the mountainous sky, the edge of the world yonder where the green furze was margent to the sky, the susurrant boughs, the carilloneuring of the birds, the pierrette butterflies, theiving from verdant altars the attared sweets of a million chalices, bespoke the actuality and the lavishness of love! The clouds were floating like spume, and the evening was growing cool, less serene, sullen, and a mistaken bull-frog in the lake sounded its note like that of a loose banjo-string.

The natural parquetry at the doctor's feet was stirring in the breath of the upper airs.

“It is the end of the year,” he said, aloud ;  
“it is the end of the year, whether the month

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

be March or December. And, will I, nill I, it is the end for me.”

He looked straight ahead into the hazy savanna beyond his vantage, feeling for the stub of pencil he always carried in the pocket of his waistcoat. Opening his book, he began to scribble deliberately on the fly-leaf, an act that the average bibliophile would shudder to see; but the books of Dr. Paradise were his tools, and he used them, whatever his needs. In his minute, scholarly handwriting, he composed, with few inter-lineations, some verses to the departing month. Never had an Indian summer seemed more tragic than this dying March, not alone in its meanings to him, but even visually, for the storm, creeping up from the Gulf, typical of the semi-tropical climate, had transformed spring into twilighted autumn with lightnings throbbing in the west.

“It is presaging winter, that wind,” said the doctor. “I wonder if I have forgotten time and been in a trance for a season?”

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Then he read his impressions from the  
bescribbled fly-leaf :

Thro' the dusk a murmur urges,  
Stirring tremors in the trees  
Like the swell of solemn surges  
On the shores of distant seas.

Ere upon a sombre morrow  
Lift their crests to clearer tone,  
And the burden of their sorrow  
Thunders in a mighty moan !

O'er the skies the light scuds thicken  
Like birds frightened from their rest,  
And with eager pinions quicken  
Towards the silence of the West.

All day long has swept a mutter  
From its waking to its wane,  
As when plaints the heart would utter  
Falter for their very pain.

All day long has breathed a Something,  
Which still in the darkness grieves,  
And seems prone a broken, dumb thing,  
Sobbing in the fallen leaves.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

All day, as when He, the Holy,  
    Bent and traced upon the ground,  
Reached the solemn oaks and slowly  
    Wrote their speech in shadows round.

Lo, now cooler airs assail us  
    With their wierd, impetuous hums,  
And affront the night to hail us  
    That the rude Auctumnus comes ;

Comes a Harper with his bold strains,  
    And with lusty lungs to rouse  
Tranquil Nature with the old strains  
    As his strong hand smites the boughs ;

Comes the quiet woods to kindle  
    Till in red and gold they flare,  
And consume their green and dwindle  
    But to branches, gaunt and bare ;

Comes to vex us with his vigors  
    And to mock our summer-suns  
As he heralds all the rigors  
    Of the Winter he fore-runs.

Rumble now the skies with rages,  
    Lo, a storm will lash the flight  
Of this day unto the ages  
    While we slumber through the night.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Even now a farewell pleads it,  
Phantom feet in rain descend  
Ere a gust of tempest speeds it,  
And we murmur,—This the End.

He looked up, forgetting that he was not in the study at home where he was wont to write; instead, he found himself still in the amplest of salons, amid the daintiest of hangings, carpets, and changing frescoes, all losing their summeriness by the moment. He took his hat off and let the now rampant wind flutter his thick hair. His muse, leech-wise, had cooled the inflammation from his sorrow; indeed, he never rhymed unless he felt the need for blood-letting, and, having served that purpose, his verses were burned like old lint.

“We are strange creations,” he said aloud. “I have said it is the end of everything, and yet my heart is leaping within me at the prospect of remeeting my fellows, and I must confess to thorough refreshment.”

He rose, brushing the cohesive segments

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

of bark from his coat and stretching to erectness.

“Ah, well,” he said, with a wan smile, “hope is like a bad clock,—forever striking the hour of happiness whether it has come or not.”



## X

### ANGÈLE AS AN EARTHLY MINISTRANT

*“La guerre ’verti pas tue beaucoup soldats.”*

(An averted war does not kill many soldiers.)

ANGÈLIQUE had held vigil forty hours without closing her anxious eyes, kneeling beside the bed, praying with all her might, and during Carmélite’s conscious intervals soothing her with soft-spoken caressings and giving the medicines with accurate regularity. She was in a calm frenzy to impart the superfluity of life within herself to Carmélite, who seemed so nearly exanimate ; she breathed lightly, grateful that the workings of Nature were noiseless that Carmélite might sleep in peace even while those about her must continue to exercise the functions of being. All the love for her cousin she had indifferently supposed

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

to be within her, if required, she manifested now in passionate eagerness to bring the girl back to health. Beside this higher prompting, she knew that if Carmélite were to die, a shadow would hover about her the rest of her own life. She longed to confide in some one—and only the doctor would understand perfectly, she felt—that she might enjoy a sympathy during the hours that irked her by reason of the pain of her conscience. But there was no hope of seeing the doctor until Mémé's fate was decided, for she could not be spared a moment, the sick girl depending every instant upon Angèle's ministrations, hysterically pleading for life, as from her slayer. Meanwhile Angèle had long hours in which to think, and to understand her plan of action whatever might befall. There was Mémère to be brave for, and the colonel would care, and 'Ine, and the doctor. She depended most upon the doctor's strength and philosophy. She did not always follow his logic, but she inevitably adopted his

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

deductions, for the reason that she was superstitious about disobeying him, and she thus yielded him a kind of authority which he was careful never to relax.

