

The Outsider as Insider

IMPRESSIONS

Hearn was by profession a journalist, but most "news" simply bored him. During a decade in Cincinnati he specialized in covering the most brutal and squalid sides of local life, passing stern judgments on what the locals had come to accept as normal. In the process he developed a style as lurid as his subject matter.

In Louisiana he underwent a change of heart. Deeply drawn to this unfamiliar world, he strove to present it with sympathy and love. To readers around the country he was now an insider, describing and explaining what they could barely imagine. In the process, he defined many of the themes that dominate subsequent writings on New Orleans. Later, he made good use of this reportorial style, which might be called "affectionate impressionism," in his landmark writings on Japan.

Memphis to New Orleans

NOVEMBER 14, 1877.

... One leaves Memphis with little regret, despite those lovely sunsets, for rain and storms are more frequent than fine days. The day of my departure I watched the cottonboats being loaded, being myself upon a cottonboat; and the sight, at first novel, became actually painful as the afternoon waned and the shadows of the steamboat chimneys lengthened on the levee. Cotton, cotton, cotton,—thump, thump, thump,—bump,

bump, bump; until everything seemed a mass of bagging and iron bands, blotched with white, and one felt as if under the influence of a cotton nightmare. Just when the boat was leaving the levee, it suddenly occurred to me that the color of the face of the bluffs and the color of the new cotton bales piled along the slope were almost precisely the same; and the irregularly broken brownness of the bluffs themselves helped out the fancy that Memphis was actually built upon bales of cotton. Allegorically speaking, this is strictly true.

—I once thought when sailing up the Ohio one bright Northern summer that the world held nothing more beautiful than the scenery of the Beautiful River,—those voluptuous hills with their sweet feminine curves, the elfin gold of that summer haze, and the pale emerald of the river's verdure-reflecting breast. But even the loveliness of the Ohio seemed faded, and the Northern sky-blue palely cold, like the tint of iceberg pinnacles, when I beheld for the first time the splendor of the Mississippi.

"You must come on deck early to-morrow," said the kind Captain of the *Thompson Dean*; "we are entering the Sugar Country."

So I saw the sun rise over the cane fields of Louisiana.

It rose with a splendor that recalled the manner of its setting at Memphis, but of another color;—an auroral flush of pale gold and pale green bloomed over the long fringe of cottonwood and cypress trees, and broadened and lengthened half way round the brightening world. The glow seemed tropical, with the deep green of the trees sharply cutting against it; and one naturally looked for the feathery crests of cocoa-nut palms. Then the day broke gently and slowly,—a day too vast for a rapid dawn,—a day that seemed deep as Space. I thought our Northern sky narrow and cramped as a vaulted church-roof beside that sky,—a sky so softly beautiful, so purely clear in its immensity, that it made one dream of the tenderness of a woman's eyes made infinite.

And the giant river broadened to a mile,—smooth as a mirror, still and profound as a mountain lake. Between the vastness of the sky and the vastness of the stream, we seemed moving suspended in the midst of day, with only a long, narrow tongue of land on either side breaking the brightness. Yet the horizon never became wholly blue. The green-golden glow lived there all through the day; and it was brightest in the south. It was so tropical, that glow;—it seemed of the Pacific, a glow that forms a background to the sight of lagoons and coral reefs and "lands where it is always afternoon."

Below this glow gleamed another golden green, the glory of the waving cane fields beyond the trees. Huge sugar mills were breathing white and black clouds into the sky, as they masticated their mighty meal; and the smell of saccharine sweetness floated to us from either shore. Then we glided by miles of cotton-fields with their fluttering white bolls; and by the mouths of bayous;—past swamps dark with cypress gloom, where the gray alligator dwells, and the gray Spanish moss hangs in elfish festoons from ancient trees;—past orange-trees and live-oaks, pecans and cottonwoods and broad-leaved bananas; while the green of the landscape ever varied, from a green so dark that it seemed tinged with blue to an emerald so bright that it seemed shot through with gold. The magnificent old mansions of the Southern planters, built after a generous fashion unknown in the North, with broad verandas and deliciously cool porches, and all painted white or perhaps a pale yellow, looked out grandly across the water from the hearts of shadowy groves; and, like villages of a hundred cottages, the negro quarters dotted the verdant face of the plantation with far-gleaming points of snowy whiteness.

And still that wondrous glow brightened in the south, like a far-off reflection of sunlight on the Spanish Main.

—"But it does not look now as it used to in the old slave days," said the pilot as he turned the great wheel. "The swamps were drained, and the plantations were not overgrown with cottonwood; and somehow or other the banks usen't to cave in then as they do now."

I saw, indeed, signs of sad ruin on the face of the great plantations; there were splendid houses crumbling to decay, and whole towns of tenantless cabins; estates of immense extent were lying almost untilled, or with only a few acres under cultivation; and the vigorous cottonwood trees had shot up in whole forests over fields once made fertile by the labor of ten thousand slaves. The scene was not without its melancholy; it seemed tinged by the reflection of a glory passed away—the glory of wealth, and the magnificence of wealth; of riches, and the luxury of riches.

O, fair paradise of the South, if still so lovely in thy ruin, what must thou have been in the great day of thy greatest glory!

White steamboats, heavily panting under their loads of cotton, came toiling by, and calling out to us wild greeting long and shrill, until the pilot opened the lips of our giant boat, and her mighty challenge awoke a thousand phantom voices along the winding shore. Red sank the sun in a sea of fire, and bronze-hued clouds piled up against the light like fairy is-

lands in a sea of glory, such as were seen, perhaps, by the Adelantado of the Seven Cities.

"Those are not real clouds," said the pilot, turning to the west, his face aglow with the yellow light. "Those are only smoke clouds rising from the sugar-mills of Louisiana, and drifting with the evening wind."

The daylight died away, and the stars came out, but that warm glow in the southern horizon only paled, so that it seemed a little further off. The river broadened till it looked with the tropical verdure of its banks like the Ganges, until at last there loomed up a vast line of shadows, dotted with points of light, and through a forest of masts and a host of phantom-white river boats and a wilderness of chimneys the *Thompson Dean*, singing her cheery challenge, steamed up to the mighty levee of New Orleans.

At the Gate of the Tropics

NEW ORLEANS, NOVEMBER 19, 1877.

Eighteen miles of levee! London, with all the gloomy vastness of her docks, and her "river of the ten thousand masts," can offer no spectacle of traffic so picturesquely attractive and so varied in its attraction.

