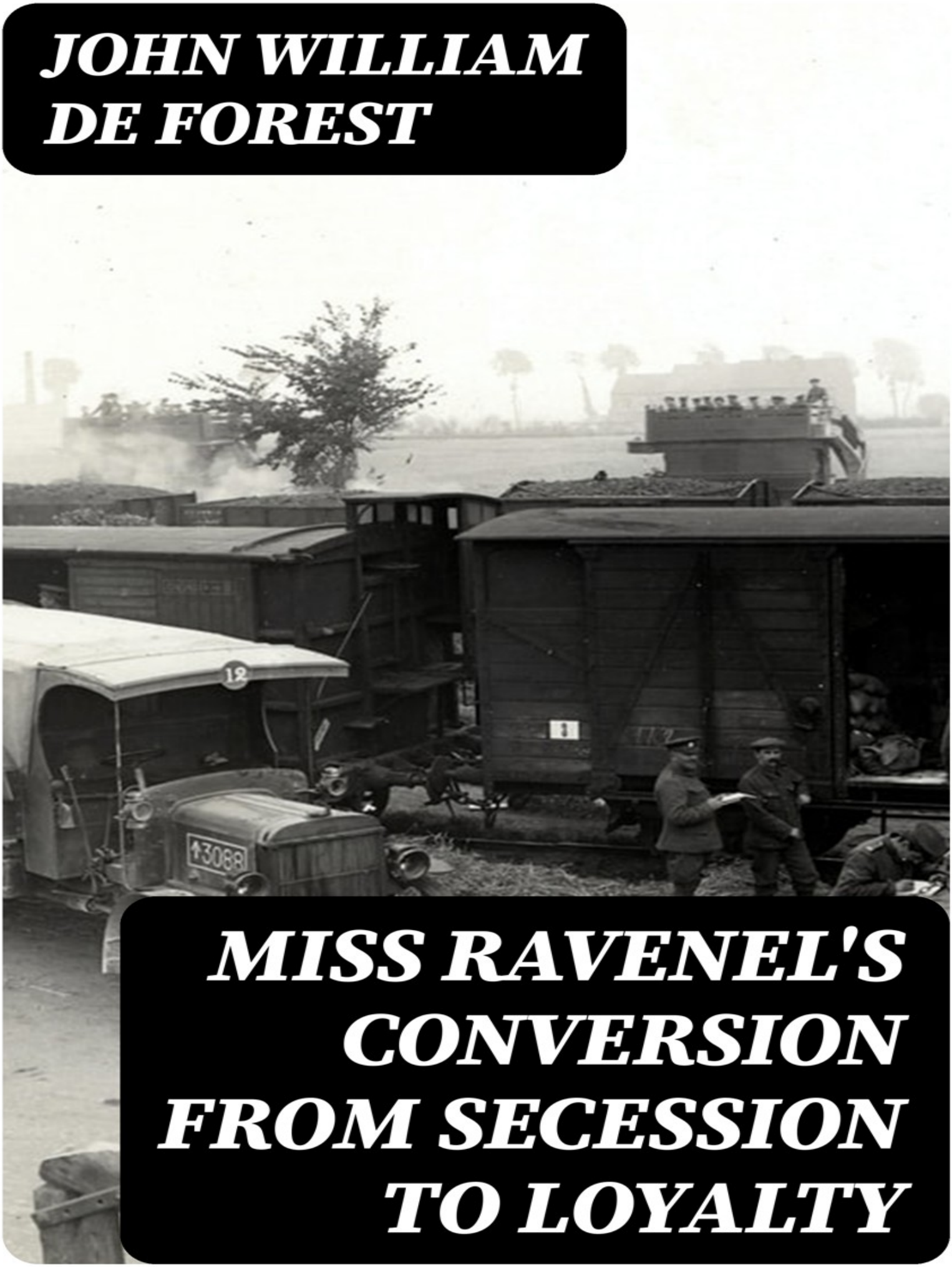
JOHN WILLIAM DE FOREST



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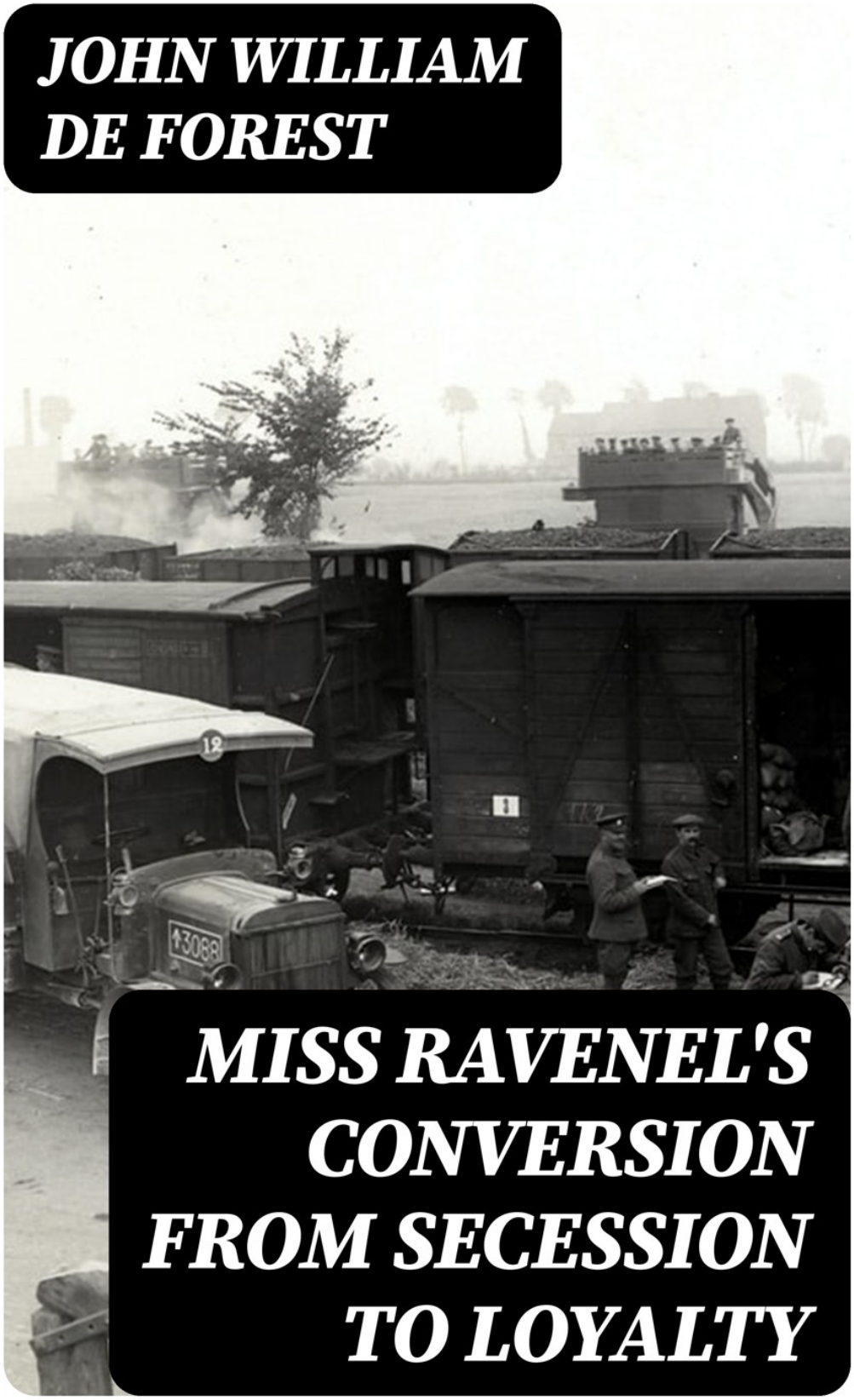

MISS RAVENEL'S CONVERSION FROM SECESSION TO LOYALTY

John William De Forest

Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty

Historical Novel

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CHAPTER I.
MR. EDWARD COLBURNE BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH MISS LILLIE RAVENEL.

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It was shortly after the capitulation of loyal Fort Sumter to rebellious South Carolina that Mr. Edward Colburne of New Boston made the acquaintance of Miss Lillie Ravenel of New Orleans.

An obscure American author remarks in one of his rejected articles, (which he had the kindness to read to me from the manuscript) that every great historical event reverberates in a very remarkable manner through the fortunes of a multitude of private and even secluded individuals. No volcanic eruption rends a mountain without stirring the existence of the mountain's mice. It was unquestionably the southern rebellion which brought Miss Ravenel and Mr. Colburne into interesting juxtaposition. But for this gigantic political upturning it is probable that the young lady would never have visited New Boston where the young gentleman then lived, or, visiting it and meeting him there, would have been a person of no necessary importance in his eyes. But how could a most loyal, warm-hearted youth fail to be interested in a pretty and intelligent girl who was exiled from her home because her father would not be a rebel?

New Boston, by the way, is the capital city of the little Yankee State of Barataria. I ask pardon for this geographical

impertinence of introducing a seventh State into New England, and solemnly affirm that I do not mean to disturb thereby the congressional balance of the republic. I make the arrangement with no political object, but solely for my private convenience, so that I may tell my story freely without being accused of misrepresenting this private individual, or insulting that public functionary, or burlesquing any self-satisfied community. Like Sancho Panza's famous island of the same name, Barataria was surrounded by land, at least to a much greater extent than most islands.

