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By FREDERIC S. ISHAM, Author of "Under the Rose"

\* \* \*

should batten too gluttonously at this

general collation. It was the one topic

of interest in the musty, dusy court-

house until the end appeared with the

following announcement in the local

"Annonce! Vente importante de ne-

And thereafter were specified the

Coincident with these disasters came

news from the north regarding his sup-

posedly immense interests in New York

state. A constitutional convention had

abolished all feudal tenures and freed

the fields from baronial burdens. At

a breath-like a house of cards-the

northern heritage was swept away and

about all that remained of the princi-

pality was the worthless ancient deed

itself, representing one of the largest

But even the sale of the negroes and

his other merchandise and property

failed to satisfy his clamorous creditors

or to pay his gambling debts. Those

obligations at cards it was necessary to

meet, so he moved out of his bachelor

apartments, turned over his expensive

furnishings and bric-a-brac to the gam-

blers and snapped his fingers at the

His new home was in the house of an

aged quadroon who had been a servant

in his family many years ago-how

who had been his nurse before she had

received her freedom. She enjoyed the

distinction of being feared in the neigh-

borhood; her fetiches had a power no

other witch's possessed, and many of

charms, save crossing her threshold to

get them. Mauville, when he found

fortune slipping away from him and

ruin staring him in the face, had been

glad to transfer his abode to this un-

hallowed place; going into hiding, as it

when he expected to emerge, confident

But inaction soon chafed his restless

"Any one been to see me, mammy?"

himself from the streets in that quar-

ter of the town where the roofs of va-

rious colored houses formed strange

were bright with flaring headdresses,

ages of ebony. Returning one day

from such a peregrination, he deter-

Pausing before a doorway, the land

baron looked this way and that and,

able virtue belonging to the old crone's

pharmacopœia. Mauville slowly as

cended the dark stairs and reached his

retreat, a small apartment, with fur

"Yes, auntie," replied the land baron

"Any one been to see me, mammy?"

gemmen been here befo' who take yo'

message about de troops; when dey go

"You know that, auntie?" he asked

"Yes, honey," she answered, shak-

"What did he want?" said the land

"He gib me dis." And the crone

handed her visitor a slip of paper on

which a few words were written.

"It means I am going away, mam-

"Gwine away," she repeated. "When's

"Tomorrow; perhaps tonight even;

ing her head. "Yo' be berry careful,

"Only dat Mexican gemmen - dat

as an old crone emerged from an ill

lighted recess and stood before him.

humiliating to his pride.

one and no more.

voice on the landing.

Mar's'r Edward."

"What dat mean?"

baron quickly.

yo' gwine?"

nature and drove him forth in spite of

overanxious constables and lawyers.

colonial grants.

gres! Mauville estate in bankruptcy!"

different lots of negroes to be sold.

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jealous lest some one of their number Culver leaned back in his chair, his glance bent upon a discolored statue of Psyche in the courtyard. "Had the marquis attended to his garden, like Candide or your humble servant, and eschewed the company of kings, he might have been as care free as he was wretched. His monarchs were knocked down like ninepins. Louis XVIII. was a man of straw, Charles X. a feather top and Louis Philippe a toy ruler. The marquis' domestic life was as unblest as his political career. The frail dals. These, the only offspring of the iniquitous dame, were piquantly dressed in the journals for public parade. Fancy, then, his delight in disinheriting his wife's relatives and leaving you, his daughter, his fortune and his

"His name!" she repeated sadly. With averted face she watched the fountain in the garden. "If he had given it to my mother," she continued, "but now-I do not care for it. Her name is all I want." Her voice trembled, and she exclaimed passionately: "I should rather Mr. Saint-Prosper would keep the property and I-my work. After denying my mother and deserting her, how can I accept anything from him?"

"Under the new will," said Culver, "the estate does not revert to Mr. Saintlong no one seemed to remember-and Prosper in any event. But you might divide it with him," he added sud-

"How could I do that?" she asked without looking up.