But, after all, she thought, as she sat in the darkened room inhaling the effluvia of fever and drugs, the doctor did not need her ; he had a worldful of friends, and he was intending to marry Mrs. Trezevant, whom she knew to be beautiful and whom she suspected of being intellectual like the doctor. So, only Mémère and 'Ine really wanted her ; and when they would pass,—well, she had always said she would be a nun. That was peace and freedom from trials ! Had she not been vowed a Child of Mary since that attack of measles twenty years ago ? With that fact in mind, had she not worn many party-dresses of blue ? Ah, poor little Maman would like to look from heaven and see her a nun, she was sure, lest she marry a Frenchman. Maman had bidden Mémère to tell Chuchute that as soon as she would be grown.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Madame Livaudais found such sensible devotion in her niece that, distraught as she was and ill fit to undertake the nursing of Marcel, she was not now so divided in her attentions and gave her care to the boy. Once in a while she would go to Carmélite's door and look in, a phantom with a face yellow as old wax in a state of frozen hysteria.

Angèle would feel her presence, look up, and try to reassure her with a smile. There was no wavering effort at a response from the aunt, who would sigh heavily and utter in a dead voice, "*Pitié, mon Dieu!*" and vanish. The mother's melancholy was an additional weight upon Angèle's heart, responsible as she felt she was for all the sorrows of that home. Madame de Marigny was in charge of 'Ine, who escorted the old dame to early Mass each morning, after which both would stop in to take a look at the patients and shed a tear for the nurses,—the visitors were quite as anguished about these as about the sick members of the family.

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

Madame felt herself to be a very left-handed nurse; eager to accomplish and help, but her strength and intuitions for the sick-room had been expended long since. So she prayed for hours, whether before the little shrine in her room, or before that of the Immaculate Conception at the Cathedral, or sitting upright in her chair with her book.

She was very anxious about Carmélite and Marcel, but fearful lest the strain being undergone by Angèlique should undermine her health.

“Ah, my poor Marie Angèlique! my adored baby!” she would sigh from time to time as a relief from set prayer, and then listen as long as patience would permit to the tales of 'Ine about Angèlique's girlhood. Then it would seem that the praise was of the dead, and she would rise, frantic in her inaction.

“She were forever packin' roun' 'er dawg,” Victorine would say. “Tétesse, you 'member Fauvette Le Breton. Dat wuz de bad-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

des' dawg! He wuz so rotten he wuz tainted. W'en dat mis'ible dawg fell sick, dat chile *wou'n* go to bed none, but nus dat dawg tell he die!"

"An' we all took mou'nin' fo' a mont', I r'member," answered Madame de Marigny, wistfully, tender towards any recollection associated with her beloved grandchild. "An' den we bury him in de garden, an' he is yet dere."

'Ine nodded. "Chuchute was sho' fond o' dat dawg," she said. "She cry two day' fo' her po' *ton-ton*. Dat dawg oughter gone 'fo' he ever come. An' us tryin' to keep trouble f'om dat chile."

Madame rose. It was too horrible. Angèlique was not dead, like Elphée; and, living or dead, none were so precious as these. She would not have Angèle spoken of as if she had only to do with the past. She fingered her silver rosary. "In de mi'll of life we are in det'," she murmured, without humor.

But Victorine knew her obligation to keep

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

madame entertained. Angèle had told her to talk all she wished to and never to leave Mémère.

“Is dey got dat ooman Eusèbe nussin’ dat chile, Tétesse?” she asked. “She fool. She de kin’ to give a chile foot-bat’ ef he leg cut off! Me, Ah don’ see how Momzelle Titine kin stan’ dem servant’. Dere’s Joseph. Ah nev’ wants to work wid a Joseph. All de Joseph boys is mischeevous and de Joseph men is scolds.”

Madame continued to click her beads as she told them off.

“Hahn! he say de firs’ time he fadder ever come in de house de fadder spik so rough he got mad wid him an’ nev’ spik to him affer. Now, w’at kin’ o’ talk is dat? You know w’at Ah tell ’im, me? *‘Fiché moin la paix!’* You got fi’ papa!”

Then perhaps Achille Bel-Air would return with the latest tidings of the stricken household. Carmélite was usually slightly delirious. On the afternoon of the third day Joseph

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

came, and Victorine met him downstairs. One could never be sure of Victorine. Approached with geniality, she was liable to respond with bitterness. She might prove nettle or thistle-down.

In the entresol she brushed Joseph with her head high and more than unusually tweaky.

“You tell Momzelle Titine Ah’m comin’ to nuss dat boy ef she’ll sen’ one o’ you nigger’ here to stay wid Tétesse.” She pretended not to notice the man save as a receiver of messages.

“You a nigger yo’s’e’f,” answered Joseph, teasingly.

“Ah’m no nigger.” Victorine was decided and dignified. “Nigger wuz bawn on Good Friday, w’en Gawd wuz daid. Pé! Yo’ tongue got no Sunday—it never rest’.”

“Come wid me now,” invited Joseph, politely. “I’m goin’ right back to de house.”

“Ah woun’ pass on de *banquette* wid you,” responded Victorine. Then with scorn she

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

added, "St. Joseph, you got no biz'ness wid us *bon temps* folk nohow."

The man laughed with commendable good humor. "Dass all right 'bout St. Joseph. Dat ain' my name, nohow. *Polichinelle*, do'n you know yet dat I never gives de same name w'ere I works, so's de w'ite people cain' ketch up wid me? St. Joseph! You all time got sompin to say 'bout dat. You kin tek yo' St. Joseph, an' yo' St. Michel, an' yo' St. Pierre, ef you leave me *cinq piastres!*"

The man shouted at his wit and snatched some scraps of dinner from the shelf on which Céleste usually reserved her share.