In the center of this enormous crescent line of wharves and piers lie the great Sugar and Cotton Landings, with their millions of tons of freight newly unshipped, their swarms of swarthy stevedores, their innumerable wagons and beasts of burden. Above the line of depot and storehouse roofs, stretching southward, rises the rolling smoke of the cotton-press furnaces. Facing the Sugar Landing, stretching northward, extend a line of immense sugar sheds, with roofs picturesquely-peaked, Sierra-wise. Below, along the wooden levee, a hundred river boats have landed without jostling, and the smoky breath of innumerable chimneys floats, upward-eddying, into the overarching blue. Here one sees a comely steamer from the Ohio lying at the landing, still panting, after its long run of a thousand miles; there a vast Mississippi boat lies groaning, with her cargo of seven thousand bales, awaiting relief by a legion of longshoremen. At intervals other vessels arrive, some, like mountains of floating cotton, their white sides hidden by brown ramparts of bales built up to the smoke-

stacks; some deeply freighted with the sweet produce of the cane fields. Black tugs rush noisily hither and thither, like ugly water-goblins seeking strong work to do; and brightly-painted luggers, from the lower coasts,—from the oyster beds and the fruit tree groves—skim over the wrinkled water, some bearing fragrant freight of golden oranges, and pomegranates, and bananas richly ripe; some bringing fishy dainties from the sea. Ocean steamers are resting their levitation sides at the Southern piers, and either way, along the far-curving lines of wharves, deep-sea ships lie silently marshaled, their pale wings folded in motionless rest. There are barks and brigs, schooners and brigantines, frigates and merchantmen, of all tonnages—ships of light and graceful build, from the Spanish Main; deep-bellied steamers, with East Indian names, that have been to Calcutta and Bombay; strong-bodied vessels from Norway and all the Scandinavian ports; tight-looking packets from English ports; traders under German, Dutch, Italian, French, and Spanish flags; barks from the Mediterranean; shapely craft from West Indian harbors. . . .

—It is not an easy thing to describe one's first impression of New Orleans; for while it actually resembles no other city upon the face of the earth, yet it recalls vague memories of a hundred cities. It owns suggestions of towns in Italy, and in Spain, of cities in England and in Germany, of seaports in the Mediterranean, and of seaports in the tropics. Canal street, with its grand breadth and imposing façades, gives one recollections of London and Oxford street and Regent street; there are memories of Havre and Marseilles to be obtained from the Old French Quarter; there are buildings in Jackson Square which remind one of Spanish-American travel. I fancy that the power of fascination which New Orleans exercises upon foreigners is due no less to this peculiar characteristic than to the tropical beauty of the city itself. Whencesoever the traveler may have come, he may find in the Crescent City some memory of his home—some recollection of his Fatherland—some remembrance of something he loves. . . .

I find much to gratify an artist's eye in this quaint, curious, crooked French Quarter, with its narrow streets and its houses painted in light tints of yellow, green, and sometimes even blue. Neutral tints are common; but there are a great many buildings that can not have been painted for years, and which look neglected and dilapidated as well as antiquated. Solid wooden shutters, painted a bright grass-green, and relieved

by walls painted chocolate color, or tinted yellow, have a pretty effect, and suggest many memories of old France. Few houses in the quarter are without them. . . .

Most of the finer public buildings must have been erected at a time when expense was the least consideration in the construction of an edifice. They are generously and beautifully built; yet it is sad to see that many of them are falling into decay. Especially is this the case in regard to the old St. Louis Hotel—now the State House—with its splendid dome, frescoed by Canova, and its grand halls. To repair it would now require an outlay of hundreds of thousands. It has been outraged in a manner worthy of Vandals; soldiers have been barracked in it; mould and damp have written prophecies of ruin within it. Hither it was that the great planters of the South dwelt in the old days when they visited New Orleans, and under their rich patronage the hotel prospered well, till the war swept away their wealth, and, for a time at least, ruined New Orleans. I doubt if any of the great hotels here are now doing well.

The St. Charles, with its noble Greek façade, is the handsomest of these. From the entrance of the rotunda looking outward and upward at the vast Corinthian columns, with their snowy fluted shafts and rich capitals, their antique lines of beauty, their harmonious relation to each other, the sight is magnificent. I find a number of noble Greek façades in the city, the City Hall, the Methodist Church, on Carondelet street, and other structures I might name, are beautiful, and seem to illumine the streets with their white splendor. This elegant, gracious architecture appears adapted to this sky and this sunny clime; and, indeed, it was under almost such a sky and such a sun that the Greek architecture was born.

But, after all, the glory of the city is in her Southern homes and gardens. One can not do justice to their beauty. The streets broaden there; the side-paths are bordered with verdant sod as soft and thick as velvet and overshadowed with magnolias; the houses, mostly built in Renaissance style, are embowered in fruit-bearing trees and evergreen gardens, where statues and fountains gleam through thick shrubbery, cunningly trimmed into fantastic forms. Orange and fig trees; bananas and palms; magnolias and myrtles; cypresses and cedars; broad-leaved, monstrous-flowering plants in antique urns; herbs with leaves shaped like ancient Greek sword-blades, and edged with yellow. . . . And you can walk through this paradise hour after hour, mile after mile; and the air only becomes yet more fra-

grant and the orange trees more heavily freighted with golden fruit, and the gardens more and more beautiful, as you proceed southwardly. . . .

NOVEMBER 20.

I have just witnessed a terrible exhibition of the power of the machinery. Friends had advised me to visit the huge cotton press at the Cotton Landing, and I spent several hours in watching its operation. Excepting, perhaps, some of the monster cotton presses of India, it is said to be the most powerful in the world; but the East Indian presses box the cotton instead of baling it, with enormous loss of time. This "Champion" press at the New Orleans Levee weighs, with all its attachments, upwards of three thousand tons, and exerts the enormous pressure of four million pounds upon the bales placed in it. When I first arrived at the gate of the building where the machinery is placed, they were loading the newly pressed bales upon drays—bales much smaller than the ordinary plantation bales. I was considerably surprised to see three or four negroes straining with all their might to roll one of these bales; but I was not then aware that each of the packages of cotton before me weighed upward of *one thousand pounds*. . . .

The spectacle of this colossal press in motion is really terrific. It is like a nightmare of iron and brass. It does not press downward, but upward. It is not a press as we understand the term generally, but an enormous mouth of metal which seizes the bale and crushes it in its teeth. The machine did not give me the idea of a machine, it seemed rather some vast, black genie, buried up to his neck in the earth by the will of Soliman, the pre-Adamite Sultan.

Fancy a monstrous head of living iron and brass, fifty feet high from its junction with the ground, having pointed gaps in its face like gothic eyes, a mouth five feet wide, opening six feet from the mastodon teeth in the lower jaw to the mastodon teeth in the upper jaw. The lower jaw alone moves, as in living beings, and it is worked by two vast iron tendons, long and thick and solid as church pillars. The surface of this lower jaw is equivalent to six square feet.

The more I looked at the thing, the more I felt as though its prodigious anatomy had been studied after the anatomy of some extinct animal,—the way those jaws worked, the manner in which those muscles moved.

Men rolled a cotton bale to the mouth of the monster. The jaws opened with a low roar, and so remained. The lower jaw had descended to a level with the platform on which the bale was lying. It was an immense plantation bale. Two black men rolled it into the yawning mouth. The titan muscles contracted, and the jaw closed, silently, steadily, swiftly. The bale flattened, flattened, flattened—down to sixteen inches, twelve inches, eight inches, five inches. Positively less than five inches! I thought it was going to disappear altogether. But after crushing it beyond five inches the jaws remained stationary and the monster growled like rumbling thunder. I thought the machine began to look as hideous as one of those horrible, yawning heads which formed the gates of the *teocallis* at Palenque, and through whose awful jaws the sacrificial victims passed. . . .

—Do you remember that charming little story, “Père Antoine’s Date-Palm,” written by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and published in the same volume with “Marjorie Daw” and other tales?

