

MARIE-LOUISE CHRISTOPHE

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## CHAPTER I

### *The Hotel de la Couronne*

MARIE-LOUISE was born in Cap Francois in the days of its glory. Her father was a publican and his inn flourished under the high sounding name of Hotel de la Couronne. It was a noted hostelry in the town and was patronized by the best people of the city and the country round about. About its court yard were dwarf palms, mangoes, and other semi-shrubs, and from seats beneath them one could look at mountains looming up in the east, their domes courting clouds, fleecy-white or blue-black, according to the season, while between them and the city were plains -- The Plaine du Nord -- upon which spread plantations, rich in sugarcane and coffee-trees, owned by planter-emigres from far off France. The soil of these plantations was rich, and the richness was transferred to the pockets of the planters. They and their families came to Cap Francois to empty their pockets and the Hotel de la Couronne captured a part of the contents.

There were high doings in the wine room when the planters came to town. The vintage of their homeland warmed even their tropic-boiled blood until it sometimes sizzled. They sung songs, told stories and played billiards and the tips they flung to their attendants were lavish. Because of patronage the Hotel de la Couronne was a public place without reservation; also a publication place. Everything that could be called news was rehearsed within its wine, room, and comments of all kinds made by those who listened. Not only was there news of The Plaine du Nord, but also from la belle France.

The French planters liked this possession of the homeland. Their life here was one of ease, and while they leisured riches flowed in; but their wives did not share their liking. A white woman aged twice as quickly in Saint Domingue as in the home country. Their husbands, they said, loved beauty and youth, so turned away from them when both had fled. Judging from the stories told in wine rooms, this must have been so; for their polygamous souls extolled the beauties of negro mistresses, who somehow did not seem to grow old.

Saint Domingue presented a curious mixture of population at this time. Not only were there one hundred black slaves to every white person, but there was a vast number of persons of mixed blood. The display on street parades was varied and remarkable, and perhaps might be called magnificent. The carefully housed French women palely white; their white husbands bronzed by the Caribbean sun; their offspring by black wives yellow in all shades; and natives ebon black. Such a parade suggested all kinds of stories and formed a singular historic background. Because of this mixed blood there were many grades of society. White blood in any degree conferred freedom on the fortunate possessor, and yet it did not bring happiness. The half-breed aped the white man and wanted to be white, but that class did not want him to be. The law guaranteed equality, but it was a fiction. There was a line of demarkation between the two. It was possible in Saint Domingue for a black man to be free. Free and easy masters permitted such a thing, either as a gift or by purchase, if the would-be purchaser had the money.

Because of this, Coidovic, the owner of the Hotel de la Couronne, was a free man.

## **CHAPTER II**

### *Marie-Louise*

Coidovic lived a life outside his hostelry. He had a wife and daughter, both of whom he loved. The wife, like himself, had been born a slave; but the daughter had been born free. Coidovic had picked up quite a little education, and, because of his surroundings, a varied one. It was irregular, however, and unsatisfactory to him. He wanted his daughter to have one obtained in the regular way; so she was sent to schools. He wanted her to have accomplishments-music and painting -- such as white women possessed, so he employed teachers in these arts.

Marie-Louise was of a sunny disposition. She inherited this from her father, perhaps, for he was of easy feeling. He knew the hard knocks of life, and how hard it was to climb. He was considered successful, but it had not soured him. He was a fatalist. He could account for his success in no other way. Other people had tried harder and failed; so he was ready to hold out a helping hand to those who tried to rise; but the mother would have liked to see her daughter put on the dignity her position warranted.

Marie-Louise was sunny. As a child she played with all the children who came her way, black or white with the shades between; played in the palm shaded streets and the Place d'Armes of Cap Francois; or

with the naked black urchins in the clay-baked alleys or compounds. Station made little difference to her.

As she grew older and more domestic, she was quiet. She listened to the stories told by old femmes of all colors in the streets of Cap Francois, and to those of the French women who tarried in the waiting salon of the Couronne. Strange stories they all told. There was the old woman slave who scrubbed the floors of the hotel. She had been born in Africa, and the wild life she recited and yet longed for awakened a kind of awe in Marie-Louise. Her unknown ancestors must have shared that kind of life only three generations before her. Then Adele the free woman, who brought stories of duplicity and fraud from the plantations of the Plaine du Nord along with her vegetables and fruit. Then the French women of the waiting salons.

They were so unhappy they did not care who heard their stories. It was possible for a white man to love a negro, but a white woman could not love even a negro saint. Then she heard of far-off France that these white women were always longing for; and of the richness there with which even the French furnished houses of Saint Domingue could not vie. Marie-Louise gained an education not to be had in the public schools, and had an historical knowledge not to be found in text books. Her mother denounced this knowledge as out of the regular course; but her father sympathized with it, it was so like his own. He had not thought of it as valuable in his own case, but when he heard it from his daughter's lips -- his daughter who was educated -- it aroused a new interest and value.

"You are a wonder," he told Marie-Louise.

"You should be a queen; you know so much about the people and have such an interest in them." Coidovic could not conceive of any possibility that could make her a queen. When he made the declaration before his wife, she flung up her head "She's too common and undignified," she said. "Nothing of that sort could happen to her."

Nevertheless, Marie-Louise grew up into the same sunny-faced woman she had been as a child. She was loved by all the people of Cap Francois and the plantations outside.

### **CHAPTER III**

*The Boy from St. Kitts*

One day during Marie-Louise's girlhood, there came a new possession into the Coidovic household -- a boy slave about twelve years old. He had been bought from a French naval officer in the fleet of M. le Comte d'Estaing, which had put into the harbor of Cap Francois.

This boy had been born on the Island of St. Kitts. He had endured the same life as all slaves -- six years of naked freedom and then work. At seven he had been apprenticed to a mason kept on his master's estate. Five years he worked at this, and after efforts showed he learned the trade well. It was hard work, however, and at the age of twelve, he ran away -- or to be more exact -- he changed masters, for the French sailing master who received him on board his ship claimed him as a slave. He had never had a name until on board this ship, when the sailors dubbed him Christophe because of the island he came from, and the name followed him through life.

The ship on which he took passage put into the harbor of Cap Francois. As she entered the harbor it was discovered to be in the midst of a French naval fleet of twenty-four ships, under the command of M. le Comte d'Estaing. This fleet was bound for Savannah on the American mainland to aid the Americans who were fighting to free themselves from their British overlords. The admiral had been recruiting fifteen hundred soldiers with which to assist the Americans colonies, with twenty-two hundred more from Guadeloupe and Martinique. The fleet reached its destination, stayed a month during a rainy season and then returned to the island homes of the soldiers. The young officer had no further use for a servant, so he sold Christophe to Coidovic.

Christophe was of rather a surly disposition, but no one could withstand Marie-Louise's sunny smile; so they became close childhood friends and sweetheart as the years passed.

