ANDRE THE MINSTREL.

It was in the good old days, not so long ago when measured by years, but ages as viewed from the present by the perspective of established change, the good old days when plantation life in the low country was in its age of gold. Morning was blooming out full and rosy, and the dew hung heavy on the tangled vapor and Cherokee rose, as the minstrel Andre Duval awoke and assumed a sitting posture.

He raised his eyes vigorously for a moment, with the unconscious grace of a young animal, looked about to enjoy his facilities, then, letting fall his small, curtout head on his knee, slumbered again.

Overhead the leaves of the magnolia were thick; the hedge behind him stood so tangled, thorny, full of flowers, the air, stirring gently, bore the smell of marsh plants and the fragrance of orange blossoms, a not unpleasing mixture. Everywhere the nesting birds were singing, the grass took wakefully, the starlings flirting.

Andre Duval looked himself over half unconsciously, half quizzically; his gray eyes twinkling with every patch on his coat and trousers, and concentrating finally at one on a somewhat rusty great toe protruding from a badly worn shoe. Beside him, in the grass, was his guitar, by his guitar. All night he had slept there very soundly, and now he felt mated, if not refreshed; hungry, too, as only a young, strong fellow can be after a prolonged fast.

Lately he had been in New Orleans, by by he scarcely knew how; getting on fairly well in a low way while his clothes had remained decent; long the time came for him to try the country, and it that failed himself, why! He was not of a temperament that weighs accurately. The future for-sakind him in particular for speculation; the past had no data that he could use. He had come from the southern hill country of France to Louisiana with some sort of dream in his brain, had landed without money, and, of course, had found nothing that he had expected to find. The real was the reverse of his ideal.

These were the days when New Orleans and the plantations of lower Louisiana were at the zenith of prosperity. Men recently knew how rich they were, now with they seem to care how they spent their money; sill a good for naught, shiftily dressed, with nothing but a guitar and a few songs to recommend him, might, if a trifle reserved and in a way proud, starve even then.

For a wanight Andre had tramped through the country, taking no note of directions, turning this way to evade a swamp, that way to find a place where a stream could be waded, and now and again lingering for a day or two at a plantation. Sometimes he got food at the negro cabins, sometimes at the mansions; but usually his bed was green earth, with only a tree for shelter. Luckily, the weather was fine.

After a fashion, Andre had engaged his leisurely pilgrimage, especially when he was tired. Never had he dreamed of such luxuriance of trees, shrubs, grass, woods, flowers; nor had his imagination ever suggested such fruitfulness as the plantations, the orange groves and the gardens promised to his eyes. And then the mansions! Tower, great, rambling, vine-covered, tree-shaded, gallery circled structures impressed him as the abodes of princes to exile. In pastoral conversing them, and constructed romances, in which the mediæval spirit was twined with all its ancient splendor.

On this portingee morning, so rosy, so dewy, so fragrant, Andre awoke with surprise that he had slept so late; much more he was annoyed to find that he was on the confines of a plantation, and near the greatest mansion that he had yet seen. Well! in the half light of early morning, just beyond the little field, a great roof, a heavy stack of chimneys, broad verandas and small paned windows, all half hidden in foliage and long moss, with great, gray tree boles showing through and gnarled branches reaching across. Still beyond all this a bayou glistened like silver studded with diamonds as the morn peeped over it. He raised his eye again and put upon his knee, the better to gaze at the beautiful picture. A dream had suffused his sleep during the night just gone, and its spell had not yet departed from his imagination. Surely yonder home was the house of which he had dreamed! Why, yes, there was the great gate with the monstrous piece to uphold it, and there was the front house by the bayou. Again he rubbed his eyes.

Being thus occupied, Andre Duval was ill prepared for the shock that just then came upon him in the form of a loud, authoritative, not stalled again his from behind with a hand "how-how-how-man!" Once he trembled, and was held down by the weight of the great, black, shaggy scoundrel. "What are here?"

Andre's nose and mouth were buried in the soil, ground so that he could scarcely breathe, much less cry out, and a sensation with a sharp knife was scrambling at the back of his neck while heavy paws pressed hard upon his outstretched arms.

"Ah! What have you there, Achille, all fallen? Hold, you wild! Come off, I say! Be dead! Be dead!"

Andre heard these exclamations given in a soft French voice, and presently French voice—but a firm and nearly one as well. The big teeth that had been ready to sink into his neck were removed in an instant, though the animal kept its place on his back.

"Get with you! Here, you rascal!"

A resounding kick followed by a whine brought Andre relief. He squirmed over and sat upright rubbing the earth from his face and feeling of his neck to find out if it were whole.

