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GRAHAM, N. C.

MASTER and SLAVE

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The first falling darkness speeded the dispersion of the assemblage, and the choosing of the church-bell's sponsor was a sacred event in the history of the parish.

The christening day of the bell was the most perfect of that incomparably lovely season, the Louisiana spring.

The pale blue sky had set a fleck in it. The boom of the little prairie was spread with rosy green aprinkled with buttercups and violets, and on the edges of cool bright willows rocked in the gentle breeze. The lanes were bordered by walls of dark cherokee vines, against which white roses glistened in the sunlight.

The cones dotting stretching branches of pecans were opening in light hued leaves, while after in the swamp above, the bluish gray treetops of Spanish moss could be seen the feathery fringes which later would be plumes in the crowns of royal cypresses. The soft air was sweet with jasmine, china flower and sweet gum and rang with the joyous song of the mocking-bird.

The bell, secured upon the steepest of plantation wagons, drawn by six sleek mules, was arrayed in a robe of white muslin, off with bands of blue satin and bunches of pink roses. A string of red coral, the gift of the godmother, encircled its brow, above which was a wreath of white magnolia blossoms. The wagon was clothed in white cotton cloth, the harness of the mules decked out with knots and bows of ribbon, and the bareless black who drove was attired in his holiday garment, with a broad red sash across his chest.

The cortege escorting the bell in its progress of six miles from the warehouse at Marksville to the church at Mansura was composed of full 200 persons on horses, in buggies and on foot.

It was headed by Eloi Durant, the ancient volunteer sacristan, bearing aloft a banner of blue silk on which was embroidered in yellow the name of the sodality society. Following him rode Homer DeBellevue, holding a tall, slender wooden cross painted white and garlanded with flowers. A dozen younger men with silk banners inscribed with sacred legends formed a cavalcade preceding the carriage of Father Grhe, who in black robe and cap, white surplice and gilded stole sat between two acolytes gowned in red and white and carrying censers burners. On each side of the wagon six horsemen sashed with blue rode as a guard of honor to the bell and then the fat mules, as in an open conveyance seated beside her grandfather. She was attired in white, a tall veil over her hair and shoulders, and held a nosegay of large white roses in her lap. A sweet, childish face, brown hair and hazel eyes distinguished the victor of the contest, a girl of 15, gentle, shrinking and blushing. On a roan pony at the side of the carriage a young man in white and red and screened the face of her mistress with a sunshade. The cavalcade closed with vehicles, in which were many women, matrons and maidens, and a long line of white youths and negroes marching aloft came after.

As the procession wound past the Marksville church the bell in the tower, rung by Father Chalms himself, greeted its new sister with a merry peal, while all the men uncovered their heads.

Arrived at Mansura, the bell was reverently lifted and hung in the sheltered temporary scaffolding which had been provided for it at the church front, and around it the people arranged themselves in a wide circle. Two trays of white roses were placed on the scaffolding, and all heads were reverently bowed. The altar vessel of holy water and sprinkler, the aromatic gums in the censers were lighted from live coals, and Father Grhe, reading the words of dedication and bathing bell and flowers with incense and blessed water, bestowed the name "Sto. Cecilia," chosen by the sponsor. Estelle sang a sweet "Ave Maria" in a voice so fresh and musical that it reached the hearts of all, and the very birds seemed to cease their warblings to catch its tender melody. She repeated after the priest her sponsorial vow of unflinching solicitude for the bell, to care for it and protect it, and pray that it should be the ever eloquent messenger summoning increasing numbers to the worship of God.

"Gloria In Excelsis Deo" was sung by the choir, after which Estelle emptied the trays of flowers over the bell and distributed them among the throng, by whom they were now regarded as special aids to holiness.

As the sinking sun touched the rim of the swamp forest the chime from the spire at Marksville came floating over the prairie on the moistening evening air. Estelle stood before the scaffold, and all heads were reverently bowed. Father Grhe, with padded hammer, struck three mellow notes upon the side of the bell.

"The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary," sweetly chanted Estelle.

"And she conceived of the Holy Ghost," came the response from the choir.

