AN AMERICAN IN EUROPE.

Observations Upon the Life and Politics of Twenty-five Years Ago.

BY THE LATE

JAMES SHEPHERD PIKE.

A Stop at Amiens.

The privacy of a French inland town is charming, even when that town is a city of 60,000 inhabitants and within two and a half hours of Paris, like this city of Amiens.

Here I can find neither a Paris nor an English newspaper, and the news from America, which came four days ago, is utterly inaccessible. Since I left Brussels and struck into these depths of French life, five days ago, not one word of the doings of the surrounding world has reached my ears. The people have no public life; they know no more of affairs, in their own or in foreign countries, than the pre-Adamites, whose stone chisels lie in the gravel beds around Amiens, knew of their contemporaries, if they had any.

It seems to be accident that determines the industry of a people. In one town it is lace, in another it is silks, in another it is cutlery, in another steam engines, in another ribbons, and here it is cotton velvet.

There are two kinds made at Amiens, the cotton and the *poil de chevre*. Here, too, is made a peculiar cloth for bags to hold the macerated beet while it is undergoing the enormous pressure which expresses the juice out of this root for sugar making.

Within a year an invention is said to have improved the process of extracting this juice so that the root is made to yield 20 per cent. more than in the old method. The bags under the new process have to be made of a strong, peculiarly made brown linen fabric, instead of woollen, as in the old process; but, if a tenth more juice is obtained, it will be a vast addition to the annual sugar crop of France, which will be this year between 200,000 and 250,000 tons. The making of beetroot sugar is an industry which must soon be introduced extensively into the United States. We have the soil and the climate and the consumers. If the French and the Dutch can fabricate the raw sugar out of the beet for six or seven cents a pound, we ought to be able to make the business yield a handsome profit at the price sugar must long bear in the United States at the rate of duty our necessities will compel us to impose on it.

The French are in some places as stupid as they are polite. To any inquiry you may propose they are ready with their reply. But the chances are even that the information they so politely volunteer is worthless.

My tavern keeper at Amiens did not know there was a great manufactory of cotton velvet within a stone's throw of his hotel.

The same authority informed me there were sugar beet manufactories in the town, which representation proved to be wholly groundless.

Think of such ignorance being found in the proprietor of a leading hotel in an American city of 60,000 inhabitants!

In the South of France.

I found Lyons buried in fog, and left it in the same condition, which I understand is its normal state in winter. It was dirty and uninteresting.

I visited the silk manufactories. The silks are all made by hand looms in small rooms, in a quarter of the city which stands on a steep hill, up which I was taken in rail cars by the means of an endless iron rope and a stationary engine. I came back on foot over the steepest street in Europe. It falls one foot in six.

Leaving Lyons on Dec. 22 for the south, I entered the old Roman country.

The lower part of France was just as much Roman two thousand years ago as Italy. The Roman remains at Nismes and Arles are in the best state of preservation. These two obscure towns were, two thousand years ago, large and flourishing cities—chief towns of Gaul. Going thither I pass through, before reaching Avignon, the little town of Orange, formerly the capital of the principality of that name.

This principality was acquired by the Prince of Nassau by marriage, and was held by that house from 1530 until 1700, the period of the death of William III. of England, and from, this possession is derived the title of the heir apparent of the Netherlands.

At Orange are extensive remains of the walls of a Roman theatre, incorporated subsequently into the palaces of the Princes of Orange.

At Orange the triumphal arch which bestrides one of the roads leading out of town is supposed to be two thousand years old. Yet it is in a good state of preservation. But the old Roman theatre is the great object of interest in this ancient town. The front wall stands intact, over 300 feet long and more than 100 feet high—a prodigious piece of masonry.

There are no remains of the palace of the former Princes of Orange, who used to reside here. There is a monument in the public square to Count Gasparin, who was born in this place and who died in 1862.

At all these towns—Lyons, Orange, and Avignon—the bloody axe of revolutionary France has left its hideous traces.

We fail to appreciate the enormities of the French revolution till we tread step by step upon the scenes of its detailed history.

This alone brings us face to face with its nameless atrocities.

At Avignon, the palace of the Popes, occupied by them for nearly a century, is a huge fortress in appearance, and now so in reality. Its walls are 100 feet high, and its towers 150

Its foundations are excavated in the solid rock, a sort of hard chalk.

Its hall of the Cardinals has immense groined arches like the crypt of a great cathedral. The walls of the palace are, in places, thirteen feet in thickness.

The building is now a barrack and the ancient consistory, or hall of the Cardinals, is cut longitudinally into several stories for the accommodation of the soldiers who occupy it.

Avignon is in a large plain, and is only interesting from its historic associations with the Papacy, of whose vices and schism it is alike a souvenir, and as the burial place of Petrarch and Laura. Leaving Avignon, one enters a well-marked chalk country, whose barren hills approach the roadside. Between them is a wash of gravel extending a little way up their sides, the remains of some ancient flow of water. This constant feature of barren gravel has never left us since we came through the gorges of the Jura Mountains.