Père Antoine was a good old French priest, who lived and died in New Orleans. As a boy he had conceived a strong friendship for a fellow student of about his own age, who, in after years, sailed to some tropical island in the Southern Seas, and wedded some darkly beautiful woman, graceful and shapely and tall as a feathery palm. Père Antoine wrote often to his friend, and their friendship strengthened with the years, until death dissolved it. The young colonist died, and his beautiful wife also passed from the world; but they left a little daughter for some one to take care of.

The good priest, of course, took care of her, and brought her up at New Orleans. And she grew up graceful and comely as her mother, with all the wild beauty of the South. But the child could not forget the glory of the tropics, the bright lagoon, the white-crested sea roaring over the coral reef, the royal green of the waving palms, and the beauty of the golden-feathered birds that chattered among them.

So she pined for the tall palms and the bright sea and the wild reef, until there came upon her that strange homesickness which is death; and still dreaming of the beautiful palms, she gradually passed into that great sleep which is dreamless. And she was buried by Père Antoine near his own home.

By and by, above the little mound there suddenly came a gleam of green; and mysteriously, slowly, beautifully, there grew up towering in tropical grace above the grave, a princely palm. And the old priest knew that it had grown from the heart of the dead child.

So the years passed by, and the roaring city grew up about the priest’s home and the palm tree, trying to push Père Antoine off his land. But he would not be moved. They piled up gold upon his door-steps and he laughed at them; they went to law with him and he beat them all; and, at last, dying, he passed away true to his trust; for the man who cuts down that palm tree loses the land that it grows upon.

“And there it stands,” says the Poet, “in the narrow, dingy street, a beautiful dreamy stranger, an exquisite foreign lady, whose grace is a joy to the eye, the incense of whose breath makes the air enamored. May the hand wither that touches her ungently!”

Now I was desirous above all things to visit the palm made famous by this charming legend, and I spent several days in seeking it. I visited the neighborhood of the old *Place d’Armes*—now Jackson Square—and could find no trace of it; then I visited the southern quarter of the city, with its numberless gardens, and I sought for the palm among groves of orange-trees overloaded with their golden fruit, amid broad-leaved bananas, and dark cypresses, and fragrant magnolias and tropical trees of which I did not know the names. Then I found many date-palms. Some were quite young, with their splendid crest of leafy plumes scarcely two feet above the ground; others stood up to a height of thirty or forty feet. Whenever I saw a tall palm, I rang the doorbell and asked if that was Père Antoine’s date-palm. Alas! Nobody had ever heard of the Père Antoine.

Then I visited the ancient cathedral, founded by the pious Don André Almonaster, Regidor of New Orleans, one hundred and fifty years ago; and I asked the old French priest whether they had ever heard of the Père Antoine. And he answered me that they knew him not, after having searched the ancient archives of the ancient Spanish cathedral.

Once I found a magnificent palm, loaded with dates, in a garden on St. Charles street, so graceful that I felt the full beauty of Solomon’s simile as I had never felt it before:

“*Thy stature is like to a palm tree.*”

I rang the bell and made inquiry concerning the age of the tree. It was but twenty years old; and I went forth discouraged.

At last, to my exceeding joy, I found an informant in the person of a good-natured old gentleman, who keeps a quaint bookstore in Commercial Place. The tree was indeed growing, he said, in New Orleans street, near the French Cathedral, and not far from Congo Square; but there were many legends concerning it. Some said it had been planted over the

grave of some Turk or Moor,—perhaps a fierce corsair from Algiers or Tunis,—who died while sailing up the Mississippi, and was buried on its moist shores. But it was not at all like the other palm trees in the city, nor did it seem to him to be a date-palm. It was a real Oriental palm: yea, in sooth, such a palm as Solomon spake of in his Love-song of Love-songs.

"I said, I will go up to the palm tree; I will take hold of the boughs thereof."

... I found it standing in beautiful loneliness in the center of a dingy wood-shed, on the north side of Orleans street, towering about forty feet above the rickety plank fence of the yard. The gateway was open, and a sign swung above it bearing the name "M. Michel." I walked in and went up to the palm tree. A laborer was sawing wood in the back shed, and I saw through the windows of the little cottage by the gate a family at dinner. I knocked at the cottage door, and a beautiful Creole woman opened it.

"May I ask, Madame, whether this palm tree was truly planted by the Père Antoine?"

"Ah, Monsieur, there are many droll stories which they relate of that tree. There are folks who say that a young girl was interred there, and it is also said that a Sultan was buried under that tree—or the son of a Sultan. And there are also some who say that a priest planted it."

"Was it the Père Antoine, Madame?"

"I do not know, Monsieur. There are people also who say that it was planted here by Indians from Florida. But I do not know whether such trees grow from Florida, I have never seen any other palm tree like it. It is not a date-palm. It flowers every year, with beautiful yellow blossoms the color of straw, and the blossoms hang down in pretty curves. Oh, it is very graceful! Sometimes it bears fruit,—a kind of oily fruit, but not dates. I am told they make oil from the fruit of such palms."

I thought it looked so sad, that beautiful tree, in the dusty wood-yard, with no living green thing near it. As its bright verdant leaves waved against the blue above, one could not but pity it as one would pity some being, fair and feminine and friendless in a strange land. "*Oh, c'est bien gracieux,*" murmured the handsome Creole lady.

"It is true, Madame, that the owner of the land loses it if he cuts down the tree?"

"*Mais oui!* But the proprietors of the ground have always respected the tree, because it is so old, so very old!"

Then I found the proprietor of the land, and he told me that when the French troops first arrived in this part of the country they noticed that

tree. "Why," I exclaimed, "that must have been in the reign of Louis XIV!" "It was in 1679, I believe," he answered. As for the Père Antoine, he had never heard of him. Neither had he heard of Thomas Bailey Aldrich. So that I departed, mourning for my dead faith in a romance which was beautiful.

The City of the South-

NEW ORLEANS, NOVEMBER 29, 1877.

I paid a good deal of attention to the old Spanish Cathedral here, founded by Don André Almonaster, Regidor and Álferez-Real of his Most Catholic Majesty. It is called the oldest church in the country, excepting one, I believe, in St. Augustine, Florida; and it is now always spoken of as the French Cathedral. But I was terribly disappointed about it. It is not now the same Cathedral that the Spanish Regidor built. Don André did not build for the centuries; and one day his church-towers crumbled down into the Plaza, and the whole Cathedral had to be pulled down and reconstructed. It was reconstructed Frenchily, and has lost its Spanish features.

You may still find those features preserved in certain old prints that hang, yellow with age and spotted with fly-specks, in the offices of certain ancient Notaries of the French Quarter; and you will find that Don André built the cathedral after that curiously mixed, but not unimposing style that characterizes the old cathedrals of Spanish-America. It had towers with Roman-arched windows, and cupolas of brick; and it looked very picturesque and quaint. Now it looks quaint enough, but less picturesque. I observed that the clock-face was broken to pieces, and that several of the pieces had been lost; and I supposed they do not wish to mend it, lest they should impair the venerable look of the façade—the yellow façade, the triple-pointed façade. And the beauty of the thing is enhanced by the fact that on either side stands one of the oldest-looking structures one could wish to see—buildings nearly two hundred years old, formerly called the "Mairie" and the "Palais-de-Justice." This Palais-de-Justice, or, in Spanish, *casa curial*, was also built, they say, by Don Almonaster, and is still the Courthouse of New Orleans. Both buildings have ponderous piazzas under the second story, supported by thickset Roman arches.