"Again the strokes fell gently," beheld the head-mast of the Lord," the girl intoned.

"Be it unto me according to thy word," answered all.

Three more the musical waves rose in undulating ascent skyward.

"And the word was made flesh," she sang, with a graceful genuflection, in which the multitude joined, replying: "And dwelt among us."

The bell of Mansura had tolled its first Angelus.

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inherited from her father, Colonel Bixlow.

A thousand acres were under fence and in culture of sugar, cotton and corn; the remainder was woodland, a field of two hogheads of sugar and five barrels of molasses per acre by the open kettle process of reduction then in vogue and 800 pounds of lint cotton to a like area attested the prolific fertility of the fields.

Oakfell's father endured widowhood a year and married Fidele Gaspard, a Spanish looking girl of 18, daughter of Antoine Gaspard, who, it was said, had escaped from Paris with a price on his head after the fall of Danton and who was remembered as a man of cruel aspect, taciturn and furtive, as one haunted by a terrible fear or horrible memory. He was shiftless and poor, but his daughter was humble, pliant and beautiful. She was mistress of "L'Espérance" six years, ministering to her stepson as to a superior being, and on her deathbed prayerfully besought his interest and protection for her own little boy, Evariste, whom she left at the dependent age of 5 years. Mme. Fidele was universally loved and by none with greater fervor than by Horace. The fullness of his boyish affection he transferred to the half brother, now like himself motherless, and generously assumed responsibility for his welfare. The demise of their father in 1854 gave to this assumption the character and obligations of actuality.

Evariste was dark and beautiful as his mother. His figure was slight and exquisite, with hands and feet small and delicate like a woman's. Not the slightest nor the swallow-surprised him in agility and gracefulness, but his manner was unobtrusive, secretive, and avoiding platitudes, he was ever content to be alone. His eyes were black, his hair thin and brown. To these sons, the father had left nothing but a debt owed in Kentucky for blooded horses, which Horace speedily discharged. Evariste was portionless; his brother bade him consider himself half owner of all the estate and assured him that partition should be made on his attaining majority, or as soon thereafter as he might deem it desirable, making an equitable allowance for his maintenance and education. The elder's fraternal love was sobred by paternal solicitude relieved of all anxiety. The difference between the ages of the two was five years. Evariste being 19 when Horace was sent to the legislature.

The home was now presided over by the Widow Wyley, whose long experience as the wife of an overseer had given her a knowledge of the minutest estate and management details. Her character which enabled her to rule efficiently and kindly. Thrift and neatness came naturally from her Dutch mother, as did also her passion for cows and bees. Her face was big and red, and so was her heart; her hair was white and strong, and so was her nature. Binker Wyley, her stalwart son, who had abandoned the overseer's trade for the law, was only for oxen, mules and dogs and to whose shrewd, frugal management was due the fact that the property of "L'Espérance" was second to that of no plantation in the parish of Avoyelles, with the possible exception of Baldoino's, on Bayou des Glaisses. The dwelling was a brick structure of two stories, with broad, covered verandas projecting from the second in front and rear. On the ground floor, which was laid, were at one side of a wide hall a dining room and housekeeper's apartment, at the other an office, library and medicine store, in which were kept considerable quantities of medicaments of approved use on large plantations. The second story contained parlor and sleeping apartments, high ceilinged and elegantly separated by a hall corresponding to the one below and reached by exterior stairways leading to the verandas. The furniture was heavy, old and rich. An acre set in pecan, walnut and fig trees and inclosed by a high white fence made a shady lawn between the house and the public road along the bank of Bayou Claire. On the left were the overseer's house and plantation stores, a hundred yards farther the large quarters, barns, stables and cattle yards on a bend of the bayou was the steam cotton gin and at the rear of the fields the brick sugar mill, with long, low roofed purgery and massive chimney for bagasse burning. The warm day was closing. Oakfell sat at the western window of the office near a table on which lay written reports which had been left with him by the overseer. From a personal of them he had turned to a volume of English poetry, and read these lines:

He thinks his fellow guilty of a sin,
Nor evers like his own and, having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
He denounces him as his lawful prey.