Nismes and Arles.

I stopped over night at Arles.

There are fragments of old statuary in the museum, of ornamental architecture, rescued from the wrecks of the old public buildings erected here. The chief of these buildings is a colossal structure, the Amphitheatre, still standing in its original proportions.

Nothing is wanting but the parapet of stone which surmounted its upper arches, and which is supposed to have been not less than ten feet high. The external walls of two vast stories, both sustained by arches, still remain. Not an arch is wanting. The interior is dilapidated, the stone seats having been partially worn away or removed; but enough remains to show completely the original appearance of the enormous structure.

It is of oval shape, and the external dimensions are 460 feet length and 340 feet width.

The arena, where the gladiators, or Roman prize fighters, exhibited their prowess, where wild beasts fought with one another or where they tore captives or Christian martyrs in pieces, and where other amiable performances of the same sort took place, is 230 feet long and 130 wide.

In so good a state of preservation is this edifice that it is still used as the place of public amusements, such as the circus, feats of acrobats, balloon ascensions, &c. The external height of the walls cannot be less than a hundred feet. The amphitheatre was used all through the middle ages as a fortress.

Hard by are the remains of a Roman theatre, not less remarkable, but by no means in such good condition.

There is here another most curious relic of antiquity—a cemetery, which has been occupied since 250 B. C., and was used as such from that time till the sixteenth century. The way to it is lined by empty stone coffins, used now sometimes for watering troughs.

They are of various dates, running back to pagan times, and still showing pagan and Roman inscriptions. There is a singular uniformity in the coffins, and they bear a curious resemblance to the Egyptian sarcophagi, being, in fact, the same thing a little less elaborate in shape.

There are the foundations of a chapel, which is alleged to be the first Christian chapel in Gaul, founded by a disciple of St. Paul.

At the old town of Nismes, near Arles, are to be seen three things of note: First, the Maison Carrée; second, the amphitheatre, and third, the baths for women, constructed by the Romans. The latter are interesting as showing how such things were done. In a hot climate baths are an indispensable luxury. A mountain stream is here caught as it reaches the foot of the heights, which descend quite into the town. A level place is scooped out for a basin, and over it is a large esplanade or garden, rising some ten feet from the bottom.

The esplanade covers only a portion of the surface, the remainder being left for the water in the basin. In some places the esplanade is supported on arches, under which the water circulates. You descend by steps to a paved level around the basin, and again from this level by steps into the water, which is, perhaps, four feet deep, and courses under some of the arches quite swiftly.

At one end of this esplanade, which is of an irregular shape, there are steps which lead into the water.

A railing, supported by little ornamented pillars, protects the promenade of the esplanade from the basin.

Large trees are growing on it and some old statues still adorn it, it being kept as a public garden. The running water finds its way between stone masonry through the town, part of the distance being used by washerwomen.

The Maison Carrée, at this place, is classic, but it is not imposing. The portico is about 25 feet by 35 feet, and descends to the ground by ten or twelve steps. The interior is only 35 feet by 45 feet.

It is lighted from the roof, which is made of heavy semi-cylindrical tiles.

It is, however, vastly interesting as an edifice which remains as it was built, after a lapse of two thousand years.

The depth of the portico is about one-third the whole length of the building.

The amphitheatre is in a rare state of preservation, considering what it has passed through not only from years, but wars, and from deliberate efforts for its destruction. Great sums have been of late expended in restoring the edifice, and the work goes on.

It is a trifle smaller than the amphitheatre at Arles, but not to a noticeable extent, while both internally and externally it is in a better state of preservation.

Charles Martel tried hard to destroy it by stuffing it with wood and firing it and then by applying water to its heated state. This process would account for the chips in the stones and the cracks in the arches.

Nismes is the birthplace of M. Guizot. Fléchier was formerly Bishop of Nismes, whose statue is one of the four in the square of St. Sulpice at Paris.

From Arles to Marseilles the country is mercilessly barren. First comes the immense gravel plain known as the Cran, noted by Eschylus, 500 B. C., and afterward by Pliny and Strabo. It is a level bed of coarse gravel, barren as Sahara, except where irrigation has seduced a little grass through the stones, on which sheep are fed.

The resource of sheep feeding where land seems incorrigible is alike adopted on the chalk downs of England, the heaths of Holland, and the gravel plains of the south of France.

The magnitude of this gravel plain has excited the wonder of all ages for more than two thousand years.

The railroad crosses it for about twenty miles, and it appears quite as wide as it is long. How it came here is one of the curious problems of the geologist. But away in the rear is a chain of barren hills or mountains affording a significant hint.

In traversing the gravel plain, barren rocks, lying in huge masses, come to view.

Some of the scenes are picturesque in their desolation, showing huge, perpendicular walls of rock, sometimes in the shape of a vast amphitheatre. At intervals are interspersed small tracts devoted to the grape and olive tree, and proving emphatically that here, at least, the land of the vine and olive is a land of sterility and desolation. But for irrigation no part of the country about Marseilles would produce anything.