Victorine grunted and shrugged her thin shoulders. "*Rendé service baille chagrin*," she remarked, contemptuously. (Render a service, expect a sorrow.)

They were in the doorway of the kitchen now.

"I prays dat some day de bayou will turn to one big san'wich an' de Basin to whiskey," Joseph observed, moving off to

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dodge the uplifted skillet Victorine had caught up in her remonstrance.

“So you ain’ name St. Joseph, *hein?*” muttered the nurse. “Well, you got no manner’ to talk ’bout dem lik’ dat ; dey’s sho’ w’ite folks, an’ dey is good for you.” Another thrust occurred to her. “You better tek de name o’ St. Pierre, cos yo’ sho’ is hard-haided.”

Joseph was nothing abashed. “I hears dat you is voodoo, *Polichinelle,*” he said, impertinently. “You kin change my name if you w’an’.”

Victorine never denied this title. It was sometimes a warrant for the good behavior of the kitchen. “Yass, Ah voodoo,” she said, half closing her small eyes and placing a hand on a hip in an attitude of positiveness. “An’ I kin mek work on you, too, nigger. An’ I knows a man what was sassy like you, an’ Ah don’ say who done it, but dat man wuz et up by snake’. Dey took one snake outen his haid ten yard’ long.”

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Joseph grew serious. "He mus' ha' taken a groun' puppy an' cook 'im an' eat 'im, cos dat meks you et up wid snake'. A voodoo don' tol' me dat befo'. But I ain got no hard feelin' fo' you."

"*Pas si bête*," answered the nurse.

Victorine did "pass on the banquette" with Joseph, with the permission of madame, who would follow later for her daily visit, with Céleste. She sent the usual messages through 'Ine to Bébé, to be careful of draughts and of fevers, and to take repose whenever the chance offered it. The nurse met the shower of charges with grim patience. "Dat chile has no feelin' fo' us," she commented. "Cos Méme sick no rizen dey mus' be sickness in *dis* family." Yet she adored the sacrifice of her "Chuchute," not understanding the full measure of the girl's remorse.

Madame Livaudais greeted Victorine tenderly when she learned that she had come to stay as long as she might be needed. She broke into hysterics almost, for the faithful

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negress had been Titine's "*Maman Tête*" and the common repository for the trials, woes, and transports of the family long before her birth.

Victorine, with the assurance and dignity of one so important to the household, sat beside the sleeping boy, with a palm-leaf fan, flicking at mosquitoes, her full-gathered skirts spread about her grandly, her arms on the arms of the chair, rocking gently. As soon as she entered, a calm seemed to pervade the room to counteract the vibrations set to work by the excitability of the mother, who now retired to a window where she could breathe fresher air, but keep the boy, so waxen and still, in her sight.

The odor of drugs was heavy in the room and there was no stir anywhere save the muffled swing of the rocking-chair. Victorine kept her eyes closed for the most part, praying; and when she would open them again it would be to gaze long upon the unconscious boy, whose breathing was so slight

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

that often his mother would have believed he had passed away in sleep.

Downstairs in the court-yard Joseph was polishing silver and singing one of the songs which gave him pride in his genius for metrical and lyrical composition. Sometimes he would pause for a rhyme or quaver for decision as to tune ; or there might be a suspension of tone when he gave absorbed attention to some intricate or embossed piece of tableware. With the faint click of a spoon laid down, his original song would recommence :

“ On de way to cane-break, close by de medder,  
Dere I had a forty-pound gun,  
But we short o’ ammunition, we loaded up wid  
punkin,—  
Anyt’ing to make de Yankee’ run.

“ Den, I lookin’ over yander, we see de cloud arisin’,  
Ve’y cloudy, goin’ to have a storm.  
But you ve’y much mistakin,’ de colored troop’ are  
comin’ ;  
Put de brass button on de uniform.”

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It seemed so wonderful to Madame Livaudais that the world could revolve in its old way when her domestic machinery was so clogged and she entirely indifferent to the comings and goings of men or events.

The hour passed wearily, as if the clock had run down and been wound long after without moving up the hands. But Madame Livaudais had no sense of time—the hours meant nothing to her unless Mémé and Marcel were in health, teasing her, worrying her in the way all true mothers love. Sérentine Rosière, the Gascon milkman, reined up his cart and rang his bell loudly beneath the window. The “dago” children at the corner made a great tantara with tin receptacles in their commercing with him. Ernestine rose and crept out to silence Joseph and to hold a short vigil with Carmélite; then she came back again, making scarcely a whisper as she passed, but uttering audibly in dejection of tone, “*Pitié, mon Dieu! Miséricorde!*”

Victorine continued to rock and to pray

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

inaudibly, but presently a slow, stern interest grew in her face. An arrow of light, the last evening ray, pierced the shutter and fell on the bed, and Ernestine in haste rose to ban it; but Victorine's swarth hand was raised and she had ceased to rock. Her face was illuminated to a whiteness not of mere physical tissue, and following her gaze, the mother turned her diverted glance again to the bed.

The boy's pale eyelids fluttered—he wetted his lips with his tongue—drowsily he opened his eyes. “*Mammoute!*” he called. His mother fell upon her knees at his side. “*Mo faim, Mammoute,*” whined the boy, peevishly; “*’Ine, j’veux mon café noir—et quique-choge*” (something).