And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And long his head to think himself a man?

"The book was closed upon his finger, and with lowered eyes he pondered these thoughts when the open doorway was filled by the generous figure of Mrs. Wyley.

"Mr. Oakfell, where is Evariste today?" she asked. "I have not seen him since morning."

"He went to attend the races at Mansura, I believe," Oakfell replied.

"You will not, I hope," she said, settling herself comfortably in a rocker, "think me needless if I question the propriety of one so young frequenting such gatherings, where gambling, drinking, profanity and sometimes homicide are the features. I forbade them to Binker. Evariste goes to them so often. The old lady's manner evinced the sincerity of her anxiety.

"I appreciate your interest and desire you always to speak your thoughts without restraint on any subject which may concern my brother," said Oakfell.

"In this instance, however, I think you need have no apprehensions. Evariste, you know, is expressly encouraged by our law, which puts betting at an equal footing with other contracts. It has received the countenance of our best citizens and has thus had its respectability preserved. Were such as Evariste to absent themselves the turf would soon degenerate to a mere gambling affair and contest of citizenship. No long as honor rules the track the excitement is healthful to men. I have no misgiving of Evariste. He is thoughtful and prudent beyond his years, has a perfect control over himself, which I envy him, and his spirit is too high and proud to yield to a low temptation, so he led by an unworthy example. My faith in him is perfect,

CHAPTER IV.
AT "ESPÉRANCE."

"ESPÉRANCE" was a fair domain of 1,800 acres, which, with slaves, live stock, mills, gins and improvements, had descended to Horace Oakfell from his mother at her death in 1837. She was a well bred

and I love him as if he were my son."

"How blessed he is to have such a brother," said Mrs. Wyley, her fears for the one forgotten in her admiration of the other.

"There he is now!" exclaimed Oakfell, rising and going to the door. "Was there ever such a little man beauty as he? And he is so free from vanity that I do not believe he is at all aware of his good looks."

Evariste had alighted from his foaming horse at the gate and, having thrown the bridle to a negro boy, was walking up the bricked path to the house with the easy step and calm air of one returning from a short and leisurely stroll in a shady grove, his regular breathing betraying no sign of the hard run of 11 miles he had given the panting beast now being led to the stables. And Horace's tribute of unconsciousness of self was scarcely sustained by the faultlessly fitting suit, uncheckered collar and fashionably adjusted neckerchief, the dainty shoes and carefully oiled locks resting on his shoulders in a glossy black roll. And a suspicion of dandyism might have had confirmation in the delicate perfume scattered from his handkerchief as he passed it across his brow.

"How was the sport today, my boy?" Horace asked cheerily as Evariste entered the room.

"One excellent half mile race between Quillebert's Charlotte Corday and Judge Elgee's Belle Cheney," said Evariste. "The others were only ordinary."

"How was the betting?"

"Quite brisk. The odds were in favor of Belle Cheney. I took Charlotte Corday and won \$50. She came in by a neck. Leonard Latolais backed the Elgee mare and lost heavily. Father Galotte parted with some of his fitties on the race, his loss this time.

"To these sons, the father had left nothing but a debt owed in Kentucky for blooded horses, which Horace speedily discharged. Evariste was portionless; his brother bade him consider himself half owner of all the estate and assured him that partition should be made on his attaining majority, or as soon thereafter as he might deem it desirable, making an equitable allowance for his maintenance and education. The elder's fraternal love was sobred by paternal solicitude relieved of all anxiety. The difference between the ages of the two was five years. Evariste being 19 when Horace was sent to the legislature.

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HE WAS NOT REMOVED.

Because No One Would Be Willing to Take His Place.
James G. Blaine at one time in his career was, as regards consular officers, in favor of a limited tenure of office. Mr. Blaine sat in his room at the state department one day discussing different matters of public interest with Mr. Evarste, then his immediate predecessor in office.

