

Periwinkle House

By Opie Read

Illustrated by
R. H. Livingstone

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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—The time is the late '60s or early '70s and the scene a steamboat on the Mississippi river. All the types of the period are present and the floating palace is distinguished by merriment, dancing and gaiety. There are the customary drinking and gambling also. Virgil Drace, a young northern man, is on his way south on a mission of revenge. He meets an eccentric character in the person of one Liberty Shottle, who is constantly tempting the goddess of chance. They form a singular compact.

CHAPTER II—Drace gets his info off his mission by entering into deck sports in which he exhibits an unusual athletic prowess. Shottle becomes possessed of two tickets for the French ball, a great society event, and proposes that Drace accompany him to the affair. The young men attend and Drace unexpectedly meets the girl who had fired his heart aboard the steamer. She is accompanied by one Boyce, whose proprietary interest indicates that he is her fiance. Through stratagem Shottle learns that the name of the girl is Nadine la Vitte and that her companion of the evening is the man who is seeking to marry her.

CHAPTER IV, Continued.

"We are on the right side, anyway," Shottle cried. "Give me a gun—give me something."

Some one gave him an old carbine, and another gave Drace a cavalry saber. The man from the North grasped it, feeling that he was to fight the scoundrels that cast discredit and reproach upon his native state.

At this time of man's madness nature could not restrain the introduction of her own grim humor. Dogs gathered in the open space between the bands of advancing rioters, and fought, howling, the victims of wounds without cause.

Not many shots were fired. The authorities made a criminal of the citizen who carried a gun or concealed it in his house. It was a hand-to-hand strife, the breaking of heads, the cutting of throats. A big, red-shirted negro with razor gleaming in the smoky light made a grab at Drace, who had just room enough to leap back and strike with his saber; but the agile negro dodged, the blow was caught by a brick wall and the blade was broken off at the handle. But with the hit, a boxing glove of steel, Drace knocked the negro down and then passed over his body, striking right and left, pushing onward to the front, where the jagged ranks saw-toothed one into the other.

The struggle now was to save the hanging man, who, without fall enough to break his neck, was strung up to strangle. Drace was the first man to fight his way to him. He dropped his steel boxing glove, grabbed out his knife, leaped up, caught hold of the limb of the tree with one hand and cut the man down.

Catching up his weapon, he was about to mix in the fight again when the sharp scream of a woman caught and held him for a moment. He glanced hurriedly about; at various windows were lights and silhouetted figures of onlookers. But as if drawn by some lodestone instinct his eyes went to a second-story window just beyond the tree; and there, in the strong light of a lamp just behind her, he saw again the face of the barbaric rose maid, Nadine la Vitte.

Instantly he whirled and strove to fight his way to a gate which he saw in the wall before the house. But now came a new cry and a scramble for safety. A troop of United States cavalry came sweeping the thoroughfare from curb to curb, their drawn sabers flashing, the aroused anger of Uncle Sam rebuking a riot. Not to run was to be trampled to death, but Drace stood an instant to look about for Shottle. He could not find him, however, and he had to seek his own safety, for the cavalry were near, spreading out upon the sidewalk.

With divers others, he stood not upon the order of his going but ran back down the street and then hurried down a side street out of the path of the troopers. There he waited until the tumult had subsided—perhaps an hour. Then he made his way back to the scene of the riot.

The house at the window of which he thought he had glimpsed the face of Nadine la Vitte was now dark. But in spite of the curious glances of sundry loiterers, Drace took a careful survey of it and of the three oak trees in front—even felt their bark to familiarize himself with them. At the corner he sought the name of the street, on the lamp, but the glass had been broken, leaving only a red "L" and the fragments and "e." But no

matter—he would know where to turn, would know the house when abreast of it.

Now Drace hastened toward the St. Charles. The streets were quiet. But a wagon rattled by, and he saw that it was filled with wounded men. He thought of Shottle and his spirit was oppressed with sorrow. Shottle's escape must have been impossible, and tomorrow they would take his body, throw it into some cozy hole and cover it with mud.