I found at Arles that the proverbial beauty of the native women of that locality was not exaggerated. The type is very uniform. The mouth is small, the hair and eyes black, the forehead small and symmetrical, and the nose unobtrusive. The form tends to embonpoint, and it is remarkable to see how such a face, supported by a good constitution, can grow old without losing its beauty.

Marseilles.

On a pleasant Christmas Day I climbed to the top of the observatory and gardens on the high wall overlooking Marseilles and its harbor, where the view is most extensive.

Marseilles spreads out beneath the feet, walled in by great barren mountains which bear neither tree nor shrub. They are of a dirty white color and glow with aridity, even under a winter's sun. The city is built of a stone of a similar color, and apparently of the same kind as that used in Paris.

Country and city alike exhibit from this elevation a uniformity of dreariness. There is some cultivation in the country seats on the hillsides, shown in occasional patches of poverty, stricken pines, and in little garden patches. But the general aspect of the city and its environs is that of a vast brick kiln.

The rocks on every side rise in such rough peaks and fall in such precipitous gorges that it is dangerous to attempt walking outside the regular pathways. Barrenness and desolation reign as far as the eye can reach. In summer, when the sun pours down its vertical rays, the heats must be frightful, and no escape is possible, except by plunging into the Mediterranean. There are several rocky islands off the harbor, but they are of a piece with the mainland, and invite the traveller but to scorch and shrivel him. There was a large crowd on the heights, seeking amusement, as around other cities in summer and early autumn. The laurestinus was in blossom in the public garden, and the cactus was growing in the open air. Still the wind was not warm, and a great coat was no discomfort.

Numerous pleasure boats were on the bay, and a still larger fleet was on the shore awaiting customers.

There is a variety of water craft in the harbor, but everything is heavy and lumbering and dirty. Vessels and boats seem alike made for rough weather, both at sea and in port; this is a condition imposed by open roadsteads and bad harbors. The boats at the wharves are protected by great pads of ropes at their bows and on their sides.

I had expected to find Marseilles a good natural harbor, but, like every French port but Toulon, it owes almost everything to art.

The Frenchman has had all sorts of difficulties to contend with in making himself a sailor, and he has had to learn how to convert the open outlets of mountain streams and sand-hill rivulets into protecting harbors. This is the case at Havre, at Boulogne, at Calais, at Dieppe, at St. Valery-sur-Somme, and at St. Valery-en-Caux.

Compared with the deep, capacious, and well-protected harbors of Old and New England, the French harbors, with the exception of Toulon, are meagre in the extreme.

It required all the genius of Colbert to develop the maritime capacities of France.

The vessels in the main harbor at Marseilles have to lie with their heads onto the quay and unload over the bow; an immense disadvantage, especially for discharging grain in bulk, which comprises a considerable part of their trade.

It takes 400 men here to do the work of one of our elevators.

The harbor of Marseilles is a circular basin, with a narrow neck outlet closed by gates, which lead directly to the open sea. There is a belt of land which projects beyond the town and sweeps round in front, forming an open roadstead. There is no rise and fall of tide in the Mediterranean, and therefore no currents in this harbor. But the outer swell is always felt in its monotonous and depressing sameness.

After Christmas I found them gathering a hay crop all along the road from Marseilles to Toulon. At the latter place the sun shines warm on the quay facing the harbor, and awnings are up. The harbor of Toulon is smooth as glass. The shop doors are open and women sit bareheaded knitting on the sidewalk, while in Paris the skating is good.

The scrubby pine of high northern latitudes is the only forest tree of this sterile soil.

Toulon.

Between Toulon and Nice is the home of the olive. The trees grow to the size of those in an ordinary orchard, and look at this time of year not unlike a willow in their leafy aspect. This tree does not get fully into bearing till it is twenty years old, and it lives and flourishes for a hundred years and more. The olive begins to ripen in December and is picked till February. To be put into jars it must be gathered green. When used for oil it is allowed to ripen. The oil is worth on the spot about a dollar a gallon, and the product is about forty gallons per acre. A good olive plantation is worth $500 the acre. The soil is generally the coarse gravel I have everywhere met with sluice leaving the Jura, and is unproductive, except when irrigated.

The hills about Toulon are vast piles of naked rocks, like those about Marseilles, and this character is preserved all the way to Nice, except that for a short distance some lesser ranges have wooded summits of black forests. At Toulon I visited the Bagnio, made immortal by Victor Hugo in "Les Misérables." This establishment is to be broken up, and the convicts, now about 3,000 in number, are to have their punishment changed into penal servitude at Cayenne. It is understood the prisoners are gratified at the change, and talk now of nothing else. The ships are being prepared, and the embarkation is to take place in a few weeks. Each prisoner wears a belt of iron around his waist and another around his ankle, the two connected with a chain. The whole weighs eighteen kilos, or almost forty pounds. If he escapes and is caught, these irons are removed and those weighing double are substituted.

