

has started a new cemetery, and there are five hundred graves in it. What story does that tell?"

A few months afterward Philip Co-mines married Isabel Dorsett. On her marriage eve Isabel's thoughts drifted through the past. "Did I or did I not love poor Tom? To a fatal accident do I owe my happiness? One thing I know—

I love Philip. From his love came mine. It is no dream, no vague, wondering aspiration; it is a solemn experience."

Mis' Polly, in a gray silk, was the mistress of ceremonies at the wedding. People shook their heads and said that she was growing old, for she did not mind Isabel's slipping from under her thumb, and nobody heard of her rules nowadays.

## BARTHÉLEMY DE MACARTY'S REVENGE.

BY THE HON. CHARLES GAYARRÉ.

**I**N a contribution entitled "A Louisiana Sugar Plantation of the Old Régime," published in *Harper's Monthly*, March, 1887, I have given some of my souvenirs about a locality where sugar was made for the first time in 1795 by Monsieur de Boré, six miles above the city of New Orleans.

Among the most intimate friends who frequently visited the family at the Boré plantation there was an old maid named Mademoiselle de Macarty. Her name originally had been McCarthy. It had been Frenchified into Macarty. She was of Irish origin, being the descendant of a family that emigrated from Ireland and followed the fortunes of James II. after the battle of the Boyne. There was a Count de Macarty member of the House of Peers under the reign of Louis Philippe.

Mademoiselle de Macarty lived near the De La Chaise plantation, once well known on account of its brick-yard, but now divided into streets and lots which have become part of New Orleans. She was in affluent circumstances, possessed houses in the city, and owned a number of slaves. She had a beautiful and productive garden, of which she was very proud, superb orange-trees, a well-cultivated orchard, and acquired considerable reputation for the skill with which she manufactured all sorts of condiments, sweetmeats, and other delicacies. In this she was assisted by a *dame de compagnie* named Barella, of Italian descent. These two women have ever since remained inseparably connected in my memory with more than one fond recollection of a feast on fruit and sugar-plums.

Mademoiselle de Macarty left all her fortune to her nephew, Augustin de Macarty, who subsequently became Mayor

of the city of New Orleans, and died childless.

She had another but more distant relative, called Barthélemy de Macarty, who lived a few miles below the city on a place fronting the river, and extending to the swampy forest behind. This gentleman, born to wealth, early in life gave proofs of possessing a considerable degree of eccentricity. He lived with his widowed father, Chevalier de Macarty, whom I knew in his old age, and who continued to wear, until the last day of his existence, a powdered head and a queue of the old *régime*. This aged gentleman drove every day, at the same hour, from his rural residence to Hewlett's Exchange, at the northwest junction of Chartres and St. Louis streets, where he appropriated for his special use the same corner and the same arm-chair, holding converse with a few friends of congenial habits and thoughts, and passing with them in successive review all the visitors of the establishment as they went in or went out, and commenting on each one of those who were of sufficient importance to be noticed. At 2 o'clock P.M., precisely, he rose, addressed the same invariable bow to the company, entered his carriage with the same privileged leg foremost, and was driven home at the same leisurely rate of locomotion. Then there was an end of him, so far as the outward world was concerned, until the repetition of the same proceeding on the next day.

The widowed father and the unmarried son were reported to live together with a singular sort of etiquette. The house was a spacious two-story one, after the fashion of the old colonial or creole dwellings, with large open verandas, or galleries, running along every side of the edifice, and supported by massive brick pillars.

It was divided in the centre by a broad hall. On the left of this hall the apartments were exclusively occupied by the father, and on the right by the son. They respectively kept as distinct an establishment as if they had been miles apart. When so disposed, they reciprocally invited each other in turn to breakfast or to dinner. They continued to live with the same formality until the senior Macarty departed this life.

His son, Barthélemy, had been thoroughly educated, and gave promise of a brilliant career. When still very young, he had been selected by Governor Claiborne for his Secretary of State. Handsome, possessed of those clean-cut features which characterize the patrician of long descent, rich, and distinguished in every way, the youthful Secretary of State was the cynosure of society, and mothers kept a steady eye on him, for there certainly could not be a more eligible match for a beloved daughter. Suddenly, however, he disappeared from the brilliant circles of which he was the ornament, and became a recluse on the plantation which I have mentioned. Much talk, of course, there was on the subject, but the cause of such a stupendous social event never was really ascertained. Conjectures and suggestions, that was all. Everybody thought at first that it was a transient whim, but it lasted twenty-five years. Monsieur de Macarty, during all this lapse of time, was invisible to everybody, save to a few friends in New Orleans, whom he had to dine with him every Sunday, and for whom he usually sent his carriage, as their means of transportation.