But the French Cathedral still contains two venerable objects of interest—two ancient tombs. One is the tomb of Don Almonaster; the other is the family tomb of the noble French family De Marigny de Mandeville, ante-revolutionary, aristocrats all, who may have strutted in those picturesque costumes we are familiar with in the paintings of the period; who belonged in the age in which gentlemen bowed and took snuff with an ineffable grace which this uncultivated generation are powerless to conceive of.

Ancient, in good sooth, is the tomb of Don André Almonaster. It is marked by a great marble slab, flush with the church pavement, and situated opposite the side altar of the southern aisle. Benches are placed over it. The feet of more than four generations of worshipers have obliterated the carven helmet with its knightly plumes, and blotted out the noble armorial bearings of the carven shield. Only their outline is dimly visible; but the inscription, deeply cut, remains.

... I was talking the other day with an old gentleman who has long been a resident of New Orleans. ... I asked him why it was that the early French colonists had chosen the pelican for the arms of Louisiana. "It was probably suggested to them," he replied, "by the fact that pelicans were so common in the country; and the pretty fallacy about the bird's devotion to its young made it seem a still more appropriate emblem for so fertile and bountiful a land as this. I suppose you know the arms were changed."

"No, sir," I replied, "I did not hear of it. Who could have had the bad taste to change them?"

"Why, the Radical carpet-baggers and scallawags, of course. Nobody else would have done such a thing. Do you know why they did it? Because, sir, those arms were a perpetual sarcasm upon their scoundrelism—a standing rebuke to their thievery. The pelican had ceased to feed its young with its own blood; its blood was drained by the vultures who came down here to prey upon Louisiana. The mother State was no longer able to feed her own young, because the thieves and carpet-baggers had robbed her of her very life-blood. So the thieves had a new seal made. The pelican was no longer represented as feeding her young with her blood; but the young were represented alone in the nest, and the mother pelican *coming from a distance* with something in her mouth. If you see some of the bonds issued in Warmoth's time, you will see how the arms were changed."

"But now they have been restored, have they not?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; now we have some reform and honesty in the State and Municipal Governments; and the Pelican, thank God, is again able to feed her young."

New Orleans has long been celebrated for the beauty of her women, and most deservedly so, I think. It is not, however, their comeliness of feature that especially impresses the stranger; it is their grace; it is that supple shapeliness which the French term *svetless*, and for which the English tongue has no word. The opaline skin, the sun-golden hair of Northern beauty are seldom visible here; it is the rich, dark beauty of the Spanish and French types that one finds in New Orleans. A comely Creole woman's figure will often impress one as a startling realization of the Greek ideal of grace,—a statue by Lysippus animated and garbed—a living Venus of flushed bronze. This elegant, close-embracing costume now in fashion—the only modern dress, surely, that Cytherea would acknowledge well becoming a graceful woman—is admirably adapted to such figures. I have never seen the long dresses—made to be held up while walking, so as to show a gleam of snowy linen—so perfectly worn and perfectly managed as by the ladies who promenade Canal street of a sunny afternoon. And their robes make the air odorous as they pass, by the exquisite perfume of the South, the breath of orange flowers. I can not say I think beauty of feature a common gift of the women of New Orleans; indeed, I think it a rare one, comparatively speaking; but when one does find it, he straightway dreams of Titian and Veronese and Tintoretto.

I find that a large proportion of the lodging houses here are kept by colored women. Especially is this the case in the French Quarter; and all these colored concierges speak both French and English. Their English, however, is often deficient, and is invested with the oddest French accent imaginable. Somehow or other the French language sounds to me far more natural than our own in a black mouth; and it seems to be spoken by the blacks much better than English. It has been often observed that the negro acquires Spanish with facility. Southern tongues flow melodiously from his lips, being musically akin to the many-voweled languages of Africa. The *th's* and *thr's*, the difficult diphthongs and guttural *rr's* of English and German pronunciation have a certain rude Northern strength beyond the power of Ethiopian lips to master. French is barren of rugged sounds; and it is common to hear these Southern negroes, with all the "politenesses" and "tendernesses" of which the sweet, smooth language is capa-

ble. The day after my arrival in the city I must have examined twenty-five or thirty furnished rooms offered for rent by colored housekeepers, and it was very pleasant to hear them speaking the speech of their old masters. . . .

Yesterday evening, the first time for ten years, I heard again that sweetest of all dialects, the Creole of the Antilles. I had first heard it spoken in England by the children of an English family from Trinidad, who were visiting relatives in the mother country, and I could never forget its melody. In Martinique and elsewhere it has almost become a written dialect; the school children used to study the "Creole Catechism," and priests used to preach to their congregations in Creole. You can not help falling in love with it after having once heard it spoken by young lips, unless indeed you have no poetry in your composition, no music in your soul. It is the most liquid, mellow, languid language in the world. It is especially a language for love-making. It sounds like pretty baby-talk; it woos like the cooing of a dove. It seems to be a mixture of French, a little Spanish, and West African dialects—those negro tongues that are voluminous with vowels. You can imagine how smooth it is from the fact that in West Indian Creole the letter "r" is never pronounced; and the Europeans of the Indies complain that once their children have learned to speak Creole, it is hard to teach them to pronounce any other language correctly. They *will* say "b'ed" for bread, and "t'ed" for thread. So that it is a sort of wopsy-popsy ootsy-tootsy language.

The patois of Louisiana is not nearly so soft. It is simply corrupted French, and when written, a Frenchman can understand a good deal of it, though he could hardly understand it when spoken. . . .

—If this be not the cosmopolitan city of the world, it is certainly the cosmopolitan city of the Americas. While standing in the bar-room of the St. Charles Hotel recently, where the auction sales of real estate are held, a friend pointed out to me foreigners from almost all parts of the world. I saw Herzegovinians, Cubans, Spanish-Americans, Italians, Englishmen, old-country French and Creole French, Portuguese, Greeks from the Levant, Russians, Canadians, Brazilians. We were a little party of four at the time, and within the space of twenty minutes I heard my three Southern friends converse with business acquaintances in the following languages: French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Modern Greek. I thought it a good example of the cosmopolitan character of New Orleans. . . .

There are many Greeks, sailors and laborers, in New Orleans, but I can not say that they inspire one with dreams of Athens or of Corinth, of Pana-

thenaic processions or Panhellenic games. Their faces are not numismatic; their forms are not athletic. Sometimes you can discern a something National about a Greek steamboatman—a something characteristic which distinguishes him from the equally swarthy Italian, Spaniard, "Dago." But that something is not of antiquity; it is not inspirational. *It is Byzantine!* And one is apt to dislike it. It reminds me of Taine's merciless criticism of the faces of Byzantine art. But I have seen a few rare Hellenic types here, and among these some beautiful Romaic girls,—maidens with faces to remind you of the gracious vase-paintings of antiquity.

—I must tell you a New Orleans ghost-story which I have just heard. In these days ghosts have almost lost the power to interest us, for we have become too familiar with their cloudy faces, and familiarity begetteth contempt. An original ghost is a luxury, and a rare luxury at that. Now I think this one is unique enough to excuse me for presuming to relate it.

