

CLASS CRITICISMS.

A tender lambkin found his way into the woods one summer day, and he used a deal of talking: The goat admired his voice and form, The lion laughed about in scorn; "The goat," said he, "is joking."

"I saw the beast, a perfect muff, And yet a pretty beast enough; But then his voice is shocking. He tried to roar: this was his way—" The lion scornfully cried: "Ba-a-a!" And there was merry mocking.

The deer said: "What made me most mad Was not the voice; that wasn't bad. But oh, such dreadful leaping! He kicked and skipped like any fool; But yet for progress, as a rule, He might as well be creeping."

"A bad beast altogether, sir," The tiger said. "My anger stirs To think of his pretension. He cannot roar; nor can he run; Yet when to-day, at rising sun, I had the condescension

"To offer in a pleasant way, A bit of man, killed yesterday; He looked at me disgusted, And answered: "Sir, I crave to pass. I eat no food at all but grass; Such beasts cannot be trusted."

And so these critics falsely shamed, And full of partial censure blamed, As each beast had its passion; And yet the lamb was true and good, Yet sometimes, I have understood, Men judge in the same fashion.

—Lillie E. Barr, in *N. Y. Ledger*.



[Copyright, 1883, by A. N. Kellogg Newspaper Co.]

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

I tried to say all this to my kind friends in a way that would not seem ungracious.

"Well, my lad, so be it," said Mr. Dorian. "I have forebodings about you, and you must promise to write to me all about Bostock. I have heard something of northern pluck and obstinacy; I reckon you've got both. If you will go, wait till the cool of the day, and I'll drive over with you to Barre's. It's only four miles across, and it will be, much handier than to go up to Vicksburg. The Cotton Queen stops there to wood up on her way down the river."

Very little passed between us as we rode over to the river that evening. Mr. Dorian was serious and thoughtful; and, while I anticipated new scenes and adventures, I could not but be sad with the parting.

"I hope we shall meet again, Dorr," he said, as a glimpse of the river appeared through the trees.

"I know we shall," was my answer, delivered with a fervor that startled myself.

It was like the voice of prophecy. We did meet again, in a situation and under circumstances which romance would vainly attempt to rival.

"Barre's" was a place on the low riverbank where stood a solitary store house, and some thousands of cords of dry wood, ready for use. Two white men of the class which had never been two miles away from the river sat and dangled their rusty boots in the water, and with some profanity and a vast exhalation of tobacco juice, hotly argued the unsettled question as to which was the fastest boat, the Cotton Queen, or the S. S. Prentiss.

"Thar comes the Queen now," said the champion of that craft. "Ah, but she's a beauty! If she ever kites the S. S. on this water she'll walk right off'n her."

"She'll never catch her."

"Much you know 'bout boats."

"O, you talk! I was sailin' the Mississippi when you couldn't tell a pint o' water from a hoghead o' lasses."

The discussion was in a fair way to "go on forever," but the near approach of the stately Queen put an end to it. Heralded by great volumes of smoke beyond the point, and by that peculiar, deep-drawn coughing of the pipes that accompanies one of these river monsters, she burst into view like a splendid apparition, reminding one of the genii of the Arabian Nights. Her great paddles churned the river into foam. Twilight still prevailed, but the signal colored lanterns were hung out fore and aft, and aloft, and lamps were lit in the saloons, state-rooms and cabins. Tier upon tier the great height of the steamer rose from the water, the light flashing out from every opening. Surmounting the whole was the "Texas," or pilot's cabin, with the gilded figure of a queen displayed in front of it, seated on a gilt-corded bale of cotton. The lofty smoke-pipes towered from the decks. Everywhere the boat was crowded with people.

I had long ere now recovered from the amazement with which I learned that wharves and docks were unknown in these waters, which deepen rapidly from the shore, and that these steamers are so light of draught that, to use the quaint language of the illustrious man who thoroughly knew the west, they can go anywhere "where the ground is a little damp." The Queen came straight up to the shore; the two loungers who had been discussing her and her rivals took the cables that were thrown out and moored them to the trees; and immediately a swarm of half-naked negroes sprang ashore, and under the urging of the mate, with an occasional oath and blow, began to take in wood for the long passage down the river. It was a work of some time, and darkness succeeded, the moon rising late. An open iron basket, fixed on a standard at the bow, was filled with fat pine knots, continually replenished as they burned out. The fierce red light flared out over the dusky faces and flitting forms of the negroes, and gave occasional glimpses of the passengers as they leaned on the rails and watched the picturesque scene. Mr. Dorian, standing at my side, suddenly pinched my arm.