A high wooden fence, made of solid planks closely wedged together, protected Monsieur de Macarty's premises from intrusion, concealing everything from view save the tops of the tallest trees. Within, there was the most luxuriously perfumed garden, blooming with innumerable flowers, adorned with the rarest plants and all the wealth of the vegetable world. For them he never hesitated to pay even enormous sums. His library was of the choicest, and containing the most costly editions, with magnificent engravings. In this solitude, into which the arts and sciences alone were permitted to enter, he lived absorbed in himself, and apparently dead to everything else. His agent visited him twice a year to render his accounts. Houses after houses, which

he never saw and never cared to see, were bought for him in New Orleans. People would talk occasionally of his ever-increasing fortune, and wonder at the obstinate seclusion of one for whom the world should have had so many attractions.

For twenty-five years this gentleman continued to be inapproachable and invisible to anybody save to his slaves, his agent, and the same few friends who seldom failed to visit him weekly. These friends were very reticent about the recluse, and all that could be extracted from them was that the Sunday dinners of Monsieur de Macarty were exquisite, and his black cook a *cordon bleu*.

One day there was a sensational report in New Orleans. Monsieur de Macarty had suddenly departed for France, without even bidding farewell to his Sunday friends, who were in as great amazement as the rest of the people. All that could be learned from his servants was that he had received a letter which had greatly disturbed him. He had hastily sent a messenger to his agent in New Orleans, and had ordered a trunk to be packed with personal effects, as if for a long journey. Three days after, a ship bound for Europe had stopped in front of his house, and Monsieur de Macarty, with his faithful body-servant, black Joe, had gone on board. We happen to know the contents of the letter received by Monsieur de Macarty. It was a short one, and ran as follows:

"DEAR SIR,—I know not what connection has existed between you and my mother. All that I know is that she more than loved, that she worshipped you. This she did not, and could not if she had wished it, conceal from me. I, her only child, was fifteen years old when she died from the fatal effects of a mysterious grief which she seemed to hug voluntarily to her bosom. I never knew her but with sadness in her heart and on her brow. On her death-bed she made me solemnly promise that if I ever needed help in this world, I should send to you a sealed paper which I enclose. I am now eighteen, and in such distress that death alone can relieve me. I keep, however, the word which I pledged to my mother, but without hope. What could you do for me? You in New Orleans and I in Nantes, and the ocean between us! What more need I say to you at such a distance? How meaningless and fruitless does such a communication appear to me! But a mother's wish has been obeyed.

NATALIE VERMANDOIS."

There was enclosed in this letter a small note, carefully sealed, but without address, either outside or inside, nor was it signed. Here is its text:

"O idol of my heart, never to be effaced from it! I have wronged you deeply, past redemption. I ought not to have doubted. It was an unpardonable crime to doubt your word—your honor. How can I have been so guilty? But if you had known to what extent I was deceived, perhaps you would have pardoned. Alas! you scorned to seek any explanation; and you were right. I adore your superb pride, although it has made us both so miserable. I adore it, because it is like the justifiable pride of a god—a generous pride which has made you spare my husband, your treacherous friend, whom you could have crushed. He does not know it; but I do! I know what a mournful recluse you have been since that fatal day of separation. Although so far away, I have never lost sight of you, and have ever been with you in spirit. Oh, how thoroughly I have learned to know you—better than you know yourself! Alas! it is too late. How marvellous is the intuition of sorrow! It is that intuition which makes me address you these lines with implicit confidence, when I have but a few days to stay in this valley of tears. I leave my only child in the hands of an unworthy husband. I fear for her. Should she ever appeal to you, save her. I know that this is the only revenge to which your pride will stoop.

"Faithfully thine in heaven and forever."

Forty days after the departure of Monsieur de Macarty a stranger rang the bell at the magnificent house of the banker Vermandois, in Nantes. He asked the servant who opened the door if Mademoiselle Vermandois was at home. The answer was affirmative, and the stranger was ushered into a superb reception-room. The servant retired without asking for a name, which had not been given, to be announced in compliance with a usual formality. His practical eye had satisfied him that the visitor was a person of distinction.

There stood conspicuous in that saloon the full-length portrait of a lady. The stranger approached the painting, and seemed to be immediately absorbed in its contemplation. He became dead pale, and grasped the left side of his breast, as if some sharp pain had suddenly shot through his heart. But that pallor had left no trace, and his arm had fallen listlessly down along his right side, when a door opened, and a young lady advanced toward him. He bowed gravely, and said:

"From the resemblance which exists between you and that portrait, I suppose that I have the honor to address Mademoiselle Vermandois. I am Monsieur de Macarty, from New Orleans. You have appealed to me. I have come."