He had a fund of new tales for her to listen to and meditate on. Most of her old stories had to do with the island she lived on and France, the country the white planters came from. Now she learned there was a land to the west of Saint Domingue -- a great nation -- and they were fighting for independence from England. She listened to his description of the soldiers he marched with the negro troops from the West Indies, the regulars from France and the hard-featured farmers from the American colonies; but mostly she liked to listen to the stories of a Saint Domingue mulatto, Chavannes, who had become Christophe's chum.

Chavannes had been greatly impressed with what the Americans were fighting for freedom. Why could not freedom be had in Saint Domingue? This greatly impressed Marie-Louise. She was free -- but why could not Christophe, her best friend, also be free?

Christophe was stable boy about the hotel, and the light-hearted, half-drunken planters tossed him many a gold piece as a tip when he brought their horses to the block. That put an idea into the head of Marie-Louise.

"Keep them," she said, "and I will make father sell you your liberty. Then you will get what Chavannes is talking about."

The idea took root in Christophe's brain.

The work of stable boy was not strenuous, so Christophe had many hours of leisure. These he passed, for the most part, in Marie-Louise's company. She read to him, mostly books of history, to which he listened eagerly. She was reading about the English colonies one day, when he interrupted her as a sudden thought took possession of him. He was from an English colony. All English people had at least two names. He had been named Christophe by a French captain, but he was going to have an English given name to go with it. Henry was the name he picked out.

"But the French people have Henris," interrupted Marie-Louise.

"Yes; but did you not tell me they spelled the name differently?" inquired Christophe.

"Yes, with an i instead of a y," admitted the girl.

"Then mine shall be spelled with a y," declared Christophe.

"Then if that be your desire, it shall be Henry, and I will be the first to so address you," and she held out her hand.

Henry grasped it and looked into her clear eyes for a moment, then drew her into his arms and kissed her.

"You are a darling," he whispered.

The cycle of childhood friendship ceased at that moment and the commune of lovers began.

Very shortly Christophe was taken from the stable and put into the billiard room to keep the score of the planters. It was a better place. The tips were more numerous and larger. The stenchy overalls of the stable boy were exchanged for a white starched coat and shirt.

"You look much nicer," commented Marie-Louise.

"Thank you," returned Christophe. "I feel nicer; and I am grateful to you for the advancement, for I suppose it was your influence that obtained it for me."

"Father ought to be willing to do something for his daughter," was the only comment of Marie-Louise.

The change was an education to Christophe, and the roll of teacher changed from Marie-Louise to the first. The planters talked over their billiards and their wine, and the longer they played and the more they drank the more they talked. They said things not intended for slave ears. The wine loosened their tongues and blurred their intellects.

Christophe listened with amazement and then coolly digested what they said; and within the short tropic twilight told what had been said, with his disgusted reflections to Marie-Louise. It was as new to her as to Christophe. First it amazed her as it had her lover. Then she cogitated upon it. Then it was that Christophe became teacher.

What he had heard the planters say was that Saint Domingue was a powder barrel and liable to blow up at any time. There were, they said, twenty thousand planters with five hundred thousand black slaves, and between them were twenty-four thousand people neither white or black, and the three classes were opposed to each other. If the slaves ever found out the power of numbers, it would be death to the whites; also, if the jealousy of the mulattoes increased to the boiling point, so they could join the blacks, the boiling would become fiercer. But they were so jealous that they would not unite.

Marie-Louise listened and thought as she listened to Christophe.

"There may be a revolution," she mused. "A black kingdom may take the place of the white one. Chavannes' dream may come true."

"It will mean bloodshed," interposed Christophe.

"Oh, I hope not!" exclaimed the gentle Marie-Louise.

Another thing the planters talked about, and that was the homeland of France. They were having a revolution across the sea. The king had been beheaded and a new order set up. The people had torn down the Bastille and declared all men were brothers. If the idea should ever cross the ocean to this province, then all would be doomed.

France was rather of a misty far-away land to Christophe and Marie-Louise, a wonderful land when they thought of the fine furniture which adorned the houses of the French planters, and the flowing dresses which robed their wives and daughters.

But the people -- the common people -- who had driven out the king, must be kind, even if savage, to be willing to clasp hands with all men as brothers.

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One night as the twilight deepened and the two sat under the pepper tree in Cordova's court-yard, Christophe took a bag from his pocket and emptied the contents into Marie-Louise's lap. The heap was composed of shining golden francs.

"There's what your father paid for me, with enough additional for annual interest. Do you think he would sell me my freedom?"

Marie-Louise gathered the golden heap into her hand, put it back into the bag and returned it to Christophe.

"Keep it until I tell you to see father," she said.

The next day at nightfall, the two met under the pepper tree, she said

"You can see father now."

The next night at their meeting, Christophe said

"I have earned my first money as a free man today, because of you, I suspect -- and your father would not take any interest. Said my work ought to be interest enough, also, I suppose because of your influence. I don't know how I can thank you or repay you; but if a life of devotion will lessen my debt, I will gladly give it. I am poor, but I may be richer; and when I am, I am coming to claim you!"

"Don't wait for riches!" exclaimed Marie-Louise. "Time is flying; war is threatening; and we are sure only of the present!"

"You are a prize, Marie-Louise !" throbbed Christophe. "I hope I deserve you!" and in the closing twilight their lips touched in a betrothal kiss.

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Effects of the Brotherhood of Man*

The revolutionary fire from France caught in the multiplied tinder of Saint Domingue. Everybody wanted change, even the white planters; but the mulattoes thought their day had come when the National Assembly of Paris granted the right of election to all freemen irrespective of color. That set fire to the white fuel of the island and the smoke from that fire floated about the billiard room of the Couronne. A white man had been dragged from his house and beheaded for agreeing with the yellow men; and a seventy-year-old affranchi had been tied to the tail of a horse and dragged through the streets as an example. Mobs of whites burned the plantation buildings of the yellows as a rebuke for insolence and riches. It was whites against France, yellows against white and blacks against both.

Oge, the mulatto, had been to France in the interest of the yellows and he had had his bones broken on a rack in the public square, together with those of Chavannes, the friend of Christophe.

That was too much for the blacks and they started an insurrection. Christophe kissed his wife and started for the mountains to join it.

The insurrection was not a success and they saw the head of their leader paraded on the point of a pike through the streets of Cap Francois as a warning.

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As a result, Toussaint and his runaway slaves crossed over the boundary to the Spanish end of the island from whence they fought the French end. But Toussaint could not be a Spaniard. His sympathies lay with France who had declared all men free. So he again led French forces and became governor-general of Saint Domingue and reunited all the warring factions so the French flag floated over the whole island; but it had taken seven years of savage war to do this.

Christophe, who had been his lieutenant, had arisen to the rank and dignity of a general of France. Under the government of Toussaint, he was made commandant of Cap Francois and surrounding country. He built a magnificent mansion in the city and furnished it with the most exquisite furniture that could be bought in Paris; then he inducted Marie-Louise into it as mistress. She walked through the rooms in awe.

"Oh, Henry!" was all she could say.