Victorine slipped from the room and crossed the hall to Carmélite's room. Angèle saw her framed in the doorway, her hands uplifted above her holily-radiant face. The girl raised her brows questioningly.

“De pigeon’ is done cross water!” she

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said, softly, but with a note of glorification.  
“Gawd is good!”

Angèle traversed mentally the past few days to the era she had almost forgotten in her new misgivings and affections. “Marcel——”

“He’s goin’ well. He spik to his Mam-moute fo’ eat somet’ing. Gawd is good!”

Carmélite’s eyes flashed open,—the news had reached her sisterly consciousness. “Marcel goes better?” she asked, weakly. Without realizing how sick her brother had been, the fact was in-felt and retarded her own progress. So that Victorine went back to the boy’s room to tell his mother that Carmélite, too, was feeling better.

Angélique breathed deeply and said the most earnest prayer that had ever been provoked in her wilful heart. Her cousin’s dumbness had seemed to be of a retaliative quality, her own guilt being uppermost in her thought. Now she longed to tell Dr. Paradise all the truth, so that he might

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rejoice with her that God had been good and wrought His own will despite her unworthy interference.

“It is not a sin that I hate myself,” she soliloquized. “Numa, for whom I cared because he wouldn’t recognize my allures ! I have a mouse-trap for a heart, baited with vanity on a palpitant trigger. I hate you, Marie Angèlique. You love like a dilettante.”

Angèle kissed her cousin’s hand and dropped a repentant tear thereon which Carmélite never understood, nor would its falling have been explained had she, in her faintness, the interest to question.

As for herself, Angèlique was creepingly cold, and in the numbness and strangeness of her feeling could formulate but two longings : a bath and an old-time talk with Dr. Paradise. Both would mean stimulation and a shaking off of a fearful mental fatigue. She was self-sick with disappointment, now that her consideration had turned upon herself ; she felt that she had built a great fire

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in her heart which had proved of doubtful delight and warmth, and now there was left only the burnt-out slag. Further than this, she did not realize the mystery of her pain. The physician attending the two patients ordered nourishment of a tentative character for both, and assured the mother that there was no reason to apprehend a repetition of the boy's trouble; he would outgrow any predisposition to such attacks, and only care need be exercised for a few years in his diet and general conduct. Mademoiselle Carmélite had had one of those mysterious fevers that are grouped under the title of malaria, and which are endemic in semi-tropical latitudes. She should have a change of air.

Victorine said she did not intend to leave without Angèle, and the girl felt that she was too feeble to parley or to resist.

“Tétesse kin be alone all night fo' w'at Ah keer,” announced Victorine; “but Ah is come fo' yo' ole sassy self, an' Ah don' go tell you mek a start.”

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

“But, Nénaine?” queried Angèle, longing for her own room, her grandmother’s embrace, and the coolness of her wide bed.

Victorine was growing stolid by moments, authoritative and superior; her Madras was saffron and white, woven in outlines of determination. When she spoke, her large blue-ball ear-rings, purely ornamental and without a feint at being genuine, bobbed with emphasis.

“Dey is Nana, an’ *la veille Rose*, an’ dat nigger Joseph. You gotter come wid me, an’ dass w’at you gotter do. Yo’ Nénaine say so.”

“What time is it, ‘Ine?” asked Angèle, temporizing. She thought she would be sparing her own feelings to remain a while longer to know positively that Mémé would have a good night without further alarms.

Victorine glanced up at the clock. It had ceased ticking. “Huhn! Huhn! Dat clock don’ walk no mo’. Et’s time fo’ you an’ me to go home.”



## XI

### ANGÈLIQUE GOES TO CONFESSION

“ ‘J’ordi tout mounne allé a confesse

*Mais quand yé revini de ’église, diab’ jèté yé des péchés.’ ”*

(All the women go to confession nowadays, but as soon as they return from church the devil heaps more sins upon them.)

ANGÈLIQUE passed quietly out with her nurse after she had been bidden *au revoir* with profuse thanks and an exacted promise that she return on the morrow. There were not many blocks to go, and the girl felt the need of exercise and fresh air, so they walked, despite her impatience to be again enfolded in the old arms that held her closest. Though she aspired to that caress, there was an empty fate beyond it; there was nothing else. She was face to face with a future, seeming to have turned her

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

back upon all that had been before, and the atmosphere was noisome with the odor of her burned bridges. She knew her nearest duty was to Mémère and 'Ine. The colonel seemed to fade from her range of view, and there was no Dr. Paradise at all. Neither was there hope nor, for the matter of that, ambition. So Angèle languidly walked beside Victorine, her sprightliness of spirit gone, as is inevitable when there is no zeal and no desire.

Just inside the court-yard door, behind the Moorish jar and a clump of Spanish daggers, a shadow was waiting and startled Angèle and Victorine by springing into entity.

“Tell to madame dat Mamzelle L'Ange is come, 'Ine,” said the hushed voice of Toussine. “She is waitin'.”

Victorine passed up the stairs, lighted by an iron lantern many times out of proportion to the small jet of gas within it.

Toussine spoke quickly and in a low tone.

“*Tiens!* Pastonair Wangateur give it to-

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

day fo' you. You put dat li'l piece silk in yo' pray'r-book an' never take it out, never, never." She paused and fumbled in a bit of newspaper, and producing a tiny parcel, pressed it into Angèle's hand. "It's li'l charm fo' make good luck an' bring to you Missieu Numa. You buy ten cent' wort' rum an' put it w'ere no one kin drink it, or see it even. Dat will las' six mont'. You may drop t'ree drop on de li'l sack ev'ry Friday cep' Good Friday, and make wish w'ile you do dat an' sign o' de cross. You mus' wear dat all de time, all de time; in yo' corset, on yo' *scapulaire*, or in yo' purse; an' Pastonair say you mus' never let it fell on de flo'. Ef you look inside de sack, it will bring curse."

