

THE KING OF HONEY ISLAND

A NOVEL OF AMERICAN LIFE DURING THE WAR OF 1812.

BY MAURICE THOMPSON.

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CHAPTER VII.

CONTINUED.

Fairfax turned about, and with folded arms stood apart, scarcely thinking, but wrapped in a mood that filled the air about him with confused and indefinable apprehensions. He was not aware that Pauline had come near until she spoke, and then he started perceptibly (to himself, if not to her), and looked down at her as if from a great distance. We must remember that he had not slept during the night; this might, to a degree, account for the unnatural slowness with which he responded to the fresh, almost enthusiastic, manner of the girl, as she began to speak of the sun-glories that shimmered over the lonely marshes of the Rigolets.

Meantime, Lieutenant Ballanche was informing Mr. Vernon of the probability that a British fleet was at hand to co-operate with hostile Indians in the effort to devastate the whole country from Pensacola to New Orleans, and that in the latter city there was need of wise counsel and patriotic effort.

"Things are in a bad condition," he said, "and we need the work of men like you, Mr. Vernon, to bring order out of confusion, and to urge the citizens to a proper view of duty. At present, the most deplorable indifference as to the outcome of affairs prevails in New Orleans; nobody seems to realize our dreadful danger."

"The government seems to me most to blame," remarked Mr. Vernon. "Instead of building fortifications and fitting out such vessels as can be had for defence, it is spending most of its time and money searching for imaginary robbers and impossible pirates."

"It is true that our defences are of no value, but you are wrong in thinking that our outlaws are imaginary. I have just been up Pearl River and to Honey Island, where robbers are more numerous than honest citizens. It is not of these, however, that we need to speak; bad as they are, they are less dangerous than those citizens, ostensibly respectable and worthy, who use their apparent social superiority as a cloak to hide the villainies they encourage."

Ballanche spoke with an earnestness amounting almost to vehemence, and by the half closing of his eyes and a certain immobility of all his features, his face took on an intensely resolute expression.

Mr. Vernon looked calmly at him, as if by a sort of masterful scrutiny he could read his inmost thoughts and draw from them a more comprehensive meaning than the speaker himself realized in them. Presently he said:

"You may be right, lieutenant; but, for my part, I see many sides to the question. New Orleans and Louisiana owe very little to any government, save that which they themselves represent. Understand, nevertheless, that I am for allegiance to the government at Washington, or at whatever other place the United States councils meet, and that I am for a vigorous defense of New Orleans against any British force that may come; but I should advise careful speaking when it comes to characterizing our citizens as encouragers of villainies."

"But perhaps, sir, you do not know the condition of things in New Orleans."

"Lieutenant, I do know. How could I help knowing? I knew before you were born; I have known ever since; I know now."

Ballanche made a slight, quick movement and something like an almost invisible flush leaped into his olive-brown cheeks. Mr. Vernon's voice had been so deep and powerful and his attitude so suggestive of virile or leonine superiority that the young man had felt a shock, which for the moment confused him.

"What reliable word have you that a British fleet is near here?" Mr. Vernon continued, his manner changing to one of mere inquiry.

"None. The activity of the Indians and the presence of foreign emissaries among the tribes seem to indicate, however, that a strong movement is to be made."

"And what did you succeed in doing toward suppressing the Pearl River robbers?" Mr. Vernon presently asked.

"Of course, I did nothing—nothing seems possible in the matter at present—but I found out a good deal about them, and have been thinking over a plan by which it might be possible to serve both them and the country."

"That would be a singular achievement, I should say."

"Yes, at first thought it would appear so; but I believe it can be done."

Mr. Vernon stood waiting for the lieutenant to explain; but he did not urge him to proceed even by a look.

"If amnesty were tendered to all of the outlaws who should join our military forces and do service for the country, I believe the most of them would accept the offer in good faith. At all events, I am going to lay the matter before the governor."

Mr. Vernon made no remark; he stood in the attitude of a respectful listener whose mind had run ahead of what his companion had been saying; and when Lieutenant Ballanche looked into his strange, deep eyes, they were quite inscrutable!