In the lobby of the St. Charles men stood in groups, talking of the fall in the price of cotton. The riot, which to Drace had meant so much, was not even known, so accustomed was the town to scenes of violence. Drace asked the clerk if Shottle had come in. No; his key was in the box. Then Drace thought that surely Liberty must be dead or wounded, hauled away to suffer. He went forth again, to the department of police, to the cavalry barracks, but nothing could he learn. Then in his room he sat sorrowing over his friend and yet thrilled with a selfish happiness, for he had found the barbaric rosemaid. He went to bed, tossed, slept, dreamed in a mingling of distress and gladness, and awoke. Shottle was standing in the room.

"Thank the Lord!" cried Drace, and sprang out of bed.

"That's what I say, friend Virgil. But you will please address me as Colonel Shottle. I am a free man. Here!"

He held forth an envelope; opening it, Drace took out a hundred-dollar banknote.

"What does this mean, Lib?"

"I am Colonel Shottle, sir, and not Lib."

"I beg your pardon, Colonel; but what does this mean?"

Shottle sat down and crossed his long legs. He took out a cigar and lit it.

"Virgil, I fought as long as I thought it was of advantage. The old carbine I had wouldn't shoot, and I want to tell you that mauling darky heads with a piece of iron is hard work. I looked about for you but couldn't find you, and knowing that you knew how to take care of yourself, I began to sniff for a way to get out, found a hole in a wall, ducked through and scooted. That was all natural enough. Anybody could have done that. But now comes the inspirational part. I got around into Royal street and met a steamboat captain who asked me to have a drink, and I needed it, for I had been hard at work.

"So I went in with him. And then up I hops to a gambling house with the money you'd paid me for introducing you to Nadine la Vitte. The poker tables were full, so I nipped in modestly at the faro-bank. That's not a very swift game, but sometimes it is as sure as buying houses and lots, if you've got the patience. I invested cautiously till about daylight, cashed in exactly two hundred, and here I am as refreshed as a horse grazing on clover."

"Colonel, I congratulate you!" said Drace.

The two breakfasted together, and then Drace set out to find again the house at the scene of the riot—the house at the window of which he had seen the face of Nadine la Vitte. At length he found himself in the side street where he had taken refuge the night before, and turning out of this he came to the tree from the limb of which he had cut down the half-strangled victim of the mob. There opposite was the house and there was the window at which he had seen Nadine's face; but across the window, boards had been nailed! The other windows, too, and the doors, were nailed up; the place was deserted. Could that face at the window have been only a creature of his imagination?

An old negro in nondescript livery came down the walk from a house a few doors away. He might have been footman to a barlequin. But when Drace spoke to him, the dignified change in his countenance appeared to alter even the aspect of his attire; and now he might have been usher to a governor. This quick change had been brought about by his intuitive discovery that Drace was a man of consequence.

"Do you know anything about the people who lived across the street?" Drace asked.

"Wall, no sah; da wus po' folks, sah."

"Then you don't know where they went?"

"No sah. My 'ployment is ter look after folks ob er higher 'dition, sah. An den ter preach on Sunday."

"Oh, you are a preacher."

"Called, sah, wid er blast from de trumpet."

"Does your church ever need money?" In a moment he lost his dignity.

"Look yeah, boss, what's er nigger church fur ef it ain't ter need money? Co'se it need money. But what you gwine do about it?"

"Yassuh," he said, when Drace had warmed him with a greenback, "I reckon dey done moved away. There was er kind of rumpus last night. And I reckon they-all thought it wasn't no place for dem no mo'; dey lef mighty sudden-like, uhly dis mawnin'."

leave, and the French market. He went into the old St. Louis cemetery, and looked upon the novel sight of bodies sepulchered in a wall with doors like a furnace. These compartments, he learned, were rented by the month to the poor; and a short tenantry it was for many a son and daughter of penury answering Eternity's call, for when the grim agent failed to collect the pittance promised by sorrow, the shrouded renter was evicted—an old Spanish custom, Drace was told.

Recalled by these grim surroundings to the purpose that had brought him to the South, Drace now determined to give himself wholly to his quest for Stepho la Vitte. He returned to the hotel, and found Shottle nervous in a cloud of smoke. The floor was covered with burned matches and the stubs of cigars.