She to whom these words were addressed trembled all over her frail body. With all the signs of extreme agitation she seized both his hands, which she shook with convulsive pressure, and looked as if disposed to fall kneeling at his feet, without being able to speak. Monsieur de Macarty prevented her, if such was her intention.

"I beg you to be composed," he said. "I know the nature of your distress. I have made the necessary inquiries before calling on you. You love Monsieur de Kerleree, a young captain of cavalry in the French army, but without any fortune, and you would rather die than marry old Castera and his millions. I understand it all. It is a story of very ancient date. Well, in memory of your mother, I will interfere in this matter."

Natalie clasped her hands, tears of joy gushed out of her eyes, and her feelings of gratitude would have burst out in burning expressions from her lips if Monsieur de Macarty had not hastened to check her, saying, frigidly: "Pray spare me any display of emotion; no scene, if you please; I hate such idle demonstrations, such hysterical explosions. Is your father at home?"

She could answer only with an affirmative motion of her head.

"Then," continued Monsieur de Macarty, in the same freezing tones, "allow me to ask you the favor to carry this card to your father. I desire to have with him a strictly private interview."

Mademoiselle Natalie, overpowered by hopes and fears, and by astonishment at the strangeness of the situation she was in, staggered out of the apartment to carry the message to her father. In the mean time Monsieur de Macarty calmly and slowly paced the large room, stealing occasionally furtive and, as it were, involuntary glances at the portrait.

After a delay of a few minutes Monsieur Vermandois entered. He was a tall, handsome man, about fifty years old, with features sinister in their beauty, and bearing that undefinable expression which in certain faces is a warning to physiognomists. There was no exchange of saluta-

tions between the two men. They stood face to face in close proximity, and for a while looked steadily at each other. There was bewilderment and anxiety in the inquiring eyes of Vermandois, and one hand, which he held behind his back, twitched convulsively. Monsieur de Macarty was self-collected, expressionless, and impassible, like marble. He was the first to break the prolonged and embarrassing silence.

"Sir," he said, "it is the first time that I have seen you since, under the guise of false and treacherous friendship, you robbed me of a treasure which you have been unable to appreciate. Think not that I condescend to address you any reproach. I have come here for a business transaction with Banker Vermandois. I shall be brief. Cashier of the Louisiana Commercial Bank, you resigned and departed for France shortly after your marriage. You were still on the ocean when a deficit of fifty thousand dollars was discovered, clearly traceable to you. Secret measures were instantly taken to have you arrested in due time. Of this I was confidentially informed by one of my friends, who was one of the directors. For the sake of one who shall be nameless, and on condition that your crime should not be divulged, I paid the sum that you had appropriated to your own uses and purposes. I have in my possession the whole transaction officially certified. This is not all. You are at present on the eve of bankruptcy. Your late speculations at the Paris *Bourse* have proved disastrous. You are obliged to pay within a few days to certain parties whom you know the round sum of five hundred thousand francs. You cannot do it. You see that I am well informed. Those parties have transferred to me all their claims. I am your sole creditor." Monsieur de Macarty paused and looked at Vermandois as if he dared him to a denial. Vermandois remained silent.

"Now to the point," continued Monsieur de Macarty. "Here is the business transaction which I propose. It suits me that your daughter should marry Monsieur de Kerleree, and no other. If you consent to it, I will deliver to you the Louisiana Commercial Bank document which I have mentioned, and will cancel the five hundred thousand francs obligations that I hold. I give you the remainder of this day and the coming night to

decide on my proposition. If you accept, as I want no further interview, nor any direct communication with you, let the marriage of Monsieur de Kerleree and Mademoiselle Vermandois be announced to-morrow morning in the *Impartial* of Nantes as having to take place within a short time. If this notice does not appear, I will consider it as a refusal. In that case, on your own head be the consequences. I will no longer spare you."

Without waiting for any manifestation whatever on the part of Vermandois, Monsieur de Macarty turned on his heel and deliberately walked out of the house.

The next morning this short editorial appeared in the first column of the *Impartial*:

"We are delighted to announce from the highest authority the *prochain* marriage of Monsieur de Kerleree and Mademoiselle Vermandois. Monsieur de Kerleree is a promising young officer, and belongs to the oldest nobility of Brittany, but is honorably poor. The bride is extremely rich, being the only daughter of our well known and distinguished banker, Philippe Vermandois. This gentleman deserves great credit and commendation for his liberal and noble disregard of the inequality of fortune between the parties. *Une telle alliance entre la haute noblesse et la haute finance obtiendra une approbation universelle.* It is one of the social and political necessities of our progressive epoch."