There was an old house on Melpomene street which nobody could live in. Many good folk had attempted to take up their residence in it, but none ever dwelt there more than one night. Sometimes people would send their furniture there in the morning and have the place fitted up, only to find everything outraged and violently upset in the afternoon. Carpets had been torn from the floor and stuffed up the chimney, or flung into the center of the room in an elfish shape, mockingly suggestive of a corpse with its hands crossed. Invisible footsteps shook the house with thundering tread, and bolted doors opened mysteriously at the touch of viewless hands. As the years flitted by the Goblin of Decay added himself to the number of the Haunters; the walls crumbled, and the floors yielded, and grass, livid and ghastly-looking grass, forced its pale way between the chinks of the planks in the parlor. The windows fell into ruin, and the wind entered freely to play with the ghosts, and cried weirdly in the vacant rooms. At last the police authorities resolved to solve the mystery of the house.

Stephen Leary was then Chief of Police. He visited the house one evening, accompanied by a picked detachment of six men, all armed with double-barreled shot-guns double-shotted. When the seven entered the crumbling building it was twilight. The chief ordered the detachment to form a hollow square in the middle of the old parlor, facing outward, and he himself filled the center of the square, lest the ghost might arise in the midst and seize every man by the back of the neck at the same time.

"Now," quoth he, "whencesoever it may approach we can blow it back to h— without hurting each other." And the hollow square remained stationary in the position of "ready."

Then the clocks commenced to strike the hours. There seemed to be at least a hundred clocks within hearing,— each one a little faster or a little slower than the rest. They told the time regularly in a hundred different keys, till it became "the dead waste and middle of the night." One after another, all the hundred clocks struck the hour of twelve. Then a vast and awful silence fell. The seven men brought up their muskets to "Present," and stared wildly in seven different directions.

Suddenly a gust of wind blew the light out; and they heard It coming;— an invisible and irresistible force seemed to burst up the flooring under the feet of the policemen;— *and each one simultaneously felt himself seized from below and violently flung against the ceiling. . . .*

And yet the city would not pay the bills of the seven doctors who attended the faithful men thus grievously injured "while in the discharge of their duty."

The Streets

. . . New Orleans, alone of American cities, has preserved all the romance of its earlier days in the titles of its streets, and with a simple directory one can recall the entire history of the French and Spanish dominion. Having changed its ownership no less than five times, having passed under so many masters, having witnessed such vicissitudes of fortune, New Orleans has a history full of incident and romance, and this it tells in its street nomenclature.

The old *carré* or parallelogram of the original city still preserves the names given by Le Blond de la Tour, who laid it out. There have been few changes here. The rue de l'Arsenal, Arsenal street, has given way to the rue des Ursulines, named in honor of the Ursuline nuns, who erected their convent here a century and a half ago. The rue des Quartiers, Barracks street, and the rue de l'Hôpital, Hospital street, are titles given to unnamed streets, because the government barracks and hospital were erected on them. Similarly the rue de la Douane, or Customhouse street, received its title, not from the massive granite customhouse

that now stands there, but from the old wooden building, devoted to the same purpose, erected by the Spaniards a century and a quarter before. The boundary streets of the city, which marked the line of the old wall, all bear military titles referring to the old fortifications. Esplanade street was where the troops drilled; Rampart, rue des Remparts, marks, like the boulevards of Paris, the destroyed walls; while Canal street was the old fosse or canal which surrounded the city and which was continued as a drainage canal to the lake, and filled up only a few years ago.

Of the old streets only two have disappeared, *rûe de l'Arsenal* into *Ursulines*, and *rue de Condé* into *Chartres*.

There have been some few corruptions in the old names. The *rue de Dauphiné*, named after the province of Dauphiny, in France, has dropped the accent on the *e*, and become simply *Dauphine* (pronounced *Daupheen*) street, as if it were named after the Dauphin's wife. The street named in honor of the Duc du Maine has got the preposition for ever mixed with the noun, and is, and will be ever, *Dumaine*, instead of *Maine* street.

In naming the streets of the city as it grew beyond its original boundaries, a dozen different systems were pursued. The gallantry of the French Creoles is commemorated upon old city maps by a number of streets christened with the sweetest and prettiest feminine names imaginable. Some of these were christened after the favorite children of rich parents, but again not a few were named after favorite concubines. The old maps of New Orleans were covered with such names as *Suzette*, *Celeste*, *Estelle*, *Anelie*, *Annette*, and others; many of these have died away into later titles, but not a few still survive. The religious tendency of the population showed itself in giving religious names to many of the streets. There are several hundred saints so honored, and scarcely one in the calendar has escaped a namesake in the Crescent City. There are besides these, such streets as *Conception*, *Religious*, *Nuns*, *Assumption*, *Ascension*, etc.

At the time of the French revolution there was an outbreak in France of Roman and Greek fashions. The modern French tried to imitate the ancient classics by assuming the Roman dress and Roman names. The Creoles who, although dominated by the Spaniards, were red republicans in these days, followed that fashion and all the names of antiquity were introduced into Louisiana and survive there to this day. *Achille* (*Achilles*), *Alcibiade* (*Alcibiades*), *Numa*, *Demosthène* (*Demosthenes*), came into fashion. The streets found a similar fate and the new faubourg *Ste. Marie* was liberally christened from pagan mythology. The nine muses, three graces, the twelve

greater gods and the twelve lesser ones, and the demi-gods, all stood godparents for streets. The city fathers went beyond this, and there was a Nayades and a Dryades street, a Water Work, a Euphrosinè street, and so on without end.

Then came the Napoleonic wars, and with them, intense enthusiasm over the victories of the Corsican. A General of Napoleon's army who settled in Louisiana after the St. Helena captivity named the whole upper portion of the city in honor of the little Emperor. Napoleon Avenue, Jena and Austerlitz streets are samples which survive to this day.

In addition to these came the names and titles of the early Louisiana planters, such as Montegut, Clouet, Marigny, Delord, the early Governors of Louisiana, Mayors of New Orleans, and distinguished citizens.

These, however, failed to supply the 500 miles of streets that New Orleans boasts of, with a sufficiency of names.

In the naming of streets the French are not quite so matter of fact as the Anglo-Saxons, and they have shown this in some titles they have left behind. In New Orleans no Anglo-Saxon, for instance, would ever think of naming a street Goodchildren street, *rue des Bons Enfants*, or Love street, *rue de l'Amour*, Madman's street, Mystery street, Piety street, etc. Old Bernard Marigny christened two thoroughfares in the faubourg Marigny which he laid out, "Craps" and "Bagatelle" in honor of the two games of chance at which he lost a fortune. A curious mistake was that of the first American directory-maker who insisted upon translating Bagatelle into English and described it as Trifle street.

But even when a person is acquainted with the names of the New Orleans streets, the next thing is to know how to pronounce and spell them. This is very important, for they are seldom pronounced as they would seem to be. Tchoupitoulas—pronounced Chopitoulas—and Carondelet are the shibboleth by which foreigners are detected. No man is ever recognized as a true Orleanais until he can spell and pronounce these names correctly; and the serious charge made against an Auditor of the State, that he spelled Carondelet, Kerionderlet, aroused the utmost indignation of the population, who could never forgive this mistake.