"Lib, I'm crushed," announced Drace. "So am I. But how does it happen that the dust-cart drove over you too?"

"Nadine is gone. The place is nailed up."

"That's tough, all right. But what are you going to do about it? Are you going to come to your puritanic senses and give the whole thing up, or do you expect—"

"I expect to fulfill my sacred mission. I must find Stepho la Vitte."

Shottle got up and shook hands with his friend. He swore that he would make the search the aim of his life.

"Suppose you hire me by the day," he suggested. "A man does better work by the day. He always has fresh stimulus every time the sun rises."

"Very well—ten dollars a day."

"That's liberal, Virgil, and I'll take it. And let's get Old Josh to help us. He is more or less acquainted with Stepho's habits."

CHAPTER V

An hour later Drace and Shottle returned to their hotel after a ceremonious visit with Colonel Josh. The Colonel knew of Stepho, had indeed met him once, and he promised to make discreet inquiries that should without fall disclose the creole's whereabouts.

Hardly had Drace reached his room, however, before a visitor was shown in—a visitor who introduced himself as an agent of the New Orleans police department and who had a most distressing communication to make:

It was known that Mr. Drace and his friend had taken part in a recent riot. Mr. Drace was one of the leaders, had severely wounded more than one man, and without cause, being from the North, just arrived, and having no possible interest in the city. However, he was to be treated with more of lenity than would rhyme with his crime, for instead of punishment he was only to be banished, along with his friend. A steamboat, the Bumblebee, bound northward, would leave next morning. The chief of police would give if Mr. Drace and his friend failed to register among the passengers.

With scarcely twelve hours left in which to find Stepho la Vitte, Drace paced the streets in an agony of anxiety, making a hundred plans to find Stepho or to outwit the New Orleans officials and prolong his stay, but all in vain.

Colonel Josh did not appear, but he seemed to have embarked upon the quest, for when the distracted Drace called at his quarters about midnight the old fellow was still absent. Dawn brought Drace back again, for all his other endeavors had been unsuccessful, and but two hours remained before the Bumblebee's departure.

Routed out of bed, the Colonel kept Drace waiting a full half hour before he put in an appearance. Then, however, he offered a faint ray of hope. He had discovered that a certain Frenchman, a wine dealer, living at an address he produced scrawled on paper, was reported to be an intimate of Stepho. Possibly from him Mr. Drace might—

Drace hurriedly explained the decree which had banished him; then he "presented" the Colonel with a check on account, asked him to convey his respects to Miss Lucy and took his departure.

On his way to the Frenchman's he stopped at the hotel, where he found Shottle strapping up their baggage—and a police official paying an informal but suggestive call. An hour's grace remained. Drace paid his score at the desk, sent his baggage to the boat and then, summoning a cab, drove off with Shottle to the house of the Frenchman. It proved to be a mean abode, both wretched and dwelling. Drace knocked eagerly. A small man, his mustache dyed, came to the door, blinking.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I am a friend of Mr. la Vitte, and—"

"Pardon, monsieur, but you do not look like him, ze friend."

"But I am. And I came with word that will be of advantage to him. The police are after him—"

"Aw, he know zat. Monsieur would trouble himself for nothing. Good morning."

"Just a moment, please. You have no need to look on me with suspicion. I am his friend—and—"

"If you his friend," interrupted the man, "you know he gone—to Europe, on steamer to France."

Drace was about to abandon the man in despair when Shottle, who had been staring at a case of wine which stood by the door ticketed and sealed for shipment, suddenly interrupted.

"Ah," he cried, "can this be the



"Zat is Ze Private Stock," He Snarled.

famous Chateau Yquem?" And brushing past the Frenchman, he leaned over as if to examine the bottle. With a cry, the wine merchant shoved him rudely away. "Zat is ze private stock," he snarled. "He is not for sale. I am not yet open for business, sirs. Good morning."

Shottle grasped Drace's arm and drew him away. A cart had halted outside, and as they entered their cab they saw the carter shouldering the case of wine and bearing toward his vehicle.