"Marry him," laughed the attorney. the negroes would have done anything But the jest met with scant response, his fair client remaining motionless as to have possessed these infallible a statue, while Barnes gazed at her furtively. Culver's smile gradually faded. Uncertain how to proceed, realizing his humor had somehow miscarried, he was not sorry when the manager arose, saying: "Well, my dear, it is time we were at

the theater." "Won't you accept this nosegay from my garden, Miss Carew?" urged the lawyer in a propitiatory tone as they

were leaving. And the attorney not only accompanied them to the door, but downstairs to the street, where he stood for a moment watching them drive down the thoroughfare. Then he slowly returned, breathing heavily - invidious contradiction of his youthful assumption - and shaking his head as he

mounted to his room. "Culver, you certainly put your foot We have a large stock of in it that time!" he muttered. "How she froze at my suggestion! Has there been some passage of arms between them? Apparently! But here am I. pondering over romances, with all this legal business staring me in the face." His glance swept a chaos of declarations, bills, affidavits and claims. "Confound the musty old courthouse and the bustling Yankee lawyers who set such a disturbing pace! There is no longer gentlemanly leisure in New Or-

> He seated himself with a sigh before a neglected brief. In the distance the towers of the cathedral could be seen, reminding the attorney of the adjacent halls of justice in the scraggy looking square, with its turmoil, its beggars and apple women in the lobbies; its ancient, offensive smell, its rickety stairs, its labyrinth of passages and its babel of tongues. Above him, however, the plaster bust of Justinian out of those blank, sightless eyes continued the contemplation of the garden as though turning from the complex jurisprudence of the ancients and moderns to the simple existence of butterflies and flowers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

aninny fastened upon him, hurried HERE is an aphorism to the efthrough the entrance. Hanging upon fect that one cannot spend and have; also a saying about the the walls were red and green pods and bunches of dried herbs of unquestionwhirlwind, both of which in time came home to the land baron. For several generations the Mauville family, bearing one of the proudest names in Louisiana, had held marked prestige under Spanish and French rule, while extensive plantations indicated the commercial ascendency of the patroon's ancestors. The thrift of his forefathers, however, passed lightly over Edward Mauville. Sent to Paris by his mother, a widow, who could deny him nothing, in the course of a few years he had squandered two plantations and several hundred negroes. Her death placed him in undisputed possession of the residue of the estate, when, finding the exacting details of commerce irksome, in a moment of weakness he was induced to dispose of some of his possessions to from New Orleans; how many dey Yankee speculators who had come in am." with the flood of northern energy. Most of the money thus realized he | quickly. "You know that I"placed in loose investments, while the remainder gradually disappeared in indulging his pleasures.

At this critical stage in his fortunes, or misfortunes, the patroon's legacy had seemed timely, and his trip to the north followed. But from a swarm of creditors to a nest of antirenters was out of the frying pan into the fire, hastening his return to the Crescent City, where he was soon forced to make an my," pushing back his chair. assignment of the remaining property. A score of hungry lawyers hovered C. SMITH & SONS around the sinking estate, greedily

veying himself in a mirror. "How long yo' gwine away foh?" "Perhaps forever, auntie."

"Not foh good, Mar's'r Edward, not foh good?" He nodded, and she broke into loud wailings. "Yo's gwine and yo' old mammy 'll see yo' no mohno moh! I knows why yo's gwine, Mar's'r Edward. I'ze heard yo' talkin' about her in yo' sleep. But yo' stay, and yo' mammy has a love charm fob yo'. Den she's yo's foh suah."

"Pshaw, mammy! Do you think I would fly from a woman? Do I look as though I needed a charm?" "No. She mus' wership yo'!" cried

the infatuated crone. "We're losing time, mammy," he exclaimed. "Stop this nonsense, and go pack a few things for me. I have some letters to write."