"What do you think of the plan?" the young man inquired. "It is not worth trying?"

"It may be; but what do you know of the feeling among the freebooters themselves on the subject?"

"I have some reason to believe that most of them would be glad to quit the life of outlaws. If the leaders can be reached the thing can be accomplished, I am almost sure."

"Who are the leaders?"

"It is not easy to find out. Of course Lafitte has all the Baratarian pirates

under his thumb. But, although the mysterious Pierre Rameau is called King of Honey Island, I have found out to my satisfaction that there is one above him in command of the great Pearl River and inland organization; and that one lives in New Orleans, directing the proceedings from his safe position in the midst of the highest society of the city."

"And who is he?"

"I think that I know, but I cannot yet breathe his name in this connection; it would create a wild scene, I can assure you, sir."

Mr. Vernon folded his arms high upon his broad chest and appeared to lift himself until he showed taller than even the tall orlele.

"If you begin to stir up records in New Orleans," he remarked, "you will soon have a heavy load on your hands. My own opinion is that nothing will be gained by any negotiations with pirates. The country can fight its battles without them."

"At all events, I shall make my report to the governor, and he may do as he shall see fit."

"Are you sure that the governor himself is entirely clear of entanglement with the powerful alliance of freebooters?"

Again the eyes of the lieutenant became sharp and searching as he scanned Mr. Vernon's massive face, and said:

"Do you suspect him?"

"Humph!" with a shrug, was the only answer Mr. Vernon gave. It was as if the ejaculation were meant to toss Ballanche aside.

A half-hour later the young officer took his leave.

"Au revoir!" he called from the gig as his crew pulled away toward the schooner. His farewell comprehended the whole group on the Water-Bird's deck; and yet he was looking straight at Pauline. Fairfax noticed this, but seeing him going farther and farther away, while Pauline seemed quite content to stay where she was, the artist smiled very complacently.

Mr. Vernon ordered the vessel put under sail at once, speaking to his men with an intonation that suggested impatience or great haste.

The most careless observer could have seen that something in the conversation between him and Lieutenant Ballanche had stimulated him; but whether with anger or some other passion no one would have determined from his appearance or actions.

Up through the Rigolets the little vessel went, with a fair breeze and in a golden sunlight as ever drove away a fog. The channel, a broad and beautiful river connecting Lake Borgne with Lake Pontchartrain, flashed like silver between its grassy marsh meadows, over which the herons and wild geese, the pelicans and the plovers flew back and forth like shuttles through the warp of the dreamy weather. Here and there, scattered from distance to distance, picturesque clumps of live-oaks were set against the almost violet sky like orchards on a prairie.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHATEAU D'OR AND COLONEL LORENG.

Mr. Vernon's house in New Orleans, was, perhaps, the most pretentious residence place in the city. Built of gray brick, it stood well back from the street, in the midst of old trees. Its broad verandas and high-hipped dormer-windows, showing but dusky forth through the foliage, which almost hid the balconies and oriels between, were solid and heavy. The whole structure was massive and solemn-looking, giving the general impression of exclusiveness and lofty loneliness.

The grounds were large and lofty where showed that neither money nor care had been grudgingly spent to add beauty and comfort to the place. From base to roof, the house suggested in every angle and curve the wealth, pride and taste of its owner; but it also suggested more; the peculiar civilization grown out of the old Louisiana colonial life and out of the strange vicissitudes and exigencies of the development of New Orleans spoke through the architecture and surroundings. There were flowers everywhere, especially roses and cactuses, making the dusky air flash with colors—blended perfumes coming and going with the wind-puffs and all around and above the soft, satin rusle of leaves.

Mr. Vernon had named his place Chateau d'Or. He liked the name, he said, because a vessel that brought him good luck had borne it; but he never told what the good luck was or what had become of the vessel. It seemed to delight him no little when he was able to excite curiosity on this subject, only to leave it altogether unsatisfied. The name, in accordance with a custom still lingering in the creole country, was set in large letters over the gate, and still higher up was the sketch of a ship under full sail.