It was through Ravenel the father that Colburne made the acquaintance of Miss Ravenel. In those days, not yet a soldier, but only a martially disposed young lawyer and wrathful patriot, he used to visit the New Boston House nearly every evening, running over all the journals in the reading-room, devouring the telegraphic reports that were brought up hot from the newspaper offices, and discussing the great political events of the time with the heroes and sages of the city. One evening he found nobody in the reading-room but a stranger, a tall gentleman of about fifty, with a baldish head and a slight stoop in the shoulders, attired in an English morning-suit of modest snuff-color. He was reading the New York Evening Post through a rather dandified eyeglass. Presently he put the eyeglass in his vest pocket, produced a pair of steel-bowed spectacles, slipped them on his nose and resumed his reading with an air of increased facility and satisfaction. He was thus engaged, and Colburne was waiting for the Post, raging meanwhile over that copperhead sheet, The New Boston Index, when

there was a pleasant rustle of female attire in the hall which led by the reading-room.

"Papa, put on your eyeglass," said a silver voice which Colburne liked. "Do take off those horrid spectacles. They make you look as old as Ararat."

"My dear, the eyeglass makes me feel as old as you say," responded papa.

"Well, stop reading then and come up stairs," was the young person's next command. "I've had such an awful afternoon with those pokey people. I want to tell you——"

Here she caught sight of Colburne regarding her fixedly in the mirror, and with another rustle of vesture she suddenly slid beyond reach of the angle of incidence and refraction.

The stranger laid down the Post in his lap, pocketed his spectacles, and, looking about him, caught sight of Colburne.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he with a frank, friendly, man of the world sort of smile. "I have kept the evening paper a long time. Will you have it?"

To our young gentleman the civility of this well-bred, middle-aged personage was somewhat imposing, and consequently he made his best bow and would not accept of the Post until positively assured that the other had entirely done with it. Moreover he would not commence reading immediately because that might seem like a tacit reproach; so he uttered a few patriotic common-places on the news of the day, and thereby gave occasion for this history.

"Yes, a sad struggle, a sad struggle—especially for the South," assented the unnamed gentleman. "You can't

imagine how unprepared they are for it. The South is just like the town's poor rebelling against the authorities; the more successful they are, the more sure to be ruined."

While he spoke he looked in the young and strange face of his hearer with as much seeming earnestness as if the latter had been an old acquaintance whose opinions were of value to him. There was an amiable fascination in the sympathetic grey eyes and the persuasive smile. He caught Colburne's expression of interest and proceeded.

"Nobody can tell me anything about those unlucky, misguided people. I am one of them by birth—I have lived among them nearly all my life—I know them. They are as ill-informed as Hottentots. They have no more idea of their relative strength as compared to that of the United States than the Root-diggers of the Rocky Mountains. They are doomed to perish by their own ignorance and madness."

"It will probably be a short struggle," said Colburne, speaking the common belief of the North.

"I don't know—I don't know about that; we mustn't be too sure of that. You must understand that they are barbarians, and that all barbarians are obstinate and reckless. They will hold out like the Florida Seminoles. They will resist like jackasses and heroes. They won't know any better. They will be an honor to the fortitude and a sarcasm on the intelligence of human nature. They will become an example in history of much that is great, and all that is foolish."

"May I ask what part of the South you have resided in?" inquired Colburne.

"I am a South Carolinian born. But I have lived in New Orleans for the last twenty years, summers excepted. A

man can't well live there the year round. He must be away occasionally, to clear his system of its malaria physical and moral. It is a Sodom. I consider it a proof of depravity in any one to want to go there. But there was my work, and there I staid—as little as possible. I staid till this stupid, barbarous Ashantee rebellion drove me out."

"I am afraid you will be an exile for some time, sir," observed Colburne, after a short silence during which he regarded the exiled stranger with patriotic sympathy.

"I am afraid so," was the answer, uttered in a tone which implied serious reflection if not sadness.

He remembers the lost home, the sacrificed wealth, the undeserved hostility, the sentence of outlawry which should have been a meed of honor, thought the enthusiastic young patriot. The voice of welcome ought to greet him, the hand of friendship ought to aid him, here among loyal men.

"I hope you stay some time in New Boston, sir," he observed aloud. "If I can be of the slightest benefit to you, I shall be most happy. Allow me to offer you my card, sir."

"Oh! Thank you. You are extremely kind," said the stranger. He bowed very politely and smiled very cordially as he took the bit of pasteboard; but at the same time there was a slight fixity of surprise in his eye which made the sensitive Colburne color. He read the name on the card; then, with a start as of reminiscence, glanced at it again; then leaned forward and peered into the young man's face with an air of eager curiosity.

"Are you—is it possible!—are you related to Doctor Edward Colburne of this place who died fourteen or fifteen years ago?"

"I am his son, sir."