"Now, here," said he, "is a case in point. This man has been consular agent at Un-Hung for 20 years. He went there at the time of the war and has remained there ever since. It is time he came home and got acquainted with his own country before he grows a cue. If he stays much longer, he will have a Chinese bias in his sight. I shall remove him at once."

"I wouldn't remove him, Mr. Secretary," replied Mr. Evarste quietly.

"Why not?"

"I am afraid it will be an unpleasant thing to do."

"My mind is made up," replied Mr. Blaine. "As soon as I can find a good live man to take his place I shall remove him."

"But I think you will have grave difficulty in finding a good live man who would be willing to take his place."

"I anticipate no such difficulty. But will you explain to me, Mr. Evarste, why there will be any difficulty?"

"Because the man has been dead and buried these six months, Mr. Secretary."

The Shelter of the Dock.
A knavish looking fellow was once charged before a magistrate with stealing a pair of trousers. The evidence against him not being strong enough to convict him, he was acquitted after a patient investigation of the case. The accused, however, to the surprise of everybody, remained in the dock.

"Thinking he could not hear or did not understand the magistrate's decision, the lawyer who had been defending him told him he was at liberty to go about his business if he had any. The man, however, shook his head heavily, but did not move.

"You are discharged. Why don't you go?" asked the lawyer.

By this time the court was nearly empty, and the accused, leaning forward, whispered to his defender:

"I can't leave the dock until all the witnesses against me are gone."

"Why?" asked the man of law.

"Because of the trousers," answered the other. "Don't you understand?"

"Most certainly I do not!" said the solicitor. "What about the trousers?"

"Only this, sir—I've got them on!"—London Answers.

A Lang Twenty.
Professor Figgers (who has just run across an old acquaintance at the reception)—I am so glad to have stumbled upon you in this way, my dear Mrs. Goldwin. How long it has been since we met! But I must say you have dealt very lightly with you. Who could imagine that you have a daughter is old as Miss Prudence there? And little Prue—well, just think of her having "come out" already!

Mrs. Goldwin—Yes, professor, I can't realize these things myself. Prudence is 20 today.

Professor Figgers—Why, my dear Mrs. Goldwin, you don't tell me so! And only ten short years ago I remember her so well as a romping little chit at 10! Well, well, how marvelously these girls do grow!

How to Play Trombones.
There is a story on record of a certain colonel of an English regiment to whom, by long training, absolute exactness and uniformity had become second nature, and who complained to his bandmaster on one occasion that the trombone players were spoiling the appearance of the entire battalion. "You must see," he said, "in future that the men move their sliding things in and out together!"



Evariste was walking up the bricked path to the house.

and her grandfather, and I tell you, brother, the priest is your stout friend, though you are not a Catholic. He declared there never has been in this parish your equal in all the good qualities of head and heart and that you were the ablest, ablest leader the people could choose. Estelle's eyes sparkled and her face flushed with pleasure at these compliments upon you, and she charged me with so many pretty messages of gratitude to you that my horse was blown up with the weight of them. When her face lights up in that way, it is radiant beyond compare. I am sure at 20 she will be the loveliest woman in Louisiana.

"Boy, boy," said Horace, smiling, "you are becoming excited, going into her trenchant language, isn't it?"

"Well, supper is by no means so far off as that," interposed Mrs. Wyley good humoredly, "and if you will hasten to your room, Evariste, you will get the dust of the road brushed off you before I have the bell rung."

As the young man, setting upon this reminder, disappeared into the house his brother remarked:

"What a boon it is to be gifted in love the fullness of life as that boy does. Though of grave and sedate exterior, his whole being vibrates in sympathy with the life around him. Every breath he inhales is a draft of sparkling wine to another man. His sleep is but the opiate effect of the day's joy; his eyes, close in thankfulness

open for the day that has passed and open in eagerness for the day that begins. Apparently impassive, he is keenly observant of and responsive to every event, possessing a marvelous power of seeing and assimilating what is presented and reacting what is disagreeable. He delights in the graceful spinning through the air of the falling leaf, but will not look at it when it has touched the dust, and with all his air of unconcern he is a public-spirited, quick to adjust men and things and give them their proper estimate."