"This is for the queen your father said you should be," he replied. "Your taste and reading and teaching is reflected here. Without it I could not have produced it. You deserve all I can give. Enter and share my joy."

## CHAPTER V

### *A Visit from Royalty*

General Christophe and his wife did enjoy the magnificence of their home, he with a rather haughty dignity, she with a simple dignified joy. Cap Francois was at their feet. The slave, stable boy and hotel marker was governor and the daughter of the inn shared his glory.

The isle of Saint Domingue, after her seven years of war, was at peace and sharing a prosperity never before enjoyed. There was no slavery on the island. The dream of Francois Toussaint for universal freedom seemed coming true. No wonder his people called him L'Ouverture.

Over in France, however, the nation was suffering a reaction. Human nature was getting the better of Napoleon, the savior. He had been third consul, first consul, consul alone. Now he had taken upon himself the title of emperor and was making good that title. The justified right of freedom and franchise which had been bestowed upon all in the Caribbean isles was being doubted. The new emperor was sorry it had ever been given. He wished the island for a principality for his sister Pauline and her impecunious husband, LeClerc. In fact he meant to grant it to her whether or no. But there were difficulties. The riches of the planters had come through slavery and the slaves had been freed. Somehow the edict must be revoked. Ah, the revocation was the trouble!

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There was L'Ouverture! -- he had risked his life to gain freedom for the island. Freedom had been his dream and he would not see it overturned without a greater struggle than had been made to gain it. The people loved their freedom and would fight to the last man to retain it! They loved Toussaint, their great general, and would follow wherever he led. That was Napoleon's great wish and effort to get rid of Toussaint.

The murmurs from Paris had reached Saint Domingue. General Christophe heard them. It worried him somewhat. He did not doubt but what victory would rest with the island forces; but he had had enough of war. He was enjoying life with Marie-Louise and wished to continue it; but he was not unmindful of what the future might hold. Of this fear, however, he said not a word to Marie-Louise. She must have her day of pleasure unsullied by fear. He had no doubt but what she would be equal to any emergency; but he wished her to be free from fear as long as possible.

One morning a rumor came to the commandant's house. Outside the bay was a war fleet -- twenty-two sail with the tricolor at the prow of each headed for the harbor. Such an armament could mean but one thing. That nation had come to claim her lost province, by force of arms if necessary. He must make ready to meet them -- force against force, if that were the ultimatum. He went to his own room -- his and Marie-Louise's and sent for her. When she came in it needed no second glance to tell her trouble brewed. She flew to his arms

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"Henry, what is it?"

"We are in trouble," he answered; "but be brave, my queen!"

She snuggled in his arms, looking up in his face, and as she did not speak, he continued

"Could you leave this beautiful place and live in a thatched hut?"

"Would you be with me?" she countered. "If you would be there, the place would make no difference. But why do you ask such a question? What has happened?"

"Twenty-two war ships lie off this harbor! Their coming can mean but one thing! I have not many troops at my disposal, and it would be some days before I could get reinforcements; therefore we shall have to prepare for the worst!"

"And have you got to stay and fight those horrid Frenchmen? Why can't we both fly?"

"I can't give up without a fight?"

"I will stay with you -- fight with you!"

"No, my dear, you must fly, if necessary, with the babies, and I will come to you. Do s you realize that if I fight this fleet, I shall be no longer a general of France, but a rebel?"

Marie-Louise fingered his coat and was silent a moment, then looked at the floor, but only for a moment did her eyes rest there, then they met those of her husband and her arms went round his neck.

"That makes no difference with me. You are mine; and I can love a rebel as well as I have loved a slave and a general!"

The tall, gaunt, stern-featured general bowed his head until his lips met hers.

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"I knew you would be brave and true. We'll prepare for the worst. Gather the things you value most, and be ready to fly at any moment.

The fleet sailed into the harbor, and when anchored, sent an aide to the commandant. He announced the fleet was that of LeClerc, the newly appointed governor-general of Saint Domingue, and he wished the city put in readiness for his landing with some twenty-two thousand soldiers.

"You say LeClerc has been appointed governor-general? Your government must know that François Toussaint is governor -- general of the island, and was appointed for life. Why a new governor-general?"

"Oh, the government simply wished to relieve Toussaint of the cares and responsibilities of office and place them on the shoulders of a younger man, so he can enjoy life. We come on a peaceful errand."

"If you come on a peaceful errand, why the need of twenty-two thousand soldiers? Are there not soldiers enough on this island for legitimate use? This demand should have been made of Toussaint. I am under him and until I hear from him, I cannot grant permission to land."

The aide was entertained and dined in a most sumptuous manner from plates of gold, which doubtless impressed him. He returned and reported the result of his interview to LeClerc.

LeClerc was impressed by the report of his aide; also chagrined at the reply. The result was, the aide paid another visit to the Cap Francois commandant, in which his demands

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were reiterated with the added insult, that refusal would be considered an act of rebellion.

Christophe replied that his position had not changed since the first interview and that he should repel an endeavor to land with all his resources, and if he was forced to evacuate, he should burn the city.

After the aide had returned to the flag ship, Christophe called Marie-Louise. He told her the result of the interview, and informed her also that he had a mule train and guard ready to convey her with two servants and such supplies as he could gather, to a refuge he had provided in the mountains.

Marie-Louise who had seen her husband go off to battle before, knew that nothing she could say would change his mind or should change it so she simply clung to him in a moment's embrace, and was led by him to her saddle horse, helped upon his back, bowed down for a good bye kiss and the little train took up its journey.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### *The Rebel*

Marie-Louise and her little retinue wended their way across the Plaine du Nord and up into the mountains. At the end of the second day they arrived at a deserted hamlet where an army had been mobilized. On the outskirts of this was a but a little larger and better than the others, and in this she took up her quarters, her servants and guards taking others in the vicinity. In this she waited for what she hardly knew and dreaded what she waited for.

The days were long and the sleepless nights longer. At the end of the fifth day appeared the object of her wait and watch the army of her husband. At the head of it he rode, still in his uniform of a French general, and behind him straggled a jaded, discouraged mob of men. Leaving the pitching of the camp to a subaltern, Christopher hastened to his wife. She met him with outstretched arms and tears streaming down her cheeks -- tears both of joy and sorrow. After resting in his arms a few moments and enjoying the luxury of both grief and joy, she held him from her and studied the face turned down to her. It was gaunt and stern and yet about the corners of the eyes and mouth lurked a smile at the pleasure of reunion.

"So all is lost?" she questioned continuing her study.

"Yes," slowly answered her husband; and,

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with a quizzical expression, countered, "You see an outlaw before you!"

"You are my husband, outlaw or soldier, and my love for him is the same !"

"I knew it would be, Marie, so you see there was joy as well as sorrow in coming to the mountains!"

"But will not the French pursue you here?"

"No," he answered. "These mountains cannot be entered except through defiles and every defile can hide an ambush. A thousand men in ambush can outmatch LeClerc's entire army."

"And the city! Did you burn that?"

