

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

VOL. X.

AUGUST, 1875.

No. 4.

A FARMER'S VACATION: V

OLD JERSEY.



FARM-HOUSE IN ST. PETER'S VALLEY.

NOTHING in the whole experience of travel produces such genuine emotion as discovery. To come upon an interesting and important old town, of which we had hitherto known next to nothing, and of which we are sure that most of our countrymen are equally ignorant, awakens an introverted enthusiasm that proves us akin to Columbus. "Where is Treves, exactly? I don't think I quite know." Such a question as this, from one who is otherwise our equal, always emphasizes the secret satisfaction with which we contemplate our individual merit of good fortune.

Discovery is not the least of the great pleasures that finally reward those who climb down from the high quay at St. Malo and embark on the side-wheeler "Pinta," bound for the untried waters of La Manche, which we found still so lashed by the tail of the "forte tempête," that even the barbarous passage from Dover to Calais faded from our recollection. After four hours of almost mortal agony, we ran past the great mole at

St. Helier's, and were in still water. In due time we were in the old "Hôtel de la Pomme d'Or," and were at rest, amid such wholesome old-fashioned hospitality and cordial attention as only a combination of French and English customs can give. Think of Southdown mutton and "Suprême de Volaille," of English tea and French coffee under the same roof!

The rain, which had so much interfered with our pleasure in France, had rained itself out, and our two weeks in Jersey were blessed with the most superb autumn weather. We were in a land rarely visited by Americans, and so little known to our literature of travel, that at each turn of its beautiful lanes we found a fresh delight. So much as is generally known of the island relates—just as our popular notions of Siam center around its twins—to the cattle for which it has long been famous. The cattle are still there in all their beauty, but they are but one element of a beauty that is almost universal.

VOL. X.—27.

MADAME DÉLICIEUSE.

Just adjoining the old Café de Poésie on the corner, stood the little one-story, yellow-washed tenement of Dr. Mossy, with its two glass doors protected by batten shutters, and its low, weed-grown tile roof sloping out over the sidewalk. You were very likely to find the Doctor in, for he was a great student and rather negligent of his business—as business. He was a small, sedate, Creole gentleman of thirty or more, with a face and manner that provoked instant admiration. He would receive you—be you who you may—in a mild, candid manner, looking into your face with his deep blue eyes, and reassuring you with a modest, amiable smile, very sweet and rare on a man's mouth.

To be frank, the Doctor's little establishment was dusty and disorderly—very. It was curious to see the jars, and jars, and jars. In them were serpents and hideous fishes and precious specimens of many sorts. There were stuffed birds on broken perches; and dried lizards, and eels, and little alligators, and old skulls with their crowns sawed off, and ten thousand odd scraps of writing-paper strewn with crumbs of lonely lunches, and interspersed with long-lost spatulas and rust-eaten lancets.

All New Orleans, at least all Creole New Orleans, knew, and yet did not know, the dear little Doctor. So gentle, so kind, so skillful, so patient, so lenient; so careless of the rich and so attentive to the poor; a man, all in all, such as, should you once love him, you would love him forever. So very learned, too, but with apparently no idea of how to *show himself* to his social profit,—two features much more smiled at than respected, not to say admired, by a people remote from the seats of learning, and spending most of their esteem upon animal heroisms and exterior display.

"Alas!" said his wealthy acquaintances, "what a pity; when he might as well be rich."

"Yes, his father has plenty."

"Certainly, and gives it freely. But intends his son shall see none of it."

"His son? You dare not so much as mention him."

"Well, well, how strange! But they can never agree—not even upon their name. Is not that droll?—a man named General Villivencio, and his son, Dr. Mossy!"

"Oh, that is nothing; it is only that the Doctor drops the *de Villivencio*."

"Drops the *de Villivencio*? but I think the *de Villivencio* drops him, ho, ho, ho,—*diable!*"

Next to the residence of good Dr. Mossy towered the narrow, red-brick front mansion of young Madame Délicieuse, firm friend at once and always of those two antipodes, General Villivencio and Dr. Mossy. Its dark-covered carriage-way was ever rumbling, and, with nightfall, its drawing-rooms always sent forth a luxurious light from the lace-curtained windows of the second-story balconies.

It was one of the sights of the rue Royale to see by night its tall, narrow outline reaching high up toward the stars, with all its windows aglow.

The Madame had had some tastes of human experience; had been betrothed at sixteen (to a man she did not love, "being at that time a fool," as she said); one summer day at noon had been a bride, and at sundown—a widow. Accidental discharge of the tipsy bridegroom's own pistol. Pass it by! It left but one lasting effect on her, a special detestation of quarrels and weapons.

The little maidens whom poor parentage has doomed to sit upon street door-sills and nurse their infant brothers have a game of "choosing" the beautiful ladies who sweep by along the pavement; but in rue Royale there was no choosing; every little damsel must own Madame Délicieuse or nobody, and as that richly adorned and regal favorite of old General Villivencio came along they would lift their big, bold eyes away up to her face and pour forth their admiration in a universal—"Ah-h-h-h!"