These unhappy prisoners are often chained two and two when working. These are sentenced to the Bagnio for all terms, from one year to life imprisonment. The crimes for which they are incarcerated are assassination, theft, robbery, fraudulent bankruptcy, &c. They are mostly dressed in buff. The prisoners for life wear a green cap. This fatal symbol covered the oldest and most despairing countenances.

The foreheads of all of them were worn by deep, horizontal furrows, and the expression generally was a picture of misery.

How hopeless must that sorrow be which sees no prospect of termination but with life, and life under such conditions! No wonder the poor wretches sigh for relief, even if it must be obtained by encountering the pestilential malaria of Cayenne.

Some of the prisoners have wives in Toulon, who are allowed to go with other friends of the prisoners to visit them for three hours every Sunday, to carry them food and to furnish them money to buy it, to the amount of ten francs a month.

The prisoners sleep on board of hulks and are chained to their sleeping places. The chain of every prisoner is examined four times in every twenty-four hours.

We were rowed out into the harbor, which was smooth as a mirror, and went on board the iron-clad frigate Solferino. She is constructed like the British ship Warrior, the plating above water not extending beyond the central portion of the ship, thus leaving her two ends exposed, which could easily be blown to bits. She carries two rows of broadside 68-pound rifles, numbering about ninety in all. On the upper deck are no guns at all. Her crew numbers nearly eight hundred men. Her bow is shaped in the form of a prodigious ram, and the bowsprit gear so made as to allow of its most effective use.

The ship looks well enough, but one is not impressed with her formidable character.

Toulon is an admirable harbor. It is a broad bay surrounded by islands, making it entirely landlocked. There is plenty of water, there is never any frost, the climate is healthy, and there is no tide flow. Every condition of a perfect harbor seems thus to be here completely answered.

If the surrounding hills were covered with verdure, instead of being, as they are, mere heaps of arid rock, the situation would be worthy the celestial regions. The gods could ask no more.

The Mediterranean is, after all, but a lake. Its waters are salt, but its quiet shore line takes away the idea of an ocean. Its surface is quiet, and the surf indicates no deep sea roll. There is usually but a gentle ripple, which would not threaten a bark canoe. The want of tides results in an absence of visible currents, and the ordinary struggle of contending winds and tides is thus wanting. The whole body of water lies blue and unruffled as far as the eye can reach. Vessels come and go upon the horizon, opposite my windows, incessantly, and open boats and great drift nets are a conspicuous feature. The beach of shingle is tossed up against the opposite side of the great promenade, and just on a level with it, and the line between them is marked by a row of shrubbery and newly-planted trees, which in their flourishing state testify to the habitual sobriety of the sea in these parts.

SNAKES THAT WERE SNAKES,

But They Were Not of This Locality, Says the Westchester Farmer.

"The snake," said a Westchester county farmer who was adding a few touches to his stone fence, "is comparatively extinct in this part of the United States. Scarcely anything left of the family, except a few mourners.

"Up in the Northwest is where you want to go if you're anything of a snake lover. I was up there for a while, and I tell you it was interesting. I wouldn't have missed the experience for worlds. Up there you'd have to stop the mowing machines because they'd get clogged up with snakes, four and five in a bunch. After you once got a field cleared it wasn't so bad, but wherever you found that prairie grass would be the place to look for a menagerie."

"It must have been exciting to work in such a field," said THE SUN reporter.

"No. It was just pitiful. One minute you'd hear their rattling and the next you'd see the snakes cut down. I don't say that there wasn't any danger.

"I should think they'd strike at you very frequently."

"Oh, the danger didn't run that way. We were pretty well protected as far as their biting is was concerned. We always had a lot of stovepipe on hand, and every man would get long legs nicely togged out in sheet-iron trousers before he went to work. Sometimes they would get after the men so lively that the noise of their teeth on the sheet iron would sound like hail on a tin roof. It would bother a tenderfoot considerably, but after a man had been there awhile he didn't mind it. It was funny to watch a snake gather himself and glance off a piece of sheet iron with the first toothache he probably ever had.

"But the real danger came in when you went to fix the mowing machine. You see when the snakes would get knotted together around the knives they would bite anything that was handy. The consequence was that they would fill one another full of poison, and when the knife went through their bodies it would get all gummed up with venom. Of course somebody would have to clean it off, and he had to be mighty careful not to scrape his finger against the blade too hard, because if he took the skin off it meant one of two things, a funeral or a terrible waste of whiskey.

"No," the old man concluded almost contemptuously; "snakes up this way are pretty good to make pets of, but they don't really seem like snakes."

A PROTEGEE OF HAMLIN'S.

By that Prince of American Story-Tellers,

BRET HARTE.

(Copyright, 1893, by Bret Harte.)

CONCLUDED.

When they reached the street and the gate closed behind them Jack Hamlin again became uneasy. The girl's clouded face and melancholy manner were not promising. It also occurred to him that he might meet some one who knew him and thus compromise her. This was to be avoided at all hazards. He began with forced gayety:

"Well, now, where shall we go?"