A handsome young man with a gun on his shoulder stood before him, and an enormous dog was slinking along beside the hedge.

"Who upon earth are you? What are you up to here? Inquired the young man, as he put his foot for sport, as if to assure while force for his astonishment, and gazed hard at Andre. His eyes softened as he spoke.

"I awoke a moment ago," said Andre, "and was preparing to make my toilet when your dog interfered. Seems to me that this is a pretty rude way of entering one's chamber."

"A thousand pardons," responded the other, "Monsieur must see that it was the merest accident."

He glanced over Andre's dilapidated habiliments and at the guitar case hard by.

The minstrel laughed, doffed his fragment of a hat and arose. Once erect he looked quite well, and presently assumed the king. His brown hair was curly and bright, with reddish lights shot through it, and on his face a pleasing sprightliness gave it soft, simpled expression. He picked up his guitar and slung its strap over his shoulder, at the same time handling a long, rude staff.

Again the young man with the gun looked him over from head to foot.

"Monsieur has not breakfasted yet I presume?" he presently said, with a light, graceful gesture.

"No I usually breakfast to morrow," responded Andre, returning the gesture with an increment of humorous suggestion.

"I monsieur will kindly honor me I should be glad to invite him to breakfast with me at my father's house yonder?"

"Oh, with deep pleasure, thank you, monsieur."

"Come, then."

"You are very kind, monsieur."

They strode side by side along the hedge till they came to an opening, then they crossed the little field to the great cabon door.

The sun was now well up in the east and shining gorgeously. Birds began came the longing tenses to worry the long tones on the quivering hedge and to make the fierce flash and curtle like the site of heavy air.

Andre looked on the scene and saw a slender girl standing on the step of a veranda in the dark shadows of the vine, she was dressed in a morning robe and had an unlike a tall, gaze flower. Instantly a wave of shame came over him. He stopped just in the gate.

"Come on, monsieur," said his companion.

"Oh, no," he stuttered, "I cannot, I am not—I—" He glanced down over his clothes.

"Do not think of that," urged the other in soft monotone, "it makes no difference. If monsieur is a little travel worn. That is rather but my little sister."

He glanced Andre's arm and led him, right along while he was speaking. The girl stood, her eyes fixed on Andre, their slender shoulders and soft set heads, their little bodies and lowered limbs manifesting almost perfect.

"We call you plus the Chateau d'Armand," said the young man to Andre's ear as they approached the veranda. "My name is Mathieu d'Armand, what name have you?"

"Andre Duval."

"Monsieur Duval, little sister, our sister, Mademoiselle d'Armand," said the young man, with graceful lightness and yet with dignity.

The girl curtsied sweetly, but there was a reserve in her manner in her eyes as she looked intently except, then over Andre's form. Her brother managed to poke under her arm and with his interpreted smiling, and from them, who caught the spirit of Mathieu's hospitality. "I be bad lad, "The poor fellow is starving," she could not help saying to her brother.

"Breakfast is waiting, I believe," she said, to prevent her brother's poke into the hall. "And you found no game this morning, brother mine?" she added to Mathieu.

"The dog captured one, Mademoiselle," said Andre, with a shrug and a contrite cast aside.

At this moment a magnificent parrot cried out from its perch on an under hanging perch:

"Vous ici! Vous ici! Un marouble! Ho! Ho! Ho!" (Comedie! A rogue!—Ho!)

"The bird discriminates with accuracy," added Andre.

Everybody laughed; it was impossible not to do it.

Mathieu held his gun on a backhorn rack and took Andre's battered hat and hung it beside his own; then said:

"Come this way, please."

They bowed to Mademoiselle Armand, and Andre followed his young host into a room where he was left to bathe the face and make ready for breakfast; a silent black boy standing by to serve him at need.

A few minutes later Mathieu came to inquire if he was ready, and they went together to the breakfast room.

As they were crossing the hall the parrot screamed out:

"Degrace, you rogue-rile, begone, quick! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

Andre Duval found himself in a house worth studying; it was a place to shatter the ice of the settler, the poet, the dreamer. Here, indeed, was more a provincial palace—a castle, castle, so to say—a crown chateau. It was a wooden structure of ample dimensions, built after the ancient design and finished in a rude way, but, yet in refined at every turn a solid taste and that refinement which comes of a long linked refined ancestry. The hall was lofty, with rafters, the massive wall pieces, the great dark stairs to the loft, the ancient pictures, the tapestries, the gorgeous hangings—a furnitureall these seemed to be steeped in the atmosphere of centuries. He remembered having seen such things during his childhood in France.