"Look up there on the second deck, just beyond that group of ladies. He

you see that tall man with the red vest and check shirt-front?"

"Yes."

"I haven't seen that face in twelve years; but I can't be mistaken in it. That man is Conrad Bostock. Dorr, I hate to have you go on the same boat with him! If you are wise—"

The bell rang sharply. "All aboard!" the captain sang out.

I wrung Mr. Dorian's hand, and passed over the plank. There was a great convulsion of the engines and splashing of the paddles as the Queen backed out into the stream. I looked toward the landing, but my good friend was hidden in the darkness. As our boat steamed down the river I went about on this floating palace and observed the curious sights.

CHAPTER X. A STIRRING SCENE.

All told, there were about fifteen hundred people on the Cotton Queen that night. They were of all sorts and conditions. There were planters and their families returning from an early visit to the north; speculators by the score who had been up to Memphis and beyond to look over the crop; some, like myself, from the north, going down the river upon errands of business or pleasure; not a few sporting men, who frequented the bar, talked loud and smoked long cigars, and there was a Virginian taking thirty slaves of both sexes to New Orleans for sale. I had seen something already of the grand scale upon which the large river boats were constructed; but the magnificence of this one amazed me. Everything in the way of gilding, decorating and furnishing that could be done was there, regardless of expense. Tall mirrors in the saloons and cabins multiplied the crowd. Carpets of gorgeous pattern and the first texture were under foot. Profusion and variety of viands were at the crowded tables at mealtimes. I walked about and mingled with the passengers, hearing much talk of the immense cotton and sugar yield which the season promised, and of speculations and bargains in which less figures than a hundred thousand dollars were never named. The general tone, even in business talk, seemed to be light, buoyant and confident. Life seemed to be going on, like the boat that carried us, at high pressure.

Until ten o'clock did I occupy myself in visiting every part of the steamer, and observing the passengers and their different tastes and occupations. In one of the large saloons there was dancing and waltzing, to the music of piano and violin. On the after deck a brass band was pouring forth stirring strains, and hundreds of couples were promenading. The moon had by this time risen, and the spectacle of her flood of light on the wide river was grand indeed. Rafts and flat-boats were passed, as well as smaller freight-boats; and once the steam-pipes of the Queen screamed shrill in answer to the salute of a large steamer going up.

"That's the Prentiss," a man near me said. "Some day they'll happen to come together, going the same way; and then there'll be the biggest race this river ever saw. Both captains are eager for it, and there'd be piles of money bet on it. I'd hope to be there that day."

"Isn't it dangerous?" a man from Boston inquired.

"Dangerous? Well, maybe, a little, but we never think of that down here. Steamboats always have raced, and I reckon they always will. I feel myself just this way about it—that if I owned one of these boats, and she couldn't carry steam enough to beat the other without bursting—why, then let her burst, and be d—d to her."

"But the passengers?"

"I should say they'd better be at home, that trip." I went forward and found a large number greatly interested in the performances of one of the negro hands, who was dancing in a grotesque fashion to the thrumming of a banjo. Then I went below, past the gilded and mirrored mahogany bar-counters, when half-a-dozen men in their shirt-sleeves were mixing fancy drinks for a noisy and thirsty crowd. Around a table in an adjoining saloon so many were pressing that I could not see what the attraction was. They stood

on tiptoe and tried to peer over the shoulders of those in front of them. A large chandelier lighted the room, but the point of interest was concealed by the throng.

The pressure soon became so great that I was crowded up against the wall. More to save myself from suffocation than from curiosity, I reached up to the top of a door-swing, put my foot on the knob, and was at once able to elevate myself over all heads, and look directly down upon the table. The position was uncomfortable; but I was not compelled to keep it more than ten minutes.

Two men sat at the table playing cards. The one facing me I recognized at once as he who had been pointed out to me by Mr. Dorian as Conrad Bostock.

The crowd overtopped them, hung over them, but they paid no attention to anything but their game.

Plates of gold and notes were upon the table. I could not see what the

game was or how it was being played; but it was apparent that Bostock was largely the winner. The pile of money in front of him steadily increased, and the light sound of cards striking the table was now and then punctuated by something like an oath from the other player.

