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Come and see Highland
Park's Attractive New
Playhouse

**A Southern
Christmas**

Before the Emancipation
Proclamation

By ELLA RAY WELCH

It was Dec. 15. That was before rail-
roads had taken from the Mississippi
river the great carrying trade of
freight and passengers, and the steam-
ers plying back and forth between
St. Louis or Cincinnati and New Or-
leans were the main means of convey-
ance in the southwest. One might
start from either of these cities early
in December, when the ground was
covered with snow, and reach New
Orleans for Christmas to find summer
still lingering.

On this day of Dec. 15, when the
steamer *Tecumseh* was passing Baton
Rouge, in the cabin sat two men play-
ing cards. In those days on the Mis-
sissippi gambling went on openly,
either chips or money on the table
without any pretense of concealment,
and these two men were playing with
the principal currency of the period—
the state bank bills. One of them
was a professional gambler, the other
a young sugar planter, whose home
was in Louisiana, not far from New
Orleans. The gambler was quietly
taking away from the planter what
money he had with him; now permit-
ting him to win a few dollars, and
now forcing him to lose a great many.
Presently he took the last of his op-
ponent's funds.

Arthur St. Clair could not afford to
lose this money. He owned a good
plantation and the negroes to work it,
but had no capital. Indeed, many of
the planters of that day were in a con-
tinual state of debt, usually borrowing
on a new crop before having liquidat-
ed their indebtedness for the old one.
St. Clair was one of these. Besides
working on the credit system in vogue
at the time, he was a very kind mas-
ter to his slaves and never denied them
anything they wanted, no matter what
the cost. Nevertheless, having lost
some \$800 to the gambler, he yielded
to a temptation to risk separating one
of the families he owned, for the pur-
pose of making an attempt to recoup.
"I have a negro boy, ten years old,"
he said, "whom I consider worth at
least \$400. Will you lend me \$200 on
him?"

"Certainly, sah; with pleasure, sah."
"I'll draw up a note containing a
lien on the boy."

"It's not necessary, I assure you, sah.
Your word is quite enough, sah."
So they played on till the amount
loaned was lost; then \$200 more was
borrowed. This also being lost, a bill
of sale for the boy was made out for
the property to be delivered ten days
from the date, signed by St. Clair and
handed to the gambler.

"I would be happy to loan you more
on other of your servants, sah," said
the gambler.

"No," said the other ruefully. "By
what I have done I have separated a
family. The boy I have lost at cards
is the only child of the best man and
the best woman I have on my planta-
tion. It will break both the father's
and the mother's hearts to part with
him. I have done very wrong and will
do no more."

St. Clair, with lowering brow, went
out on the guard, as the deck outside
the cabin was called, and sitting him-
self down in one of the wooden arm-
chairs he found there, gave himself up
to remorse at having yielded to tempta-
tion. He was not troubled at the
money he had lost, for money in itself
was of little value in his eyes. But he
had used his credit to the uttermost
farthing, and he saw no way to pre-
vent the boy he had lost, Billy, from
being torn from his parents. In ten
days a scene would be enacted that
he dreaded. Ten days! Why, in ten days
it would be Christmas.

St. Clair arose from his chair and
paced the guard feverishly. Of all the
days in the year to take a boy from
his parents and turn him over to
strangers! Why had he not made the
time twenty days—any other, than on
Christmas day? It had not occurred
to him that the tenth day from the
present would be the day on which all
Christians tried to make all other
Christians happy. How could he tell
his man Sam, that on Christmas day
instead of being made happy by gifts
his family was to be made miserable
by the loss of one of its number?

St. Clair carried his trouble home
with him, but kept it to himself till the
day before Christmas. He tried to
nerve himself to tell his wife, that she
might relieve him of the task of telling
Sam and Susan, the parents of little
Billy, that on Christmas day they must
part with their best beloved. But his
effort was a failure. Adelia St. Clair
took as much interest in the welfare of
her negroes as if they were a part of
her own family. Her husband could
not nerve himself to confess how weak
he had been.

He knew that Sam was very fond of
him, though he was Sam's master. He
had often stood between Sam and
harm and had given him everything he
wanted. He felt that he could impart
the news to Sam with less pain to
himself than to any one else and knew
that by confessing the whole story
Sam would blame him less than any
one else. So the day before Christmas,
calling the slave aside where he would
not be overheard by others, he made
his confession.

"Sam," he added, when he had told
that on Christmas the new owner of
Billy would arrive to take the boy
away, "this breaks my heart."

"Mars Arthur," gasped Sam. "I for-
give you, but I wouldn't forgive no
nigger master in de world!"