"I had to. I hated to -- your birth place the place where I found you. But I could not allow it to be a welcome for the Princess Pauline."

"And our home, Henry?"

"That is gone. That was the first one fired. I applied the torch. I had to set the example. It caused a pang, but you were not there you or the babies. What is the use of preserving a nest when the birds have flown. Perhaps I can build you another sometime."

"Here is our home," exclaimed Marie-Louise, leading him inside. "We can be as happy here as in a mansion if the French don't come. What's going to be done now? Does it mean LeClerc has reconquered the island?"

"He has entered the ruined city of Cap Francois; but I do not believe he can reconquer the island. I am waiting to have a conference with Toussaint and Dessalines."

So Christophe and Marie-Louise waited for news and a conference.

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At the end of the second evening, while Christophe and Marie-Louise were sitting at their door, Christophe suddenly sat at attention. Marie-Louise observing him, also listened. Ah, there was the far off throb of drums. Away to the west over the plains came the first ones; then those nearer took up the throbs. The beats were in the African code and they were of alarm, with the implied command to be ready for an emergency. Then the drums of the rebel army camped round about them took up the alarm. Yes, the nation understood and was ready to act.

But it was slow waiting. The days passed uneventful, only on some nights the drums beat, letting this army in the mountains know they were still watching and ready to warn them.

Then came Dessalines, the tall, gaunt, ugly faced French general, with mule trains loaded with guns. There was an ugly grin at the corners of his mouth, however.

"I have been ordered to disarm the people," he said; "so I have gathered in these guns, and I am storing them in the mountains under your nose. They may come in handy," and the grin deepened.

"But the people and Toussaint?" queried Christophe.

"The people wait and Toussaint loves France. France declared for the brotherhood of man! France freed the slaves of Saint Domingue; and Toussaint still believes in France; so everybody is marking time in the island."

So Dessalines departed and the rebel army in the mountains waited.

Days passed and again Dessalines appeared. This time he displayed no grin on his features, but the fierceness of the tiger, which his soldiers called him; also his enemies, the French. He came to the cabin of Christophe

"Do you want a guest, and can you welcome another rebel?"

Christophe and Marie chorused "yes" to each question; and they followed the answer with questions of their own

"What has happened down on the plains?"

"Everything has happened," answered Dessalines. "LeClerc has kidnapped Toussaint, and he is on his way to France, a captive. They ambushed and tried to kidnap me, and would but for the warning of a dear friend. Then they called out the cavalry to hunt and chase me. That's why I'm here. I, like yourself, am no longer a general of France, but a rebel, a bandit, an outlaw."

"Welcome, bandit," chorused Christophe and Marie.

"I have answered your questions, now I have some to ask myself. What are we going to do? Are we going to sit down and let Napoleon and his representative here have the island without farther ado, or

are we going to fight? I believe we can beat LeClerc. He has more soldiers than we have and they are better armed; but we know the country better. We can ambush a regiment here and there so there will soon be a parity of troops, and as time and ambushes go on our troops will outnumber his and we can conquer. We still have the guns for our soldiers here in the mountains," and the cunning grin visited his face for a brief moment. "We shall have to desolate the island so it can feed no enemy. We did that once for France, it can be no worse for ourselves."

Christophe mused.

Marie-Louise sighed.

"I am sorry to have the island desolated," she said.

"But you would rather see it desolated than see it conquered, would you not?" added Dessalines.

"Oh, yes," assented Marie-Louise.

"Then let us summon the army this very night."

As the twilight deepened the drum corps of the several regiments assembled on the hard-beaten parade ground. The snares began with a long roll

"Venier?" they seemed to say in the patois of the country,

"Venir-r-r-r-r-r" (come) !

Then a rattle of tenor drums-"A faire du bruit," in the vernacular of the isle-a call for "diablerie."

This was punctuated to divide the time and harmony and rhythm by the big bass drums, "bourdonner ! dondon-er (come)"!

The roll and rattle of the drums were echoed all over the French part of the island to the Caribbean Sea.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### *The Dream*

Because the drums had beaten, a host gathered. The host was armed with the guns that had once belonged to them, and commissioned to go forth and destroy -- destroy every building and every Frenchman or his family to be found within the confines of the Caribbean Sea.

That they did with a will -- every lordly mansion, every macerating mill and every marauding band of French soldiers paid the penalty of that order. For two years the orgy of destruction went on, and then yellow fever finished the job.

Dessalines, the black general, like an avenging demon, superintended the work of destruction. He was everywhere, and when the French evacuated, a worshipful people made him emperor. As a warrior he

was superb; but as an emperor, trying to rebuild a desolated country, he was not a success. His enthusiastic, admiring and marauding soldiers became his enemies when forced to repair the damage they had done. They hated him -- hated him so badly that they assassinated him.

Then it was that Christophe, his lieutenant, became his successor. He did not fly so high as Dessalines.

He was content to be a king -- King Henry the First of Haiti.

He was as stern a man as Dessalines -- tall, raw boned, ugly featured. He profited by the mistakes of Dessalines. The work of his predecessor had to be continued, and King Henry realized that it was only a question of time when his subjects would hate him as badly as they had Jean Jacques and would murder him as they had their first monarch; but the grip of authority and power was on him and if he fell by the hand of the assassin he would have a glorious reign.

He would be king and Marie-Louise -- gentle Marie-Louise -- should be queen, not only of his heart but of Haiti. He would build her a palace -- he had already selected the site in Milot, and a name, Sans Souci -- the equal of which for magnificence should not be found in the New World. She should have servants to minister to her every want -- she who had been his inspiration and his teacher under the pepper tree in her father's court yard -- and the Prince Royal and his two daughters, they should be princesses in every sense of the word.

So he began his reign, and where Emperor Jean Jacques had been stern and hard for the good of the people of Haiti, his successor was stern and hard for the good of King Henry.

All around the new king, as he built his palace, he saw frowns. His subjects were enemies; and in the Caribbean Sea about his shores were French and English ships, ready to pounce upon him should opportunity offer; so he turned to the unfinished fortress of Dessalines, La Ferriere, the greatest fortress in the new world, to command the sea which harbored his foreign enemies; and, which, he realized, would stand as a monument to him -- his strength or his weakness, no matter which it should be -- until it mouldered by the hand of time.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### *The Humor of Being King*

The new country was in the throes of birth. It was only a stretch of country, and the people living therein were children. They could not help themselves and were under the delusion that a country grew as the

plantations round about. They had no relations with the other countries and wanted none. Only their king and a few of his kind saw the advantage of such relations -- saw the advantage of an exchange of products. But Haiti had no means of making such an exchange -- no medium of exchange either at home or abroad. Christophe wrinkled his brow over this situation and pondered deep and long as to how such a medium could be created. At last a broad grin illumined his features, accompanied by an audible laugh, something rarely seen or heard, for King Henry had no sense of humor. Yet something humorous had penetrated the seriousness of his mind.