Suddenly this man made a noise that sounded like a deep growl, and drawing a knife from his sleeve pinned to the table the card that his opponent had just played. And so quickly that the whole seemed to be but a single motion, he drew a revolver, cocked it and pointed it at the other's head.

The crowd fell back in fright; some were thrown down and trampled under foot, some were carried back against the wall, and many who could fled from the room. The two gamblers sat motionless.

"You wouldn't send a man out of the world this way?" the one who was threatened by the pistol said.

"I ought to, you cheating scoundrel! Sir," to a bystander, "just look at this ace of diamonds that he played last. Now look at the trumps he's played there, and see if there ain't another of 'em."

The man addressed ran over the cards, and quietly threw out another. "I thought so; I thought I was cheated, an hour back, but I couldn't lay my finger on the spot till this minute. I'm going to take every dollar of that money. Dan Turner, rake it in."

The revolver still covered Conrad Bostock's head. The companion of the man who held it proceeded to stuff his pockets with great handfuls of the gold and notes on the table until not a dollar remained.

"Now, I've done with you, you miserable, clumsy cheat!" the man with the pistol said. "You ought to be lynched. You're a disgrace to the company of all gentlemen; but—"

"Lynch him! Throw him into the river! Drown him! Tie him fast to a nigger!" came a shower of suggestions from the crowd.

The object of their attentions turned pale. I had marveled to see his composure when the muzzle of the revolver was at his forehead; but he doubtless was thoroughly acquainted with his own class, and knew that there was no danger of more than a menace from that quarter, provided he sat still and made no resistance. But when those hostile cries were heard, he realized his danger at once. He was among gamblers, sporting men, speculators and adventurers; many of them had been drinking freely; his offense was something each man, by reason of his own mode of life, was prepared to regard as a personal insult and injury. And he probably knew, too, that no wild beast of the forest or the wild is so cruel in its rage as a crowd of men.

No time was allowed him to think about it. A rush was made for him; a dozen hands seized him; spite of his struggles, cries and curses, he was dragged along toward the gangway.

The captain came running down, hearing the commotion, and, seeing the situation of affairs, began to intercede for the endangered man.

"For God's sake, gentlemen, what's the matter? Don't have any violence here."

"It's only a — card-sharp we're going to give a ducking."

"It's about time we made an example of some of these blacklegs who travel along the river, fleecing honest gentlemen."

"I'd like to have him put down in the furnace-room, till the boat gets to New Orleans."

"Save me, Capt. Norris!" the wretched man exclaimed.

"Ah!—is it you, Con Bostock?" the captain cried. "I know you of old. Gentlemen, just spare him this time, and if he ever dares to come aboard the Queen again, you can drown him or hang him, for all I care. But to-night, please let's have no violence. It might hurt the good name of my boat."

The appeal was successful. The captain's interference had given two minutes for reflection; and when a mob can be got to think, there is hope of it. With some dissent, the merciful council was approved.

"But you'll set him ashore?" some one suggested.

"With great pleasure. There's a landing two miles below; he'll have to walk two miles to find a house."

The crowd became good humored at the idea, and sundry coarse jokes were cut at the expense of the gambler's plight. The boat was soon brought to the shore, and he was unceremoniously landed. I did not expect ever to see his course, depraved face again; but it was with me as it ever is—"man proposes, God disposes."

CHAPTER XI.
IN LOUISIANA.

The ever-changing scenes of the great river interested me, and I could have studied for days the varying phases of human nature about me; but as current and stream bore us rapidly down, the object of my journey pressed upon my thoughts, and it was with eager alacrity that I stepped ashore at Donaldsonville, at the head of Bayou La Fourche. With a few others and with my small luggage I was transferred to a small steamer, and the last few miles of my journey we followed the course of the bayou.

For the first time I was in that land of wonders, lower Louisiana. I was floating on one of the multitude of streams, which, more than one hundred miles above the Delta of the Mississippi, help to carry off the great pressure of waters to the gulf. Other rivers receive tributaries to swell their flood; as the mighty Father of Waters approaches salt water he is compelled to send off other rivers to relieve himself. I was in a region entirely alluvial, a land doubtless manufactured, as might be said, by the continual deposit of soil brought down by the tireless water giant and thrust out into the gulf. As the poet Longfellow finely says of this strange phenomenon, he "Seizes the hills in his hands and drags them down to the ocean."