But, mark you, she was good Madame Délicieuse as well as fair Madame Délicieuse: her principles, however, not constructed in the austere Anglo-Saxon style, exactly (what need, with the lattice of the Confessional not a stone's throw off?). Her kind offices and beneficent schemes were almost as famous as General Villivencio's splendid alms; if she could at times do what the infantile Washington said he could not, why, no doubt she and her friends generally looked upon it as a mere question of enterprise.

She had charms, too, of intellect—albeit not such a sinner against time and place as to be an “educated woman”—charms that even in a plainer person, would have brought down the half of New Orleans upon one knee, with both hands on the left side. *She* had the whole city at her feet, and, with the fine tact which was the perfection of her character, kept it there contented. Madame was, in short, one of the kind that gracefully wrest from society the prerogative of doing as they please, and had gone even to such extravagant lengths as driving out in the *American* faubourg, learning the English tongue, talking national politics, and similar freaks whereby she provoked the unbounded worship of her less audacious lady friends. In the center of the cluster of Creole beauties which everywhere gathered about her, and, most of all, in those incomparable companies which assembled in her own splendid drawing-rooms, she was always queen lily. *Her* house, *her* drawing-rooms, etc.; for the little brown aunt who lived with her was a mere piece of curious furniture.

There was this notable charm about Madame Délicieuse, she improved by comparison. She never looked so grand as when, hanging on General Villivencio's arm at some gorgeous ball, these two bore down on you like a royal barge lashed to a ship-of-the-line. She never looked so like her sweet name, as when she seated her prettiest lady adorers close around her, and got them all a-laughing.

Of the two balconies which overhung the banquette on the front of the Délicieuse house, one was a small affair, and the other a deeper and broader one, from which Madame and her ladies were wont upon gala days to wave handkerchiefs and cast flowers to the friends in the processions. There they gathered one Eighth of January morning to see the military display. It was a bright blue day, and the group that quite filled the balcony had laid wrappings aside, as all flower-buds are apt to do on such Creole January days, and shone resplendent in spring attire.

The sight-seers passing below looked up by hundreds and smiled at the ladies' eager twitter, as, flirting in humming-bird fashion from one subject to another, they laughed away the half hours waiting for the pageant. By and by they fell a-listening, for Madame Délicieuse had begun a narrative concerning Dr. Mossy. She sat somewhat above her listeners, her elbow on the arm of her chair, and her plump white hand waving now and

then in graceful gesture, they silently attending with eyes full of laughter and lips starting apart.

“Vous savez,” she said (they conversed in French of course), “you know it is now long that Dr. Mossy and his father have been in disaccord. Indeed, when have they not differed? For, when Mossy was but a little boy, his father thought it hard that he was not a rowdy. He switched him once because he would not play with his toy gun and drum. He was not *so* high when his father wished to send him to Paris to enter the French army; but he would not go. We used to play often together on the banquette—for I am not so very many years younger than he, no indeed—and, if I wanted some fun, I had only to pull his hair and run into the house; he would cry, and monsieur papa would come out with his hand spread open and —”

Madame gave her hand a malicious little sweep, and joined heartily in the laugh which followed.

“That was when they lived over the way. But wait! you shall see; I have something. This evening the General —”

The houses of rue Royale gave a start and rattled their windows. In the long, irregular line of balconies the beauty of the city rose up. Then the houses jumped again and the windows rattled; Madame steps inside the window and gives a message which the housemaid smiles at in receiving. As she turns the houses shake again, and now again; and now there comes a distant strain of trumpets, and by and by the drums and bayonets and clattering hoofs, and plumes and dancing banners; far down the long street stretch out the shining ranks of gallant men, and the fluttering, overleaning swarms of ladies shower down their sweet favors and wave their countless welcomes.

In the front, towering above his captains, rides General Villivencio, veteran of 1814-15, and, with the gracious pomp of the old-time gentleman, lifts his cocked hat, and bows, and bows.

Madame Délicieuse's balcony was a perfect maze of waving kerchiefs. The General looked up for the woman of all women; she was not there. But he remembered the other balcony, the smaller one, and cast his glance onward to it. There he saw Madame and one other person only. A small blue-eyed, broad-browed, scholarly-looking man whom the arch lady had lured from his pen by means of a mock professional summons, and who now stood beside her, a smile of

pleasure playing on his lips and about his eyes.

"Vite!" said Madame, as the father's eyes met the son's. Dr. Mossy lifted his arm and cast a bouquet of roses. A girl in the crowd bounded forward, caught it in the air, and, blushing, handed it to the plumed giant. He bowed low, first to the girl, then to the balcony above; and then, with a responsive smile, tossed up two splendid kisses, one to Madame, and one, it seemed—

"For what was that cheer?"

"Why, did you not see? General Villivencio cast a kiss to his son."

The staff of General Villivencio were a faithful few who had not bowed the knee to any abomination of the Américains, nor sworn deceitfully to any species of compromise; and this band, heroically unconscious of their feebleness, putting their trust in "reactions" and like delusions, resolved to make one more stand for the traditions of their fathers. It was concerning this that Madame Délicieuse was incidentally about to speak when interrupted by the boom of cannon; they had promised to meet at her house that evening.