"Is it possible! I am delighted to meet you. I am most sincerely and earnestly gratified. I knew your father well. I had particular occasion to know him as a fellow beginner in mineralogy at a time when the science was little studied in this country. We corresponded and exchanged specimens. My name is Ravenel. I have been for twenty years professor of theory and practice in the Medical College of New Orleans. An excellent place for a dissecting class, by the way. So many negroes are whipped to death, so many white gentlemen die in their boots, as the saying is, that we rarely lack for subjects.—But you must have been quite young when you had the misfortune—and science had the misfortune—to lose your father. Really, you have quite his look about the eyes and forehead. What profession may I ask?"

"Law," said Colburne, who was flushed with pleasure over the acquisition of this charming acquaintance, so evidently to him a man of the world, a savant, a philosopher, and a patriotic martyr.

"Law—that is a smattering of it—just enough to have an office and do notary work."

"A good profession! A grand profession! But I should have expected your father's son to be a physician or a mineralogist."

He took off his spectacles and surveyed Colburne's frank, handsome face with evidently sincere interest. He seemed as much occupied with this young stranger's history and prospects as he had been a moment before with his own beliefs and exile.

At this stage of the conversation one of the hotel servants entered the room and said, "Sir, the young lady wishes you would come up stairs, if you please, sir."

"Oh, certainly," answered the stranger, or, as I may now call him, the Doctor. "Mr. Colburne, come up to my room, if you are at leisure. I shall be most happy to have a longer conversation with you."

Colburne was in the usual quandary of young and modest men on such occasions. He wished to accept the invitation; he feared that he ought not to take advantage of it; he did not know how to decline it. After a lightning-like consideration of the *pros* and *cons*, after a stealthy glance at his toilet in the mirror, he showed the good sense and had the good luck to follow Doctor Ravenel to his private parlor. As they entered, the same silver voice which Colburne had heard below, exclaimed, "Why papa! What has kept you so long? I have been as lonely as a mouse in a trap."

"Lillie, let me introduce Mr. Colburne to you," answered papa. "My dear sir, take this arm chair. It is much more comfortable than those awkward mahogany uprights. Don't suppose that I want it. I prefer the sofa, I really do."

Miss Ravenel, I suppose I ought to state in this exact place, was very fair, with lively blue eyes and exceedingly handsome hair, very luxuriant, very wavy and of a flossy blonde color lighted up by flashes of amber. She was tall and rather slender, with a fine form and an uncommon grace of manner and movement. Colburne was flattered by the quick blush and pretty momentary flutter of embarrassment with which she received him. This same

irrepressible blush and flutter often interested those male individuals who were fortunate enough to make Miss Ravenel's acquaintance. Each young fellow thought that she was specially interested in himself; that the depths of her womanly nature were stirred into pleasurable excitement by his advent. And it was frequently not altogether a mistake. Miss Ravenel was interested in people, in a considerable number of people, and often at first sight. She had her father's sympathetic character, as well as his graceful cordiality and consequent charm of manner, the whole made more fascinating by being veiled in a delicate gauze of womanly dignity. As to her being as lovely as a houri, I confess that there were different opinions on that question, and I do not care to settle it, as I of course might, by a tyrannical affirmation.

It is curious how resolutely most persons demand that the heroine of a story shall be extraordinarily handsome. And yet the heroine of many a love affair in our own lives is not handsome; and most of us fall in love, quite earnestly and permanently in love too, with rather plain women. Why then should I strain my conscience by asserting broadly and positively that Miss Ravenel was a first class beauty? But I do affirm without hesitation that, like her father, she was socially charming. I go farther: she was also very loveable and (I beg her pardon) very capable of loving; although up to this time she did not feel sure that she possessed either of these two qualities.

She had simply bowed with a welcoming smile and that flattering blush, but without speaking or offering her hand, when Colburne was presented. I suspect that she waited for

her father to give her a key to the nature of the interview and an intimation as to whether she should join in the conversation. She was quite capable of such small forethought, and Doctor Ravenel was worthy of the trust.

"Mr. Colburne is the son of Doctor Colburne, my dear," he observed as soon as his guest was seated. "You have heard me speak of the Doctor's premature and lamented death. I think myself very fortunate in meeting his son."

"You are very kind to call on us, Mr. Colburne," said the silver voice with a musical accent which almost amounted to a singsong. "I hope you don't hate Southerners," she added with a smile which made Colburne feel for a moment as if he could not heartily hate Beauregard, then the representative man of the rebellion. "We are from Louisiana, you know."

"I regret to hear it," answered Colburne.

"Oh, don't pity us," she laughed. "It is not such a bad place."

"Please don't misunderstand me. I meant that I regret your exile from your home."

"Thank you for that. I don't know whether papa will thank you or not. He doesn't appreciate Louisiana. I don't believe he is conscious that he has suffered a misfortune in being obliged to quit it. I am. New Boston is very pretty, and the people are very nice. But you know how it is; it is bad to lose one's home."

"My dear, I can't help laughing at your grand misfortune," said the Doctor. "We are something like the Hebrews when they lost Pharaoh king of Egypt, or like people who lose a

sinking wreck by getting on a sound vessel. Besides, our happy home turned us out of doors."