She slightly raised her tear-dimmed eyes. "Where you please—I don't care."

"There isn't any show going on here, is there?" He had a vague idea of a circus or menagerie—himself in the shadow of the box behind her.

"I don't know of any."

"Or any restaurant or cake shop?"

"There's a place where the girls go to get candy in Main street. Some of them are there now."

Jack shuddered. This was not to be thought of. "But where do you walk?"

"Up and down Main street."

"Where everybody can see you?" said Jack, scandalized.

The girl nodded.

They walked on in silence for a few moments. Then a bright idea struck Mr. Hamlin. He suddenly remembered that in one of his many fits of impulsive generosity and largesse he had given to an old negro retainer, whose wife had nursed him through a dangerous illness, a house and lot on the river bank. He had been told that they had opened a small laundry or washhouse. It occurred to him that a stroll there and a call upon "Uncle Hannibal" and "Aunt Chloe" combined the propriety and respectability due to the young person he was with, and the requisite secrecy and absence of publicity due to himself. He at once suggested it.

"You see, she was a mighty good woman and you ought to know her, for she was my old nurse——"

The girl glanced at him with impatience.

"Honest Injun," said Jack, solemnly; "she did nurse me through my last cough. I ain't playing old family gags on you."

"Oh, dear," burst out the girl, impulsively, "I do wish you wouldn't ever play them again. I wish you wouldn't pretend to be my uncle; I wish you wouldn't make me pass for your niece. It isn't right. It's all wrong. Oh, don't you know it's all wrong—and can't come right any way. It's just killing me. I can't stand it. I'd rather you'd say what I am and how I came to you and how you pitied me!"

They had luckily entered a narrow side street, and the sobs which shook the young girl's frame were unnoticed. In a few moments Jack felt a horrible conviction stealing over him that in his present attitude toward her he was not unlike that hound Stratton, and that however innocent was his own intent, there was a sickening resemblance to the situation on the boat in the base advantage he had taken of her friendlessness. He had never told her that he was a gambler like Stratton, and that it was impossible for him to assist her, except by stealth or the deception he had practised, without compromising her. He, who had for years faced the sneers and half-frightened opposition of the world, dared not tell the truth to this girl, from whom he expected nothing and who did not interest him. He felt he was almost slinking at her side. At last he said, desperately:

"But I snatched them baldheaded at the organ, Sophy, didn't I?"

"Oh, yes," said the girl, "you played beautifully and grandly. It was so good of you, too. For I think somehow Mme. Bance had been a little suspicious of you; but that settled it. Everybody thought it was fine, and some thought it was your profession. Perhaps," she added timidly, "it is."

"I play a good deal, I reckon," said Jack, with a grim humor which did not, however, amuse him.

"I wish I could and make money by it," said the girl, eagerly.

"Jack winced, but she did not notice it as she went on hurriedly:

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about. I want to leave the school and make my own living. Anywhere where people won't know me and where I can be alone and work. I shall die here among these girls, with all their talk of their friends and their—sisters—and their questions about you."

"Tell 'em to dry up," said Jack, indignantly.

"Take 'em to the cake shop and load 'em up with candy and ice cream. That'll stop their mouths. You've got money—you got my last remittance, didn't you?" he replied quickly. "If you didn't, here's——" His hand was already in his pocket when the girl stopped him with a despairing gesture.

"Yes, I got it all. I haven't touched it. I don't want it, for I can't live on you. Don't you understand—I want to work. Listen. I can draw and paint. Mme. Bance says I do it well; my drawing master says I might in time take portraits and get paid for it. And even now I can retouch photographs and make colored miniatures from them. And," she stopped and glanced at Jack half timidly, "I've done some already."

A glow of surprised relief suffused the gambler's face, not so much at this astonishing revelation as at the change it seemed to effect in her. Her pale blue eyes, made paler by tears, cleared and brightened under their swollen lids like wiped steel; the lines of her depressed mouth straightened and became firm. Her voice had lost its hopeless monotone.

"There's a shop in the next street—a photographer's, where they have one of mine in the window," she went on, reassured by Jack's unaffected interest. "It's only round the corner—if you care to see."

Jack assented. A few paces further brought them to the corner of a narrow street, where they presently turned into a broader thoroughfare and stopped before the window of a photographer. Sophy pointed to an oval frame containing a portrait painted on porcelain.

Mr. Hamlin was startled. Inexperienced as he was, a certain artistic inclination told him it was good, although it is to be feared he would have been astonished even if it had been worse. The mere fact that this headstrong country girl, who had run away with a cur like Stratton, should be able to do anything else took him by surprise.

"I got ten dollars for that," she said, hesitatingly, "and I could have got more for a larger one, but I had to do that in my room during recreation hours. If I had more time and a place where I could work——" she stopped timidly and looked tentatively at Jack. But he was already indulging in a characteristically reckless idea of coming back after he had left Sophy, buying the miniature at an extravagant price, and ordering half a dozen more at extraordinary figures. Here, however, two passers-by, stopping ostensibly to look in the window, but really attracted by the picturesque spectacle of the handsome young rustic and his schoolgirl companion, gave Jack such a fright that he hurried Sophy away again into the side street. "There's nothing mean about that picture business," he said, cheerfully; "it looks like a square game, and it *is* game," and relapsed into thoughtful silence.