As soon as the promises were delivered, Toussine vanished like a wraith, and Angèle felt of the objects that had been placed in her hand to make sure she had not dreamed. Then, mounting the stairs rapidly, she gathered the slight old figure that stood there,

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

primed with impatience, close to her heart. Her grandmother led the girl to her own room to hear the story of the past days. There was so much to tell : a recounting of weary and anxious hours in which weariness was forgotten ; the present condition of the two patients ; the state of Nénaine, of the household generally, even to Joseph, the tireless messenger. Angèle was questioned and prompted to loquacity for an hour, when Madame de Marigny noted her languor and urged her to go to bed. The girl was nothing loath, but first said her prayers with her grandmother, performed all the tender offices to which the old dame was accustomed, kissed her, and tucked her in the bobinet-bar decently. She turned out the gas and sent a last glance towards the *veilleuse* flickering in its red glow on the oratory. Her prayers had been made dutifully and without spirit, for she did not feel prepared even for lip-service ; her tutelary Virgin seemed far off to-night. Beside, the voodoo charm which

## AN ANGEL BY BREVET

she had slipped into the bosom of her dress was hurting her.

When she reached her room, she sent Victorine on some inconsequent mission, telling her she wished to read a little before making ready for bed. When the footsteps of the nurse died down the corridor, Angèlique drew the amulet from her dress and placed it on the *duchesse*, where the full light of the candelabra could fall upon it. The ribbon intended for her prayer-book was a time-yellowed bit of brocade, of the pattern familiar to a long-gone generation, with scalloped edges and embossed flowers in the creamy weave. The little sack was of rose-colored flannel, scarcely more than an inch long and not so wide, and smelt strongly of black pepper. Angèlique smiled faintly, hesitated only an instant, and then with redoubtable courage slipped the point of her nail-scissors into the coarse white over-casting and ripped the bag open. Pressing the sides, she forced the contents upon a sheet of paper.

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Half an hundred seeds of large black pepper dotted the page, then, amid a flavor of spices, a quantity of glistening mineral like polished lead, but brittle as coal. There were also flakes of dried herbs, crumbs of mouldy bread, a wisp of hair, the half of a white bean, and a tarnished brass medal of St. Benedict. The mass looked pitifully impotent for good or ill as it was spread there, withered or garishly shining in the glare of the candles. Angèlique smiled with more heart.

“I am through with all that forever,” she said half-aloud, folding the fetish in the paper. “It is not that I do not believe, but I shall have no dealings with darkness. If I have desecrated this charm, the Holy Mother will protect me.” She moved to the window and fluttered the paper out beyond the balcony. When she looked at the sheet again, it was merely gritty and empty, and she crumpled it in her palm, tossing the light ball out upon the cobble-stones of the street. Then she

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yawned self-indulgently and sent a look of longing towards her great white bed.

The house-bell reverberated through the halls, its tinnience reaching Angèle in her upper chamber. The approaching *savates* turned, their owner grunted and retraced the long passage, talking to herself all the way. Angèle wearily unbound her crispy hair, too tired to think of aught but repose.

But she sprang up in another moment, startled to hear the familar voice of Dr. Paradise. He was asking if madame had retired, supposing, if he had thought about her at all, that Angèlique was still at the Livaudais home, where he had sent daily inquiry for the invalids. Angèle crept to the door and listened. She heard Victorine say that 'Tit-Té-tesse had come home and was going to bed, worn out, and the doctor express the hope that she would be rested in the morning. Then she heard his hand turn the knob. He was going.

Angèle stooped over the broad mahogany

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balustrade. "*Docteur !*" she called, in an unsibilant whisper. "Will you wait but a moment? I will come down."

Victorine grunted, "*T'en prie !*" and shuffled into the salon to make a light. She did not approve, and she made bold in the stress of her emotions and by right of a long acquaintance to tell the doctor that Angèle was exhausted from her long vigil and should have been in bed an hour before. Angèle did not take time, meanwhile, to fasten up her hair with pins, but as she came down the long staircase braided the goffered locks,—the doctor was such an old habit. Victorine disapproved of this unconvencion likewise; but Angèle would not listen, passing hastily into the faded old drawing-room.

Dr. Paradise was standing by the mantel, intent upon the white marble outlines of the features that had been those of the bride of Pierre de Marigny, tracing there some likeness to that bride's granddaughter. He had no idea of sitting, for he felt a considerate

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interest in the girl and knew she should be asleep.

The pallor of her face was alarming to him: it was the extreme creaminess of the magnolia-leaf accentuating the dim lines under her dark eyes. Notwithstanding these signs of responsibility, she was more the little girl he used to know than she had been during the last several years he had seen her. Her hair was braided as in the convent days and her smile was of all-eclipsing fineness and purity.

“*Dieu de mes pères*, how you stare at me!” exclaimed Angèle, not displeased, still smiling her virginal smile, and trying not to lapse into French, as she was apt to do when tired. “Sit down. I wanted you to come.”