They met. With very little discussion or delay (for their minds were made up beforehand), it was decided to announce in the French-English newspaper that, at a meeting of leading citizens, it had been thought consonant with the public interest to place before the people the name of General Hercule Mossy de Villivencio. No explanation was considered necessary. All had been done in strict accordance with time-honored customs and if any one did not know it it was his own fault. No eulogium was to follow, no editorial indorsement. The two announcements were destined to stand next morning, one on the English side and one on the French, in severe simplicity, to be greeted with profound gratification by a few old gentlemen in blue cottonade, and by roars of laughter from a rampant majority.

As the junto were departing, sparkling Madame Délicieuse detained the General at the head of the stairs that descended into the tiled carriage-way, to wish she was a man, that she might vote for him.

"But, General," she said, "had I not a beautiful bouquet of ladies on my balcony this morning?"

The General replied, with majestic gallantry, that "it was as magnificent as could be expected with the central rose wanting." And so Madame was disappointed, for she

was trying to force the General to mention his son. "I will bear this no longer; he shall not rest," she had said to her little aunt, "until he has either kissed his son or quarreled with him." To which the aunt had answered that, "coûte que coûte, she need not cry about it;" nor did she. Though the General's compliment had foiled her thrust, she answered gayly to the effect that enough was enough; "but, ah! General," dropping her voice to an undertone, "if you had heard what some of those rose-buds said of you!"

The old General pricked up like a country beau. Madame laughed to herself, "Monsieur Peacock, I have thee;" but aloud she said gravely:

"Come into the drawing-room, if you please, and seat yourself. You must be greatly fatigued."

The friends who waited below overheard the invitation.

"Au revoir, General," said they.

"Au revoir, Messieurs," he answered, and followed the lady.

"General," said she, as if her heart were overflowing, "you have been spoken against. Please sit down."

"Is that true, Madame?"

"Yes, General."

She sank into a luxurious chair.

"A lady said to-day—but you will be angry with me, General."

"With you, Madame? That is not possible."

"I do not love to make revelations, General; but when a noble friend is evil spoken of"—she leaned her brow upon her thumb and forefinger, and looked pensively at her slipper's toe peeping out at the edge of her skirt on the rich carpet—"one's heart gets very big."

"Madame, you are an angel! But what said she, Madame?"

"Well, General, I have to tell you the whole truth, if you will not be angry. We were all speaking at once of handsome men. She said to me: 'Well, Madame Délicieuse, you may say what you will of General Villivencio, and I suppose it is true; but everybody knows'—pardon me, General, but just so she said—'all the world knows he treats his son very badly.'"

"It is not true," said the General.

"If I wasn't angry!" said Madame, making a pretty fist. "How can that be?" I said. "Well," she said, "mamma says he has been angry with his son for fifteen years." "But what did his son do?" I said. "Noth-

ing,' said she. 'Ma foi,' I said, 'me, I too would be angry if my son had done nothing for fifteen years'—ho, ho, ho!"

The old General cleared his throat, and smiled as by compulsion.

"You know, General," said Madame, looking distressed, "it was nothing to joke about, but I had to say so, because I did not know what your son had done, nor did I wish to hear anything against one who has the honor to call you his father."

She paused a moment to let the flattery take effect, and then proceeded:

"But then another lady said to me; she said, 'for shame, Clarisse, to laugh at good Dr. Mossy; nobody—neither General Villivicencio, neither any other, has a right to be angry against that noble, gentle, kind, brave ——'"

"Brave!" said the General, with a touch of irony.

"So she said," answered Madame Délicieuse, "and I asked her, 'how brave?' 'Brave?' she said, 'why, braver than *any soldier*, in tending the small-pox, the cholera, the fevers, and all those horrible things. Me, I saw his father once run from a snake; I think *he* wouldn't fight the small-pox—my faith!' she said, 'they say that Dr. Mossy does all that and never wears a scapula!—and does it nine hundred and ninety-nine times in a thousand for nothing! Is that brave, Madame Délicieuse, or is it not?'—And, General,—what could I say?"

Madame dropped her palms on either side of her spreading robes and waited pleadingly for an answer. There was no sound but the drumming of the General's fingers on his sword-hilt. Madame resumed:

"I said, 'I do not deny that Mossy is a noble gentleman;'—I had to say that, had I not, General?"

"Certainly, Madame," said the General, "my son is a gentleman, yes."

"But," I said, "he should not make Monsieur, his father, angry."

"True," said the General, eagerly.

"But that lady said: 'Monsieur, his father, makes himself angry,' she said. 'Do you know, Madame, why his father is angry so long?' Another lady says, 'I know!' 'For what?' said I. 'Because he refused to become a soldier; mamma told me that.' 'It cannot be!'" I said.

The General flushed. Madame saw it, but relentlessly continued:

"Mais oui," said that lady. 'What!' I said, 'think you General Villivicencio will

not rather be the very man most certain to respect a son who has the courage to be his own master? Oh, what does he want with a poor fool of a son who will do only as he says? You think he will love him less for healing instead of killing? Mesdemoiselles, you do not know that noble soldier!"

The noble soldier glowed and bowed his acknowledgments in a dubious, half remonstrative way, as if Madame might be producing material for her next confession, as, indeed, she diligently was doing; but she went straight on once more, as a surgeon would.

"But that other lady said: 'No, Madame, no, ladies; but I am going to tell you why Monsieur, the General, is angry with his son.' 'Very well, why?'—'Why? It is just—because—he is—a little man!'"