The old woman reluctantly obeyed, and the land baron penned a somewhat lengthy epistle to his one time master in Paris, the Abbe Moneau, whose disapproval of the Anglo-Saxon encroachments-witness Louisiana-and zeal for the colonization of the Latin races are matters of history. Having completed his epistle, the land baron placed it in the old crone's hand to mail with, "If that man calls again tell him I'll meet him tonight," and, leaving the room, shot through the doorway, once more rapidly walking down the shabby thoroughfare. The aged negro woman stumbled out upon the balcony and

gazed after the departing figure.

CHAPTER XXX. N a certain evening about a month later the tropical rains had flooded the thoroughfares until St. Charles street needcl but a Rialto and a little imagination to convert it into a watery highway of another Venice, while, as for Canal street, its name was as applicable as though it were spanned by a Bridge of

Straws, editor and rhymester, was seated on the semioriental, semi-French gallery of the little cafe called the Veranda sipping his absinth and smoking a cheroot. Before him was paper partly covered with well nigh illegible versification and a bottle of ink, while a goose quill, tool of the tuneful nine, was expectantly poised in midair.

"Confound it!" he said to himself. "I can't write in the attic any more since Celestina has gone, and apparently I can't write away from it. But I must stop thinking or I'll never complete this poem. Now to make my mind a blank, a fitting receptacle to receive inspiration."

were, until the storm should blow by, The bard's figure swayed uncertainly on the stool. In the lively race through a sonnet it was often of late a matter of doubt with Straws whether Bacchus or Calliope would prevail at the finish, and tonight the jocund god had had a perceptible start. "Nappy, eh?" said a voice at his el

bow as a dripping figure approached, deposited his hat on one chair and himself in another. The newcomer had a long, Gothic face and a merry-wise expression. The left hand of the poet waved me-

chanically, imposing silence. The quill dived suddenly to paper, trailed twice across it and then was cast aside as Straws looked up. "Yes," he replied to the other's inter-

rogation. "It's all on account of Celestina's leaving me. You ought to see my room." The poet sighed. "And you, Phazma; how are you feeling?" "Sober as a judge."

"Then you shall judge of this last couplet," exclaimed Straws quickly. "It has cost me much effort. The editor wanted it. It seemed almost too sad a subject for my halting muse. There are some things which should be sacred even from us, Phazma. But what is to be done when the editor in chief commands? 'Ours not to reason why!' The poem is a monody on the tragedy at the theater."

"At the St. Charles?" said Phazma musingly. "As I passed it was closed. It seemed early for the performance to geometrical figures and the windows be over. Yet the theater was dark; all the lights had gone out." beneath which looked out curious vis-"More than the lights went out," an-

swered Straws gravely. "A life went mined to end a routine of existence so "I don't exactly-oh, you refer to

Miss Carew's farewell?" "No; to Barnes'!" "Barnes'!" exclaimed his surprised seeing only the rotating eyes of a pick-

"Yes; he is dead; gone out like the snuff of a candle! Died in harness, before the footlights! He acted as if he were dazed while the play was progress, and I could not but notice it. standing in the wings. The prompter spoke of it to me. Even Miss Carew rallied him gently between acts on his

niture of canework and floor covered subdued manner. "This is our last performance togethwith sea grass, the ceiling low and the er,' he said absently. She gave him a windows narrow, opening upon a minreproachful look and he added quickly: iature balcony that offered space for 'Do I appear gloomy, my dear? I never "Is dat yo', honey?" said an adoring felt happier."

