THE FATE OF LOUIS CAPDAU.

A LEGEND OF LOUISIANA, 1795.

BY MAURICE THOMPSON. A story told in a summer-house that, standing on stilts in the surf-ripples of the Mexican Gulf, looked like a heron whose plumes (the tree-fern and moss on the roof) were as green as emerald. She who told the story was a creole of creoles, and it was a bit of ancestral romance, falling from her mobile lips, as she lay in a hammock, gently swaying to the palpitations of a Cribbean

breeze. Late in the eighteenth century, about the year 1795, perhaps, the narrator's paternal line, flowing down its course of restless adventure, had found a season of quietude and comparative opulance on a large plantation not far

from New Orleans. Chevalier de Beret, the then head of the family, was a man of note and influence in the colony, a leader of the French element, a fighter, a high liver, and a loving father, whose stern heart idolized his only daughter, Mlle. Marie.

At that time the Spaniards had control of the Louisiana territory, and there was no good feeling between the French and their proud and overbearing rulers; but Chevalier de Bere knew well how to avoid friction by offering liberal, even luxuriant, hospitality to the officials of the local government, and to the social controllers of New Orleans.

So it came about that one Don Manuel Cortinas saw and fell in love with Mlle. Marie de Beret when she was just sixteen, beautiful as a flower, and as clever as beautiful.

But Mlle. Marie's affections were already bestowed upon Louis Capdau, brother of the afterward famous Jean Capdau, who became one of the most | threats of vengeance. terrible of the outlaws then infesting the Gulf region. At that time, however, the brothers had a fine plantation near that of Chevalier de Beret. and were young men of fair standing in the colony, although nothing what ever was known of their antecedents. They were rich, owned many slaves, moved in the best society of New Orleans, and were handsome withal.

The rivalry between Don Manuel | sed to Don Manuel; Cortinas and Louis Capdau was a very quiet one on the surface. The young | negro. men met frequently, exchanged polite greetings, danced in the same parlors, sat at the same board; but they hated each other, of course, the Spaniard especially revolving in his mind schemes et, with perfect coolness. for removing his rival from the scene of action. As for Capdau, feeling sure of his place in Marie's heart, he could afford to be generous as well as perfect- Capdau is a gentleman." ly complaisant.

Chevalier de Beret's plantation was known in those days as the Cote de Beret, and the mansion, a rude but spacious building, was called the Chateau de Beret. It overlooked a grand sketch of the Mississippi, and, viewed from a boat on the water, it looked not unlike a small castle sunk deep amid its mossy live-oaks and magnolias.

Don Manuel Cortinas pressed his suit, supplementing his attentions to Mlle. Marie with flattering and extremely valuable privileges procured for her father by force of a close relation with the Spanish governor. The girl thus found herself occupying an almost unbearable position. Love and respect for her father and fear for his safety, on one hand, and dislike, nay loathing of Don Manuel, on the other, were set against her passion for Louis Capdau, so that she knew not what to

As time passed on, the Chateau de Beret was frequently invaded by parties of brilliant people invited thither by the master of the place. Most of these were Spaniards, and among them always Don Manuel, tall, dark, handsome, graceful, brilliant, but with something in his dusky eyes and heavy mouth that suggested cruelty and treachery.

No one ever knew how the whisper got afloat, but in some way it came to be current in New Orleans that the Capdan brothers had good reason for the mystery which hung around their family history. Some one, it was said, had discovered that they had come from San Domingo, where they were pose.' well-known as of negro blood.

The scandal floated about for a good while before it reached the cars of Chevalier de Beret, who at first was inclined to treat it with contempt; but it grew day by day and would not be lightly cast aside. Knowing his daughter's feelings, and secretly approving them, though dreading an open rupture with Don Manuel on account of his influence with the governor, he was greatly perplexed by the turn that this dark rumor was giving to affairs. This perplexity was aggravated in the last degree by what took place, when one day a number of invited guests arrived at the Chateau de | gulf. Beret to have dinner and a dance. Mlle. Marie was looking her sweetest, and the house was wreathed with flowers in honor of the occasion. Don Manuel, whose vessel had borne the guests by way of the river, looked saturnine thau ever before.