I was in that region which is actu-

ally at most seasons below the level of the streams, where great levees or banks are built upon each side to confine the water to its own bed. Upon the summit of these levees, high above our heads as we steamed along, we saw negro men and women walking, carrying immense bundles and even jars full of water upon the bare crown, without a touch of the hand. At times the bends of the bayou enabled us to look beyond the levees over a section of the country and see vast plantations green with the miniature forests of the sugar-cane. It is here, in this rich, black soil, that the most prolific sugar country in North America is found. The population was almost evenly divided between white and black; the larger part of the former was of French descent; the French language was much spoken, and French names of persons and places were the most common.

To me this was all new and strange, and I was asking many questions about these strange features of the land when the boat stopped and the captain announced "Bostock's." I was the sole passenger landed here. Engaging a lusty and lazy negro to carry my trunk and show me the way, I took the last steps of my journey with throbbing heart. All that Mr. Dorian had related, all that he had put into his warnings, recurred to me. I stopped. I shrank from the test that I had come two thousand miles to make.

"Dar am de house, maussa," said my guide.

It was a large frame house with verandas above and below. It stood not two hundred yards back from the bayou. Stately oaks, beautiful magnolias were before and around it, through which were seen glimpses of wide plantation lands.

The day was hot, the sun oppressive. As I advanced toward the house I saw a man seated in the shade, while another was speaking earnestly and with much gesticulation to him. I stopped, fearful of intruding, but I was already within earshot.

"A lazy, idle, sulky nigger, sir, I tell you! He don't earn his salt. I'd have whaled him long ago if you hadn't forbidden me; and I must tell you sir, if he ain't to be whipped, he'd better be sold. Mayn't I send him over to New Orleans?"

The answer was inaudible.

"Yes, sir, I know you don't like it; but I'm convinced it's the only way to manage. Well, then—if here ain't the

day was hot, the sun oppressive. As I advanced toward the house I saw a man seated in the shade, while another was speaking earnestly and with much gesticulation to him. I stopped, fearful of intruding, but I was already within earshot.

"A lazy, idle, sulky nigger, sir, I tell you! He don't earn his salt. I'd have whaled him long ago if you hadn't forbidden me; and I must tell you sir, if he ain't to be whipped, he'd better be sold. Mayn't I send him over to New Orleans?"

The answer was inaudible.

"Yes, sir, I know you don't like it; but I'm convinced it's the only way to manage. Well, then—if here ain't the

day was hot, the sun oppressive. As I advanced toward the house I saw a man seated in the shade, while another was speaking earnestly and with much gesticulation to him. I stopped, fearful of intruding, but I was already within earshot.

"A lazy, idle, sulky nigger, sir, I tell you! He don't earn his salt. I'd have whaled him long ago if you hadn't forbidden me; and I must tell you sir, if he ain't to be whipped, he'd better be sold. Mayn't I send him over to New Orleans?"

The answer was inaudible.

"Yes, sir, I know you don't like it; but I'm convinced it's the only way to manage. Well, then—if here ain't the

day was hot, the sun oppressive. As I advanced toward the house I saw a man seated in the shade, while another was speaking earnestly and with much gesticulation to him. I stopped, fearful of intruding, but I was already within earshot.

"A lazy, idle, sulky nigger, sir, I tell you! He don't earn his salt. I'd have whaled him long ago if you hadn't forbidden me; and I must tell you sir, if he ain't to be whipped, he'd better be sold. Mayn't I send him over to New Orleans?"

The answer was inaudible.

"Yes, sir, I know you don't like it; but I'm convinced it's the only way to manage. Well, then—if here ain't the

day was hot, the sun oppressive. As I advanced toward the house I saw a man seated in the shade, while another was speaking earnestly and with much gesticulation to him. I stopped, fearful of intruding, but I was already within earshot.

"A lazy, idle, sulky nigger, sir, I tell you! He don't earn his salt. I'd have whaled him long ago if you hadn't forbidden me; and I must tell you sir, if he ain't to be whipped, he'd better be sold. Mayn't I send him over to New Orleans?"

The answer was inaudible.

"Yes, sir, I know you don't like it; but I'm convinced it's the only way to manage. Well, then—if here ain't the

day was hot, the sun oppressive. As I advanced toward the house I saw a man seated in the shade, while another was speaking earnestly and with much g