The Vernon household was well known to almost everybody in the city; that is, the place and the family name were familiar to the ears and eyes of the people; but there were comparatively few persons who had gained anything like a "visiting acquaintance" with the family. The circle of Mrs. Vernon's friends was, however, as select as it was small; and as for Pauline, she had but recently ventured into society without the formalities of a set debut. Mr. Vernon himself was, without being what we call a public man, a leader of the people. His influence was as powerful as it was general, and it was exerted without effort and, apparently, without ambition on his part. His long residence in Louisiana, his personal force and his great wealth had combined to give him this hold upon the people from highest to lowest, and yet no one could say that he was easily approached. He took no public part in the affairs of the State or the city; but his influence was always

sought when matters of grave importance demanded the use of specially sound judgment, or when the more unmanageable element of the people had to be perfectly controlled. He seemed to possess the confidence of all the races and clans of men in the city and, by some power, was able to command them.

When Mrs. Vernon and Pauline found themselves once more in Chateau d'Or they were as happy as it is ever possible for a mother and her daughter to be. Their stay at Bay Saint Louis had (although they were probably not aware of it) been a powerful tonic and invigorator.

Pauline went about the house and grounds singing like a happy bird, her face radiant, her step light and her heart brimming with half-formed dreams. There was nothing in all her circle of vision to shade or to mar the golden promise that filled it like the soft splendor of springtime. She knew nothing of life's evils—not even the plethora so often attending unlimited access to the luxuries of wealth had ever come to her—and the abounding good in her experience only urged her into a rich development, a radiant blooming, so to call it, which made her beauty of face and of form come out like the blowing of a rose.

The city was very gay when the Vernons came back to it, and Pauline found herself caught in the whirl like a butterfly in a June breeze. There was the theatre, there was the balls, the receptions, the excursions to the country-seats of wealthy planters—nothing was wanting that would keep her spirits at full bloom; and there was the library at Chateau d'Or, where the romances that she loved so dearly filled many a mabogony shelf.

Both Fairfax and Lieutenant Ballanche had called frequently within the first month, and she had seen them often at the theatres and at balls and receptions given by her friends. They had been very attentive and very interesting, each in his way bringing to her receptive mind fascinating impressions and obscure, haunting visions of a great world of experience lying quite outside of her horizon. The young men were so different in personal appearance, in address, in habit of thought, in temper and in everything that goes to build and project individual character, that one served as a foil to emphasize the other at almost every point.

Pauline, while she had every advantage that wealth could bring to her within the narrow and isolated circle of environment, was still no more than a provincial girl; and her limitations, though they probably enhanced to a degree her attractiveness, restricted her vision and compressed her understanding in some measure.

A society girl of to-day, seeing one like Pauline, would call her strangely unsophisticated; still she was not less delighted than most ladies would have been when her mother announced that it was her purpose to "give a party," as the phrase goes, limiting the invitations mostly to young people.

When the evening came, with the grounds and the stately house brilliantly lighted, the whole interior wreathed and festooned with flowers and the servants all assigned to duty, it would have been hard to decide which was the more radiantly happy, Mrs. Vernon or Pauline.

All the windows and doors were open, so that the gentle May winds crept through to stir the rich curtains and to make the candles in the many-armed candelsticks wave their silvery flames. Some of these candles were made of myrtle-wax, taken from the wild berries, after a local custom of the time, and as they burned they sent out a faint, exquisitely pleasant perfume, at once mild and sweet.

The rather sombre mansion was transformed by lights and flowers into something like a gorgeous palace; even the heavy, black-mahogany furniture caught a gleam and a glow.

Pauline hugged her mother, under the impulse of a swift joy, when the time approached for the guests to begin arriving.

"Isn't it all beautiful!" she exclaimed, almost straggling Mrs. Vernon with her snowy, plump arms. "And I'm so happy! See how the pictures come out, and how the statuary gives effect to everything! And the stairway—how the festoons of flowers and moss have changed it! I wonder who will be the first guest to come!"