"If I heard another speak in this way without naming the person, I would understand you to describe Mr. Horace Oakfell rather than Evariste," Mrs. Wyley remarked.

"No, no," said Oakfell. "My temperament is too opaque. Everything affecting it throws a shadow. I anticipate dangers, I brood over events, I busy myself to guard against troubles which may never arise. In some of my moods life seems a greivous necessity. Not so with Evariste. To him it is all a glad song."

"What do you think will be calling? Will you make a lawyer of him?"

"By no means."

"How so? Do you not like your own profession?"

"As a branch of learning, a science, a mental discipline, yes. But as a practical profession I loathe it almost. No, Evariste will never be a lawyer by my advice."

"What then? A physician or a minister?"

"Hardly the latter," said Oakfell, smiling. "I do not think his best of mind is toward religious enthusiasm. You have put a question the answer to which I have not thought out to my own satisfaction. This is the nearest approach to a plan that I have yet been able to formulate. I fancy politics and dislike the practice of law and therefore at times incline to propose to Evariste later that he shall manage our joint interests on the plantation while I exploit a political career."

"That seems a wise arrangement," Mrs. Wyley assented, "leading to the happiness of yourself and brother and the good of the people."

Binker Wyley, in clean apparel donned after his day of toil in the fields, joined his mother and Horace, and Evariste returning, the four at the signal of the bell proceeded to their evening meal of poultry, hot bread, rice, coffee, milk and preserves of the sugar-cane. The two quick moving girls, women had flamed by the waving of peacock feathers in the hands of two silent boys of ebony black. As they ate and conversed songs and laughter and the jingling of harness chains told of the coming of the laborers from the furrowed reaches of sugar cane and cotton plant.

The supper ended, the three men, leaving the room, found standing under the veranda, but in hand, a young quadroon of small stature and intelligent face. He was well clothed, and his manner was polite and humble.

"Well, Leon," said Oakfell, "this is a surprise. I should have thought after jockeying so skillfully for Mr. Quillebert today you would have been kept at home tonight to be exhibited to his admiring friends."

"He did try to keep me, Mr. Horace," replied Leon, "but I would not stay."

"What! You ran away, Leon? Do you not know the patrol law and the danger of your being out after dark without Mr. Quillebert's written permission?"

"I came away, Mr. Horace. I did not run away, and I know of the patrol law, but not offensively. 'I had to see you tonight, sir, and I have come to tell you my troubles and ask your advice and help. If I am wrong, you will tell me so. I will believe you and submit to punishment. If I am right, you will tell me so, and I hope you will help me. I have always believed you to be the best man in this country, and I know you cannot do or aid a wrong. I beg that you will hear me.' Tears rolled down his face, and his hands were held out beseechingly.

"I cannot refuse to hear you, Leon," said Horace. "Walk into my office."

"Mr. Horace, will Mrs. Wyley be so good as to be present when I tell you about my matter? She has known me all my life and will hear me. She may know much about me that I do not. Will she be so kind as to come into the office, Mr. Binker?" turning to the overseer.

"I have no doubt she will," the latter said.

"Request your mother to do so," Horace said to Binker, "and you, Leon, go to the kitchen and get supper. Come here half an hour from now."

"If you will excuse me, brother, I will go to my room. I believe the tragedy of Richard III will interest me more than Leon's melodrama." Evariste said and mounted the stairway.

Oakfell lighted a cigar and awaited Mrs. Wyley and Leon in the office.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Lord Eldon's Apology.

On one occasion a junior counsel, on their lordships giving judgment against his client, exclaimed that he was surprised at their decision. This was construed into a contempt of court, and the young barrister was ordered to attend at the bar that next morning. Fearful of the consequences, he consulted his friend John Scott, afterward Lord Eldon, who told him to be perfectly at ease, for he would apologize for him in a way that would avert any unpleasant result.

Accordingly when the name of the delinquent was called Scott rose and coolly addressed the judges. "I am very sorry, my lords," he said, "that my young friend has so far forgotten himself as to treat your lordships with disrespect. He is extremely penitent, and you will kindly sm