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CRESCENT CARNIVAL

FRANCES PARKISON KEYES

(Continued)

When dinner was over, and the grinning black boy had cleared away the table, except for the glasses, the men began to play poker. There was an occasional call for more liquor and for another "small black". But for the most part the men were intent on their game. When they stopped playing, considerably after midnight, they tumbled off to bed in the dormitory, some of them still in their underclothes, the banter which took the place of formal good nights, gradually trailing off into silence. The next morning they began where they had left off the night before. The decks of cards were picked up again, the "small-blacks" put in a periodic appearance, the plates piled with oysters and chickens and terrapin were brought in by the grinning black boy.

Mr. Broussard, like his friend Mr. O'Meara, was deep in the poker game; and this was not interrupted until a Gargantuan dinner was shoved onto the table by King. In the case of the previous meals, the provender which had been brought along on the lugger furnished its sole source of supply, and after it had been devoured, most of the men went to sleep from sheer repletion.

CHAPTER XVI.

Dr. Anconi lounged out on the gallery, where Breck was standing, looking helplessly toward the blue waters of the bay and made a casual statement and asked a casual question.

"I thought I'd try my luck for a while. Would you care to go with me?"

"Thank you. I'd like to very much."

"All right. Suppose we get some bait and a couple of poles." He accepted Breck's offer to do the rowing, and sat back in the stern until they reached a shallow spot where some abashed wire was stretched between lines of fence posts, strung along the waters of the Gulf. Dr. Anconi motioned to Breck to stop rowing. He had finished baiting his line and now cast it out, settling himself comfortably and pulling away at his pipe. "We've come out to fish, not to talk," he said, "but there's a rumor going around that you want to get into local politics, with a view toward going further in the future."

"The rumor's true."

"If you don't mind my asking, is there any special reason?"

"Several. I have a son, and I have a notion that he'd be better off, some day, if I did something definite with my life. Instead of just drifting. If I were representing my parish I'd have to live in it. I was gone from Louisiana fourteen years. I don't want anything like that to happen again, either to me or to Drew."

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He paused, stopped by an uncomfortable sensation that Dr. Anconi was inwardly smiling. Breck had to force himself to go on. "And I do believe in this reform movement that's sweeping over Louisiana. I think it's the beginning of a new era. I want to have a part in the redemption of my native state. I love Louisiana and—"

"I'm afraid you have an aggravated case of youth, Breck. You've got another handicap, too. You're sensitive. Your skin's about as thick as tissue paper. And men who go into this game need to have thick hides."

"You make me feel as if I ought to give up the idea entirely, Dr. Anconi, and—"

"I'm not trying to make you feel that way. I'm only trying to open your eyes, so that you won't go into all this like a blind kitten. Without warning, Dr. Anconi began to struggle with his cane, and after a tussle, landed an eight-pound redfish. "Well, have to go on now until one of us gets a sheep's head," he said.

The poker game was still going on when Breck and the coroner got back, but the men were beginning to show signs of wear. The next morning the real purpose of the fishing trip was revealed. Odilon Dupre announced that they must select a delegate for the Constitutional Convention.

"Who did you have in mind for a delegate, Doc?" Clement Perez inquired.

"Claude Martin wouldn't be a bad man," the coroner suggested. Mr. Broussard and his friend Mr. O'Meara, Mr. Perez, Allain de Gruy and Omer de Hauterive, not to mention the two planters whose names Breck had never yet learned, were all gazing attentively at Dr. Anconi and nodding their heads.

Breck knew that Claude Martin was as good as elected already. He also knew that he himself could count on going as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Breck was eager to get home now and, instead of the anticipation which had buoyed him up before, he had a letdown feeling which he could not shake off. This was intensified when he found no one at the Donaldsonville station to meet him. He had wired Anna telling her when she might expect him. He tried the telephone in the waiting room, but got no answer. Vaguely alarmed, he went to the livery stable and hired a hack.

(To be continued)

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Ellen's Diary

Continued from page 2

ent trees, that now tower and spread in graceful lines among their neighbours about the lawn. Night-winds of March play a quiet requiem over his clay—without a faulty note, that he may enjoy and love it the better in its purity . . . a gentle lullaby of a melody to this gallant soul full of years and wisdom and at heart, kindly as a child, who now has come to his long rest!

By this St. Patrick's Day will have dawned to have folks honor in mind and heart the memory of Ireland's Patron Saint. "Sure an'

you an' me an' the man will have to take a trip there one day, Ellen" Pat chuckled to us recently when we spoke of this enchanting land of his people. "I'm after belavin' there's Irish about James too, else why should he have a lakkin' for raisin' av pigs? At any rate we must go." "And why Pat?" we asked him. "Oh to smell the peat fires a-burnin'—jak I've heard the old folks tell. To see the wee cottages an' the thatched roofs—an'" he twinkled. "p'rhaps to hear a leprechaun a-mourning or the green folk dancin' by the light av the moon! To find our for certain sure, is the grass av ould Ireland greener than is ours. To hear the ould songs. . . . "And to learn how to make love?" we teased. Pat smiled. "I've always heard

an Irishman makes the best sweet-heart av them all. Mind I don't know at all but many's the time I heard it said. "A treasure in our scrap book: "Love Making in Paddy's Land" by Elsa Keeling describes this bewitchment delightfully.

(1) Under Kitty's Window. "Ah then who is there talkin'?" "Sure it's only me you know. I was thinkin' we'd go walkin'— "Wor ye raly thinkin' so?" "Och, ye needn' be so cruel An' me thrugged this sivin miles" "Is it cruel, Michael, Jewel?" "Sure I'm dressin' all the while!"

(2) Before Michael's Cottage. "There, now, that's me cottage,

Dorothy Dix Says—

Continued from page 2

bottle. Make the toddler complete his block house. Teach your children a pride in doing good work and never lying down on their jobs. You can't down the man and woman who have patience and grit enough to stick to the thing they have undertaken. The failures are those who flit from one thing to another and do nothing well. Teach your children these things and you will have fitted them for life.

Kitty? "Is it, Mike?" "Yes, an' isn't it pretty?" "Him—lonesome like." "Lonesome!" (Now's y'r minute! Michael, strike!) "Sure if YOU wor in it—" "Arrah, Mike!" "Until Monday — — Diary — Good-night. . . .

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