At which Sophy, the ice of restraint broken, again burst into passionate appeal. If she could only go away somewhere where she saw no one but the people who would buy her work; who knew nothing of her past nor cared to know who were her relations. She would work hard—she knew she could support herself in time; she would keep the name he had given her; it was not distinctive enough to challenge any inquiry—but nothing more. She need not assume to be his niece; he would always be her kind friend; to whom she owed everything—since this miserable life. She trusted still to his honor never to seek to know her real name—nor to ever speak of her to that man if he ever met him. It would do no good to her nor to them; it might drive her—for she was not yet quite sure of herself—to do that which she had promised him never to do. There was no hysteria, no impatience, nor acting in her voice, but he recognized the same dull desperation he had once heard in it, and her eyes, which a moment before were quick and mobile, had become fixed and set. He had no idea of trying to penetrate the foolish secret of her name and relations; he had never had the slightest curiosity, but it struck him now that Stratton might at any time force it upon him. The only way that he could prevent it was to let it be known that, for unexpressed reasons, he would shoot Stratton "on sight." This would naturally restrict any verbal communication between them. Jack's ideas of morality were vague, but his convictions on points of honor were direct and positive.

Meantime they were passing the outskirts of the town. The open lots and cleared spaces were giving way to grassy stretches, willow copses, and groups of cottonwood and sycamore, and beyond the level of yellowing rules appeared the fringed and raised banks of the river. Half tropical looking cottages with deep verandas—took the place of incomplete blocks of modern houses, monotonously alike. In these sylvan surroundings Mr. Hamlin's picturesque rustic companion looked less incongruous and more arcadian; the young girl had lost some of her restraint with her confidences, and lounging together side by side, without the least consciousness of any sentiment in their words or actions, they nevertheless contrived to impress the spectator with the idea that they were a charming pair of pastoral lovers. So strong was this impression that, as they approached Aunt Chloe's laundry, a pretty, rose-covered cottage with an enormous whitewashed barn-like extension in the rear—the black proprietress herself, standing at the door, called her husband to come and look at them, and flashed her white teeth in such unqualified commendation and patronage that Mr. Hamlin, withdrawing himself from Sophy's side, instantly charged down upon them.

"If you don't slide the lid back over that grinning box of dominoes of yours and take it inside I'll just carry Hannibal off with me," he said in a quick whisper, with a half-wicked, half-mischievous glitter in his brown eyes. "That young lade's a lady, do you understand? No riff-raff friend of mine, but a regular nun—a saint—do you hear? So you just stand back and let her take a good look round and rest herself—until she wants you." Two black idiots, Miss Brown," he continued cheerfully, in a higher voice of explanation as Sophy approached, "who think because one of 'em used to shave me and the other saved my life they've got a right to stand at their humble cottage door and frighten horses."

So great was Mr. Hamlin's ascendency over his former servants that even this ingenious pleasantry was received with every sign of affection and appreciation of the humorist, and of profound respect for his companion. Aunt Chloe showed them effusively into her parlor—a small, but scrupulously neat and sweet-smelling apartment, incordinately furnished, with a huge mahogany centre table and chairs, and the most fragile and meretricious china and glass ornaments on the mantel. But the three jasmine-edged lattice windows opened upon a homely garden of old-fashioned herbs and flowers, and their fragrance filled the room. The cleanest and starchiest of curtains, the most dazzling and whitest of tidies and chair covers bespoke the adjacent laundry, indeed the whole cottage seemed to exhale the odors of lavender, soap, and freshly ironed linen. Yet the cottage was large for the couple and their assistants. "Dar was two front rooms on de next flo' dat dey never used," explained Aunt Chloe; "friends allowed dat dey could let 'em to white folks, but dey had always been done kep' for Marse Hamlin, if he ever wanted to be wid his old niggers again." Jack looked up quickly with a brightened face, made a sign to Hannibal, and the two left the room together.

When he came through the passage a few moments later there was a sound of laughter in the parlor. He recognized the full, round, lazy chuckle of Aunt Chloe, but there was a higher girlish ripple that he did not know. He had never heard Sophy laugh before. Nor, when he entered, had he ever seen her so animated. She was helping Chloe set the table, to that lady's intense delight at "Missey's" girlish housewifery. She was picking the berries fresh from the garden, buttering the Sally Lunns, making the tea and arranging the details of the repast with apparently no trace of her former dejection and unhappiness in either her face or manner. He dropped quietly into a chair by the window, and, with the homely scents of the garden mixing with the honest odors of Aunt Chloe's cookery, watched her with an amusement that was as pleasant and grateful as it was strange and unprecedented.

