

ROCK THEE, MY BABY.

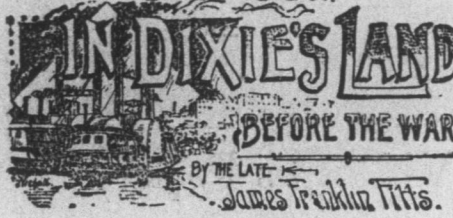
A Cradle Song.

Dove of purest whiteness,
In thy cradle nest,
Eyes of sunlit brightness,
Close them to rest;
Lips of lily sweetness,
Cheeks like roses fair,
Neck of pearly neatness
Strewn with flaxen hair.
Rock thee, my baby, softly now sleep,
Beautiful angels vigils will keep.

Tiny waxen fingers
Thy soft ringlets twine,
Oh! what sweetest fingers
In dear baby mine;
Now to dreamland speed thee,
Baby, haste away,
Fairy bands will lead thee,
In the silent way.
Rock thee, my baby, softly now sleep,
Beautiful angels vigils will keep.

Angel wings enfold thee
Where ye sweetly lie,
In their arms they hold thee,
Chanting lullaby;
Naught thy slumber breaking,
Sleep without annoy,
Till from slumber waking
Like new bloom of joy.
Rock thee, my baby, softly now sleep,
Beautiful angels vigils will keep.

—J. Byington Smith, in Christian Inquirer.



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CHAPTER XV.—CONTINUED.

"Dorr," he said, "come here. Sit down in this chair before me. Summon your strength; and you, Coralie—be strong, if you can. You have confessed that you love each other; let that love strengthen you for what is to come. The time has come when the bitter truth must come out. It is an hour that I have feared and dreaded for years, and one that I have prayed might never come. Yet how can I hold silence any longer? When a man tells me that he loves you and would marry you, Corrie, when you confess that you love him—I must speak out. The lie that I have lived for your sake, my child, can no longer be concealed; you and Dorr must know it. Pray God that the truth shall not divide you!"

He covered his face and shuddered. I looked at Coralie; I sought to take her hand. She withdrew it, and looked with frozen face at her father.

"You spoke of poverty a moment since," he resumed. "That is nothing—to me. I am rich. I like you, Dorr Jewett, as you know. I could depart in peace if I knew you two were to be happy. But—"

He looked from one to the other, and hesitated. He had bidden us strengthen ourselves for the revelation that he had not the courage to make.

"Coralie, give me your hand."

She placed it almost mechanically in his palm. He held it up and looked at it—a shapely little hand, with tapering fingers and rosy nails.

I thought his mind was wandering; I was almost sure of it when he spoke again, rudely, almost fiercely:

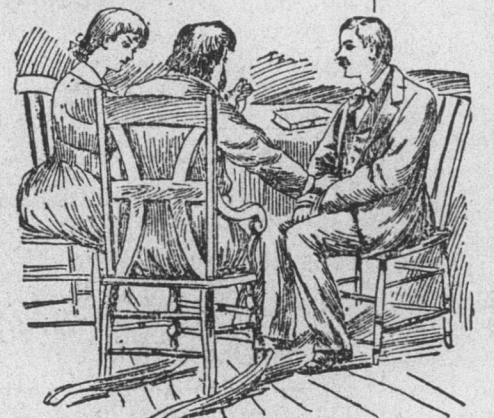
"This is the hand you want, Dorr Jewett, is it? Look at it—closely, boy, closely!"

Coralie softened and trembled. She must have thought, with me, that he was crazed.

"Look at the base of the finger-nail; see the little quarter-circle, which upon your nails and mine is pure white. Look at hers!"

We looked. The circular mark was dusky and clouded.

"Aye, it is the mark of Cain! It speaks a terrible truth, that I have kept hidden from the world. But one man living knows it, beside myself; there was another once who threatened to reveal it—and I slew him. Girl, there is a drop of blood in your veins that is of the despised race. You are my child; but your mother was not my wife. She was a slave; and you,



"IT'S THE MARK OF CAIN."

following her condition, are also a slave!"

CHAPTER XVI.

WE TWO.

I have no very clear idea of what immediately followed that astounding revelation. I do remember that there was a silence in which the tick of the clock on the marble shelf sounded like thunder. I realized the full force of the discovery, but was made dumb and motionless by it. Coralie, I think, did not at first fully comprehend it. Her great eyes were lighted with curious inquiry.