Adelia St. Clair learned the secret
that her husband could not force him-
self to tell her from the boy's mother,
who, frantic with grief, went to her to
entreat her to do something to save her
from being separated from her boy.
The blow was almost as severe upon
the mistress as upon the slave. But
she kept her head and sent Susan away
assuring her that if there was anything
she could do to prevent the calamity
she would do it, but, knowing her hus-
band's financial straits, she could give
no hope.

As soon as Sue had departed Mrs. St.
Clair sent for her husband. The cus-
tom of gambling was so prevalent
among the planters of that day that
she did not reproach him. She could
not but recognize that he had been
weak to risk the happiness of a fam-
ily whom both he and she considered
committed to their charge by Providence,
but she knew nothing was to be
gained by holding up to him his sin,
and she knew he suffered keenly for
what he had done. She began at once
to confer with him upon some plan by
which a sum might be raised to buy
back the boy. In vain they went over
everything they possessed that could
possibly be mortgaged. All such prop-
erty had been mortgaged already. Be-
sides, there was no time to negotiate.
New Orleans was the nearest place
where such a matter could be attended
to, and to go there, make a loan and
return would require several days.

Sam came in just as they had agreed
that nothing could be done to save
his boy to him. He looked anxiously
from one to the other to see if there
was any hope. St. Clair nodded to his
wife to speak for both.

"There is no time in which to pre-
vent the separation," she said. "Your
master has received a message that
Billy will be called for tomorrow. We
can only promise that if we can keep
a knowledge of Billy's future where-
abouts we will buy him back if it
should be possible."

There was no comfort in this for
Sam. He knew his master's proneness
to drift finally and believed that he
would get deeper and deeper in
debt. With a moan he turned away to
impart the sad tidings to his wife.

The news that little Billy had been
sold and was to be taken away on
Christmas morning cast a gloom over
all, white and black, on the plantation.
"Dis won't be no Chris'mas at all,"
said one.

"Wha' mass go sell Billy fo' to go
way on Chris'mas? He ought to had
no sense den dat," said another.

"Yo' shet up, nigger," said a third.
"Mars wouldn't 'a' done dat if he hadn't
had to do it."

These criticisms, though plentiful
among the negroes, were not mingled
with much blame. They all knew
their master and had perfect confi-
dence in his intentions.

As soon as St. Clair had finished his
breakfast—cup of coffee—he left the
plantation in order to avoid being pre-
sent at Billy's departure. About 10
o'clock a hired servant announced to
Mrs. St. Clair that a man had come
for Billy. Mrs. St. Clair went to a
jewel box, where she found the re-
mains of her jewels that had not been
pledged. Taking a mental inventory
of them, she could not possibly make
out their total worth at over \$300.
She sighed at not being able to find
anything more.

Taking the remnant of a property
that had been in her family for many
generations, she went downstairs. She
was surprised to find a well dressed
man, not at all like one who might
have been sent for a negro boy. He
rose deferentially as she entered.

"I am surprised," she said, "at seeing
a gentleman. Are you the owner
of the boy you have come for?"

"Yes, madam."

"May I ask who you are?" she asked
curiously.

"A gambler, madam."

"A gambler?"

"Yes, madam. I am the gentleman
who won the boy from your husband."

This looked hopeful. Mrs. St. Clair
produced her jewels and was begin-
ning a speech as to their value when
the man interrupted her.

"Is your husband at home, madam?"

"No, I expect he went away to get
rid of seeing this poor family lose
their treasure."

"I did not notice, madam, when I
took a bill of sale from your husband
that the property was to be delivered
on Christmas day. I have come my-
self to see Mr. St. Clair to impress
upon him the folly of playing cards
for money with a professional gambler.
I found him an easy prey." Taking
out a wallet he handed the lady a roll
of bills and paper, then added,
"There is the amount, madam, I won
from your husband, and there is the
bill of sale for the boy." The latter he
tore into bits and threw them into a
fire burning on the hearth. "I thought
Christmas should be a proper day,
madam, to give this advice to your
husband. I found him a very attrac-
tive gentleman and am glad to have
had an opportunity to show my appre-
ciation of him. I bid you good morn-
ing, madam."

But Mrs. St. Clair would not let him
go. She sent negroes to scour the
country for her husband, and when he
was found and brought in Sam and
Sue and Billy were also sent for.
The latter were not told of what had
happened and came, supposing that they
had been called for the partying.

That Christmas which opened so
gloomily turned out to be the merriest
that had ever been known on the St.
Clair plantation.

DUTCH BELTED CATTLE.

Once Nearly Extirminated, They Are
Now Bred by the Nobility.

Dutch-belted cattle originated in
Holland several hundred years ago.
At the time of the great Holland wars
they were nearly exterminated by the
invading armies, and the few that re-
mained became the property of the no-
bility, who have bred them pure ever
since, but do not willingly part with
them. They are known in Holland as
Veldrangers, which name means "wrapped
around with a sheet."