The Doctor felt that he had a right to abuse his own, especially after it had ill-treated him.

"Were you absolutely exiled, sir?" asked Colburne.

"I had to take sides. Those unhappy Chinese allow no neutrals—nothing but themselves, the central flowery people, and outside barbarians. They have fed on the poor blacks until they can't abide a man who isn't a cannibal. He is a reproach to them, and they must make away with him. They remind me of a cracker whom I met at a cross road tavern in one of my journeys through the north of Georgia. This man, a red-nosed, tobacco-drizzling, whiskey-perfumed giant, invited me to drink with him, and, when I declined, got furious and wanted to fight me. I told him that I never drank whiskey and that it made me sick, and finally succeeded in pacifying him without touching his poison. In fact he made me a kind of apology for having offered to cut my throat. 'Wa'al, fact is, stranger,' said he, '*I*,' (laying an accent as strong as his liquor on the personal pronoun) '*I* use whiskey.'—You understand the inference, I suppose: a man who refused whiskey was a contradiction, a reproach to his personality: such a man he could not suffer to live. It was the Brooks and Sumner affair over again. Brooks says, 'Fact is *I* believe in slavery,' and immediately hits Sumner over the head for not believing in it."

"Something like my grandfather, who, when he had to diet, used to want the whole family to live on dry toast," observed Colburne. "For the time being he believed in the universal propriety and necessity of toast."

"Were you in danger of violence before you left New Orleans?" he presently asked. "I beg pardon if I am too curious."

"Violence? Why, not precisely; not immediate violence. The breaking-off point was this. I must explain that I dabble in chemistry as well as mineralogy. Now in all that city of raw materialism, of cotton-bale and sugar-hogshead instinct —I can't call it intelligence—there was not a man of southern principles who knew enough of chemistry to make a fuse. They wanted to possess themselves of the United States forts in their State. They supposed that they would be obliged to shell them. The shells they had plundered from the United States arsenal; but the fuses were wanting. A military committee requested me to fabricate them. Of course I was driven to make an immediate choice between rebellion and loyalty. I took the first steamboat to New York, getting off just in time to escape the system of surveillance which the vigilance committees established."

It may seem odd to some sensible people that this learned gentleman of over fifty should expose his own history so freely to a young fellow whom he had not seen until half an hour before. But it was a part of the Doctor's character to suppose that humanity took an interest in him just as he took an interest in all humanity; and his natural frankness had been increased by contact with the prevailing communicativeness of his open-hearted fellow-citizens of the South. I dare say that he would have unfolded the tale of his exile to an intelligent stage-driver by whom he might have chanced to sit, with as little hesitation as he poured it into the ears of this graduate of a distinguished university

and representative of a staid puritanical aristocracy. He had no thought of claiming admiration for his self-sacrificing loyalty. His story was worth telling, not because it was connected with his interests, but because it had to do with his sentiments and convictions. Why should he not relate it to a stranger who was evidently capable of sympathising with those sentiments and appreciating those convictions?

But there was another reason for the Doctor's frankness. At that time every circumstance of the opening civil war, every item of life that came from hostile South to indignant North, was regarded by all as a species of public property. If you put down your name on a hotel register as arrived from Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, or any other point south of Mason & Dixon's line, you were immediately addressed and catechised. People wanted to know how you escaped, and why you tried to escape; and were ready to accord you any credit you demanded for perilous adventures and patriotic motives; and did not perceive it nor think a bit ill of you if you showed yourself somewhat of a romancer and braggart. And you, on the other hand, did not object to telling your story, but let it out as naturally as a man just rescued from drowning opens his heart to the sympathising crowd which greets him on the river bank.

Now Miss Ravenel was a rebel. Like all young people and almost all women she was strictly local, narrowly geographical in her feelings and opinions. She was colored by the soil in which she had germinated and been nurtured; and during that year no flower could be red, white and blue in Louisiana. Accordingly the young lady listened to the Doctor's story of his self-imposed exile and to his sarcasms

upon the people of her native city with certain pretty little starts and sniffs of disapprobation which reminded Colburne of the counterfeit spittings of a kitten playing anger. She could not under any provocation quarrel with her father, but she could perseveringly and energetically disagree with his opinions. When he had closed his tirade and history she broke forth in a defence of her darling Dixie.

"Now, papa, you are too bad. Mr. Colburne, don't you think he is too bad? Just see here. Louisiana is my native State, and papa has lived there half his life. He could not have been treated more kindly, nor have been thought more of, than he was by those Ashantees, as he calls them, until he took sides against them. If you never lived with the southerners you don't know how pleasant they are. I don't mean those rough creatures from Arkansas and Texas, nor the stupid Acadians, nor the poor white trash. There are low people everywhere. But I do say that the better classes of Louisiana and Mississippi and Georgia and South Carolina and Virginia, yes, and of Tennessee and Kentucky, are right nice. If they don't know all about chemistry and mineralogy, they can talk delightfully to ladies. They are perfectly charming at receptions and dinner parties. They are so hospitable, too, and generous and courteous! Now I call that civilization. I say that such people are civilized."