"Why, that is strange, papa," she said. "That dreadful man's mother was not my mother; I am very glad of that. But who was my mother?"

"Louise Le Bonfant, a beautiful Creole, whom I bought of Napoleon Castex. I bought her, girl—do you understand? She died in giving you birth, and the shame and sorrow of this bitter hour are spared her. The blood of the best French families of Louisiana for generations back was in her veins; she was beautiful, educated, accomplished, just as you are; no man could have dreamed that a drop of baser blood was hers. What of that? For a hundred years her mother had been a slave; by the cruel, monstrous law of this state, that con-

dition is yours. I may free you; I may give you by will all that I have; but that you were born in bondage and lived thus, in law, can never be denied. And I tell you this, I, your father, for whose grievous sin you are punished, as it is written in the Scriptures."

She understood the shocking truth at last. With a low cry she sank down, her arms thrown across an ottoman, her face hidden upon them.

I was instantly by her side.

"Look up, Coralie!" I cried. "Nothing shall separate us; be of good cheer."

She raised her eyes; hope faintly shone in them.

"You will despise me, Dorr."

"For what? I have heard nothing that can change my purpose or weaken my love."

"But the people who have known me—"

"They shall know you now as my honored wife. If there is anything for you to live down, let me help you do it."

She rose, reassured, smiling through her tears. She took my hand and led me to her father's chair.

"You hear what he has just said," were her words. "He loves me, spite of everything. I have nothing to give; because—I am your slave. It is for you to say. May I love him?"

The archness, the mock humility with which she turned from the distress and reproach in which her father's words had left her, to this serious aspect of the situation, are not to be described. Mr. Bostock was completely won. He rose from his chair, he clasped us both in one embrace, tears wet his furrowed face.

"At last," he said, with a sigh of infinite relief, "that dreadful burden is rolled from my soul. To keep that secret I have shed blood, I have spent abundant gold, I have become prematurely aged, and suffered in mind as



WE HEARD THE STORY FROM HIS OWN LIPS.

men rarely suffer. Let me right the wrong that I did this dear child, so far as I can, when my passions gave her life; let me make my peace with an offended God, if that be possible; let me see you two happy together—and then let me depart. Corrie, forgive your erring, miserable father. I have sinned, as other men sin; but I have suffered as they have not."

She answered him with a kiss.

"In the morning," he continued, "Le Fevre shall ride over to Thibodeaux, and bring Mr. Coteau, the lawyer. The deed that I have never dared to do, because then the people would know your story, Corrie—I will execute. I will declare your manumission, in writing, signed, sealed and acknowledged; it shall be placed among the public records—and then, child, you will be as free in law as you ever have been in fact. In the next hour my will shall be made. Everything shall be yours."

We sat upon the ottomans at his feet—we two—and in the seclusion of that room we heard from his lips the story of his errors and sufferings. The overseer rapped at the door, and called out that he must see Mr. Bostock, but was answered that he could not be disturbed. The servant who came to call us to the table was sent away. The hour was given to the past.

We listened attentively, Coralie and I, for we were both concerned in the strange story, and I especially was eager to hear the things explained that had puzzled me; yet, ever and anon, as I returned the pressure of the hand, my heart bounded exultingly forward. The past was no more a terror; the future was secure. Upon none could the fair September sun rise so brightly tomorrow as upon us two, the darlings of fate!

So I thought, as I sat there, clasping her hand and listening to Mr. Bostock's confession.

CHAPTER XVII.

BREAKING THE SEALS.

I must go back (said Mr. Bostock) to the time of my marriage. The lady was a belle of New Orleans—beautiful, but not wealthy. I was then, though a young man, the richest planter of the La Fourche. I had a rival, Napoleon Castex, who was settled in Cuba, but who often came over to enjoy the social festivities of the mild winters in New Orleans. Our rivalry was close and sharp. I was successful, and gained the man's lasting hatred in consequence.

Why is it that men and women will deliberately marry, when they are by nature, habit and education, utterly unfitted to mate together? Such things always have been and always will be. Less than three months of wedded life showed us that we were utterly ungenial. But we lived on together, making the best of it, and enduring our irksome bonds.

We had but one child, Conrad. I will speak of him later. I desire now to say that, so far as I have been able to see, he resembled neither of his parents in anything. He was bad, reckless and profligate, from an age when boys usually have no knowledge of the world. I have somewhere read that hereditary vices, as well as diseases, will sometimes skip several generations, and appear in a child of parents not given to evil. It must be so; the accumulated sins of many ancestors must have been inwrought in that boy.