The classical scholar who visits New Orleans and hears the names of the muses so frightfully distorted may regard it as unfortunate that Greek mythology had been chosen. The explanation of the mispronunciation, however, will relieve the people of New Orleans of any charge of ignorance. The Greek names are simply pronounced in the French style. Thus the

street that the scholar would call Melpomene, of four syllables and with the last "e" sounded, would be in French Melpomène, and is translated by the people of New Orleans into Melpomeen. So Calliope is Calliope; Terpsichore, Terpsikor; Euterpe, Euterp; and others in the same way. Coliseum is accented like the French Colisée, on the second instead of the third syllable; and even Felicity street—it is named, by the by, after a woman (Félicité), not happiness—is actually called by many intelligent persons Filly-city. The influence of the old French days is seen in the spelling of Dryades, instead of Dryads, as the word is pronounced, and in a number of other apparent violations of orthoëpy or orthography, the truth being that the old French pronunciation and spelling are preserved and have become current among the English-speaking portion of the population.

The constant annexation to New Orleans of suburban villages and towns, with streets of the same name produces considerable inconvenience to strangers and even to natives of the city. There is a duplicate to nearly every name, and sometimes four or five streets bearing the same title.

Thus there is a North Peter's and a South Peter's miles apart, one in the First, the other in the Second district; then there is a simple Peter's in the Sixth district, and a Peter's avenue in the same division, while in the Fifth district there is a Peter street, and in the Third a Petre, pronounced Peter. A fine chance this to get confused.

There are Chestnut streets in the First, Fourth, Fifth and two in the Sixth district. And much more confusion of the same sort.

Another circumstance that is likely to deceive and mislead strangers is the preservation of the ancient names of the streets. These have been changed time and time again with the names, until even the residents on the streets get confused. Suppose you start down Rampart street, some will call it Love (the old name), and some Rampart. Beyond Canal you will see a building called the Circus street infirmary—this was, of old, Circus street. A little further on and you will hear that it is Hercules street, and when you get well up town, exactly half the population will swear it is St. Denis, and the other half stick to Rampart.

You want to go to the Moreau street Methodist Church and inquire for Moreau street. There is none; it is now Chartres; while the Craps street Church is not on Craps, but on Burgundy, its successor. When, in addition to this, it is remembered that few of the streets in New Orleans have any signs on the corners, that these signs one encounters are often in French,

and that the numbering of the houses is very imperfect and defective, it will be seen that without a map or a good street-guide, giving not only the names of the streets to-day, but those they used to bear some years ago, a stranger can very easily lose himself in New Orleans.

The French Market

... As you near Jackson square a stream of busy-looking people appears, laden with baskets and bundles. Following this current of life, you are whirled forward to the corner, opposite the market. Here a stout old lady of heavy build, ornamented with a bonnet like a basket of vegetables, dashes across, followed by her daughter, a rosy-faced, stout-shouldered, masculine young woman. Business is everything to them, and as they pass over the oozy mud they lift their dresses high, high enough to attract the attention of the neighboring men. You follow in their footsteps into the market; at its entrance is a marble-topped stand, over which hangs the title and sign of the Café Rapide, with a painting, illustrative of the title, of many persons devouring their food with dangerous and terrifying celerity. Here you take your seat for a cup of coffee or chocolate, and glance around you.

A man might here study the world. Every race that the world boasts is here, and a good many races that are nowhere else. . . . The dresses are as varied as the faces; the baskets even are of every race, some stout and portly, others delicate and adorned with ribbons and ornaments; some, again, old, wheezy and decayed, through whose worn ribs might be seen solemn and melancholy cabbages, turnips and potatoes, crammed and jostled together in ruthless imprisonment. The butchers scorn to use all those blandishments that the lower grades of market society make use of to attract purchasers. Like Mahomet, the mountain must come to them. From the ceiling hang endless ropes of spiders' webs, numberless flies, and incalculable dirt. The stalls are deeply worn by the scraping process; in some yawn pits, apparently bottomless; and lastly, the floor of the market is not at all clean, but covered with mud and dirt from the feet of its patrons. Through the crowd lurk some skeleton-dogs, vainly hoping, by some happy accident, to secure a dainty morsel.

At the end of the market lie, sleep, eat and trade a half-dozen Indians. In olden days these Natchez, Choctaws and Creeks were numbered by the thousands, but they are melted away into Mulattoes. The lazy, unstudied attitude of these Red Roses, these daughters of the forest, is not exactly in accordance with the poetic idea one used to drink in, in his earlier days. The Indian females are formless, and the bag that they wear has no pretensions to fitting. When in addition they have hung around them bundles, beads, babies, and other curiosities, they fail to arouse our poetic sentiments.

Still following the drift of the crowd, you enter the Bazaar market, the newest of this batch of old buildings that are collectively honored with the title of market. It is in a tolerably good state of preservation. The architect had high and ambitious views, evidenced by two tin cupolas that rise like domes from the market-house. The flush days of the Bazaar market are fled; no longer are fortunes to be gained there; gloom and melancholy lurk within; many of the shops are boarded up, and even those that are occupied see few purchasers. A string of youthful merchants stretched across the street from the Bazaar to the vegetable market. Though but a dozen or so years of age, they have learned all the "tricks of the trade," and overwhelm you with good bargains, and almost extort your money from you.

At the angle of the vegetable market is the chicken repository. The dead chickens hang downward from the roof; the live ones are cooped up, and chant endless rounds of music. This market is the most cosmopolitan of all. The air is broken by every language—English, French, Italian and German, varied by gombic languages of every shade; languages whose whole vocabulary embraces but a few dozen words, the major part of which are expressive, emphatic and terrific oaths.

Nor are the materials for sale less varied. Piles of cabbages, turnips and strange vegetables adorn each side. Monstrous cheeses smile from every corner; the walls are festooned with bananas, etc.; while fish, bread, flour, and even alligators, have each appropriate tables. The bright sun leaks drowsily through the spider webs, producing a sad, sleepy light; the monotonous cries of the boys, "*cinq à dix sous*," "two cents apiece, Madame," keeps on as endlessly as Tennyson's brook, and the crowd jostles you with baskets and bundles until you drop into some neighboring stall for a bite, or make your way altogether out of the market.

If you wait a little while until the press of trade slackens somewhat and the market people begin to go home, you will have an opportunity to study the queer habits of the "dagoes"—the Italian fruit and onion dealers, who make up so important and picturesque an element in the market.

A dark-skinned woman is going out of the empty market alone. She wears a soiled, faded calico dress; but in her eye there is *Madame Dufarge* boldness, which attracts the attention. She crumples her dress in her dark fingers, holding it up higher as she crosses the muddy, sloppy street through the rain. When she reaches the curbstone she stamps her bare, brown feet on the banquette—they are wonderfully formed feet—and gives herself a shake to get the mud and water off, to an extent. She gathers and crumples her calico dress in her hands once more and, walking a short distance, disappears down a narrow, dark alley. Thither she is followed by more fastidious feet, through the puddles of water on the old, cracked flagstone pavement, by heaps of garbage and vegetable refuse, damp and decaying, till the entrance of a dingy, crowded courtyard is reached. This courtyard is surrounded on every side by narrow, dreary-looking buildings two stories high. Rickety, crazy steps lead up from the yard to the galleries of the second story. It is a dismal-looking place as the drizzling rain falls on the mouldy posts and patters on the broken flagstones. It seems a fit spot for Poverty to hold her court, or for the phantom forms of disease to lurk. There is a hydrant in this courtyard. Near the base four spouts are let in, which, when open, pour their water into a circular stone basin about eight feet in diameter. The iron column that rises above this basin performs three separate duties. It is a hydrant at the bottom; a lamp-post, supporting a big glass lamp, at the top; and an ornament altogether. While this column and the circular stone basin below present a very handsome appearance, they are in strange keeping with their surroundings, for the yard is filled with tubs, buckets, barrels, hogsheads, crates and coops, all old, besides many other things that in amount seem almost impossible to crowd into a courtyard fifty by sixty feet. There are wet clothes strung on many lines stretched across this yard from building to building; they dismally flap and flutter about in the drizzly rain which is ever falling. The lower story, surrounding the courtyard, contains fourteen rooms, while the upper has a like number. In these dim chambers, twenty-eight in all, fifty families are living and breathing. This is their home through winter and summer, heat and cold—their home, whether pesti-

lence, a terrible unseen spectre stalks about among them, or whether pity from heaven turns away the dire scourge of disease.