"They have taught you Ashantee English, though," smiled the Doctor, who has not yet fully realized the fact that his daughter has become a young lady, and ought no longer to be criticised like a school girl. "I am afraid Mr. Colburne won't understand what 'right nice' means."

"Oh, yes he will. Do try to understand it, Mr. Colburne," answers Miss Ravenel, coloring to her temples and fluttering like a canary whose cage has been shaken, but still smiling good-naturedly. Her father's satire, delivered before a stranger, touched her, but could not irritate a good temper softened by affection.

"I must be allowed to use those Ashantee phrases once in a while," she went on. "We learn them from our old mammas; that is, you know, our nice old black nurses. Well, I admit that the mammas are not grammarians. I admit that Louisiana is not perfect. But it is my Louisiana. And, papa, it ought to be your Louisiana. I think we owe fealty to our State, and should go with it wherever it goes. Don't you believe in State rights, Mr. Colburne? Wouldn't you stand by Barataria in any and every case?"

"Not against the Union, Miss Ravenel," responded the young man, unshaken in his loyalty even by that earnest look and winning smile.

"Oh dear! how can you say so!" exclaims the lovely advocate of secession. "I thought New Englanders—all but Massachusetts people—would agree with us. Wasn't the Hartford Convention held in New England?"

"I can't help admiring your knowledge of political history. But the Hartford Convention is a byeword of reproach among us now. We should as soon think of being governed by the Blue Laws."

At this declaration Miss Ravenel lost hope of converting her auditor. She dropped back in her corner of the sofa, clasping her hands and pouting her lips with a charming earnestness of mild desperation.

Well, the evening passed away delightfully to the young patriot, although it grieved his soul to find Miss Ravenel such a traitor to the republic. It was nearly twelve when he bade the strangers good night and apologized for staying so late, and accepted an invitation to call next day, and hoped they would continue to live in New Boston. He actually trembled with pleasure when Lillie at parting gave him her hand in the frank southern fashion. And after he had reached his cosy bedroom on the opposite side of the public square he had to smoke a segar to compose himself to sleep, and succeeded so ill in his attempt to secure speedy slumber that he heard the town clock ring out one and then two of the morning before he lost his consciousness.

"Oh dear! papa, how he did hang on!" said Miss Ravenel as soon as the door had shut behind him.

Certainly it was late, and she had a right to be impatient with the visitor, especially as he was a Yankee and an abolitionist. But Miss Ravenel, like most young ladies, was a bit of a hypocrite in talking of young men, and was not so very ill pleased at the bottom of her heart with the hanging on of Mr. Colburne.

CHAPTER II.
MISS RAVENEL BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CARTER.

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Mr. Colburne was not tardy in calling on the Ravenels nor careless in improving chances of encountering them by seeming accident. His modesty made him afraid of being tiresome, and his sensitiveness of being ridiculous; but neither the one terror nor the other prevented him from inflicting a good deal of his society upon the interesting exiles. Three weeks after his introduction it was his good fortune to be invited to meet them at a dinner party given them by Professor Whitewood of his own Alma Mater, the celebrated Winslow University.

The Whitewood house was of an architecture so common in New Boston that in describing it I run no risk of identifying it to the curious. Exteriorly it was a square box of brick, stuccoed to represent granite; interiorly it consisted of four rooms on each floor, divided by a hall up and down the centre. This was the original construction, to which had been added a greenhouse, into which you passed through the parlor, carefully balanced by a study into which you passed through the library. Trim, regular, geometrical, one half of the structure weighing to an ounce just as much as the other half, and the whole perhaps forming some exact fraction of the entire avoirdupois of the globe, the very furniture distributed at measured distances, it was precisely

such a building as the New Boston soul would naturally create for itself. Miss Ravenel noticed this with a quickness of perception as to the relations of mind and matter which astonished and amused Mr. Colburne.

"If I should be transported on Aladdin's carpet," she said, "fast asleep, to some unknown country, and should wake up and find myself in such a house as this, I should know that I was in New Boston. How the Professor must enjoy himself here! This room is exactly twenty feet one way by twenty feet the other. Then the hall is just ten feet across by just forty in length. The Professor can look at it and say, Four times ten is forty. Then the greenhouse and the study balance each other like the paddle-boxes of a steamer. Why will you all be so square?"

"But how shall we become triangular, or circular, or star-shaped, or cruciform?" asked Colburne. "And what would be the good of it if we should get into those forms?"

"You would be so much more picturesque. I should enjoy myself so much more in looking at you."

"I am so sorry you don't like us."

"How it grieves you!" laughed the young lady. A flush of rose mounted her cheek as she said this; but I must beg the reader to recollect that Miss Ravenel blushed at anything and nothing.