One of the natural productions of Haiti were gourds; and they were a valuable one. Six hundred thousand people used the shells of this fruit, scraped of its seeds and pulp and dried, for drinking vessels. Without them they would not know what to do; and with a scarcity, what would they not give for one. This was the idea that had amused the king.

One morning when the green gourds

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had ripened, he issued orders to his soldiers to go out and gather them wherever found. They performed their bidding and turned into the treasury no less than two hundred and twenty-seven thousand gourds and calabashes. They came in many high-piled carts.

Soon the coffee crop was ripe; but the thirsty people had no containers for their favorite, mellow, brown beverage. They cursed the king for his piracy and carried their cursing to him personally. They were angry and they evidently wanted to stir a like passion in him; but the king was good humored. He smiled -- something none of his subjects had ever seen him do before. He would return their favorite drinking vessels in exchange for coffee berries. Each gourd was appraised at twenty sous, payable in coffee.

The coffee Christophe sold in foreign countries for gold, and thus formed a stable currency.

That Christophe was vain has always been admitted. He caused many monuments to be erected to perpetuate his memory; but he has one unseen monument -- one he could not have anticipated. It is the gourd money, for no matter what the circulating medium has been made of, the standard to this day is called a gourde.

Since that day, whenever a person receives a gourde, he or she smiles, both for the anticipation of what it will buy, and the remembrance that its creation made an unsmiling king to laugh.

## **CHAPTER IX**

*The Cathedral*

Christophe loved pomp and ceremony. Being declared king was not enough. He must be crowned -- but in what manner? Naturally it was a religious ceremony. That might not have been necessary in Henry's estimation. He never for a moment believed his elevation was by divine right. His mind ran in the rut of his pattern, the atheistic Napoleon, who believed God was on the side of the biggest army. Christophe's experience had changed that slogan to "God is on the side of him who possesses most strategem."

The church had always been against Christophe. That organization always had sided with instituted power, never with revolutions; so the king did not love it. Nevertheless its ceremonies were impressive and conducted with pomp. All instituted governments recognized the church, and it was ready to assist with its ceremonies and pomp; so the king turned toward it, even if there was a covert sneer on his lips.

With Marie-Louise it was different. There was a romance about the church. The story of Mary was the story of all women -- to love, to bear, to suffer. Her plaster image looked down in combined reflection of all three. Then the music -- its harmony, its muted passion, or its swelling halleluiahs. They appealed to all women -- they appealed to Marie. She had been brought up to believe in the church; and, notwithstanding all the cruelty and suffering it had condoned in twelve years warfare, she still believed in it.

When her husband scoffed at it -- its lack of humanity and of foresight -- she simply placed her hand on his arm and said

"I'm afraid we don't understand."

That touch of Marie-Louise always softened Christophe, and he answered

"Well, my dear; we'll have the church. You may have the sentiment and I will have the pomp. We will have a state chaplain to praise or condole for a salary; and we will have a cathedral, the like of which has never been built on this side of the Atlantic.

"You may have a many-stopped organ, and I will have a military band. The king of France shall not monopolize them all. He commandeered the hautboy from Germany; the bassoon and flute from Hungary; the horn from Hanover; the clarinet from Nuremburg; and the drums and cymbals from Turkey; and he tried them all together for the first time in Saint Domingue to help subdue us. I hate France, but I like her bands, for her reeds and pipes and drums are captives, not natives."

So the king set about building a cathedral at Cap Haitian to be crowned in. It was to be a magnificent building -- the most magnificent the island had yet seen. A crowd of workmen cleared away the burned beam-ends and smoke-blackened piles of stone on one side of the Place d'Armes -- the municipal center

of the town. All the architectural skill of Europe was called upon to furnish designs, and all the skilled masons, carpenters and plasterers on the island were conscripted to do the work. In two months it stood completed – the nave two hundred and fifty feet on each side and the transept eighty feet in height. In the choir at the far end was an elegant altar and an organ, and in the tower, a chime of bells. When completed, he led Marie-Louise through it.

"There is your music to stir or lull," he said, pointing to the organ, and as he showed her the niches in the wall, within which were plaster images, he continued, "There are your saints! They are all yours except one, which is mine -- mine alone. That is Mary. The king spells his name with a y because it is English and he came from an English isle; and my Mary spells her's with a final ie because she came from a French isle. The Mary in the niche is my Marie.

"You did not know that the artist I employed, whom you thought rather insolent, because he eyed you so closely, was doing it by my orders, so the Mary in the niche should be my Marie? She shall stand there through all time and be worshiped as the mother of Haiti. Do you see the soft bronze coloring of the face? The artist had to do that over three times before he could catch the gleam and the color you give me when I come to you. I would have no other. I have been working for your immortality, and I was sure that would give it as nothing else would."

So the church stood as a state church, presided over by a French priest, Corneilla Brelle, both scorned by the king; nevertheless in the subdued light from the stained windows, the king came often to kneel at the feet of Marie of Haiti.

But the church was not always a pleasure to Queen Marie or her husband; for once, when the king was away suppressing a rebellion, by the irony of fate, a band of mulatto women in Cap Haitian held a special service in the church to the delicate compliment of the virgin mother, to pray for his defeat.

Fate played another trick in this church of Marie-Louise. Brelle, the priest, although state chaplain, was a traitor to King Henry, and the latter knew it. Once his majesty intercepted two letters for the priest, and found he had informed the authorities of the republic at Port au Prince how many soldiers he had under him and how many guns.

The king kept an executioner among his officials, as well as a chaplain. The chaplain was more especially for the queen; but the executioner was entirely for himself. He had kept him pretty busy severing the heads from the bodies of those who would betray him, so busy that this monstrosity, Gaffie, boasted he

could sever the noblest head from the greatest noble without soiling the collar immediately below where the blade touched flesh.

Gaffe performed this piece of post mortem surgery on the chaplain. Marie-Louise rarely interfered with acts of state; but this execution stirred her devotion to the church. She shuddered

"Do not get another priest" she said. "The blood of one is enough on our hands."

"My dear," replied the king, "your wish shall be my law; but priest or no priest, there always will be one worshipper at the shrine of Marie. It will be his majesty the king."

## **CHAPTER X**

### *The Palace*

On a bright June Sunday in 1811, a golden crown was placed on the head of General Christophe and a golden scepter put into his hand. His jacket was peacock blue, his vest satin, and on his feet were patent leather pumps, above which were silk stockings. Christophe knelt and a priest declared him King Henry of Haiti. Beside him knelt Marie-Louise in jewels and silks, crowned queen of Haiti.

From that day Henry was busy on a palace, San Souci, on a mountain in the little town of Milot. He built it commanding the Plaine du Nord and the harbor and the ocean beyond. An army of workmen and artisans from all parts of the world had been gathered to build the finest mansion in the New World.