Andre followed his young host into the large, airy breakfast room, where he was presented to Madame and Monsieur d'Armand. The mother of the place was short, stoutly, dark, neat, gentle and winning in his manners, while madame, his wife, was tall, stately, reserved, though by no means lacking in affability. Mademoiselle Hortense, the daughter, sat opposite Andre at the table.

Somehow our vagabond forgot his tattered clothes and his hunger, for the whole of the pleasant chatter that followed. Monsieur he did not ever heartily for one who had looked as long. Time he did smack pastes to the vanishing dishes, his eyes, the hot coils and a goodly number of other handsome accomplishments, but he managed not to spoil his good name.

After breakfast the gentlemen had cigars, and then Andre was asked to stay. Of course he would not refuse, though his heart sinked at the thought of being in the presence of Mademoiselle Hortense d'Armand. He could scarcely trust himself to look at her, lest he speak, begin to sob all sorts of wild fancies through his heart. Foolish fellow! We thought to himself that to spend one hour in such company would be a reward for all the petulence he had endured since landing at New Orleans.

When eve he began to clear the troubles of his life, which, perhaps, he tried some old French songs. At least the effect was all that he could have wished for. His fear sudden showed tears in their eyes before he was done, and when he began to assume his tramp, and was thanking them for their generous and soothing kindness, it was Madame Hortense who suggested that a whole day of rest would be good for Monsieur Duval. All the rest of the household joined at once in this request, and so Andre could not for one day only, but for many days. He asked for writing materials, and scrawled a long epistle which he gave to Mathieu to post for him. It was addressed to Louis Vaumont, Due de Montpensier, Paris. This caused Mathieu to open his eyes and wonder why this strolling minstrel should be writing to so great a man as the Due de Montpensier. He showed the superscription to his parents and to his sister. Certainly it was a mystery.

Next morning a servant came into Andre's room with a great bundle of clothes and a note, on which was written:

"Monsieur must think to serve you until you can hear from home."

He could not refuse kindness coming in this way; to have done so would have sounded some one, perhaps all, of his generous entertainers. He may, moreover, have taken a half pathetic delight in going about the house, from hall to foot, the a gentleman and wear a change it made to his appearance. Mademoiselle Hortense, when she met him in the hall, looked at him with a sweet little smirk and blushed crimson. He was not less confused than she, and so they stood a moment in awkward silence, looking at each other and smiling as foolishly as two peasants would have done.

The weather continued fine, just warm enough to make the walking birds sing morning, evening and at intervals, all the night long. Andre did his part of the singing, too. You could have heard his voice with a sweet little tenor voice, when the breeze was right, over across the bayou.

"He must be a prince or at least a count in disguise," remarked Monsieur Armand to his wife.

"He certainly has a distinguished air," said Madame Armand.

"He can read a great deal; his language is very refined," added Mathieu.

Mademoiselle Hortense said nothing, but her face was flushed, and her heart made the blood sing in her veins. To the quiet and location of Chateau d'Armand, Andre Duval had lasting in a little site of life. The change was a definite one, affecting deeply and strongly every member of the household. As Andre's spirits rose, his early wit and large knowledge of the world revealed, his quick imagination and brightening brilliance, suddenly, or was natural, he found himself in love with Hortense, and he swore to the terrible reality of his case. Hortense found herself caught during to consider her lover with Fellow; He looked in upon his life, and hastily dropped himself. The joke of his temperament was removed, the sunshine the bright layers, the dusky old recesses, the whole world had shrivled into a lateral sort of a.

One morning the household awoke to discover a little letter that Andre Duval had left during the night. It was a great surprise, very disappointing, yet what could be done? They found at one and two in hopeless surrender to the silence and loneliness of their nobels and successful minstrel.

"Do not be surprised!" (Where is the regardless) scrawled the parent. "Do not be surprised! He, he, hence!"

Mademoiselle Hortense slipped away to her room and cried.

As it is said to the special glass, the day was cloudy and rainy, the great clouds that tenacity began to be full a free, steady rain, which lasted with scarcely an interruption for two weeks.

"What is to be done?" said of Chateau d'Armand seated monsieur meeting was the fact that Andre Duval had, in taking his departure, taken, left behind him the prospects chance that Andre gave to him and not gone away disgusted in the rage of his vagabondage. Doubtless the old parent had seen his fate in Andre's letter, by about the scoundrel and molding because he would not come back. Andre had was the wise old bird over to him, but it produced in the first impression that he wants to be called a engagement.