In color they are black, with a band
of pure white entirely around the body.
They may also have white fore feet,
white hind feet and legs up to the
gambrels and a white switch. The
"belt" varies in width. On some it is
but a few inches wide. On others it
reaches back on the hips and forward
on the shoulders. Usually it covers the
body from just in front of the hips
nearly to the shoulders.

They have the prominent eyes, thin
neck, silky hair, soft skin, elevated
flanks, broad hips, long, slim tails,
shapely, well placed udders, prominent
milk veins and so called milk form,
which make up the dairy type of cow.
They are very tame and docile, hardy
and vigorous.—G. G. Gibbs in Ameri-
can Cultivator.

STOPPING THE EARTH.

It Would Generate Heat Enough to
Turn Our Globe to Vapor.

The stopping of a projectile always
results in the generation of heat. The
velocity and weight of a projectile being
known, the amount of heat devel-
oped by its stoppage can be calculated.
In the case of large bodies moving
rapidly the result of the calculation is
something astounding.

For example, the earth weighs 6,000,-
000,000,000 tons and travels in its or-
bit at the rate of over eighteen miles a
second. Should it strike a target
strong enough to stop its motion the
heat developed by the shock would be
sufficient not merely to fuse the earth,
but also to reduce a large portion of it
to vapor. It has been calculated that
the amount of heat generated by a col-
lision so colossal would equal that ob-
tained from the burning of fourteen
globes of coal each equal to the earth
in size.

And should the earth after its stop-
page fall into the sun, as it certainly
would do, the amount of heat that
would be developed by its impact on
the sun would be equal to that gener-
ated by the combustion of 5,000 earths
of solid carbon.

Two Waterloo's.

It is a very curious fact that a good
many people do not know that two
battles were fought at Waterloo, both
of these were fought against the
French, the first under the command
of the Duke of Marlborough on Aug.
17, 1705, who on this date actually oc-
cupied the same ground as the Duke of
Wellington did a little more than a
century later, June 17, 1815, the only
difference being that the former was
marching on Brussels and the latter
was marching from Brussels. In the
first battle the French were defending
Brussels. They marched out to meet
Marlborough, but owing to the slackness
on the part of Schlangenburg, the
Dutch general, who was fighting with
him, it was not a success. Marlborough
only taking a few of the French troops
as prisoners. The following one, fought
against Napoleon by Wellington, proved
to be one of the greatest victories ever
recorded in the annals of England.

On a Monday Morning.

Monday morning is a hard test for
the institution which we call life. Life
may be all very well on Saturday
night and Sunday morning, but how
about Monday morning? If you wake
up then with a pleasurable anticipa-
tion of the week of work which is
ahead of you, you are a happy man.
The instinct of the bad boy who plays
truant never quite dies out of us. One
dreams of a Monday morning when
the sun is shining and the air is clear,
of slipping quietly into one's clothes,
of tiptoeing softly out of the house,
of scaling the fence and crossing the
meadow and losing oneself in the re-
tiring woods, while time clocks re-
main unpushed and whistles blow in
vain.—San Francisco Bulletin.

Improving It.

A foreigner meeting an American
friend said to him, "How are you?"
The latter replied, "Out of sight."
The man considered this very clever
and decided to use the expression on
the next occasion. Shortly after he
was met by a friend, who asked, "How
are you?" With visible pride he an-
swered, "You don't see me."—New
York Globe.

There Must Be Something in It.

"Do you believe there is really any
such thing as love at first sight?"
"Certainly there is. If there was no
such thing how many of the married
men whom you know would ever have
been able to enchant their wives?"—
Chicago Record-Herald.

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PRUNING BY RAIN.
One of Nature's Many Methods of
Thinning Her Forests.
Nature has many ways of thinning
and pruning and trimming her forests—
lightning strokes, heavy snows, and
storm winds to shatter and blow down
whole trees here and there or break off
branches as required. The results of
these methods I have observed in dif-
ferent forests, but only once have I
seen pruning by rain.
The rain froze on the trees as it fell
and grew so thick and heavy that
many of them lost a third or more of
their branches. The view of the
woods after the storm had passed and
the sun shone forth was something
never to be forgotten. Every twig
and branch and rugged trunk was en-
cased in pure crystal ice, and each oak
and hickory and willow became a fairy
crystal palace. Such dazzling bril-
liance, such effects of white light and
irised light, glowing and flashing, I
had never seen, nor have I since.
This sudden change of the leafless
woods to glowing silver was, like the
great aurora, spoken of for years and
is one of the most beautiful of the
many pictures that enrich my life.
And besides the great shows there
were thousands of others, even in the
coldest weather, manifesting the ut-
most fineness and tenderness of beau-
ty and affording noble compensation for
hardship and pain.—Atlantic Monthly

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