“Only for a moment, then,” said the doctor, for once almost unwilling to do her bidding. “Victorine will hate me and Mémère will think me a trespasser.” He looked at her tenderly. “I see that you need rest, Angèle. You have been an angel, our

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angel,—not a brevet one, either, to Carmélite.” He lifted his tones above those of tenderness in a struggle to be rational. She was looking very weak and very beautiful. “Mémé is better. I said so many prayers—you have no idea. I knew that you sent every day to see how was Mémé and Marcel.” She trailed her fingers over her brow as if recollecting everything. “Why didn’t you ask for me in your messages as well? Ah, no, you were going to affairs. You missed nothing. Madame Trezevant’s reception, for example. Mémère read of it in the *journal*. The decorations were profused,—plants and maiden-fern hair and roses. Ah, I know! You have been there; isn’t it so? As for me, I cannot see, I cannot, cannot,—*why* you don’t marry with her. Is she not adorable?”

Her tones were peevish, and the doctor did not understand her meaning, so he kept to the main line of their conversation.

“I didn’t go to Mrs. Trezevant’s, child, and I have thought of you very nearly every

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moment since I saw you last ; but my thoughts were only worries, and I knew it would not improve matters to express them. Why didn't you write me just one line of rosemary? But, there. I know you have been harassed about Carmélite, dear, and I am happy for you that your anxiety is practically at an end. I told 'Ine to tell you not to exhaust yourself. Did she bear the word?"

"Yes," answered Angèle, good-humored once more ; "and it made me so happy that, not to laugh outright, I had to look quick for a sad picture of a persecution."

The doctor rose to go.

Angèle looked frightened. "But you are not to leave me just yet, *docteur*, for I have something to tell you. This is the confessional."

He reseated himself, glad for the additional moment. "I will listen, though I know you do not believe in my powers of absolution."

Angèle folded her hands and dared not meet his eyes. "I have been deceiving

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some one," she whispered, nervously, her face quite serious.

"Do not worry about that," answered the doctor. "To deceive some people is serving God."

Notwithstanding his light words the silent sense of heart-break was everywhere.

Angèle stretched her arms before her and closed her eyes. "My head is not clear, *docteur*. I am as tired as if I had been glad an hour. Ah, a conscience !"

Dr. Paradise smiled. "I'm glad your conscience won't let you rest," he said, half-teasingly, half-hopefully, to lift her burden. "There is hope, child, as long as we have a conscience. And you have never impressed me as a very robust specimen of sin."

Angèle revelled in the pause that followed, despairing to tell the story of the past fortnight. She felt herself disintegrating involuntarily as a ship might in a storm's shuddering sea.

"You can tell me anything, you know,"

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encouraged the doctor, bracing himself and forgetting his pain in a desire to afford her relief she seemed to crave. "Remember, even your real confessor, the one you most believe in, doesn't know you quite so well as I. When you were a tiny girl I saw the woman in you and loved you, Angèle; especially when I oftener saw the woman. Those visions were flashes in the pan. They blazed my pathway."

A dozen misgivings ran a cold race down her limbs. It was the pure child he had loved, not the vain and wicked woman; in this summary Angèle attained to adult estate and a great dignity, and a palpitant fear played with her at cross-purposes. She held her head like the holy monstrance, yet her heart was fainting.

"Pity, pity!" she cried, almost without knowing what she said. "I sent all my love into the world and it has come back unclaimed!" She burst into tears.

Dr. Paradise winced and then steadied himself before he answered. He did not

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trust himself to take her hand lest he give her the sorrow of realizing the havoc she had wrought in him, and himself the relief of tear-letting.

“Perhaps, child, it is the myth of love you sought, and not its finest mystery,” he ventured. “There is a great difference.”

Angèle stood up, tense and angry. “You have no word to soothe, you have no sympathy, no Christianity, even. I shall only tell you that I have done something that is very wrong—if it had not been for the intercession of the Blessed Mother, the result would have been entirely disastrous. As it is not so, because I have prayed, prayed, prayed, may I consider myself absolved from my sin? *Mon Dieu*, why do you not understand what I am saying without spelling out every word? Why do you not speak to me, pay attention, tell me my soul is free without I must tell you everything, inch by inch?” She stamped her foot and moved away with a gesture of despair; then, turning, she looked into the face of the doctor, who sat aghast upon the

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sofa. "When the name of a man becomes *synonyme* for insomnia, the other symptoms indicate heart-trouble ; isn't it so?" Angèle wrung her hands. "*Hélas!* you *have* loved, *docteur*, but it is a past *participe*. *Ah*, if I had known!" She went the length of the room, clenching and unclenching her hands. "*Sacré tonnerre!*" she exclaimed, coming towards her listener again ; "I am almost hating you, *docteur*. Once you were bound to me by every tie of affection ; isn't it true? Well, my chains have slipped from around your heart from loose-handling, and are only entangling your feet now. You may go, I wish you to go, now that you have presumed your freedom!"

Angèle sank into her chair, relapsing into tears, mortified, enraged. The astounded minister forgot his own trial, and, leaning over, took her disengaged hand.

"I am listening, Angélique. There is nothing you can tell me that I shall not understand and justify." Her breathing became less fitful as she heard : "You are

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more than a unit in the omnism of God, and you are so wholly His that I know you cannot really sin ; and you are my concrete of sincerity and pureness of heart. But it is to spare you suffering that I should say anything,—beside, I may not be the chancellor of even your conscience.”

Her flexible fingers lay quietly in his palms now, and only an occasional suspiration disturbed the calm. Her head drooped, her lashes lustered with tears, and the fixedness of her features, could her companion have seen them, would have presaged to him that she had still more to say, that her's was not the puerile sorrow of a maiden's years.