"Mercy, child! Do you wish to kill your poor mother? See how you are spoiling my lace and disarranging my hair! I shall not be presentable!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Natural Gas Utilized by Tramps.

Two years ago a well was drilled on the Hays farm in search of oil. The well was put down by some Eastern company. Situated in a secluded place along a little creek, very few people ever knew that the well had been drilled. What was found in the well will never be known, for, as soon as was completed, it was immediately filled up with rock and dirt. Lately, however, gas has begun to issue from the well, and now it comes forth in considerable quantities. It is not far from a little station on the Santa Fe Railroad, and this winter the tramps have taken possession of the place. They have piled rocks around the well and turned a part of an oil stove over it, on which they cook. They have put up a shanty, and in the centre of the room their stove heated it with natural gas. The advantage of natural gas has made the place a favorite rendezvous for tramps for miles around, and they have quite a colony there.—Topeka (Kan.) State Journal.

The Coat Didn't Fit.

In the days when Johannesburg was a mining camp, so the tale goes, Oom Paul on one occasion was riding through in a very ordinary suit of clothes. He unsaddled by a wagon belonging to a German, who, not recognizing him, began to hold forth on the reforms he would make if he were ruler of the State. Suddenly Mr. Kruger took off his coat, and, holding it toward the German, who was a little man, said: "Friend, put it on." "But," replied the latter, "it is too big." "Just so," said the President with a grim smile. "I'm Paul Kruger, and it is not too big for me."

CHINA AND THE CHINESE

Manners and Customs of the People.

The area of China is 4,218,401 English square miles. Of this territory only 1,336,841 miles belong to China proper, the remainder being the dependencies of Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, Jungaria and East Turkestan. Notwithstanding the relatively small size of China proper, having 386,000,000 inhabitants out of a total population of the Kingdom of 402,680,000. The present Emperor of China belongs to the Manchu dynasty, which overthrew the native dynasty of Ming in the year 1644. As the late Emperor died suddenly, he did not designate a successor, as is the custom in China, where there exists no law of hereditary succession. This is one of the causes of the trouble in China, owing to the fact that the Empress Dowager was able to obtain ascendancy over the young Emperor, so that on September 22, 1898, an imperial edict was issued announcing that the Emperor had resigned power to the Empress Dowager, who has since retained the Direction of affairs and by her dislike of foreigners has done much to foment the troubles and has made it easy for the Boxer movement to gain headway, even if she is not directly responsible for the attack, as has been suggested by those who have an intimate knowledge of Chinese affairs. On January 24, 1900, it was declared by decree that the son of Prince Tuan should succeed the present Emperor. This is generally regarded as equivalent to Kwang Su's deposition. The lively interest which Prince Tuan is taking in the attacks of foreigners is easily accounted for by his son's right to the throne.

The government of the State is based upon the government of the family. The supreme direction of the Empire is vested in the privy council or grand council. The administration is under the direction of a cabinet comprising four members, two of Manchu and two of Chinese origin, besides two assistants from the great college, who have to see that nothing is done contrary to the civil and religious laws of the Empire. These members are called ministers of State. Under their orders are seven boards of government, each of which is presided over by a Manchu and a Chinese. The

able, superlatively beautiful, disgustingly filthy, and, in short, a city of contradictions. Originally a Tartar encampment, begun by the hordes that swarmed to the eastern part of China, Peking soon became a fortified city of much strength. Here the Tartar rulers lived, surrounded by their Manchu followers—fearing the white man's usurpation far less than the numerical preponderance of the Chinese. So, in order to protect themselves from unexpected assault, they constructed a huge wall around their city—for China is a land of walls—and for a time lived in tolerable security.

Gradually, however, the Chinese, realizing to some extent their power, began a rival city adjoining the Tartar fortress. They, too, built a wall, and, as the Tartars did, whenever a workman died, his body was entombed within the wall. In this manner, it is estimated, that one million human beings found their last resting places in the walls surrounding Peking.

While the Chinese city is of much interest, both from a sociological and architectural viewpoint, yet the Tartar city is the more important. For within its precincts is the "Forbidden," or Purple City, where lives Kwang Su, the unfortunately progressive monarch of the Chinese. The Forbidden City is a city of night, for there the denizens of the palace of the Son of Heaven awaken and begin their life.