On that very day Monsieur de Macarty received a joint note from the affianced couple requesting to be favored with the permission to call on him and make him witness the happiness of which he was the author. He begged to be excused from receiving Mademoiselle Vermandois, but consented to the visit of Captain de Kerleree, to whom he said:

"I have not admitted you to my presence to be greeted with expressions of gratitude. In what I have done I have simply pleased myself, and sought my own gratification. Therefore I deserve no thanks."

"But," replied Monsieur de Kerleree, when he had finished, "we hope that you will at least honor our wedding with your attendance."

"No. That is impossible. I depart this evening for Paris, and from that city for New Orleans. I bid you farewell, probably never to meet again; but I will

leave with you a request. On the day of your marriage, I desire your wife to go alone from the altar to the tomb where she often prays for the soul of the departed, and there utter these words, which may reach the spirit to whom they are

addressed in her far-distant celestial home: 'Mother, I am commissioned by him whom you have so deeply wronged to tell you that the pardon you so long craved is granted at last; for his revenge is complete.'

### "THE CENTRE FIGGER."

BY M. E. M. DAVIS.

"**D** EY tells me you gwine ter be de centre figger at de 'Mancipation Day ter-morrer, Aun' Calline," said Uncle Jake Prince, halting in the dusty road outside the gate, and shifting his white oak split basket from one arm to the other.

"I sholy is, Unk Jake," responded Aunt Calline, with dignity.

The other cabins in the long double row of low two-roomed houses which had once made up the quarters of the old Winston plantation had fallen into disuse and decay; grass grew in their aforetime trim door-yards; "jimson" weed and mullein choked their garden patches; their window-shutters swung loose on broken hinges; their floors were mildewed and rotting; their very chimneys were crumbling; the broad walk which led past them and on to the great house, just showing its white-pillared galleries and peaked dormer-windowed roof through the trees, was a tangled thicket of undergrowth. The great house itself, seen more closely, wore an air of dilapidation, mournful enough to those who remembered it in the time of the old colonel, when its hospitable doors stood wide open winter and summer, and even the pickaninnies swinging on the big gate grinned a welcome to the incoming guest.

But Aunt Calline's cabin preserved its old-time look of thrift and comfort. In the little garden there were beds of cabbages and beans and okra, bordered with sage and rosemary; hollyhocks and larkspur and pretty-by-nights blossomed in the door-yard; a *multiflora* rose, entangled with honeysuckle, clambered up the squat chimney, and sent its long glossy green branches over the comb of the sloping roof and down to the overhanging eaves; a box of sweet-basil stood on the window-sill, and a patch of clove-pinks by the gravel-walk filled all the June morn-

ing with spicy fragrance. Within, the floor was yellow and shining from immemorial scrubblings; the rough walls were adorned with newspaper pictures; and the counterpane and old-fashioned valance of the bed were snowy white and sweet with the smell of lavender. A perpetual fire blazed or smouldered in the wide fireplace, while on the cracked hearth were ranged spiders and skillets and ponderous three-footed ovens with huge lids, suggestive of the rich brown salt-rising loaf, the crusty pone, hand-imprinted, the steaming pot-pie, the dainty "snowball," of days when self-respecting cooks looked with scorn and contempt on a cooking stove.

Aunt Calline herself, as she sat on the door-step beating cake batter in a deep pan resting on her knees, was a reminder of the old *régime*. A fantastically knotted turban encircled her head; a spotted "handk'cher" was folded across her ample bosom; her scant skirts were hitched up under a long blue check apron, and her rusty feet and ankles were bare. Her kindly old face was creased with wrinkles, but in her great soft brown eyes dwelt that curious look of eternal youth which is characteristic of her race.

"Big Hannah, whar useter b'long ter we-alls fambly, wuz de centre figger las' year," continued Uncle Jake, sociably, drawing nearer to the gate.

"Humph!" grunted Aunt Calline; "mighty fine centre figger dat corn-fiel' gal mus' er made, dough she *is* er sister in Zion! But I ain' seen Big Hannah ez de centre figger. I ain' nuver *been* to no 'Mancipation Day."

"De Lawd, Aun' Calline!" ejaculated the old man, with a well-feigned air of astonishment, "ain' you nuver been ter de 'Mancipation Day? Huccum you ain' nuver been dar?"