Dr. Paradise stroked the supple hand and spoke in the voice whose sweetness and power he did not realize. “I dreamed of you last night, dear ; not as I often have done, but in a sort of kinematographic way. I tried to hold you with a word, but you fluttered and faded—and finally blew out. You didn't seem real, or even like a memory of

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one I had known, but a visitant from another sphere, strange, unknown, and yet with the face you are now keeping in a shadow that I may not see. It is for fear of this dreaming coming true, of your getting beyond my vision, that I dread to say anything to you. Teach me each word I must say." He leaned forward, studying each item of her profile, in his heart praying for her, absolving her, assuring himself of the certain replevin of her spiritual liberty.

Angèle grew calmer under his touch, and her fingers, at first restive, then dispassionate, seemed now to cling, as will a child's, with unostentatious trust. Then she slipped her free hand in the collar of her dress and, pulling out a locket attached to a wire of gold, held it to him.

"Do you know what it is?" she asked, not looking in his direction. The spice of a dead carnation reached him, and Numa, the debonair, became more than a ghostly part of their interview.

"It is a *chiffon*, a mere rag of a flower—

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from your coat," Angèle murmured, cautiously. "I gave you a new one the last time I saw you, but you did not notice the exchange."

Dr. Paradise waited, unnerved in the tense quiet, wondering why she had taken the idea to probe his heart like that, with a voice warmly, tremorously penetrating. He closed his eyes, as if stung with pain or passion, longing to eternalize the moment lest even sweet doubt never come to him again. He felt as a man may who is sodden with drink and unsure of his actions. The silence seemed calamitous, and his dream grew more and more a preterite rapture.

Angèle chafed at his guardedness, rose, and faltered a little on her feet. In his frozen reverie he listened again, her rippling expressions percolating down to him to wear away his restraint.

"My knees are *castañets*," she said, nervously, moving away and standing where the wistaria struggled through the persiennes from the court below. "Madame Trezevant

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is no ordinary woman ; I realize it. She is *un ange de femme*, and she is in love with you. You know, I am thinking of your happiness, and I have implored you to marry her."

Dr. Paradise, weighing each word, was so stupefied that he could remember no such occasion, though he did not doubt her.

"She as good as told me she adored you ; there are months since. Ah! she has told me many things, her, to my personal self. It is all in my heart. I do not want to speak of that, but, *Dieu de mes pères!* if I should get mad, it must come out. It is in my heart." Angèle traversed the long room with renewed excitement. "And you, connoisseur, virtuoso of charming women,—marry, marry with her. It is very much all the same to me. Why should any one make *ennui* for that? *Hahn!* She herself believes her *intelligente*. She tries to make us believe she comes from the thighs of Jupiter."\*

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\* *Les cuisses de Jupiter*. Local misuse of the fable concerning the birth of Minerva is accountable for this perversion.

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The doctor roused himself, and his tones, when he spoke, were peremptory, though not less kind than usual. "I do not understand you, Angèle; you need sleep, you are talking incoherently. Or is it I, perhaps, who am not myself and cannot thread the maze? Let me leave you now, and if you have something to tell me, or will let me do some service for you, I will return to-morrow."

Angèle squared about. "To-morrow! Never! Never will you leave this house till I tell you——" But her voice failed, and the confusion of her color, red and white and white and red, caused her to hang her head. Yet she came to him where he was standing by the high-backed Italian chair, one of his fine hands in relief against the green brocade covering and massive wood-work; she slipped easily to his feet, not touching him, and covering her tear-blind eyes with both hands, pride and anger vanished.

"Before you leave me, perhaps to take that awful step, awful for Mémère and me, I must give myself the joy of telling you

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that I love you. And I thank you from my soul for this suffering.”

The minister ejaculated a cry of intense unbelief, of bewilderment and surprised happiness. “Angèlique!” He lifted and held her at arm’s length. He was not in the flush of selfish first-youth, and he would not give greeting to the face of rapture till he had made sure it was his friend.

Angèle struggled to be free, always turning her face into shadow.

“I am perfectly happy with Mémère and ‘Ine,” he heard, in an ascending ecstasy; “and when they will leave me some day, as must be, I will go to my other home, the Ursulines, where I shall be at peace. Do not pity me—it is not that. I need nothing,—nothing except the relief of having you know. I have been so thoughtless, often; but you have only been good, always the same; and now that I have all my plans anticipated, and I shall be so happy as soon as I enter the convent—oh, such peace it is there!—it will be something to remember

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that you knew I was grateful at the last though it was only a little while that I knew that I really loved you. Ah, I love to say it! I love you! And, see, I am not in the least ashamed to tell you. I cannot look at you because—your eyes. And now there need be no difference. You will come as usual. Mémère loves you always the same,—and I”—her voice became a mere thread of sound—“can govern myself to be respectful to Madame Trezevant.”

No one had ever heard the tone of self-abnegation from Angèle before, and least of all was it familiar to her indulgent companion. Her wilful, proud, self-assertive qualities had been precious to him, but the new tinge of womanliness gave him a mightier happiness and carried its own persuasion of verity. Fearing his next wave of thought would obliterate the present consciousness, he drew her slowly and tenderly to his breast as he might have performed his holiest offices. “You are the enchantress of my soul,” he said, slowly, and with much earnestness;

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“you are the gold of my heart, the sweet torment of my life, the woman I love, of my hopes derived and destinate. And I—am only a kind of moral Ruy Blas who has dared to raise his eyes to his Queen.”