"Now here are buildings of all shapes and colors," she proceeded, turning over the leaves of a photographic album which contained views of Venetian architecture. "Don't you see that these were not built by New Bostonians?"

They were in the library, whither Miss Whitewood had conducted them to exhibit her father's fine collection of

photographs and engravings. A shy but hospitable and thoughtful maiden, incapable of striking up a flirtation of her own, and with not a selfish matrimonial in her head, but still quite able to sympathise with the loves of others, Miss Whitewood had seated her two guests at their art banquet, and then had gently withdrawn herself from the study so that they might talk of what they chose without restraint. It was already reported, with or without reason, that Mr. Colburne was interested in the fascinating young exile from Louisiana, and that she was not so indifferent to him as she evidently was to most of the New Boston beaux. This was the reason why that awkward but good Miss Whitewood, twenty-five years old and without a suitor, be it remembered, had brought them into the quiet of the study. Meantime the door was wide open into the hall, and exactly opposite to it was another door wide open into the parlor, where, in full view of the young people, sat all the old people, meaning thereby Doctor Ravenel, Professor Whitewood, Mrs. Whitewood, and her prematurely middle-aged daughter. The three New Bostonians were listening with evident delight to the fluent and zealous Louisianian. But, instead of entering upon his conversation, which consisted chiefly of lively satire and declamation directed against slavery and its rebellious partizans, let us revert for a tiresome moment or two, while dinner is preparing and other guests are arriving, to the subject on which Miss Ravenel has been teasing Mr. Colburne.

New Boston is not a lively nor a sociable place. The principal reason for this is that it is inhabited chiefly by New Englanders. Puritanism, the prevailing faith of that land and

race, is not only not favorable but is absolutely noxious to social gayeties, amenities and graces. I say this in sorrow and not in anger, for New England is the land of my birth and Puritanism is the creed of my progenitors. And I add as a mere matter of justice, that, deficient as the New Bostonians are in timely smiles and appropriate compliments, bare as they are of jollities and angular in manners and opinions, they have strong sympathies for what is clearly right, and can become enthusiastic in a matter of conscience and benevolence. If they have not learned how to love the beautiful, they know how to love the good and true. But Puritanism is not the only reason why the New Bostonians are socially stiff and unsympathetic. The city is divided into more than the ordinary number of cliques and coteries, and they are hedged from each other by an unusually thorny spirit of repulsion. From times now far beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, the capsheaf in the social pyramid has been allotted by common consent, without much opposition on the part of the other inhabitants, to the president and professors of Winslow University, their families, and the few whom they choose to honor with their intimacy. In early days this learned institution was chiefly theological and its magnates all clerical; and it was inevitable that men bearing the priestly dignity should hold high rank in a puritan community. Eighty or a hundred years ago, moreover, the professor, with his salary of a thousand dollars yearly was a nabob of wealth in a city where there were not ten merchants and not one retired capitalist who could boast an equal income. Finally, learning is a title to consideration which always has been

and still is recognized by the majority of respectable Americans. An objectionable feature of this sacred inner circle of society is that it contains none of those seraphim called young gentlemen. The sons of the professors, excepting the few who become tutors and eventually succeed their fathers, leave New Boston for larger fields of enterprise; the daughters of the professors, enamored of learning and its votaries alone, will not dance, nor pic-nic, much less intermarry, with the children of shop-keepers, shippers and manufacturers; and thus it happens that almost the only beaux whom you will discover at the parties given in this Upper Five Hundred are slender and beardless undergraduates.

From the time of Colburne's introduction to the Ravenels it was the desire of his heart to make New Boston a pleasant place to them; and by dint of spreading abroad the fame of their patriotism and its ennobling meed of martyrdom, he was able, in those excitable days, to infect with the same fancy all his relatives and most of his acquaintances; so that in a short time the exiles received quite a number of hospitable calls and invitations. The Doctor, travelled man of the world as he was, made no sort of difficulty in enjoying or seeming to enjoy these attentions. If he did not sincerely and heartily relish the New Bostonians, so different in flavor of manner and education from the society in which he had been educated, he at least made them one and all believe that they were luxuries to his palate. He became shortly the most popular man for a dinner party or an evening *conversazione* that was ever known in that city of geometry and puritanism. Except when they had wandered outside of

New Boston, or rather, I should say, outside of New England, and got across the ocean, or south of Mason and Dixon's line, these good and grave burghers had never beheld such a radiant, smiling, universally sympathetic and perennially sociable gentleman of fifty as Ravenel. A most interesting spectacle was it to see him meet and greet one of the elder magnates of the university, usually a solid and sincere but shy and somewhat unintelligible person, who always meant three or four times as much as he said or looked, and whose ice melted away from him leaving him free to smile, as our southern friend fervently grasped his frigid hand and beamed with tropical warmth into his arctic spirit. Such a greeting was as exhilarating as a pint of sherry to the sad, sedentary scholar, who had just come from a weary day's grubbing among Hebrew roots, and whose afternoon recreation had been a walk in the city cemetery.