Finally it was completed, and he led the queen to it. Four stories it rose over the terrace, built of brick covered with yellow stucco and surmounted by a roof of red tile. Into the building he led her into the stately hall, with a grand stairway flanked with stone sentry boxes at intervals. The hall opened onto an exceptional large terrace. Through this he led the queen, showed her the audience chamber, the banquet hall, and up stairs to the private rooms of the king and queen, the Prince Royal and the two princesses. Then out through the gardens and grounds, where every flower and fruit that the queen had ever expressed a desire for

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were planted. To the chapel, the arsenal, the barracks, where was quartered the special black regiment of guards -- The Royal Dahomeys, the king called them -- the stable where was housed every specimen of equine flesh which the establishment would demand; then back to the palace rooms with the floors paved with marble and the walls panelled with polished hard wood, hung with mirrors, tapestries and paintings, and the library, the walls lined with richly bound books. There he bowed

"To my queen," he said.

Marie-Louise was in tears, but she smiled through them bravely

"It's very beautiful and magnificent," she said, "but I am afraid all this luxury will bring trouble.

"I am afraid, when, in the years to come, I look back on happiness, it will be under the pepper tree in my father's court yard, or even the thatched but in the mountains."

But her husband only clasped her arm a little tighter and replied.

"Put away your fears, dear. Enjoy the present as it goes. That is what you said under the pepper tree. Now we have a palace we must have a court to match it!"

King Henry did create a court -- four princes, eight dukes, twenty-two counts, thirty-seven barons and forty chevaliers.

## **CHAPTER XI**

### *Vaudeville*

King Henry set his government going in grim seriousness. He was in earnest, even to the play part. On Thursday of each week the king held court -- in the morning to the commoners and in the evening to the nobility.

In the morning he heard the complaints of planters, laborers or soldiers, and issued judgments generally just, but many times severe to one party or the other. He was unafraid and risked all consequences; but somehow his course was not popular.

At evening came the court. They wanted to come, for they enjoyed the farce. A prescribed uniform was insisted upon. The station about the king and queen, who sat upon a raised dias, was prescribed -- the princes and dukes at the footstool, the lesser nobility in the folding chairs beyond. They made profound obeisance to the king and queen and all the ceremonies were exact and dignified.

This court etiquette was pleasing to Henry, and not unpleasing to Marie-Louise; and yet there was something ridiculous about it. Some of the dukes whose ancestors had been savages in Africa two generations before were awkward in deportment. The queen, who was naturally graceful, could but observe it; yet she would say nothing about it to her husband -- nothing to mar his pleasure. Besides she felt she had been somewhat responsible. Had she not read him long descriptions of ceremonies of the French court in the old days under the pepper tree? That was where he had got his ideas. His schoolmistress gave them to him. She could not go back on her teaching. She did not want to if it gave Henry pleasure.

The foreign residents smiled. During the days when the nobility cared for their plantations, their court dress was discarded, and they went about in a very primitive fashion. The names of their estates had designations, which added to the ridiculousness of the court.

In the evening came music and dancing -- always a dance for a finale, whether in savage Africa, effete Europe, or in a rising state of the New World. Henry hated France, but his dances came from that country. The exuberance of the French people expressed itself in dances, and the exuberance of the Haitian people expressed itself in the same form. They took the dances the soldiers brought with them when they came to conquer. They had not conquered, but the dances they brought were captives -- captives for the pleasure of the Haitian court.

Henry wanted dignity in all the things he did or permitted to be done in his island kingdom -- dignity and pomp. The new dance, the waltz, which the Frenchmen had brought over, was too frivolous to suit the king, and he would have none of it. The quadrille and the stately minuet were his favorites and what he permitted. Royalty had danced them. Royal courts had enjoyed them. The slow tempo of the three-four time entranced them as it had its inventor, the elder Lully in his far away Poitou home. Its graceful movements had inveigled Louis XIV and he had danced it with his voluptuous mistress away back in 1653 -- Minuet de la Cour.

So the king and the nobility danced and dreamed. The queen smiled. The foreign dwellers laughed, and to their laughter added parodic badinage:

"Know ye the land where the orange and lime  
Mingle and grow; and its acidulous sweets  
Are absorbed by the people in titles sublime  
As observed when amorous Marmalade Duke meets Her grace, Lemonade."

Once it is said the king found the Duke of Lemonade asleep in a wrinkled uniform, and it put him in such a high temper that he shook him much as a dog would a badger; and for a second offence he was put to work on the citadel.

So Monsieur le Duc and Madame la Comtesse of Haiti met and danced in the palace of San Souci, -- the palace whose name would have one believe was without care; but it was a misnomer.

Yes, the world at large laughed at King Henry's peasant nobility, but there came a time when they did not laugh, for his kingdom waxed rich, and Louis XVIII. of France was willing to recognize everything for an alliance or contributory kingdom. He sent two envoys to the island to make terms if possible, but

Christophe, remembering the treatment his subjects had received at the hands of France, executed one and sent the other home with a jug full of small seed and a message that it would take twice as many men as there were seeds in the jug to subjugate Haiti.

And Napoleon, when he returned from Elba and wanted soldiers, was ready to swallow king and nobility for help from Haiti; but Christophe, remembering the windrows of Haitian bodies that had been thrown from LeClerc's war ships and washed up on the beach, would have none of him.

The smile left Marie-Louise's face when she heard of these negotiations. She put her hand on her husband's shoulder:

"You are always right," she said; "but I am sick of the savagery of War."

## **CHAPTER XII**

### *The Washing Place*

Every kingdom, or any form of government, for that matter, has its special meeting place -- its special loafing place -- although work may be connected with it. Haiti had one, or rather a great many such places.

This particular place, as all other similar places, was on the river bank near Milot, where a shallow little stream in its descent from the mountains, falls over its rock-bottom in tiny cascades. Here the women of the region, clad largely in nudity, came to wash soiled clothing. It was a natural laundry. This is not a fanciful term. All evidence points to this purpose by the creative power. Not only was the water there, with protruding rocks to serve as wash boards, but the soap. All around the place, with intersticing patches of sunlight, grew trees -- soapberry trees-laden with nuts. In the pulpy covering of these nuts is a mixture of stearine and palmitine, with an alkaline substance which makes natural soap; so the preponderance of evidence all points to its ordained purpose -- a natural laundry.

To this day, women gather here in great numbers to wash; and when tired, throw themselves on the ground to dry their clothing, eat a lunch of plantains and gossip. Indeed gossip forms quite a part of the program; and this gossip is carried home or into the market place for distribution. From the distribution agency Marie-Louise gained a knowledge of what her subjects were talking about.

It was the Code Henry. Napoleon wrote his code and it has outlasted his wars. He tried the sword and found the pen mightier; and the brain mightier than brawn. Henry profited by his example. He also tried the sword and now attempted the pen; but his subjects liked the sword best. There was something

exhilarating in war, but work –bah -- that was simply tiresome. Destruction was a kind of insanity; but rebuilding was simple drudgery. It was an indignity to ask a soldier to work.

So the men talked about the code in their thatched huts and the women echoed what they said at the washing place.