Many children are gathered about the dark doors. They look out vaguely at the rain, or talk and quarrel in the many dialects of their dark-skinned parents. Most of these children seem old and pinched about their faces, as though life were for them already exhausted. Dark-visaged men and women, descendants of the old Pelasgic race are gathered in numbers in these twenty-eight rooms. The men have come in off the wharf, where their boats, or their business, have occupied them all day, and are sitting in the doorways, smoking their pipes, while they gloomily look out on the gloomy weather.

The red flannel shirts and blue trousers which they generally wear give these fellows of the dark eye and raven hair a semi-piratical appearance. Their figures recall the time when Lafitte ruled, a king, over fiercer subjects on the sandy islands of Lower Louisiana. The women are inside the rooms, passing backward and forward, performing the drudgery of domestic work, while now and then they address the men in their many rapidly-spoken languages. They have a soft dialect, these women, while a great many of them possess forms and features that beneath the gentle touch of wealth and refinement would have made some even beautiful. But, with all their raven hair, their flashing eyes, and shapely forms, there is a wildness, a hardness of expression in their countenances, as if the haggard band of want had impressed them with an undefinable asperity.

On the upper gallery, out of the rain and the reach of many hungry-looking children, long strips of maccaroni are hanging up near the ceiling to dry. These people inherit from their fathers a fondness for this article; without which they would be like Americans without their wheat bread. Issuing from their rooms are the discordant notes of many of the feathered tribe, the gobbling of turkeys, quacking of ducks, cackling of guinea hens and crowing of cocks. . . . As night approaches the lingo from these feathered, red-shirted and calico-clad inhabitants is toned down to a subdued hum-drum. The birds of pride and birds of evil tuck their heads under their wings and are silent. The numerous members of the human family are fast preparing to follow their example. The men, women and children devour their scant suppers of maccaroni and unseasonable market stuff, then drop off to their respective corners or huddle among the crates and the coops in the little rooms. Soon no sound is heard save the

noise made by the elements. The drizzling rain is still falling from the dull, dark sky; the water off the roof dripping down with a pattering noise on the broken stones, or beating with loud thumps on the bottom of the tin spouts. These people go to bed early, for they have to get up early in the morning. The court yard looks in the darkness as if it had been deserted. Red shirts and faded dresses are waving backward and forward on the lines. The solitary iron lamp post, without a light at the top, stands up dimly as a true sentinel over the place. Fifty families are asleep. In the dark, silent building, sleeping quietly, to awake and go through another day of poverty, privation and toil.

At three in the morning the first sounds of stirring are heard in the twenty-eight rooms. It is dark, but soon a faint streak from a match is seen flickering on the wall; then others; soon almost all of the rooms are dimly lighted up. A figure is seen descending the rickety stairs that lead down to the stones of the yard. It is that of a boy, his dress being the same in which he retired last night. This boy goes up to the lamp-post standing above the circular basin. He has a candle in one hand, while he uses the other hand, and a pair of bare legs, to twist himself up to the lamp at the top of the post. Lighting the candle he comes down and stands on the edge of the basin awhile to rub his sleepy eyes, and recall his faculties to the post of duty.

Soon nearly all the human occupants are up and moving about, putting on the blue trowsers and faded skirts which were thrown aside at the early bedtime.

The fowls get waked up, too, by these indications that their owners are awake, and set up a clatter of indignation at being outdone in this matter of early rising by the human members of the community. At last all the figures have risen up from their various resting places; then the sleepy crowd of men, women and children follow each other down the crazy steps. They form around the iron hydrant in the dim lamp light, like matutinal votaries, who are assembled to perform their mystic rites, and do their devotions before an idol. They throng around the four spouts which pour their water into the circular stone basin. They are all barefooted and bareheaded; some even have bare shoulders, but none are completely nude. These olive-complexioned people roll up their blue trowsers, tuck up their faded skirts and go into the big basin by fours, holding their hands under the running jets of water. They shower their heads and faces till they are wide awake. . . .

The boys then run up-stairs to get the coops of poultry, which they bring down and deposit tenderly on the stone pavement. Then they are off again after the baskets and crates of vegetables, which they bring down and pile in heaps just outside of the big basin. At the first glimpse of day they are going to take these out to the market; but in the meantime they are going to wash and get them clean before offering them for sale. To do this they roll up their blue breeches above the knees and step into the circular basin, whose waters, after having performed the duty for human heads and faces, are now going to cleanse cabbage-heads and potatoes. The women pour in piles of parsnips, beets, radishes and potatoes, and the boys manipulate or pedipulate these roots under the water, where all the dirt is trodden off them, and they are taken out looking bright, nice and clean, all ready to be ranged in rows on the market stands. The four spouts of the hydrant are kept running all the time, while the water that brims over the basin runs out into the gutter beyond through overflow conduits.

The men and women are constantly jabbering while this operation is going on, about the prior rights of having their respective lots of vegetables washed, as everybody is anxious to be first at the market. In the meantime the coops of proud and noisy poultry are being carried out by other boys, who run constantly backward and forward from the yard to the market. After a while the jabbering is less loud, for many of their number have their vegetables washed, and the carriers, many of whom are women, have gone out down the alley, most of them staggering under wagon loads of comestibles.

A few old women are still left washing their stuffs in this basin of all uses. Their shrill, garrulous tones are heard till all get through. Then the stone basin, with its iron hydrant, lamppost, and light at the top, is deserted. A few of the oldest crones are left to take care of the very young children. All children who are not mere infants have gone out to work. These shriveled old women keep up for a short time a slight show of converse; a child or two cries as if unable to account for the cessation of the noise, and soon all is quiet. . . .

The courtyard people are only a part of the numbers who sell vegetables in the market. There are many others engaged in the business, who bring their vegetables in various ways and conveyances. There is a large class of people who raise their own vegetables and bring them to this place for sale in carts. At about two or three o'clock in the morning the sounds of many loaded carts are heard jolting on the streets. They travel

generally at that pace commonly practiced at fashionable funerals. They creak and rumble in a characteristic manner as they go up the street, for their drivers are ostentatiously plodding and methodical. These drivers look sleepy; the horses and mules look about half asleep; even the carts seem as though they objected to being pulled out of their sheds and dragged through the darkness at that unheard-of hour. Of these drivers, some are men and some are women.

On the arrival of the loads of vegetables at the market, the carts back up to the curbstones, the sleepy drivers descend, and the work of unloading and arranging the vegetables on the stall counters commences. The women with their limp petticoats and dresses, damp with the dew of the morning, gathered about their thick-set limbs, arrange the vegetables to their taste. . . .