General Villivicencio stood straight up.

"Ah! mon ami," cried the lady, rising excitedly, "I have wounded you and made you angry, with my silly revelations. Pardon me, my friend. Those were foolish girls, and, any how, they admired you. They said you looked glorious—grand—at the head of the procession."

Now, all at once, the General felt the tremendous fatigues of the day; there was a wild, swimming, whirling sensation in his head that forced him to let his eyelids sink down; yet, just there, in the midst of his painful bewilderment, he realized with ecstatic complacency that the most martial-looking man in Louisiana was standing in his spurs with the hand of Louisiana's queenliest woman laid tenderly on his arm.

"I am a wretched tattler!" said she.

"Ah! no, Madame, you are my dearest friend, yes."

"Well, any how, I called them fools. 'Ah! innocent creatures,' I said, 'think you a man of his sense and goodness, giving his thousands to the sick and afflicted, will cease to love his only son because he is not big like a horse or quarrelsome like a dog? No, ladies, there is a great reason which none of you know.' 'Well, well,' they cried, 'tell it; he has need of a very good reason; tell it now.' 'My ladies,' I said, 'I must not—for, General, for all the world I knew not a reason why you should be angry against your son; you know, General, you have never told me.'"

The beauty again laid her hand on his arm and gazed, with round-eyed simplicity, into his somber countenance. For an instant her witchery had almost conquered.

"Nay, Madame, some day I shall tell you;

I have more than one burden *here*. But let me ask you to be seated, for I have a question, also, for you, which I have longed to ask. It lies heavily upon my heart; I must ask it now. A matter of so great importance —”

Madame's little brown aunt gave a faint cough from a dim corner of the room.

“’Tis a beautiful night,” she remarked, and stepped out upon the balcony.

Then the General asked his question. It was a very long question, or, may be, repeated twice or thrice; for it was fully ten minutes before he moved out of the room, saying good-evening.

Ah! old General Villivicencio. The most martial-looking man in Louisiana! But what would the people, the people who cheered in the morning, have said, to see the fair Queen Délicieuse at the top of the stair, sweetly bowing you down into the starlight,—humbled, crest-fallen, rejected!

The campaign opened. The Villivicencio ticket was read in French and English with the very different sentiments already noted. In the Exchange, about the courts, among the “banks,” there was lively talking concerning its intrinsic excellence and extrinsic chances. The young gentlemen who stood about the doors of the so-called “coffee-houses” talked with a frantic energy alarming to any stranger, and just when you would have expected to see them jump and bite large mouthfuls out of each other's face, they would turn and enter the door, talking on in the same furious manner, and, walking up to the bar, click their glasses to the success of the Villivicencio ticket. Sundry swarthy and wrinkled remnants of an earlier generation were still more enthusiastic. There was to be a happy renaissance; a purging out of Yankee ideas; a blessed home-coming of those good old Bourbon morals and manners which Yankee notions had expatriated. In the cheerfulness of their anticipations they even went the length of throwing their feet high in air, thus indicating how the Villivicencio ticket was going to give “doze Américains” the kick under the nose.

In the three or four weeks which followed, the General gathered a surfeit of adulation, notwithstanding which he was constantly imagining a confused chatter of ladies, and when he shut his eyes with annoyance, there was Madame Délicieuse standing, and saying, “I knew not a reason why you should be angry against your son,” gazing in his

face with such simplicity, and then—that last scene on the stairs.

Madame herself was keeping good her resolution.

“Now or never,” she said, “a reconciliation or a quarrel.”

When the General, to keep up appearances, called again soon after his late discomfiture, she so moved him with an account of certain kindly speeches of her own invention which she imputed to Dr. Mossy, that he promised to call and see his son; “perhaps;” “pretty soon;” “probably.”

Dr. Mossy, sitting one February morning among his specimens and books of reference, finishing a thrilling chapter on the cuticle, too absorbed to hear a door open, suddenly realized that something was in his light, and, looking up, beheld General Villivicencio standing over him. Breathing a pleased sigh, he put down his pen, and, rising on tiptoe, laid his hand upon his father's shoulder, and, lifting his lips like a little wife, kissed him.

“Be seated, papa,” he said, offering his own chair, and perching on the desk.

The General took it, and, clearing his throat, gazed around upon the jars and jars with their little Adams and Eves in zoological gardens.

“Is all going well, papa?” finally asked Dr. Mossy.

“Yes.”

Then there was a long pause.

“’Tis a beautiful day,” said the son.

“Very beautiful,” rejoined the father.

“I thought there would have been a rain, but it has cleared off,” said the son.

“Yes,” responded the father, and drummed on the desk.

“Does it appear to be turning cool?” asked the son.

“No; it does not appear to be turning cool at all,” was the answer.

“H'm'm!” said Dr. Mossy.

“Hem!” said General Villivicencio.

Dr. Mossy, not realizing his own action, stole a glance at his manuscript.

“I am interrupting you,” said the General, quickly, and rose.

“No, no! pardon me; be seated; it gives me great pleasure to—I did not know what I was doing. It is the work with which I fill my leisure moments.”