Little is known of the Forbidden City, for within the memory of man not half a dozen whites have entered it. All that is known is that it contains the palaces of the Emperor, and what is perhaps more interesting, the

Three religions are acknowledged by

Confucianism has little outward ceremonial. The study and contemplation of the moral precepts of the ancients constitute the duties of a Confucianist. Buddhism and Taoism present a gorgeous and elaborate ritual in China. The bulk of the people are Buddhists. There are about thirty million Mohammedans, one million Roman Catholics and fifty thousand Protestants. Most of the aboriginal hill tribes are still nature worshippers.

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face of Kwang Su. The entire route to be traversed was cut off and thousands of soldiers line the so-called streets, so that no Peeping Tom could ply his trade. But despite all such precautions, the well-known Oriental propensity for money, exceptionally strong in the Chinese, enabled foreigners to see Kwang Su at close range. They beheld a shrinking, slight figure, dressed plainly and utterly eclipsed by the gorgeous apparel of his retinue.

The rest of Peking is very much like all Chinese cities—picturesquely confusing and terribly dirty. Streets run in the most bizarre fashion, totally oblivious of their beginning and end, aimlessly wandering from bad to worse, fringed on both sides by hovels and palaces in confusion. Dogs and pigs meander about, jostle equally offensive beggars and unkempt children; stuffy litters, suspended on long bamboo poles and carried by coolies, make life a burden; odors, concentrated be-

In China, however—that dark, mysterious land which is the world's center of interest to-day—women still dress their hair in the most elaborate and fantastic manner.

The Peking ladies glue their hair into imitations of the magpie or jay bird, or pile it high with gorgeous flowers, and bunches, loops and tassels of pearls pendant from a great gold bar, which forms the "hairpin."

The blue-black locks are parted in curious zigzags, and the ornaments are balanced from the hairpin on each side of the head.—Scientific American.

"DON COYOTE," OF THE PLAINS.

The American Wild Dog is an Interesting Animal.

One of the interesting and typical animals of the Far West is the American wild dog, lowland wolf or coyote. Canis latrans, it being known under these and other titles. While a very common animal, it is rarely well figured in the books, and is made to look more foxlike than wolfish, says Professor C. F. Holder in the Scientific American. The accompanying illustration gives a correct idea of a young male two-thirds grown. In general appearance it resembles the typical wolf, the fur being a dull yellowish gray, with dark, even black, clouded spots; beneath it is sometimes reddish and white.

While the coyote hunts singly in towns or villages, he runs in packs in the open, and it is here that he demonstrates his skill and cunning. A friend of mine observed a pack of coyotes on the edge of the desert manipulating a jack rabbit. They were across the country in a line, soon starting a hare, then formed in two parallel lines about 200 feet apart. There was a regular plan of action, and none of the coyotes seemed overexcited, but when the hare was started they wheeled into columns like soldiers, the leading coyote running at the top of his speed. After a few moments he dropped to the rear and a fresh coyote took the lead, and this was kept up until the hare was run down. The chase was a silent one. This method recalls the wild dogs of Australia, or dingos.

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TEA CLEANING PROCESS.

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between the skull of a coyote and that of a dog, and a cross between a collie and an Eskimo dog produces a very fair coyote as far as appearances go.

Seven or eight years ago Southern and Central California abounded in coyotes, and the State Legislature passed an anti-coyote act, putting a price upon his head or scalp. I had the temerity to oppose this, but time has shown the fallacy of killing all the coyotes, and the act was repealed. My argument was that as the coyote was the only enemy of the jack rabbit and ground squirrel destruction by white-stalk would result in a vast increase of rabbits and squirrels. The jack rabbit, a famous girder of young, and an all-around enemy to the agriculturist, without a redeeming feature, is the natural food of the coyote, which does not disdain the ground squirrel. The coyote is also a snake eater, even attacking the rattlesnake; in a word, he is a valuable scavenger and an animal to be preserved.