We who live in towns and cities, or in thickly settled regions, know nothing of the inter-isolation in which the dwelled on the great isolated plantations passed their lives. True, they had their chances now and again, and they went once in a rare a year to some place of resort, but their home life, monotone and picturesque as it was, stood as the measure of loneliness. Visitors did not come to such mansions within less than fifteen miles of Chateau d'Armand. The bayou was the highway. The only passerby was those on the bayou.

Long after the minstrel's departure there came a letter addressed to "M. Andre Duval, Vicomte de Vaudreuil, care of M. Mathieu d'Armand."

"He told me once to open any letter that might come when he was gone," said Mathieu.

So he broke the seal and found the following letter, accompanied by a letter of credit to a New Orleans bank for a large sum:

"MY DEAR NEPHEW—It is charming news to me that you are locally ashamed of your self who we, who are you are serious to be your own country. Our good you diverse another. Permit me, as your great-fan, to guide to the home room, and it is time for your estate awaits you. I take pleasure in enclosing you the little money, you have really finished your travels, come back and be a man to stay, and I will be glad now to remain your devoted uncle, Vicomte de Vaudreuil."

Mathieu read this epistle aloud, standing in the midst of the assembled household. They all listened in breathless silence, Hortense as pale as a ghost.

It was early summer and the hall stood open, the wind pouring through in a strong, cool current.

"Vicomte Vaudreuil! Le marouble! Ho! Ho! Ho-a-ah!"

They all turned about as the parrot screamed, and there on the threshold, ragged, travel worn, bronzed, stood Andre Duval, his old guitar slung at his side, a half jaunty smile beaming through his embarrassment and humility.

Hortense cried out and started as if to run to him; but she checked herself, turned quite trembling and sat down in a chair limp and helpless.

Mathieu went to meet him with the letter in his hand.

"Welcome, Monsieur the Vicomte; we are right glad to see you back," he exclaimed right cordially.

Andre started, gazed hard at Mathieu, and a great color gathered in his face, a cloud that was not of surprise, from his dress, everything that bears a man's inner in a moment when a breath may mean life or death.

"I have a glorious letter for you. I'm sorry I opened it, but you were"——

Andre interrupted him by tackling forward and grasping the letter in his hand. The poor fellow could not hold up under this sudden pressure of excitement.

They bore him to a bed and reported to everyone and the consequent relating, he was soon recovered. A long illness followed, through which he was nursed tender solicitude by Hortense, who, in a sense all over, when he was well enough to come out of his room and begin to say dull things and hum the old tunes—well, it is the good old story. He was in love and for a moment if Hortense was out of his sight, and before he departed from Chateau d'Armand there was a betrothal, and he left his old guitar as a pledge.

The wedding took place at Andre the following winter, the whole Armand family migrating thither for the occasion.

In a certain picturesque old residence in New Orleans I was shown the portraits, painted on panels of tulip wood, of the Vicomte and Vicomtesse Andre Duval, the wife, though quite old, as long noble, Mesdame Thompson in New York Ledger.

Bible Written in Shorthand.

There are many curious copies of the Bible in the various collections of Europe and America, but it is doubtful if there is a copy of the one belonging to the R. T. Whitney, of London. This old copy of the Holy Writ is in shorthand characters and is complete throughout.—St. Louis Republic.

The shah of Persia, the sultan of Turkey and his high mightiness the caliph of Zanzibar have joined with the government of Europe in inviting the United States to help suppress the African slave, firearm and liquor trade. This is an opportunity not to be lost. It has always been thrown into the teeth of this country that it proved an utterly selfish policy, keeping to itself and getting rich, not caring whether other people lived or died. We ought to join with other nations in the convention to suppress the trade in firearms, liquor and slaves in the Dark continent. By this means and by others we shall get at least the name of having an interest in Africa. It may be the means of our obtaining a real interest there. There is wealth untold in this new world, only waiting for the trader and developer to come and pick it up. Our home territory is growing smaller and smaller, and soon we shall be in real need of new commercial worlds to conquer. Why should we not go in and get our share of the plums to be gathered in Africa? We shall be sorry for it if we do not.

Books, every one is well aware, may and build their books with much impunity that the conclusions of the Scotch geologist or in "times caring nothin' for aria o' parliament," was fully justified by the manner in which they disregard the state of the thermometer and the alteration of "style."

NABE'S GRANDAL.

"The world is round as we know it,
And there is room for all to make it."
And why not, pray, should we make it?
This was the sentiment of an old sailor to his grandchild Nabe. And such a Nabe! Such a grandfather! Such a world! Such a sailor! Such a sentiment! Such a grandchild! Such a world! Such a sailor! Such a sentiment! Such a grandchild! Such a world! Such a sailor! Such a sentiment! Such a grandchild