So the General settled down again, and father and son sat very close to each other—in a bodily sense; spiritually they were many miles apart. The General's finger-ends, softly

tapping the desk, had the sound of far-away drums.

"The city—it is healthy?" asked the General.

"Did you ask me if——" said the little Doctor, starting and looking up.

"The city—it has not much sickness at present?" repeated the father.

"No, yes—not much," said Mossy, and, with utter unconsciousness, leaned down upon his elbow and supplied an omitted word to the manuscript.

The General was on his feet as if by the touch of a spring.

"I must go!"

"Ah! no, papa," said the son.

"But yes, I must."

"But wait, papa, I had just now something to speak of——"

"Well?" said the General, standing with his hand on the door, and with rather a dark countenance.

Dr. Mossy touched his fingers to his forehead, trying to remember.

"I fear I have—ah! I rejoice to see your name before the public, dear papa, and at the head of the ticket."

The General's displeasure sank down like an eagle's feathers. He smiled thankfully, and bowed.

"My friends compelled me," he said.

"They think you will be elected?"

"They will not doubt it. But what think you, my son?"

Now the son had a conviction which it would have been madness to express, so he only said:

"They could not elect one more faithful."

The General bowed solemnly.

"Perhaps the people will think so; my friends believe they will."

"Your friends who have used your name should help you as much as they can, papa," said the Doctor. "Myself, I should like to assist you, papa, if I could."

"A-bah!" said the pleased father, incredulously.

"But, yes," said the son.

A thrill of delight filled the General's frame. *This* was like a son.

"Thank you, my son! I thank you much, Ah, Mossy, my dear boy, you make me happy!"

"But," added Mossy, realizing with a tremor how far he had gone, "I see not how it is possible."

The General's chin dropped.

"Not being a public man," continued the Doctor; "unless, indeed, my pen—you might enlist my pen."

He paused with a smile of bashful inquiry. The General stood aghast for a moment, and then caught the idea.

"Certainly! cer-tain-ly! ha, ha, ha!"—backing out of the door—"certainly! Ah! Mossy, you are right, to be sure; to make a complete world we must have swords *and* pens. Well, my son, 'au revoir;' no, I cannot stay—I will return. I hasten to tell my friends that the pen of Dr. Mossy is on our side! Adieu, dear son."

Standing outside on the banquette he bowed—not to Dr. Mossy, but to the balcony of the big red-brick front—a most sunshiny smile, and departed.

The very next morning, as if fate had ordered it, the Villivencio ticket was attacked—ambushed, as it were, from behind the *Américain* newspaper. The onslaught was—at least General Villivencio said it was—absolutely ruffianly. Never had all the lofty courtesies and formalities of chivalric contest been so completely ignored. Poisoned balls—at least personal epithets—were used. The General himself was called "antiquated!" The friends who had nominated him, they were positively sneered at; dubbed "fossils," "old ladies," and their caucus termed "irresponsible"—thunder and lightning! gentlemen of honor to be called "not responsible!" It was asserted that the nomination was made secretly, in a private house, by two or three unauthorized harum-scarums (that touched the very bone) who had with more caution than propriety withheld their names. The article was headed, "The Crayfish-eaters' Ticket." It continued farther to say that, had not the publication of this ticket been regarded as a dull hoax, it would not have been suffered to pass for two weeks unchallenged, and that it was now high time the universal wish should be realized in its withdrawal.

Among the earliest readers of this production was the young Madame. She first enjoyed a quiet gleeful smile over it, and then called:

"Nannie, here, take this down to Dr. Mossy—stop." She marked the communication heavily with her gold pencil. "No answer; he need not return it."

About the same hour, and in a neighboring street, one of the "not responsables" knocked on the Villivencio castle gate. The General invited him into his bedroom. With a short and strictly profane harangue the visitor produced the offensive newspaper, and was about to begin reading, when one of those loud nasal blasts, so peculiar to the

Gaul, resounded at the gate, and another "not responsible" entered, more excited, if possible, than the first. Several minutes were spent in exchanging fierce sentiments and slapping the palm of the left hand rapidly with the back of the right. Presently there was a pause for breath.

"Alphonse, proceed to read," said the General, sitting up in bed.

"De Crayfish-eaters' Ticket"—began Alphonse; but a third rapping at the gate interrupted him, and a third "irresponsible" reinforced their number, talking loudly and wildly to the waiting-man as he came up the hall.

Finally, Alphonse read the article. Little by little the incensed gentlemen gave it a hearing, now two words and now three, interrupting it to rip out long, rasping maledictions, and wag their forefingers at each other as they strode ferociously about the apartment.

As Alphonse reached the close, and dashed the paper to the floor, the whole quartette, in terrific unison, cried for the blood of the editor.

But hereupon the General spoke with authority.

"No, Messieurs," he said, buttoning his dressing-gown savagely, "you shall not fight him. I forbid it—you shall not!"

"But," cried the three at once, "one of us must fight, and you—you cannot; if *you* fight our cause is lost! The candidate must not fight."

"Hah-h! Messieurs," cried the hero, beating his breast and lifting his eyes, "grace au ciel. I have a son. Yes, my beloved friends, a son who shall call the villain out and make him pay for his impudence with blood, or eat his words in to-morrow morning's paper. Heaven be thanked that gave me a son for this occasion! I shall see him at once—as soon as I can dress."