"Now, den," said Aunt Chloe to her husband, as she put the finishing touch to the repast in a plate of doughnuts as exquisitely brown and shining as Jack's eyes were at that moment, "Hannibal, you just come away and let dem two white quality chillens have dey tea. Dey's done starved, shunh!"

And with an approving nod to Jack she bundled her husband from the room.

The door closed; the young girl began to pour out the tea, but Jack remained in his seat by the window. It was a singular sensation which he did not care to disturb. Presently, however, he rose and sauntered to the table with shining eyes.

"Well, what do you think of Aunt Chloe's shebang?" he asked, smilingly.

"Oh, it's so sweet and clean, and homelike," said the girl quickly. At any other time he would have winced at the last adjective. It struck him now as exactly the word.

"Would you like to live there if you could?"

Her face brightened. She put the teapot down and gazed fixedly at Jack.

"Because you can. Look here! I spoke to Hannibal about it. You can have the two front rooms if you want to. One of 'em is big enough and light enough for a studio to do your work in. And you tell that nigger what you want to put in 'em and he's got my orders and he'll do it. I told him about your painting—said you were the daughter of an old friend, you know. Hold on—Sophy—d——n it all, I've got to do a little gilt-edged lying, but I let you out of the niece business this time. Yes, from this moment I'm no longer your uncle. I renounce the relationship. It's hard," continued the rascal, "after all these years and considering Sister Mary's feelings, but as you seem to wish it it must be done."

Sophy's steel blue eyes softened. She slid her long brown hand across the table and pressed Jack's. He returned the pressure quick and fraternally, even to the half-shamed, half-hurried evasion of emotion peculiar to all brothers. This was also a new sensation, but he liked it.

"You are too—too good, Mr. Hamlin," she said quietly.

"Yes," said Jack cheerfully, "that's what's the matter with me. It isn't natural, and if I keep it up too long it brings on my cough."

Nevertheless they were happy in a boy and girl like fashion, eating heartily, and I fear not always decorously, scrambling somewhat for the strawberries, and smacking their lips over the Sally Lunns. Meantime it was arranged that Mr. Hamlin should write to Miss Mix that Sophy would leave school at the end of the term, only a few days hence, and then transfer herself to lodgings with some old family servants where she could more easily pursue her studies in her own profession. She need not make her place of abode a secret, neither need she court publicity. She would write to Jack regularly, informing him of her progress, and he would visit her whenever he could. Jack assented gravely to the further proposition that he was to keep a strict account of all the money he advanced her, and that she was to repay him out of the proceeds of her first pictures. He had promised also, with a slight mental reservation, not to buy them all himself, but to trust to her success with the public. They were never to talk of what had happened before; she was to begin life anew. Of such were their confidences, spoken often together at the same moment and with their mouths full. Only one thing troubled Jack; he had not told her frankly who he was and what was his reputation, but she seemed to carelessly supposed she would learn it, and Jack had cared little if she did; but it was evident from her conversation that day that by some miracle she was still in ignorance. Unable to tell her himself, he had charged Hannibal to break it to her cautiously after he was gone. "You can let me down easy if you dislike me, but you'd better make a square deal of it while you're about it." And," Jack had added cheerfully, "if she thinks after that she'd better drop me entirely, you just say that if she wishes to stay you'll see that I don't ever come here again. And you keep your word about it, too, you black nigger, or I'll be the first to thrash you."

Nevertheless, when Hannibal and Aunt Chloe returned to clear away the repast they were a harmonious party, albeit Mr. Hamlin seemed more content to watch them silently from his chair by the window, a cigar between his lips, and the pleasant distraction of homely scents and sounds of the garden in the senses. Allusion having been made again to the morning performance of the organ, he was implored by Hannibal to diversify his talent by exercising it on an old guitar which had passed into that retainer's possession with certain clothes of his master's when they separated. Mr. Hamlin accepted it dubiously; it had twanged under his versatile fingers in more pretentious halls. But presently he raised his tenor voice and soft brown lashes to the humble ceiling and sang, "Way down upon the S'wanee" discoursed Jack plaintively, "far, far away; that's where my heart is turning ever, that's where the old folks stay." The two dusky listeners in an emotional race that had been wont to sweeten its toil and condone its wrongs with music sat wrapt and silent, swaying with Jack's voice until they could burst in upon the chorus. The jasmine vines trilled softly with the afternoon breeze, a slending yellowhammer, perhaps emulous of Jack, swung himself from an outspray and peered curiously into the room, and a few neighbors gathering at their doors and windows remarked that "after all, when it came to real singing, no one could beat those d—d niggers."

The sun was slowly sinking in the rolling gold of the river when Jack and Sophy started slowly back through the broken shafts of light, and across the far-stretching shadows of the cotton woods. In the midst of a lazy silence they were presently conscious of a distant, monotonous throb, the booming of the "up boat" on the river. The sound came nearer, passed them, the boat itself hidden by the trees, but a trailing cloud of smoke above cast a momentary shadow upon their path. The girl looked up at Jack with a troubled face. Mr. Hamlin smiled reassuringly, but in that instant he had made up his mind that it was his moral duty to kill Mr. Edward Stratton.