I attended one day at the New Orleans slave-market an auction of the people of a Cuban plantation, who had been sent there to obtain better prices. I learned upon inquiry that their owner was Castex, who had become ruined by unfortunate speculation. A little orphan, thirteen years old, apparently as white as myself, attracted my notice. I became her owner and took her home as a house-servant. She was called Louise Bonfant.

Time passed; the coldness between my wife and myself increased. Let me not try to apportion the blame; perhaps there was none. Our mistake was when we mutually promised to love, honor and cherish.

But she was better than I; she at least tried to keep her vows. Cherishing no affection for her, I became careless of those vows. This pretty slave-girl grew up; she was petted and educated; she usurped the place of Emilie. For awhile the latter bore it, silent and indignant. At length her outraged womanhood spoke out.

"It is better that we part quietly and without scandal," she said. "I can no longer stay in this house. Make a suitable provision for me and I will take the boy and join my people, who have gone to Paris. Tell what story you please about my absence; it will not be contradicted."

I was glad enough to make this arrangement. She went abroad and died a few years after.

Her parting words still ring in my ears.

"I leave you in sorrow, not in anger," she said. "The holy church, of which I am a child, has taught me that there is nothing more sacred in Heaven or earth than the marital vows. You have broken them; you are laying up wrath for yourself in days to come. An offended God will surely call you to account, and you will remember my words."

Often have I remembered them. Emilie has been exquisitely avenged!

Conrad accompanied her to New Orleans, but before the packet sailed he returned home. I received him with surprise and displeasure, for I had felt immeasurably relieved when Emilie proposed that he should live with her.

"I've thought the thing all over, governor," said this boy of fifteen, "and I concluded to come back. You see I've nothing to do with the old woman's quarrels; and as you've got the money, and I'm getting on where I shall want lots of it, I reckon I'll stick to you."

Within one week from the departure of my wife you were born, Corrie, your mother dying in the same hour.

The love that Emilie should have been given to your poor mother, child, I was nearly distracted at her loss. In my frenzy it seemed to me the first fulfillment of Emilie's prediction.

Soon my affections and hopes were transferred to Louise's child. Then the crushing thought came that this child was a slave, born of a slave mother, and that to manumit her would be to publish the fact to the world.

I could not bear the alternative. To save it, I resolved on a course which good judgment should have warned me against. I would break up my home here, leave the plantation, go four hundred miles up the river, and in a locality where no stories would be likely to come from La Fourche, I would bring up this child of my affection. No one there should know of the taint in her origin; no one should ever guess that she was born in bondage.

This plan I put in execution immediately. It promised to succeed. Unfortunately, I had not taken into account the precocity and wickedness of that boy. He instantly divined the truth, and began to hold the knowledge of it over me like a rod. For five years he kept me in constant terror, not so much by his evil courses as by the constant threat of betraying my secret. The amount of money that I have paid him for his silence would represent a fortune. At last, in his twenty-first year, he agreed to leave home and never return, and to keep his knowledge to himself. I was to pay him a large quarterly allowance, which has, in fact, been almost doubled. I have relied on his love of money to keep him from betraying me; and my purse alone has closed his mouth. Where the great sums that I have given him have gone, the gamblers of the river can tell.

I look back to the time between 1846, when I got rid of this unnatural son, and 1853, when the tragedy occurred which will be briefly noticed, as the happiest of my life. The disagreeable part was all behind me; conscience, as well as the fear of exposure, so torturing in these later years, did not trouble me; you were growing up, Corrie, to be just what I wished you; charming acquaintances, valued friends were all about me; my success in growing cotton was adding enormously to my wealth. All this was rudely troubled by the appearance of Napoleon Castex.

I had heard little of this man since my successful rivalry for the hand of Emilie made him my enemy. After my purchase of Louise I learned incidentally that he had once visited New Orleans, and it was told me that he made particular inquiries about me.

There were none but unpleasant recollections connected with him, and I hoped that I should never meet him again.

Suddenly, twelve years after my removal from La Fourche, he presented himself to me. I had no previous knowledge that he was in the neighborhood, and the sight of him disconcerted me. It was at a gentleman's dinner party at my own house, and he came with one of the guests, whom he was visiting. I knew that the man was revengeful and a good hater, and I began to tremble for the consequences of such a visit. I conjectured that if he had not learned the true cause of Emilie's alienation from me, he would be likely to guess it if he happened to see you, Corrie; for you were then about the age of your mother when he last saw her, and very closely resembled her. And what he should discover I knew that his hatred of me would

prompt him to spread broadcast in the neighborhood.