"We will go with you."

"No, gentlemen, let me see my son alone. I can meet you at Maspero's in two hours. Adieu, my dear friends."

He was resolved.

"Au revoir," said the dear friends.

Shortly after, cane in hand, General Villivencio moved with an ireful stride up the banquette of rue Royale. Just as he passed the red-brick front one of the batten shutters opened the faintest bit, and a certain pair of lovely eyes looked after him, without any of that round simplicity which we have before discovered in them. As he half turned to knock at his son's door he glanced

at this very shutter, but it was as tightly closed as though the house were an enchanted palace.

Dr. Mossy's door, on the contrary, swung ajar when he knocked, and the General entered.

"Well, my son, have you seen that newspaper? No, I think not. I *see* you have not, since your cheeks are not red with shame and anger."

Dr. Mossy looked up with astonishment from the desk where he sat writing.

"What is that, papa?"

"My faith! Mossy, is it possible you have not heard of the attack upon me, which has surprised and exasperated the city this morning?"

"No," said Dr. Mossy, with still greater surprise, and laying his hand on the arm of his chair.

His father put on a dying look. "My soul!" At that moment his glance fell upon the paper which had been sent in by Madame Délicieuse. "But, Mossy, my son," he screamed, "*there* it is!" striking it rapidly with one finger—"there! there! there! read it! It calls me 'not responsible!' 'not responsible' it calls me! Read! read!"

"But, papa," said the quiet little Doctor, rising, and accepting the crumpled paper thrust at him. "I have read this. If this is it, well, then, already I am preparing to respond to it."

The General seized him violently, and, spreading a suffocating kiss on his face, sealed it with an affectionate oath.

"Ah, Mossy, my boy, you are glorious! You had begun already to write! You are glorious! Read to me what you have written, my son."

The Doctor took up a bit of manuscript, and, resuming his chair, began:

"*Messrs. Editors: On your journal of this morning*"—

"Eh! how! you have not written it in English, is it, son?"

"But, yes, papa."

"'Tis a vile tongue," said the General; "but, if it is necessary—proceed."

"*Messrs. Editors: On your journal of this morning is published an editorial article upon the Villivencio ticket, which is plentiful and abundant with mistakes. Who is the author or writer of the above said editorial article your correspondent does at present ignore, but doubts not he is one who, hasty to form an opinion, will yet, however, make his assent to the correction of some errors and mistakes which*"—

"Bah!" cried the General.

Dr. Mossy looked up, blushing crimson.

"Bah!" cried the General, still more forcibly. "Bêtise!"

"How?" asked the gentle son.

"'Tis all nonsense!" cried the General, bursting into English. "Hail you 'ave to say is: 'Sieur Editeurs! I want you s'all give de nem of de indignan' scoundrel who meck some lies on you' paper about mon père et ses amis!"

"Ah-h!" said Dr. Mossy, in a tone of derision and anger.

His father gazed at him in mute astonishment. He stood beside his disorderly little desk, his small form drawn up, a hand thrust into his breast, and that look of invincibility in his eyes such as blue eyes sometimes surprise us with.

"You want me to fight," he said.

"My faith!" gasped the General, loosening in all his joints. "I believe—you may cut me in pieces if I do not believe you were going to reason it out in the newspaper! Fight? If I want you to fight? Upon my soul, I believe you do not want to fight!"

"No," said Mossy.

"My God!" whispered the General. His heart seemed to break.

"Yes," said the steadily gazing Doctor, his lips trembling as he opened them. "Yes, your God. I am afraid!"

"Afraid!" gasped the General.

"Yes," rang out the Doctor, "afraid; afraid! God forbid that I should not be afraid. But I will tell you what I do not fear—I call your affairs of honor—murder!"

"My son!" cried the father.

"I retract," cried the son; "consider it unsaid. I will never reproach my father."

"It is well," said the father. "I was wrong. It is my quarrel. I go to settle it myself."

Dr. Mossy moved quickly between his father and the door. General Villivicencio stood before him utterly bowed down.

"What will you?" sadly demanded the old man.

"Papa," said the son, with much tenderness, "I cannot permit you. Fifteen years we were strangers, and yesterday were friends. You must not leave me so. I will even settle this quarrel for you. You must let me. I am pledged to your service."

The peace-loving little Doctor did not mean "to settle," but "to adjust." He felt in an instant that he was misunderstood; yet, as quiet people are apt to do, though not

wishing to deceive, he let the misinterpretation stand. In his embarrassment he did not certainly know what he should do himself.

The father's face—he thought of but one way to settle a quarrel—began instantly to brighten. "I would myself do it," he said apologetically, "but my friends forbid it."

"And so do I," said the Doctor, "but I will go myself now, and will not return until all is finished. Give me the paper."

"My son, I do not wish to compel you."

There was something acid in the Doctor's smile as he answered:

"No; but give me the paper, if you please."

The General handed it.

"Papa," said the son, "you must wait here for my return."

"But I have an appointment at Maspero's at"—

"I will call and make excuse for you," said the son.

"Well," consented the almost happy father, "go, my son; I will stay. But if some of your sick shall call?"