PART III.

For the next two months Mr. Hamlin was professionally engaged in San Francisco and Marysville, and the transfer of Sophy from the school to her new home was effected without his supervision. From letters received by him during that interval it seemed that the young girl had entered energetically upon her new career, and that her artistic efforts were crowned with success. There were a few India-ink sketches, studies made at school and expanded in her own "studio," which were eagerly bought as soon as exhibited in the photographer's window, notably by a florid and inartistic bookkeeper, an old negro woman, a slangy stable-boy, a gorgeously dressed and painted female, and the bearded second officer of a river steamboat, without hesitation and without comment. This, as Mr. Hamlin intelligently pointed out in a letter to Sophy, showed a general and diversified appreciation on the part of the public. Indeed, it emboldened her in the retouching of photographs to offer sittings to the subjects, and to undertake even large crayon copies, which had resulted in her getting so many orders that she was no longer obliged to sell her drawings, but restricted herself solely to profitable portraiture. The studio became known; even its quaint surroundings added to the popular interest, and the originality and independence of the young painter helped her to a genuine success. All this she wrote to Jack. Meantime Hannibal had assured him that he had carried out his instructions by informing "Missy" of his old master's real occupation and reputation, but that the young lady hadn't "took no notice." Certainly there was no allusion to it in her letters, nor any indication in her manner. Mr. Hamlin was greatly—and it seemed to him properly relieved. And he looked forward with considerable satisfaction to an early visit to old Hannibal's laundry.

It must be confessed also that another matter—a simple affair of gallantry—was giving him an equally unusual, unexpected, and absurd annoyance—which he had never before permitted to such trivialities. In a recent visit to a fashionable watering place he had attracted the attention of what appeared to be a respectable, matter-of-fact woman, the wife of a recently elected rural Senator. She was, however, singularly beautiful, and as singularly cold. It was perhaps this quality and her evident annoyance at some unreasoning prepossession which Jack's fascinations exercised upon her that brightened that reckless desire for risk and excitement which really made up the greater part of his gallantry. Nevertheless, as was his habit, he had treated her always with a charming unconsciousness of his own attentions and a frankness that seemed inconsistent with any insidious approach. In fact, Mr. Hamlin seldom made love to anybody, but permitted it to be made to him with good-humored deprecation and cheerful skepticism. He had once quite accidentally, while riding, come upon her when she had strayed from her own riding party and had behaved with such unexpected circumspection and propriety, not to mention a certain thoughtful abstraction—it was the day he had received Sophy's letter—that she was constrained to make the first advances. This led to a later innocent rendezvous in which Mrs. Camperly was impelled to confide to Mr. Hamlin the fact that her husband had really never understood her. Jack listened with understanding and sympathy.

And so eventually this yearning for sympathy dragged Mrs. Camperly's clean skirts and rustic purity after Jack's heels into various places and various situations not so clean, rural, or innocent; made her miserably unhappy in his absence and still more miserably happy in his presence; gave her two distinct lives, but so unreal and feverish that with a recklessness equal to his own she was at last ready to merge them both into his. For the first time in his life Mr. Hamlin found himself bored at the beginning of an affair, actually hesitated, and suddenly disappeared from San Francisco.

He turned up a few days later at Aunt Chloe's door with various packages of presents and quite the air of a returning father of a family, to the intense delight of that lady and to Sophy's proud gratification. For he was lost in a profuse, boyish admiration of her pretty studio, and of wholesome reverence for her art and her astounding progress. They were also amused at his awe and evident alarm at the portraits of two ladies, her latest sitters, that were still on the easels, and in consideration of his half assumed but real bashfulness they turned their faces to the wall. Then his quick, observant eye detected a photograph of himself on the mantel.

"What's that?" he asked, suddenly.

Sophy and Aunt Chloe exchanged meaning glances. Sophy had, as a surprise to Jack, just completed a handsome crayon portrait of himself from an old photograph furnished by Hannibal, and the picture was at that moment in the window of her former patron—the photographer.

"O dat! Miss Sophy jus' put it dar fo de lady sitters to look at to git 'em a pleasant 'spression,'" said Aunt Chloe, chuckling.

Mr. Hamlin did not laugh, but quietly slipped the photograph in his pocket. Yet, perhaps, it had not been recognized.

Then Sophy proposed to have luncheon in the studio; it was quite "Bohemian" and fashionable, and many artists did it. But to her great surprise Jack gravely objected, preferring the little parlor out of Aunt Chloe, the vine-fringed windows, and the heavy, respectable furniture. He thought it was profaning the studio, and then, anybody might come in. This unusual circumspection amused them, and was believed to be part of the boyish awe with which Jack regarded the models, the draperies, and the studies on the walls. Certain it was that he was much more at his ease in the parlor, and when he and Sophy were once more alone at their meal, although he ate nothing, he had regained all his old naïveté.