As they turned the corner, a deep-throated blast from the Bumblebee sounded a warning. Shottle turned upon the disappointed Drace with a gleeful countenance. "Master," he said, "I'll thank you for that money again. I've found him."

"Found him!" exclaimed Drace. "How?"

"That case of wine was addressed to Stepho la Vitte at Farnum's Landing, Mississippi. That wine is going to Stepho on the Bumblebee. And so are we!"

An hour later Drace sat with Shottle on the deck of the Bumblebee, watching the ever-changing panorama of the Mississippi and musing upon the sudden shifting of his quest.

"Liberty," asked Drace presently, "how far up is this Farnum's Landing? Do you recall it?"

"Yes," said Liberty. "I know this river. Farnum's Landing is—by golly!" he exclaimed, breaking off. "Farnum's Landing is the next stop below Bethpage's Landing! And General Bethpage is my uncle! We'll go there."

"But," Drace said dubiously, "he's not my uncle, and I'm afraid it would be intruding somewhat on his hospitality to—"

"Nothing of the sort," averred Liberty. "Any friend of mine would be doubly welcome. You can't know much about the General. Taming, now, but he used to be the most remarkable character, in a quiet way, along the river. And when I tell you about him, Virgil, you'll laugh. Before the war he was professor at Newsome, a little college up in the scrub-oak country. He entered the army as a colonel and came out as a brigadier."

"I don't see anything to laugh at in that."

"No, but wait. He had considerable money, and at times used to come down to New Orleans to enjoy himself. On one occasion he lost all his money at roulette."

"Still nothing to laugh at."

"No? All the property he had with him was a bodyservant, a Guinea negro named Dip. So what does he do? He says to the proprietor of the gambling house: 'I wish to play this negro, sir.' 'All right; I'll take off the limit and let you play him. How much is he worth?' says the gambler. 'I don't want to play his value in money, but him, I tell you,' says the General. 'Say the word, and I'll bet him on one of these numbers.' He had been losing every bet, and the proprietor knew that it would be safe. So he says: 'All right, go ahead.'"

(To Be Continued.)

I. D. BROWNFIELD,
Farm and Live Stock
AUCTIONEER.

Telephone or wire for dates at my
Expense. NEBRASKA.

HERSHEY, NEBRASKA.

Beeler, Crosby & Baskins, Atty.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

Estate No. 1902 of Martha Koester, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said Estate is January 10, 1923, and for settlement of said Estate is September 7, 1923; that I will sit at the county court room in said County on October 10th, 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m. and on January 10th, 1923 at 10 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed. Dated September 7th, 1922.

WM. H. C. WOODHURST,
County Judge.

Wm. E. Shuman, Atty.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

In the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

In the Matter of the Estate of Rose M. Knox, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given to any and all persons having claims and demands against the estate of the said Rose M. Knox, deceased, that the 17th day of January, 1923, has been set and appointed as the day for the reception, examination, adjustment and allowance of lawful claims and demands of all persons, against said estate and that the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, will at said time receive, examine, adjust and allow all such claims against said estate, as provided by law, at the County Court Room in the Courthouse, in the City of North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, and all persons so interested in said estate, will appear at said time and place and duly present their said claims and demands in the manner required by law, or show cause for not so doing, and in case any of said claims or demands shall not be presented on or prior to the said 17th day of January, 1923, the same shall be forever barred.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have signed this notice and affixed the seal of said Court this 18th day of September, 1922.

WM. H. C. WOODHURST
(SEAL) County Judge

NOTICE!
In the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

Mearl E. Jacox, Plaintiff,
vs.