There were not wanting good people who feared the Doctor; who were suspicious of this inexhaustible courtesy and alarmed at these conversational powers of fascination; who doubted whether poison might not infect the pleasant talk, as malaria fills the orange-scented air of Louisiana.

"I consider him a very dangerous man; he might do a great deal of harm if he chose," remarked one of those conscientious but uncharitable ladies whom I have regarded since my childhood with a mixture of veneration and dislike. Thin-lipped, hollow-cheeked, narrow-chested, with only one lung and an intermittent digestion, without a single rounded outline or graceful movement, she was a sad example of what the New England east winds can do in enfeebling and distorting the human form divine. Such are too many of the

New Boston women when they reach that middle age which should be physically an era of adipose, and morally of charity. Even her smile was a woful phenomenon; it seemed to be rather a symptom of pain than an expression of pleasure; it was a kind of griping smile, like that of an infant with the colic.

"If he chose! What harm would he choose to do?" expostulated Colburne, for whose ears this warning was intended.

"I can't precisely make out whether he is orthodox or not," replied the inexorable lady. "And if he *is* heterodox, what an awful power he has for deceiving and leading away the minds of the young! He is altogether too agreeable to win my confidence until I know that he is guided and restrained by grace."

"That is the most unjust thing that I ever heard of," broke out Colburne indignantly. "To condemn a man because he is charming! If the converse of the rule is true, Mrs. Ruggles—if unpleasant people are to be admired because they are such—then some of us New Bostonians ought to be objects of adoration."

"I have my opinions, Mr. Colburne," retorted the lady, who was somewhat stung, although not clever enough to comprehend how badly.

"It makes a great difference with an object who looks at it," continued the young man. "I sometimes wonder what the ants think of us human beings. Do they understand our capacities, duties and destinies? Or do they look upon us from what might be called a pismire point of view?"

Colburne could say such things because he was a popular favorite. To people who, like the New Bostonians, did not demand a high finish of manner, this young man was charming. He was sympathetic, earnest in his feelings, as frank as such a modest fellow could be, and among friends had any quantity of expansion and animation. He would get into a gale of jesting and laughter over a game of whist, provided his fellow players were in anywise disposed to be merry. On such occasions his eyes became so bright and his cheeks so flushed that he seemed luminous with good humor. His laugh was sonorous, hearty, and contagious; and he was not at all fastidious as to what he laughed at: it was sufficient for him if he saw that you meant to be witty. In conversation he was very pleasant, and had only one questionable trick, which was a truly American habit of hyperbole. When he was excited he had a droll, absent-minded way of running his fingers through his wavy brown hair, until it stood up in picturesque masses which were very becoming. His forehead was broad and clear; his complexion moderately light, with a strong color in the cheeks; his nose straight and handsome, and other features sufficiently regular; his eyes of a light hazel, and remarkable for their gentleness. There was nothing hidden, nothing stern, in his expression—you saw at a glance that he was the embodiment of frankness and good nature. In person he was strongly built, and he had increased his vigor by systematic exercise. He had been one of the best gymnasts and oarsmen in college, and still kept up his familiarity with swinging-bars and racing shells. His firm white arms were well set on broad shoulders and a full

chest; and a pair of long, vigorous legs completed an uncommonly fine figure. Pardonably proud of the strength which he had in part created, he loved to exhibit gymnastic feats, and to talk of the matches in which he had been stroke-oar. It was the only subject on which he exhibited personal vanity. To sum up, he was considered in his set the finest and most agreeable young man in New Boston.

Let us now return to the dinner of Professor Whitewood. The party consisted of eight persons; the male places being filled by Professor Whitewood, Doctor Ravenel, Colburne, and a Lieutenant-Colonel Carter; the female by Mrs. and Miss Whitewood, Miss Ravenel, and John Whitewood, Jr. This last named individual, the son and heir of the host, a youth of twenty years of age, was a very proper person to fill the position of fourth lady. Thin, pale and almost sallow, with pinched features surmounted by a high and roomy forehead, tall, slender, narrow-chested and fragile in form, shy, silent, and pure as the timidest of girls, he was an example of what can be done with youthful blood, muscle, mind and feeling by the studious severities of a puritan university. Miss Ravenel, accustomed to far more masculine men, felt a contempt for him at the first glance, saying to herself, How dreadfully ladylike! She was far better satisfied with the appearance of the stranger, Lieutenant-Colonel Carter. A little above the middle height he was, with a full chest, broad shoulders and muscular arms, brown curling hair, and a monstrous brown mustache, forehead not very high, nose straight and chin dimpled, brown eyes at once audacious and mirthful, and a dark rich complexion which made one think of pipes of sherry wine as well as of years of