In Billingsgate it is said that the "heavenly gift divine—the power of speech"—is a faculty habitually abused. Here the abuse is more flagrant, for not "king's English" alone is subjected to pretty rough handling, but every language spoken on the globe is slanged, docked, or insulted by uncivilized innovations on its original purity. This commingling of languages is swelled to an absolute uproar by sunrise, when the market-goers begin to arrive. Aristocratic old gentlemen with their broadcloth, polished manners and boots puffed in and out; fat females with fat baskets hanging on their fat arms, waddle to and fro; footmen, waiters, maids and small boys come and go away. Nearly all trades, professions, colors and castes are represented with baskets on their arms.

The red-limbed, thick-set woman is at her stand, busily filling the baskets of many customers. Her short, stubby, harsh-looking broom is standing idle up against one of the shelves, waiting till the day is over. Then its harsh, yellow straws will grate once more against the paving stones of the place, as it sweeps the broken cabbage leaves and carrot tops out of the deserted market into the dirty street.

There are several marble-top tables about, in different parts of the market; four-legged stools are standing in rows alongside of these. . . . They are streaked with grease, or the polish is worn off at regular intervals where the stools are placed along side of them. The legs might look better; stray cabbage leaves and other waste material, scattered around their feet, give these legs a half-unclean, negligent appearance that borders on depravity. But then this is the market, and the wilted cabbage leaves

are a part of the place. The tall stools, too, have this semi-negligent aspect. They are brightly polished on the top of their seats unavoidably, but their rungs and legs are scratched and scraped by iron shoe-pegs, or just the least bit discolored by mud. With the odors of the aromatic coffee, steaming from the urns, is mingled a peculiar market smell.

The keepers of these stands are semi-neat looking, too. Their shirts are as white as the marble tops of the tables, their buttons as bright as the little cups and saucers, and their countenances fresh and healthy-looking as the steaming dishes of bacon and greens. Their pants show they have been in contact with the grease-spots on the table or *vice versa*. Their shoes have been treading too much about among the wilted cabbage-leaves to lay claim to a respectable appearance. But probably hungry men are not too fastidious, and they don't mind a little grease or a little mud in the gentlemen who sell coffee at "five cents a cup," and the accompaniments accordingly. Most of these coffee-vendors have the power of imitating all the languages spoken in the place, to a certain extent. They make themselves understood to all their customers, and seem thoroughly posted in favorite slang phrases of the would-be fast men who come there to drink coffee. They are acknowledged as the elite of market society by the common consent of their humbler neighbors, of the vegetable and poultry trades; and they act well up to the license of this general acknowledgment. They are condescending, however, to those around them. They seem to feel a pity for those poor vegetable sellers; for some of them were once vegetable men themselves and they can appreciate the position. They are proportionately urbane as their customers are respectable. They pour out their coffee in dignified silence for the poor market men and women who come up and lean their elbows on the marble tops of the tables. When monsieur from the steamboats, or his desk, or his loafing place at the corner, comes up to get his breakfast, the coffee-vendor is all politeness.

Strangers who come into town late at night, bringing into the city with them their rural tastes and appetites, like to get a bite of something early in the morning. So they, too, often patronize the coffee stands. Some of these have a rural lack of assurance which they failed to leave at their homes, and they look very modest when they climb the high stools. They hesitate in answering to the question whether they'll take "*café au lait* or *café noir*"; they believe, however, they'll take "the first." The respectable keeper of the coffee stand has a pitying look in his eye for the ignorance

of country people. The stranger of this class gets through, fumbles awkwardly in his pocket for the necessary pay; then gives place to the man of display, who pulls in on his purse here to gratify a taste for the ornamental somewhere else. . . .

Sometimes old rich men come here to get cheap breakfasts; for certainly black coffee, "five cents a cup," and warm beefsteaks, are as nourishing and wholesome as broiled mutton chops, soft boiled eggs, and the thigh of a spring chicken, even if it is the least bit noisy down here, and smells more like a market than a restaurant.

The red-legged woman with the short, harsh broom, and the dark-eyed, raven-haired resident of the courtyard, say that they all have to pay fifteen cents a drawer and twenty cents a corner a day for their stands, besides a city license of ten dollars a year. A drawer is the space between two posts on a shelf, and a corner is a shelf where two of the passage-ways of the market cross each other. When the collector comes around, they dive their hands down into the pockets of their damp, faded dresses, pull out their small change, and silently hand it over. But some of the sellers of vegetables are inspired with a spirit of liberty and independence. They are very jealous of their rights, and this kind don't see money matters in the same light as do most people in the world. They pay up squarely when the collector steps up, but they think forty-five cents a day a very high rent to pay for the intervals of a stall between four posts. . . .

Los Criollos

NEW ORLEANS, DECEMBER 3, 1877.

The common error of interpreting the word "Creole," as signifying a mulatto, quadroon or octoroon of Louisiana, and particularly of New Orleans, is far from being a local one, and dates back through centuries. It is not even confined to the uncultivated classes of the population of the Northern States, but flourishes, curiously enough, even in the South. It exists also in European countries—especially France, England, and Spain—mother-countries of West Indian colonies. Strangest of all, it actually lives in New Orleans, where the word Creole is a term of proud honor among the aristocrats of the South. There are numbers in this cosmopoli-

tan city who have some vague idea that the more lightly-tinted half-breeds are rightfully called Creoles.

I need not dwell upon the prevalence of this error in the North among the mass of the reading public. Ladies at Washington have been known to faint while conversing with Southern Senators at a reception, because the honorable and distinguished gentlemen accidentally observed in the course of the conversation that they were Creoles. Doubtless the remark was made with a most aristocratic feeling of pride; and its result must have been all the more astonishing to the misunderstood Southerners. When a Louisianian says "I am a Creole," he is apt to utter the words with such an intonation as might have been given by an ancient Latin colonist to the proud words, "I am a Roman citizen." For many knightly names survive among the old families of the Crescent City; and many a Creole can trace his ancestry back to the nobility of old France, or to the grandees of Spain in the days of the Conquistadores.

It, therefore, seems odd, indeed, that even among the most ignorant portion of the population of this city, there should be found any person of the opinion that a Creole may be a quadroon or octoroon. But when one considers that the light-tinted, French-speaking colored element of New Orleans,—the relatives and the children of true Creoles,—call themselves Creoles, and desire to be so called, the existence of the fallacy does not appear so extraordinary after all.

Probably the misapplication of the term will continue indefinitely, despite all definitions of popular dictionaries and all explanatory essays in popular encyclopædias, inasmuch as it has been sanctioned by the custom of more than a hundred years. It always differs more or less, however, according to locality.

In the North the error is usually confined to the belief that the almost-white colored residents of New Orleans are Creoles, and that Creoles are indigenous and peculiar to the city. I have frequently, however, encountered it in the aggravated form of a supposition that the word applies to the light-colored women only of New Orleans. In the South there appears to be a widely diffused opinion among the lower classes that the Creoles of New Orleans are "nothing more'n dammed niggers who jabber French." In New Orleans itself I have been told by persons who considered themselves really informed upon the subject, that "a Creole means a New Orleans Frenchman and nothing else." In England the proper signification of the word is generally much better understood than here, but a large