Louis Capdau arrived late, mounted on a superbly caparisoned horse, handed his bridle-rein to his groom, dismounted and came slowly up the shell walk to the veranda, whereon most of the company had assembled to sip wine and enjoy the sweet breeze from the gulf. Marie blushed te see how manly and handsome he was, how strong his bearing, how noble the poise of his large, finely turned head, how firm and elastic his step, how steadfast and magnetic his deep, dark eyes. She fancied that she never before had noticed how dead-black, closely curling and beauti-

ful was his hair. steps of the veranda and saluted gravely, but with a bright smile, the company, passing into their midst with the and with but one thought in mind, geance upon all mankind. From that

society. Marie was proud of him. She felt a tender glow suffuse her whole frame, strange expression, some gleam of unusual significance in his eyes and and follow him. cheeks, an indescribable glimmer, so to So, at the head of his black band, the brothers were quadroons.

call it, about his firm mouth. He went up to Don Manuel and spoke to him, saluting him gently, but not warmly. The Spaniard folded his arms loftily,

and stepped back, saying:

"I do not associate with mulattoes." The words were spoken in a loud, clear voice, causing every one to turn

enough to see Louis Capdau slap Don Manuel in the face. It was a heavy blow with the palm; the Spaniard reeled, almost fell before it.

"Take that, liar, coward, villian! and hat and that and that!' Blow followed blow so rapidly, that

no one could interfere. "I am whiter than you, you lying, infamous slanderer!'

and said: "He it is who has poisoned all your minds against me. What he has said is a lie-a lie. I am of as good a family as France holds."

He turned and strode back to his horse, mounted and rode away. As he passed along the veranda, by where Marie stood, pale and speechless, he spoke low to her:

"This vile Spaniard is the fabricator of all this slander: he is doing it to set your father against me and to fill you with doubt about my honor. You will not believe his falsehoods, Marie?" He quickly lifted her hand and kissed

She stood dazed, mute, until she heard him riding away, and then she sank down, like one stricken with a

Don Manuel Cortinas, after rallying from the disorder into which Capdau's vigorous onslaught had thrown him. assumed a stern air and uttered savage

his power to rally his guests. Marie, who could not control her shocked upon him through the glare of the nerves and overchaaged heart, was flames filling him with a very rage of taken to her room, and refused to see

of a duel; but Chevalier de Beret ended his way to a corner of the veranda all this with a single sentence addres-

"He is a negro - a mulatto, I will get the proofs-I will kill him-the

brute, the beast!" raged Don Manuel. "Very well," said Chevalier de Ber-"Do you doubt my word?"

"I do not believe that you are correctly informed, that is all. Louis "You youch for him?"

"I do if you desire to meet him." "I do not intend to meet him. He is a negro, and I will prove it."

"Very well." So the party was ended and the guests went home, feeling that they had witnessed a very strange affair.

From that day forward Don Manuel Cortinas thought of nothing but revenge. He was as wily as he was cour- Madiy he called for help, fiercely he ageous in his evil enterprise. Knowing well that Chevalier de Beret was in came, and he could not extinguish the sympathy with Capdau, and feeling that before he could hope to win Marie, he must substantiate, even with per- ed down to the verge of the roof and jured testimony, the charge against her leaped off, with the girl in his arms. lover's purity of blood, he set about scheming to accomplish his end.

at the Chateau de Beret, Louis Capdau called upon Marie's father, and presented a casket of papers showing that he and his brother were the last of their name, and that they represented a noble family, which the fortunes of French politics had ruined. Their father had died on the scaffold for a political offense, and they had been forced into exile. These proofs were so clear and connected that there could be no doubt whatever of their sufficiency. Chevalier de Beret embraced the Spaniard had cast him on the sand, but young man, and, calling Marie, em- he strove hard, half lifting himself, braced her also. He joined the hands falling back, reaching forth his arms

"That villainous Don Manuel," said he, more to himself than to the happy lovers, "that villainous Don Manuel has been the originator and propagator him. He is the ringleader of these of this rumor. I understand his pur- slaves.

"And I, too," said Louis Capdau. Marie shuddered, and her blushes faded from her beautiful cheeks.

"Oh, I fear hlm very, very greatly!"