"Sit quiet," said the son. "They will think no one is here." And the General noticed that the dust lay so thick on the panes that a person outside would have to put his face close to the glass to see within.

In the course of half an hour the Doctor had reached the newspaper office, thrice addressed himself to the wrong person, finally found the courteous editor, and easily convinced him that his father had been imposed upon; but when Dr. Mossy went farther, and asked which one of the talented editorial staff had written the article:

"You see, Doctor," said the editor—"just step into my private office a moment."

They went in together. The next minute saw Dr. Mossy departing hurriedly from the place, while the editor complacently resumed his pen, assured that he would not return.

General Villivicencio sat and waited among the serpents and innocents. His spirits began to droop again. Revolving Mossy's words, he could not escape the fear that possibly, after all, his son might compromise the Villivicencio honor in the interests of peace. Not that he preferred to put his son's life in jeopardy; he would not object to an adjustment, provided the enemy should beg for it. But if not, whom would his son select to perform those friendly offices indispensable in polite quarrels? Some half-

priest, half-woman? Some spectacled book-worm? He suffered.

The monotony of his passive task was relieved by one or two callers who had the sagacity (or bad manners) to peer through the dirty glass, and then open the door, to whom, half rising from his chair, he answered, with a polite smile, that the Doctor was out, nor could he say how long he might be absent. Still the time dragged painfully, and he began at length to wonder why Mossy did not return.

There came a rap at the glass door different from all the raps that had forerun it—a fearless, but gentle, dignified, graceful rap; and the General, before he looked round, felt in all his veins that it came from the young Madame. Yes, there was her glorious outline thrown sidewise upon the glass. He hastened and threw open the door, bending low at the same instant, and extending his hand.

She extended hers also, but not to take his. With a calm dexterity that took the General's breath, she reached between him and the door, and closed it.

"What have you?" anxiously asked the General,—for her face, in spite of its smile, was severe.

"General," she began, ignoring his inquiry—and, with all her Creole bows, smiles, and insinuating phrases, the severity of her countenance but partially waned—"I came to see my physician—your son. Ah! General, when I find you reconciled to your son it makes me think I am in heaven. You will let me say so? You will not be offended with the old playmate of your son?"

She gave him no time to answer.

"He is out, I think, is he not? But I am glad of it. It gives us occasion to rejoice together over his many merits. For you know, General, in all the years of your estrangement Mossy had no friend like myself. I am proud to tell you so now; is it not so?"

The General was so taken aback that, when he had thanked her in a mechanical way, he could say nothing else. She seemed to fall for a little while into a sad meditation that embarrassed the General beyond measure. But as he opened his mouth to speak, she resumed:

"Nobody knew him so well as I; though I, poor me, I could not altogether understand him; for look you, General, he was—what do you think?—*a great man!*—nothing less."

"How?" asked the General, not knowing what else to respond.

"You never dreamed of that, eh?" continued the lady. "But, of course not; nobody did but me. Some of those Americans, I suppose, knew it; but who would ever ask them? Here in Royal street, in New Orleans, where we people know nothing and care nothing but for meat, drink, and pleasure, he was only Dr. Mossy, who gave pills. My faith! General, no wonder you were disappointed in your son, for you thought the same. Ah! yes, you did! But why did you not ask me, his old playmate? I knew better. I could have told you how your little son stood head and shoulders above the crowd. I could have told you some things too wonderful to believe. I could have told you that his name was known and honored in the scientific schools of Paris, of London, of Germany! Yes! I could have shown you"—she warmed as she proceeded—"I could have shown you letters (I begged them of him), written as between brother and brother, from the foremost men of science and discovery!"

She stood up, her eyes flashing with excitement.

"But why did you never tell me?" cried the General.

"He never would allow me—but you—why did you not ask me? I will tell you; you were too proud to mention your son. But he had pride to match yours—ha!—achieving all—everything—with an assumed name! 'Let me tell your father,' I implored him; but—'let him find me out,' he said, and you never found him out. Ah! there he was fine. He would not, he said, though only for your sake, re-enter your affections as anything more or less than just—your son. Ha!"

And so she went on. Twenty times the old General was astonished anew, twenty times was angry or alarmed enough to cry out, but twenty times she would not be interrupted. Once he attempted a laugh, but again her hand commanded silence.

"Behold, Monsieur, all these dusty specimens, these revolting fragments. How have you blushed to know that our idle people laugh in their sleeves at these things! How have you blushed—and you his father! But why did you not ask me? I could have told you: 'Sir, your son is not an apothecary; not one of these ugly things but has helped him on in the glorious path of discovery; discovery, General—your son—known in Europe as a scientific discoverer!' Ah-h! the blind people say, 'how is that, that General Villivencio should be dissatisfied with

his son? He is a good man, and a good doctor, only a little careless, that's all.' But you were more blind still, for you shut your eyes tight like this; when, had you searched for his virtues as you did for his faults, you, too, might have known before it was too late what nobility, what beauty, what strength, were in the character of your poor, poor son!"

"Just Heaven! Madame, you shall not speak of my son as of one dead and buried! But, if you have some bad news."

"Your son took your quarrel on his hands, eh?"

"I believe so—I think ——"

"Well; I saw him an hour ago in search of your slanderer!"

"He must find him!" said the General, plucking up.