By the Code Henry, every adult man or woman was obliged to work. The hours were fixed. The day began with the dawn -- that is work began at that time. It continued until eight o'clock. Then they had an hour off for breakfast, to be taken on the spot. The king did not intend his subjects should get into the cool of huts, for fear the propensity to sleep would get the better of them. From nine to twelve it was work, and then there were two hours off for siesta. A Tropic day could not be endured without a siesta, and Henry did not try to overturn natural law. Then it was work again until the tropic night quickly drew its curtains.

The men rebelled. Masters in the old times, when they were slaves, were more lenient. Ah, this was slavery the worst slavery they had endured, and the women at the washing place echoed the declaration

"This is slavery!"

This was what Marie-Louise heard; and it troubled her.

Haiti had always been. a powder barrel! It was now! In the past, when somebody touched a match to the composition it went off! If somebody touched a match to it now, it would go off! Marie-Louise dreaded the effect of the explosion! Not for herself, did she dread it, but for the king! He was a hated man, and no one could know what revenge the mob would take.

Another thing the women at the washing place rebelled against. A washing place suggests a place of cleanliness; yet it was this cleanliness that the women at the washing place denounced. The king insisted on clothing in the place of the African semi-nudity. To supply this clothing he had erected a mill to convert the cotton grown on the island into cloth.

But the women rebelled. The wearing of clothes were unnecessary, especially among children. Children had worn no clothing in Africa, where most of them came from. The children of Haiti had worn no

clothing, why should they now? Why should adults burden themselves with clothing? It might be all right for the nobility on parade, but not for general use.

So the women at the washing place struck! They made speeches! they gesticulated! Marie-Louise learned about it.

## **CHAPTER XIII**

### *The Queen's Family*

When Christophe was simply a general, living in the house at Cap Francois, three children were born to the queen. A boy, Victor, the Prince Royal, and two daughters, the princesses Amethyste and Athenaire, very much like herself.

The prince was high-strung and lazy. His father undertook his bringing up, giving him access to all departments of the government, and explaining what he saw there. Then he imported tutors from England to add to the patchwork education he had received and imparted to his son. King Henry believed in education and wanted his country to be a land of educated men and women; so he built school houses throughout the length and breadth of his kingdom, and imported teachers.

The daughters were intrusted to the queen-mother during their earlier years. She had been instructed as became her class in the schools of her home city; but there came a time when she felt her education was not sufficient for the rising princesses. Baron Vestey, of the king's cabinet, and near to him, had lived in America before his advancement, advised that female teachers be imported from that country to instruct the young princesses. Two staid spinster females were imported as general teaching factotums, and two younger, more vivacious women, to instruct in music, dancing and painting.

The two elder women had the approval of the king. They were dignity personified; but the younger ones puzzled him. The painting teacher he liked fairly well. She was artistic in person and dress, dainty even, but somewhat reserved; but on the other hand, Mademoiselle Ducette, the music and dancing teacher, was a young witch and coquette. She was something unusual as a singer and performer on the piano, the recent successor of the spinet and harpsichord. Both her instrumental and vocal performances were enjoyed by the king and the entire court. His majesty would listen to her pure tones and trills as she would warble through the Scotch and Irish melodies of the day, -- "My Highland Mary," "Robin Adair," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Sally in Our Alley," "Annie Laurie," "Lucy Flittin'," and with a most flirtatious

toss of the head she took the runs of "Coming Through the Rye." Then she would sober down, though still with animation, and sing "The Campbells Are Coming," for the king. Then he would wonder how she came by such music? Outside of drum beats, music had not entered into his life much, and yet in the leisure of an evening he enjoyed it. It was a frivolity, he admitted, something for women and not warriors, and yet he discovered he had always loved music of the simple and natural kind he had known. He had always admired the soft cooing of the ring doves -- in fact he had admired them so much he had named one of his chateaux after it, La Ramier -so he gave her the same name. One could not help admiring her -- her sweet voice and her grace in the dance.

Others beside the king admired her. There was a young lieutenant of the king's guards, Thibault. He fell violently in love with her. It was hard telling just what her feelings were toward him. He was tall and graceful and of a tropic brown. Together in the dance they made a wonderful pair, that onlookers followed with their eyes.

La Rainier, as she was generally called, had plenty of admirers beside Thibault; and she distributed her favors quite impartially, much to the anguish of that young officer.

These teachers remained at Sans Souci several years, before it was thought the young princesses had imbibed and assimilated what they could teach. Then they returned to their native land.

Thibault laid siege to La Rainier's heart, when she was about to depart.

"La Rainier," he said, "you are not going to leave me here disconsolate?"

She parried his appeal.

"You have been gorgeous," he continued. "I don't see how I am going to get along without you."

"Ah, that's the tropic sun," she answered. "It puts passion into every one. It has into me. You would not know me back in America. I shall be a very demure young woman there."

"Then I want to come and see you. Can I?" "Without the tropic sun you would cool there."

"But may I not come and see what effect it would have on me?"

"I don't know," replied the dove, warily.

"Why can't I?" he urged.

"Well, you would not be at home in America," she added. "They are a different people there. There's no king's court where I live."

"Then why go at all? Why not stay here? We can have apartments at Sans Souci, and be permanent members of the king's court. Perhaps he would advance me."

Whatever went through the pretty head of La Rainier can only be guessed; but she looked out over the Plaine du Nord to the blue domes beyond, a far-away expression in her eyes. Then she came back to earth again; but the bewitching curves around her lips had straightened a bit as she answered with mock Biblical gravity

"Almost thou persuadest me: but white women grow old with a few years in the tropics. When I am old you will cease to care for me. Then I shall wish I had stayed at home. No, Thibault, you had better marry one of your own kind in your own land."

Thibault was silent a moment. "Is that final?" he said sadly. "Will you not reconsider what you have said when you arrive in America? Perhaps you will miss the tropic passion in your cold country, and long for the Saint Domingue sun. If you do, will you not write me, that I may go to you; or else come to me direct?"

La Rainier dreamed once more, looked at the plain, the mountains and over the blue Caribbean Sea

"If I change my mind, I will write," she answered.

La Rainier and her fellow teachers sailed for their native land and Thibault waited and waited for a letter that never came.

He never married, and was killed in a revolt against his master.

"A white woman," he once said sadly, "is like a will-o-the-wisp. You see her a moment and then she vanishes. She is gone; but the brightness of her always flashes before your eyes."

## **CHAPTER XIV**

### *The Blacksmith's Pouch*

Dessalines, in his darkest hour, threatened by revolutions within his island realm and attacks by foreign naval squadrons without, pondered on how he was to meet the two. Somehow he did not worry so much about the first as the second. He was The Tiger to his men and they were afraid of his feline ferocity. He must conquer all domestic outbreaks for a two-fold reason. First because a revolution was a revolution and must be overthrown; and secondly because the war ships prowling about the coast were

awaiting just such an outbreak to get in their conquering work. Dessalines felt he had the material to oppose the first but not the second; so he started on a citadel to fill in the lack; but he never finished it. A revolution finished him.