The evening of a lovely day fell softly over the river, the moss-hung woods and the rambling, vine-covered mansion. A week had passed since the return of Don Manuel and his party to New Orleans. Louis Capdau had visited Marie every day, and now they were standing on the veranda, saying au revoir for the twentieth time. A slender moon hung over in the west against a brilliant, cloudless sky. The air was deliciously soft and balmy, just touched with the slight tingle of the

Marie crept close to her lover and sighed, as into her heart stole some strange, unaccountable foreboding of evil. He felt her hand grow chill in his; but when he tried to say something cheerful and cheering, he could find no words; for in his heart, too. there stirred the dark shadow of dread. darker, handsomer, more strangely the forecast of a formless horror he knew not how to shake off or how

him ride away, and it was as if the beat of his subalterns. of those swiftly falling hoofs was over It was done. Louis Capdau was the graves of all the hopes of her life. nailed in a long box (made of four Never before had she been afraid; but planks) which, while he was still living,

breathing was difficult. Louis Capdau went home bearing afterward hung up in four public with him a sense of final loss, like that places, as a terrible warning to insur-

which must have succeeded the death gents. and burial of Marie.

That night was a memorable one: one long afterward took another wife. It that has its dark page in the history of | was by one of his descendents that his Louisiana. A little past midnight, story was told in a summer-house at Louis Capdau's faithful body-servant Bay Saint Louis. came to awake him and say that there When Jean Capdau, the elder was great danger moving upon him. brother of Louis, returned home to The negroes of the plantations were in find the place burned, his slaves scatarms, and were marching through the tered, and, most horrible, his brother's He doffed his hat as he came up the country, bent upon blood, robbery, remains impaled on sharp stakes by fire, and all the nameless crimes of a the way-side, not to mention the inservile insurrection. He sprang from famy that had been cast upon his his bed, snatched clothing and arms, name and his honor, he vowed venconfident grace of one used to the best | mounted his horse and dashed away to | day he was a merciless outlaw preying the quarters of his own slaves. Jean, upon his kind.

The Capdau slaves, it seemed, had Saucier papers, you will find an account and she fairly trembled with the love not shared in the horrible plot, and of Jean Capdau's career, but only incishe could not hide. But what was this they readily responded to their mas- dental mention of the awful fate of his in his face? She was aware of some ter's order that they should arm them- brother Louis. Pere Vibert more selves with clubs, axes, hoes and what- than intimates that the documents ever other weapons they could find, shown to Chevalier de Beret by Louis

Louis Capdau marched forthwith, going directly toward the Chateau de Beret. He felt sure that the insurgents would naturally aim at the chateau, knowing the amount of valuables hoarded there; and, indeed, long before he reached the plantation, he heard the wild din of the savage mob, as it went howling and blowing horns, in the direction of the

Beret landing on the river. At New Orleans it had come to the ears of Carondelet, the governor, that Some of them were barely quick an uprising was contemplated by the slaves, and he had dispatched Don Manuel Cortinas with a company of

soldiers to protect the planters. Naturally enough, Cortinas led his little force directly to the Chateau de Beret, thinking to make that his headquarters, and thus, at the same time that he was quelling the insurgents, he could be sure to protect Chevalier de Beret and Marie. He landed his men at the little wharf about the Beret plantation, and marched them thence by a roundabout road Capdau now turned to the company. (which, however, was the directest route possible, owing to some intervening swamps) toward the mansion. Meantime the furious mob of blacks were approaching from one direction, and Capdau with his slaves from another. All three of the parties came together in the near vicinity of the Chateau de Beret; but an advance crowd of the insurgents had reached the house first, and set it on fire. The inmates had locked and barred all the doors, and Chevalier de Beret, firing with deadly aim from the windows,

preventsd an entrance. Louis Capdau found himself and his little band of slaves wedged in, so to speak, between the main body of the insurgents and the howling advance mob that was surging around the now burning mansion. Fired in many places at once, the dry, resinous wood of which the building was constructed. was soon so aflame throughout the lower story that escape from the upper, in which the family had taken refuge, appeared impossible; but even death by fire was far preferable to failing

into the hands of the negroes. Taking in the situation at a glance but all unaware of the party of soldiers from New Orleans, Louis Capdau called his trusty band of slaves about him The social pleasures were at an end, and made a rush for the burning man though Chevalier de Beret did all in sion. At that moment he caught a glimpse of Marie at an upper window. The apparition, pale, despairing, shone wild emotion. What could bar him away from her at such a crisis! Sword in hand he plunged forward striking Among the gentlemen there was talk down every opposing form and forcing where a strong vine gave him the means of climbing to the roof from which he made his way to the window where "You cannot fight him if he is a Marie had appeared a moment before. Hot, stifling smoke was pouring into the room; the flames would soon follow. He sprang inside and called.

"Marie! Marie!" Groping about blindly with outstretched arms, he touched her, clasped her, as she reeled, almost insensible from suffocation.