Jones, wife of Joseph T. Jones, deceased, her first, real, and true name unknown, Cora True, True, her husband, his first, real and true name unknown, Ed Miller, Miller, his wife, her first, real and true name unknown, Will Jones, Jones, his wife, her first, real and true name unknown, Ward Jones, Jones, his wife, her first, real and true name unknown, Walter Jones, Jones, his wife, her first, real and true name unknown, Joseph Jones, Jones, his wife, her first, real and true name unknown, Frank Jones, Jones, his wife, her first, real and true name unknown, Flora Stewart, Stewart, her husband, his first, real and true name unknown, their respective heirs, devisees, legatees, and personal representatives, all other persons interested in the estate of Joseph T. Jones, deceased, and all other persons claiming any interest of any kind in the following described premises, to-wit: The Southwest Quarter (SW¼) of Section Nine (9), Township Eleven (11), Range Twenty-Six (26), Lincoln County, Nebraska, their real names unknown, Defendants.

The above named defendants will take notice that on the 12th day of September, 1922, Mearl E. Jacox, the plaintiff, filed his petition in the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, against the above defendants, the object and prayer of which is to quiet title in the plaintiff to the following described premises to-wit: The Southwest quarter (SW¼) of Section Nine (9), Township Eleven (11), Range Twenty-Six (26), Lincoln County, Nebraska. The plaintiff prays that the defendant be required to set out their claims and that in the event they fail to do so that they be forever barred therefrom and that the plaintiff be declared owner of said premises. You are required to answer said petition on or before the 30th day of October 1922.

Dated this 14th day of September, 1922.

THEODORE EIRDAM,
Dated September 28 1922.



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H. H. LANDGRAF,
Ritner Building, 113 W. 6th St. Phone 570W

Mearl E. Jacox, Plaintiff.
By D. E. Harper, His Atty.

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

Notice is hereby given that the Mayor and City Council of the city of North Platte, Nebr., will receive bids for furnishing all material and constructing 1445 feet of ten inch sewer complete with one manhole, according to plans and specifications adopted and on file with the city clerk of said city.

Bids must be on file with the City Clerk on or before eight o'clock P. M., October 3, 1922. They must be on the proposal in the specifications and must be accompanied by a certified check payable to the City Treasurer for an amount equal to three per cent of the bid made. Estimated cost of the sewer is \$1490.00.

The mayor and Council reserve the right to reject any or all bids. By order of the City Council of North Platte, Nebr., Sept. 19th, 1922.

E. H. EVANS,
Mayor.
(Seal)

NOTICE OF PAVING ASSESSMENT.

Notice is hereby given that the Mayor and City Council of the city of North Platte, Nebraska, will on the 17th day of October 1922, between the hours of 8 and 9 o'clock p. m. of said day and so much longer as may be necessary to transact said business, sit as a Board of Equalization for the purpose of equalizing and assessing against abutting and adjacent property owners, the cost of paving in Paving Districts No. 4 and 5 as the same are now organized. And all persons interested are hereby notified to appear and show cause, if any why said equalization and assessment should not be made, on or before the 17th day of October, 1922 at eight o'clock p. m.

Witness my hand and the seal of said city this 25th day of September, 1922.

O. E. ELDER,
City Clerk
Seal

NOTICE OF SALE

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of a Chattel Mortgage, dated on the 18 day of February, 1922 and duly filed and recorded in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Nebraska, and executed by Vivian D. Doggette to Theodore Eirdam, to secure the payment of the sum of Seven Hundred and Fifty and no hundreds (\$750.00) and upon which there is now due said sum together with interest from date at 10 per cent per annum, default having been made in the payment of said sum, therefore, I will sell the property therein described at Public Auction at the Hinman Rooming House, 108½ East Front Street, North Platte, Nebraska, on the 23d day of October, 1922 at 1 o'clock P. M. of said day, which property is described as follows:

One Black Walnut bed room suite of three pieces, one Walnut Bed room suite, three pieces, one Solid Oak Library Table, one Leather Davenport, two Genuine Leather Rockers, one Oak Pedestal, two Leather Foot Rests, one Japanese Screen, two Leather Bottom Rockers, one Oak Buffet, Six Oak Leather bottom Chairs, one Solid Oak Pedestal Dining Room Table, one Oak Library Table, one Kitchen Cabinet, two Rockers, two Chairs, four large Velvet Rugs, five Hand Painted Pictures, eight Medium sized Rugs, one Cabinet Sewing Machine, one large Electric Hoare.

THEODORE EIRDAM,
Dated September 28 1922.