"At the end of the second act he seemed to arouse himself, when she, as Isabella, said, 'I'll fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.' He gazed at her long and earnestly, his look caressing her wherever she moved. Beginning the

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down the river, auntie," rising and sur- prison scene with spirit, ne nad proceeded to

"Reason thus with life; If I do lose thee I do lose a thing That none but fools would keep"when suddenly he threw up his arms and fell upon the stage, his face toward



Miss Carew rushed to him. the audience. With a cry I shall never forget Miss Carew rushed to him and took his head in her arms, gazing at him wildly and calling to him piteously. The curtain went down, but nothing could be done, and life quickly ebbed. Once only his lips moved-'Your mother-there!-where the play never ends!' and it was over." "It is like a romance," said Phazma

finally at the conclusion of this narra-

CHAPTER XXXI. HE sudden and tragic death of

Constance's foster father, which occurred virtually as narrated by Straws, set a seal of profound sadness on the heart of the young girl. "Good sir, adieu!" she had said in the nunnery scene, and the eternal parting had shortly followed. Her affection for the old manager had been that of a loving daughter. The grief she should have experienced over the passing of the marquis was transferred to the memory of one who had been a father through love's kinship. In the faraway past, standing at the bier of her mother, the manager it was who had held her childish hand, consoling her and sharing her affliction, and in those distant but unforgotten days of trouble the young girl and the homeless old man became all in all to each other.

Years had rolled by. The child that prattled by his side became the stately girl, but the hand clasp at that grave had never been relinquished. She could not pretend to mourn the death of the marquis, her own father. Had he not ever been dead to her-as dead as the good wife (or bad wife) of that nobleman-as dead as Gross George and all the other honored and dishonored figures of that misty past? But Barnes' death was the abrupt severing of ties strengthened by years of tender association, and when his last summons came she felt herself truly alone. In an old cemetery, amid the crumbling bricks, Barnes was buried, his sealed tomb above ground bearing in

its inscription the answer to the duke's query, "Thy Best of Life Is Sleep." Constance remained in New Orleans. There the old manager had found his final resting place, and she had no definite desire to go elsewhere. Adrift in the darkness of the present, the young future, so she remained in the house Barnes had rented shortly before his death. An elderly gentlewoman of fallen fortunes, to whom this semirural establishment belonged, Constance retained as a companion, passing her time quietly, soberly, almost in soli-

tude. This mansion, last remnant of its owner's earthly estate, was roomy and spacious, nestling among the oranges and inviting seclusion, with its pretentious wall surrounding the

The old fashioned gentlewoman, poor and proud, was a fitting figure in that ancient house, where in former days gay parties had assembled. But now the principal callers at the old house were the little fat priest, with a rosy smile, who looked after the aged lady's soul, of which she was most solicitous in these later days, and the Count de Propriac. who came ostensibly to see the elderly woman and chat about genealogy and extraction, but was obviously not unmindful of the presence of the young girl nor averse Culver, the lawyer, too, came occasionally to talk about her affairs, but often her mind turned impatiently from figures and markets to the subtle rhythm of Shakespeare. She regretted having left the stage, feeling the loneliness of this simple existence, yet averse to seeking diversion and shunning rather than inviting society. As

But while she was striving to solve us so deeply!" these new problems of her life they morning. Culver, nosegay in hand, was | cold as ice. obliged to wait longer than usual and employed the interval in casually examining his surroundings and incidentally himself. First, with the vanity of youngish old gentlemen, he gazed into a tall mirror framed in the fantastic style of the early Venetians, a glass which had belonged to the marquis and had erstwhile reflected the light beauty of his noble spouse. Pausing about as long as it would have taken a lady to adjust a curl, he peeped into a Dutch cabinet of ebony and

mother of pearl and was studying charming caeature painted on ivory, whose head, like that of Bluebeard's was subsequently separated from her lovely shoulders, when a light footstep behind him interrupted his scrutiny. Turning, he greeted the young girl and with stately gallantry, presented the nosegay.

"How well you are looking!" he said. "Though there might be a little more color perhaps, like some of these flowers. If I were a doctor I should prescribe less cloister, more city!"

She took the flowers, meeting his kindly gaze with a faint smile.

"Most patients would like such prescriptions," he went on. "I should soon become a popular society physician."