Don Coyote can be tamed, and I knew of one instance where a herder kept one that was apparently as tame as a dog.

Symbolic Characters in Chinese.

Man is represented by a straight upright stroke and two legs, a mountain by three peaks, a tree by strokes representing branches, trunk, and roots, a forest by trees, a field by a square divided into four parts, the sun by a circle and dot in the centre. A door by a picture of a double gate. An arrow piercing a target becomes the symbol for the middle. Two cash with strings through the centre aptly signify union. A mouth in a door means to listen. A woman with a broom expresses the Chinese idea of a wife. One woman under one roof means peace, two women under one roof means a quarrel, while one woman between two men, as can easily be guessed, is a symbol of anger.

Lightning Explores a Gun.

The vicinity of Williamsport, Md., was visited by the severest thunderstorm of the summer. Lightning struck in several places and cut some queer pranks. The tollgate house on the pike, a half mile from this place, was struck by a bolt which followed the chimney down through the house, striking a loaded gun standing in the corner at the head of the bed in which Elmer Palmer, the tollgate keeper and his wife were asleep. The gun exploded with a terrific report, and was shattered in fragments. Mr. and Mrs. Palmer escaped unhurt.—Baltimore American.

A Lock of Lincoln's Hair.

Mrs. C. D. Harmon, of Emporia, Kan., is said to be the possessor of a lock of Abraham Lincoln's hair, which was cut from his hair just before he died. The lock was given by Mrs. Lincoln to her sister, and in turn by the sister to Mrs. Harmon, whose husband was an associate of the martyred President when both were young lawyers in Illinois. The lock is long and straight and black, with a gray hair here and there.

It takes a pretty good mental digestion to swallow flattery.



A CHINESE DONKEY CART IN PEKING.

boards are: 1, for civil appointments; 2, for revenues; 3, for rites and ceremonies; 4, for military affairs; 5, for public works; 6, criminal jurisdiction; 7, admiralty board. Independent of the government, and theoretically above the central administration, is the Board of Public Censors, which consists of forty or fifty members under two presidents. They are privileged to present any remonstrance to the sovereign, and one of them must be present at the meetings of each of the Government boards. Each of the eighteen provinces is governed by a governor-general, who is responsible to the Emperor for the entire administration, political, judicial, military and physical. He is assisted by a council and other officials. Each province is subdivided into apartments, ruled by prefects, and each department into districts, each under a separate ruler. Each town and village also has its governing body, and among the various rulers there is a regular gradation in rank, each being responsible to his immediate superior. Political office in the general administration of the Empire is less sought after than the position of viceroys or governor in the provinces, where there are opportunities of acquiring wealth. The number of foreigners resident in the open ports of China was 13,421 at the end of 1898, British subjects predominating. About a half of the total number of foreigners reside at Shanghai.

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"DON COYOTE," OF THE PLAINS.

The American Wild Dog is an Interesting Animal.

One of the interesting and typical animals of the Far West is the American wild dog, lowland wolf or coyote. Canis latrans, it being known under these and other titles. While a very common animal, it is rarely well figured in the books, and is made to look more foxlike than wolfish, says Professor C. F. Holder in the Scientific American. The accompanying illustration gives a correct idea of a young male two-thirds grown. In general appearance it resembles the typical wolf, the fur being a dull yellowish gray, with dark, even black, clouded spots; beneath it is sometimes reddish and white.

While the coyote hunts singly in towns or villages, he runs in packs in the open, and it is here that he demonstrates his skill and cunning. A friend of mine observed a pack of coyotes on the edge of the desert manipulating a jack rabbit. They were across the country in a line, soon starting a hare, then formed in two parallel lines about 200 feet apart. There was a regular plan of action, and none of the coyotes seemed overexcited, but when the hare was started they wheeled into columns like soldiers, the leading coyote running at the top of his speed. After a few moments he dropped to the rear and a fresh coyote took the lead, and this was kept up until the hare was run down. The chase was a silent one. This method recalls the wild dogs of Australia, or dingos.

The coyote is virtually a wild dog and breeds with the