"But if the search is already over," slowly responded Madame.

The father looked one instant in her face, then rose with an exclamation:

"Where is my son? What has happened? Do you think I am a child, to be trifled with—a horse to be teased? Tell me of my son!"

Madame was stricken with genuine anguish.

"Take your chair," she begged; "wait; listen; take your chair."

"Never!" cried the General; "I am going to find my son—my God! Madame, you have *locked this door!* What are you that you should treat me so? Give me, this instant ——"

"Oh! Monsieur, I beseech you to take your chair and I will tell you all. You can do nothing now. Listen! suppose you should rush out and find that your son had played the coward at last! Sit down and ——"

"Ah! Madame, this is play!" cried the distracted man.

"But no; it is not play. Sit down; I want to ask you something."

He sank down and she stood over him, anguish and triumph strangely mingled in her beautiful face.

"General, tell me true; did not you force this quarrel into your son's hand? I *know* he would not choose to have it. Did you not do it to test his courage, because all these fifteen years you have made yourself a fool with the fear that he became a student only to escape being a soldier? Did you not?"

Her eyes looked him through and through.

"And if I did?" demanded he with faint defiance.

"Yes! and if he has made dreadful haste and proved his courage?" asked she.

"Well, then,"—the General straightened up triumphantly—"then he is my son!"

He beat the desk.

"And heir to your wealth, for example?"

"Certainly."

The lady bowed in solemn mockery.

"It will make him a magnificent funeral!"

The father bounded up and stood speechless, trembling from head to foot. Madame looked straight in his eye.

"Your son has met the writer of that article."

"Where?"* the old man's lips tried to ask.

"Suddenly, unexpectedly, in a passage way."

"My God! and the villain ——"

"Lives!" cried Madame.

He rushed to the door, forgetting that it was locked.

"Give me that key!" he cried, wrenched at the knob, turned away bewildered, turned again toward it, and again away; and at every step and turn he cried, "Oh! my son, my son! I have killed my son! Oh! Mossy, my son, my little boy! Oh! my son, my son!"

Madame buried her face in her hands and sobbed aloud. Then the father hushed his cries and stood for a moment before her.

"Give me the key, Clarisse, let me go."

She rose and laid her face on his shoulder.

"What is it, Clarisse?" asked he.

"Your son and I were ten years betrothed."

"Oh, my child!"

"Because, being disinherited, he would not be my husband."

"Alas! would to God I had known it! Oh! Mossy, my son."

"Oh! Monsieur," cried the lady, clasping her hands, "forgive me—mourn no more—your son is unharmed! I wrote the article—I am your recanting slanderer! Your son is hunting for me now. I told my aunt to misdirect him. I slipped by him unseen in the carriage-way."

The wild old General, having already staggered back and rushed forward again, would have seized her in his arms, had not the little Doctor himself at that instant violently rattled the door and shook his finger at them playfully as he peered through the glass.

"Behold!" said Madame, attempting a smile; "open to your son; here is the key."

She sank into a chair.

Father and son leaped into each other's arms; then turned to Madame:

"Ah! thou lovely mischief-maker."

She had fainted away.

"Ah! well, keep out of the way, if you please, papa," said Dr. Mossy, as Madame presently re-opened her eyes; "no wonder you fainted; you have finished some hard work—see; here; so; Clarisse, dear, take this."

Father and son stood side by side, tenderly regarding her as she revived.

"Now, papa, you may kiss her; she is quite herself again, already."

"My daughter!" said the stately General; "this is my son's ransom; and, with this, I withdraw the Villivencio ticket."

"You shall not," exclaimed the laughing lady, throwing her arms about his neck.

"But, yes!" he insisted; "my faith! you will at least allow me to remove my dead from the field."

"But, certainly;" said the son; "see Clarisse, here is Madame, your aunt, asking us all into the house. Let us go."

The group passed out into the rue Royale, Doctor Mossy shutting the door behind them. The sky was blue, the air was soft and balmy, and on the sweet south breeze, to which the old General bared his grateful brow, floated a ravishing odor of—

"Ah! what is it?" the veteran asked of the younger pair, seeing the little aunt glance at them with a playful smile.

Madame Délicieuse, for almost the first time in her life, and Doctor Mossy for the thousandth—blushed.

It was the odor of orange blossoms.

THE AWAKENING.

FROM day to day the dreary Heaven
Outpoured its hopeless heart in rain;
The conscious pines, half shuddering, heard
The secret of the East Wind's pain.

Mist veiled the sun;—the somber land,
In floating cloud-wracks densely furled,
Seemed shut forever from the bloom,
And gladness of the living world.

From week to week the changeless Heaven
Wept on;—and still its secret pain
To the bent pine-trees sobbed the wind,
In hollow truces of the rain.

'Till in a sunset hour, whose light
Pale hints of radiance pulsed o'erhead,
Afar the moaning East Wind died,
And the mild West Wind breathed instead.

Then the clouds broke, and ceased the rain;
The sunset many a kindling shaft
Shot to the wood's heart;—Nature rose,
And through her soft-lipped verdure laughed

Low to the breeze; as some fair maid,
Love wakes from troublous dreams, might rise,
Half-dazed, yet happy,—mists of sleep
Still hovering in her haunted eyes