Just then there came a volley of musketry; then another and another. Out through the window to the veranda roof, Louis leaped with his precious burden; but how could he descend with it? He tottered back and forth, almost delirious with the excitement of the awful moment. Down below, in the glare of the fire-

light, he saw, but did not realise, that a compact body of white men were dealing out death to the blacks, who were scattering in a frenzy of fright. The flames flashed through the windows and burst from the roof. Rea tongues darted around the man and caught the drapery of the fainting girl. fought the deadly element. No aid flames that were consuming Marie's floating garments. Unable to bear

longer the torture of the trial, he reel-It was like a miracle that he was not killed, for the force of the shock was great, and he lay on the ground a On the day following the encounter moment as if crushed; then writhing up, with one leg broken, but still bearing Marie, he tottered down to the river and plunged into the water. Don Manuel Cortinas came to that side of the building just in time to see

Louis Capdau leap from the burning veranda. He thought it was Chevalier de Beret, and hurriedly ran after him just in time to drag both man and girl from the water. Marie was quite dead, but Louis Capdau was alive and recognized his rival who now held the poor little form

in his arms. The crippled man was too much exhausted to rise from where the of the young people and gave them his and exclaiming with tierce energy: "Scoundrel! Villain! Coward! Do not touch her-put her down!"

Some soldiers came near ; Don Manuel called to them : "Secure that negro; but do not hurt him more. I will make an example of

They took Capdau and bound him, while the Spaniard bore the body of

Marie to a safe place. The fire roared and leaped; the broad, red flame slanting away before the breeze, crisping the tops of the live-oaks, and whisking off the long, gloomy festoons of vines and moss. Chevalier de Beret was rescued in an msensible condition, but Madame de

Beret was lost. All around, the reports of Spanish muskets told how the insurgents were faring. Many of them were killed, among them some of Capdau's faithful followers, for the soldiers knew nothing of their loyalty. The mansion was a smoldering ruin. Daylight came gray and foggy in the

east, and spread slowly over the sky. Don Manuel, finding that Marie was indeed dead, turned all the malignancy of his thwarted and conscienceless nature upon Louis Capdau, who lay suffering and helpless at his feet. "Dog of a mulatto!" he raged "Why did you do all this?"

"Poltroon!" The Spaniard made a motion as if to plunge his sword through him, but forebore. "Box him up and saw him into

Capdau answered him with one

Marie stood in the gloom and heard | quarters," he ordered, turning to some now she was so oppressed that her was sawed through at three places, thus dividing his body into quarters,

Chevalier de Beret survived, and

his brother, was absent from home at In the letters of Pere Vibert to M. Augustin Faurie, which are among the Capdau were forged, and that, in fact,

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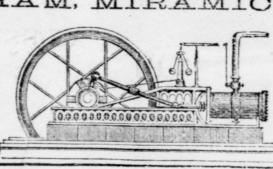
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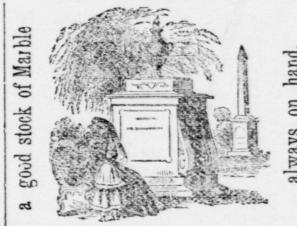
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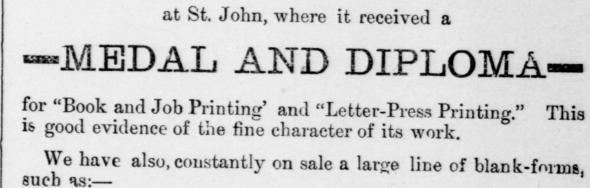
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WORLD'S EMPORIUM OF FASHION for their Spring Sewing and Housefurnishing. We will show them on our counters extraordinary pretty goods. Immense volume and variety. Everything rich and stylish. Every department full up of the latest and best. We defy the keenest competition in Canada to produce such goods and at such low prices. Get samples, wash them, see how fast in color and

measure the width. DRESS GOODS,

Prints, Piques, Muslins, Cambrics, Satin stripes and spot Washing Silks, Black Silks, Velvets, Plushes, New Dress Trimmings, Satins, Household Goods, Cottons, Flannels, Window Curtains, Laces, Carpets, Oil Cloths, Hosiery, Gloves, Umbrellas, Ladies' and Gents' Underwear.

Men's Ready Made Clothing and Furnishings. The shopping public are respectfully invited to examine this enormous stock and comparer prices. Wekeep everything to be found in any first class werehouse in St John or Montreaf Don't send away for goods. Our merchandise is As Good and Prices Lower Yours very truly

SUTHERLAND & CREACHAN.