But, although he spoke lightly, his manner was partly forced, and he regarded her furtively. Their brief acquaintance had awakened in him an interest half paternal, half curious. Women were an unknown but beautiful quantity. From the vantage point of a life of single blessedness he vaguely but quixotically placed them in the same category with flowers, and his curiosity was no harsher than that of a gardener studying some new variety of bud or blossom. Therefore he hesitated in what he was about to say, shifting in his chair uneasily when they were seated, but finally coming to the point with:

"Have you read the account of the engagement between the Mexican and the American forces at Vera Cruz?" "No, not yet," she admitted.

"Nor the list of-of casualties?" he continued hesitatingly.

"The casualties!" she repeated. "Why"-

"Saint-Prosper has no further interest in the marquis' sous," he said quickly.

She gazed straight before her, calm and composed. This absence of any exhibition of feeling reassured the at-

"He is-dead?" she asked quietly. "Yes." "How did he die?"

convinced she had no interest in the matter save that of a mere acquaint-

ance. "His death is described in half a column. You see he did not live in vain." "Was he-killed in battle?" "In a skirmish. His company was sent to break up a band of guerrilla

"Gallantly," replied the caller, now

rancheros at Antigua. They ambushed him; he drove them out of the thicket,

but fell-you have dropped your flowers; allow me-at the head of his men." "At the head of his men!" She drew in her breath. "There passed the last of an ill fated line." said the lawyer reflectively.

"Poor fellow! He started with such bright prospects, graduating from the military college with unusual honors. Ambitious, light hearted, he went to Africa to carve out a name in the army. The same ship that took him out carried back, to the marquis, the story of his brother's disgrace"-

"His brother's disgrace!" she ex-

claimed. Culver nodded. "He sold a French stronghold in Africa, Miss Carew." Had the attorney been closely ob-

serving her he would have noticed the sudden look of bewilderment that crossed her face. She stared at him with her soul in her eyes. "Ernest Saint-Prosper's brother?"

The turmoil of her thoughts held her as by a spell. In the disruption of a fixed conclusion her brain was filled with new and poignant reflections. Unconsciously she placed a nervous hand upon his arm.

"Then Ernest Saint-Prosper who girl was too perplexed to plan for the was-killed in Mexico was not the traitor?"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Culver quickly. "Owing to the disgrace, I am sure, more than to any other reason, he bade farewell to his country-and now lies unmourned in some mountain ravine. It is true the marquis quarreled with him, disliking not a little the young man's republican ideas-but my dear young lady, you are ill?"

"No, no!" she returned hastily, striving to maintain her self possession. "How-do you know this?"

"Through the marquis himself," he replied, somewhat uneasy beneath her steady gaze. "He told me the story in order to protect the estate from any possible pretensions on the part of the traitor. The renegade was reported dead, but the marquis nevertheless remained skeptical. He did not believe in the old saw about the devil being dead. 'Le diable lives always,' he said."

The visitor observed a perceptible change in the young girl, just what he could not define, but to him it seemed most to lie in her eyes, where someto seeking to mitigate her sorrow. thing that baffled him looked out and met his glance. "His brother was an officer in the

French army?" she asked, as though forcing herself to speak.

"Yes; ten years older than Ernest Saint-Prosper, he had already made a career for himself. How eagerly, then, must the younger brother have looked forward to meeting him; to serving the inert hours crept by she longed for | with one who, in his young eyes, was the forced wakefulness and stir of oth- all that was brave and noble! What er days - happy days of insecurity. a bitter awakening from the dream! fleeting, joyous days, gone now beyond It is not those we hate who can injure us most; only those we love can stab

Mechanically she answered the lawwere all being settled for her by fate, yer, and, when he prepared to leave, that arrogant meddler. Calling one | the hand given him at parting was as

"Remember," he said admonishingly. "less cloister, more city!"

A Leveler. Fond Parent (to young hopeful)-Unless you keep your face and hands clean, your teeth brushed and look neat the children of nice people won't have anything to do with you; they won't play with you. Young Hopeful-I bet if I had a goat

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