Before I could form any plan to check such a catastrophe, dinner was announced. We were just seated, when you, Corrie, came to the door and looked in, prompted, I suppose, by childish curiosity. Castex saw you, recognized your face, and asked me in French if that was my daughter. I replied that she was; and then—

The man is dead; I must soon follow him. I would like to speak to him now without bitterness or passion; yet I should not speak the whole truth if I did not say that his face, was shining with savage joy as he gave me the brutal rejoinder in French that assured me that his discovery would be published far and near. He said:

"Ah, monsieur! Five or six years hence, when the charming daughter of Louise Bonfant shall come to the same auction block in New Orleans where you purchased the mother, then I think the spirit of your wronged wife will feel avenged."

I saw that he had deliberately planned to force a quarrel on me. I knew that there could be no safety for my secret while he lived. A duel followed, and I killed him. The wound that I received at the same time from his hand laid me up for weeks, and nearly brought me to the grave.

My misery dates from that hour. It is not a comfortable reflection to carry around with you night and day that you have slain a fellow creature, though a bad one, and the thought has troubled me; but much more tormenting than this was the fear that Castex had in some way left his discovery to be revealed after his death. I grew suspicious of everybody; I abandoned old friends; while they never suspected the reason, I was continually fearful that the truth would be known and made public. Then the thought occurred to me that all this torment might be ended by returning to La Fourche. I came back to this place as suddenly as I had left it. We had been absent fifteen years, and there had been many changes; Coralie was everywhere presented as my daughter, and I gave out that Emilie, her mother, had died at my plantation far up the river.

Thus, in fear and falsehood, I preserved your good name, my child, and concealed the story of your birth. That concealment has always been at the mercy of accidents, and I have lived in the same state of torment since the duel. Perhaps it is all part of my punishment; Emilie's words were prophetic. You saw the agitation and the excitement into which the visit of that reprobate son threw me. For the sake of both of you, this falsehood can be told no longer. The truth is painful, it is humiliating; but that way lies safety for you. Thank God, the burden is gone, at last! In the morning Mr. Coteau shall come and make the writings.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THEY HELD FULL HANDS.

Two Young Women Have a Lively Time with a Bull.

Two young ladies of Sylvania recently had a novel experience while endeavoring to drive a refractory calf out of the yard, says the Atlanta Constitution.

Near the same yard was an angry bull, but the young ladies didn't know that he was angry until they started to drive the calf out.

When the girls discovered that he was really mad they were on top of the yard fence, about thirty feet distant from each other, and both yelling for help. The bull seemed to take in the situation—actually to catch onto the racket—for he commenced pawing the earth in a mischievous kind of way, and then he would run around in a playful manner near where they sat astride the fence.

Things went on thus for about ten minutes, when it began to grow very tiresome standing up on the top plank and holding on with both hands. The calf had its back turned and one of the girls said she thought she could make it to the steps before the young animal could see her. She slid gently down and then made a break for the house, but for some unknown reason at the same instant the bull turned himself about and started on a full run for the same point.

She saw him coming and her heart sank. She knew she could not make the house and she saw she could not get back to the fence before the devouring beast would be upon her. Not knowing which horn of the dilemma to take she resolved, with supernatural courage born of the moment, to grasp them both. And so she ran toward him as he came, and before he had time to retreat she had caught him with an iron grasp by both his horns and was yelling for her companion to run and grab him by the tail.

It was a supreme moment, but at last the other caught him by his long narrative—and then over that yard they had it! Up and down, round and about, yelling and bellowing, into grasses and bushes they went, until they tired the bull out and he broke away from them in self-defense.

Ethan Allen's Sword.

The sword which Ethan Allen drew in the cause of freedom in 1775 has been kept in the Allen family since the patriot's death, and is now in possession of Hannibal A. Hopkins, of Lansing, Mich. Mr. Hopkins has offered it to the government for exhibition in the national museum at Washington with other revolutionary relics, and it will probably soon be placed there. Its history is well authenticated, and Ethan Allen in his autobiography refers twice to using it in the capture of the British at Ticonderoga.

The Chinese distort the feet of their women to keep them at home. For the same reason the Venetians formerly compelled their women when abroad to wear clogs of such size and shape that walking was made extremely difficult and as little of it as possible was done.

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