Surprise was transmitted to Angèle now, for she had been passive in his clasp, construing its motive such as had prompted his endearments in her earlier age,—sympathy, soothing, protection. She dropped her hands and looked at him in inquiry, as if to discover the truth that his words did not carry with all their soberness.

“Flower of my desire!” said the priest, reverentially, trying to accustom his emotions to the unsuspected disclosure of a noble hope. He searched her face, now blanched, now glowing, noting its new, rare loveliness in a surprise that equalled his own. “Angèle! Angèle!” he cried, “there is something wrong in the construction of the world when one woman has such power to force the heart of a man to love her as you have done.” He laughed outright and

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opened his arms for the willing prisoner. "You are ineffable. I love you!" He felt that he was shedding years in the moments. He had been a philosopher, but he had been accustomed to feel that his joys were only incidents, while his sorrows were events; they had seemed ever to come in this ratio, and now he realized that there had been a reversal, and the enchantment of a woman's tongue had wrought the miracle. And Angèle withheld her benediction of their joy only a moment longer, kissing her lover upon his lips, and meeting his great sob there. Then were they lips no longer,—they were sensation.

Victorine, upstairs, impatient and anxious, made unnecessary excursions along the upper hall-way, finally settling herself on the highest step to sing a folk-song that had always meant "Come to Bed" to the little girl, without supplementary bidding. Angèle listened within enfolding arms in which the finest sense of comfort came to her that she had ever known, with a quality of strength that

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Mémère's and 'Ine's had lacked. The Creole chant came downstairs softly, but for once Angèle was unheeding and disobedient to its meaning :

Mis-sieu Pré-val, Li don-né grand bal, Li fait nèque

pa - yé Pou' un peu sau - té, Dan -

sé Ca - lin - da, boo jumb, boo jumb!

The musical score consists of three systems. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

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Angèle leaned close to her lover with a full content. "Listen," she murmured, with delicious languor, "'Ine is making herself impatient."

"I ought to be going," sighed Dr. Paradise, assuredly, but without the intention of his words.

He led her to the open window, just within the gallery, with its scroll and the De Marigny coat of arms wrought in the grilled railing. It was intertwined with racemes of purple wistaria that screened them from the street. Just below, in the stone court, a bridal-veil tree was pricked out of the gloom, and a mock-orange, their burdens of spectral blossoms calm and white in the moonlight. The radiant evening filtered around them through the silence, the moon scattering keen lustres upon the glistening magnolia-foliage above. The shivering shadows of the court uttered only Peace.

"I am in the broad day of my love," said Dr. Paradise. "Old as I am, or felt I was,

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I believe I am in the land of the Midnight Sun."

Again Victorine's ancient song floated down as she beguiled the waiting moments :

" Missieu Préval,  
Li donné grand bal,  
Li fait nèque payé  
Pou' un peu sauté,  
Dansé Calinda, boo jumb, boo jumb!"

Some negroes passed beneath the window, with tinkling guitars and mandolins, their thin sounds blurring the old nurse's melody, then trailing and shading off into toneless vibrations.

Lingeringly Angèle unclasped their lips. "Does it not seem strange?" she asked steadily; "I had known you so well, so differently."

"And yet it is already natural," explained the doctor, as a result of silent ratiocination, "for I had grown into the habit of splitting my thoughts with you always one-half."

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Angèle did not answer ; something still misted her perfect content and cast a mote in the lunar whiteness of their love. She felt bound to make the confession that alone could clear away the clouding remorse, yet with characteristic spirit she put the thought away with a shrug and spoke aloud.

“ Anyway, *docteur*, no creature bearing the name of *la Sainte Vierge* was ever known to perish, anyhow notwithstanding. If my name had not been Marie Angélique—  
*Ah, mon Dieu !*”

“ You are the dearest saint in the directory of heaven,” cried the enraptured man, pressing both her hands to his heart. “ Tell me nothing but that you love me and that we stand here with Truth and that we will never part—that we will be united almost at once.”

“ At once !” cried Angèle, with glee. “ And am I really *fiancée* with you ? And I was so wretched when you first came ! But, *Seigneur*, the colonel will be furious against us !”

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“He allowed his option to lapse,” smiled the minister. “Besides, you are too old for him, since you have passed seventeen. The dear old man!”

Angèle answered his sigh. “*Cher colonel!* And Mémère—how happy she will be when she knows!”

“Call me Martin,” said the doctor, suddenly. “I want to hear the name translated into the language only your tongue can speak.”

“I could never do that!” cried Angèle, shaking her head till her hair seemed iridescent in the double light. “I have known you too long to be familiar.”

“Again, again your dearest mouth, then.”

They met once more, silent and soft as snow, in a kiss sacred and else-effacing.

Victorine’s song had ceased; she was probably nodding on the topmost step, an old trick of hers. A fresh breeze came up from the Gulf. The Cathedral belfry sounded twelve strokes, dull, but imperious. The

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doctor reluctantly made ready to go, returning a dozen times for the culling of a kiss.

“Angel!” he whispered. “Mine forevermore!” He passed out of the street door and intuitively looked up as one will upon a shrine or the home one is leaving for a long time. Angèle’s white dress showed with powdery dimness against the batten windows as she stood boldly among the riotous, moon-crusted vines of the balcony, looking passion through spindrift in her dark eyes, then sending him her love again by new-learned symbols, more humble than gracious, across the little space.

O’Brien’s club sounded hollowly in the obscurity of the next corner. The lovers took alarm, and Dr. Paradise jealously watched his angel flutter into the recesses of the house as he had seen her in his dream.

THE END



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