La Ferriere, "The Blacksmith's Pouch," as it was called, thus became an inheritance of King Henry's. For some time it lay unfinished as his predecessor had left it; but after a while, Henry discovered that Dessalines' fears were well grounded; and he had bequeathed them to his successor as well as the unfinished fortress and the need of such a fortress; so he recommenced the work.

All day long hordes of workmen toiled on the citadel; derricks creaked, and foot by foot its walls were reared; but it was a gigantic undertaking. The mountain peak upon which it was built, rises three thousand feet above the ocean it was to dominate, and the walls of the structure itself added one hundred and thirty feet to its height.

A mulatto engineer, named Henri Besse, planned the structure, with massive walls from twenty to thirty feet thick. It was not only to be a fortress, but a refuge in time of need. It was made to garrison ten thousand soldiers, should there be need of them, with provision chambers and an enormous cistern, where every drop of water that fell on the citadel could be saved. There were powder magazines and treasure chambers.

It was to be a prison, also; and deep dungeons were built within it.

It was a strenuous three hours climb up the mountain, which the natives called Le Bonnet a l'Eveque, "The Bishop's Cap," to the fortress, and thousands of men and women toiled up the steep ascent with loads of material; with the three hundred and sixty-five cannon (one for each day of the year) ranged in batteries in the corridors; and the hundreds of casks of powder with which to charge them; together with the tons of fifty-six, thirty- and twelve pound balls to be hurled with the explosive.

Not only were there hirelings, but soldiers of the regular army compelled to assist, and military prisoners.

Once it was said a set of young men formed a literary club at Cap Haitian, Le Petit Vers. This sounded innocent enough, but it was discovered that there was a mocking pun on the word, and that the club was a political one. It seems the king had a special variety of coffee tree in his garden, the berries of

which were reserved especially for his table, much to the indignation of the populace. These berries were known to the Cap Haitian people as Les Petits Verts. When this was brought to the attention of the king, the young poets had to mount the fortress walls and work.

The workmen grumbled, but they worked. They had to. The king watched over them. He was impatient and the job was long.

When he walked down the mountain, he brooded. He was worried. Marie-Louise watched him, tried to learn the special cause of his worry; but his tongue was silent. He only pressed the hand she laid on his arm a little tighter.

She was worried -- not only at the unknown cause that stirred her husband, but his physical health. He was breaking under the strain.

One night she discovered he was absent from his bed. On talking to him she could get no satisfactory answer. She watched' him. She followed him. He went straight to the citadel, and there began to lay stones on the unfinished wall. She appeared to him and spoke:

"Oh, Henry; what are you doing?" "Ah, Marie, what are you here for? I thought you were sleeping! You must go back!"

"Why should I go back? and you have not told me why you are here!"

"Oh, Marie-Louise ! So much to do and such a little time to do it in. You know I learned the mason's trade in my St. Christopher days, and it comes in handy now. I'm not tired and I can't sleep; so I work. I only oversee during the day. But you must go back."

"Will you go with me?" she continued.

"Not now," he replied.

"Then I stay until you go."

He kissed her, prepared a seat for her where she could lean against the wall, and wrapped his discarded coat about her to shield her from the cold that even a tropic night can produce.

He worked and she watched. The procession of stars marched and a flush of dawn lit up the eastern sky.

The king paused and came near to where his wife reclined.

"Come dear," he said. "We will return now. It was good to have you here, but you must not come again."

They walked down the uneven, rockstrewn mountain side in the yet darkness, his arm about her to lead and shield her from the roughness.

\* \* \*

That day, the queen overheard talk in the court yard. Habitués of the palace had discovered the additions to the fortress walls made during the night. At first they were superstitious. It was some occult power they thought first -- some voodoo spirit hovering around, and they were, awed.

There were some among the group who remembered that the king had learned the mason's trade on his boyhood island and boldly asserted it was he who was making the nightly additions. This assertion was met with a variety of exclamations. Some did not believe it. Some were inclined to give credence to the suggestion.

The originator then boldly announced he was going to find out about the personality of the builder. "I'm going to the citadel tonight; and if it is the king, I shall throw him over the parapet --the tyrant. When he strikes the rocks at the base of the wall, there will be no king."

There was silence in the group for a moment. Then someone suggested that such a feat was problematical on account of the great strength of the king.

"Perhaps it will not be the king who alights on the rocks at the bottom of the fortress wall."

This rather nonplused the speaker for a moment, then he added

"I shall take him by surprise and give him no chance for resistance."

There was more talk and more uncertainty about the sentiments of the men.

Finally the temper of the first speaker was aroused, and he informed them angrily

"You are a set of cowards! There is not one of you that dares to accompany me and help rid the island of a tyrant!"

This assertion of cowardice and challenge to disapprove it, had it affect. The group felt their spirit of bravery was assaulted, and reluctantly announced their willingness to accompany the first speaker.

"There," he exclaimed; "numbers can decide who will land on the rocks at the base of the wall. It will be a good night's job. It will show your patriotism to rid the island of the tyrant king."

Marie-Louise listened with bated breath and a feeling of faintness. Her king must not go to the fortress tonight -- must not go any future night. When he arrived at Sans Souci, she told him what she had heard and implored him to stay at the palace this night.

He held her in his arms a moment and kissed her:

"My queen has warned me," he said; "and there will be no question as to whose bones will be broken at the foot of the wall. And you must not go with me. I must not have you to protect against the mob as well as myself."

But when the darkness descended and the king took his departure, Marie-Louise followed. She was dressed in filmy white, but she covered it with a black mantle.

All was silent when the king arrived at the courtyard and began work. Marie-Louise crept as near to where he was working as she could without discovery, then crouched to the parapet wall to strain her eyes toward the faint outline of the king.

The night was long; but just as she thought her alarm had been needless, she discovered motion in the darkness; and by extra straining of her eyes could dimly perceive many bodies creeping along the ground of the court. They were the conspirators. What she was going to do she scarcely knew, but she was going to do something. The king was busy. The very fact that assassins were coming seemed to add a nervous energy to his strength. But the night had passed and nobody came. Then he muttered "Cowards!"

At that word a dozen indistinct forms arose from the darkness and made a rush toward the giant king. He was taken by surprise, but was quickly on the defensive. At that moment a white apparition appeared, with a scream.

The conspirators suddenly passed and then ignobly fled.

The king paused as suddenly as his enemies had done; looked at the apparition a moment and then approached. Marie-Louise, when the enemy had fled stood rooted to the spot; and now the danger was over, she trembled. The king reached her, caught her in his arms, kissed her, and then laughed loudly:

"My brave queen! My savior," he said. Then he laughed again.

"They took you for a voodoo spirit."

## CHAPTER XV

### *The Phantom Treasure*

The kingdom of Christophe waxed rich with enforced industry. The king's private chest bulged with coin -- European and American. He spent it prodigally -- the palace, the citadel, a dozen palaces, with chateaux scarcely inferior to Sans Souci, all connected with paved roadways, but there was a gigantic remainder. What he did with it was a puzzle to his subjects.

It was known that always below the lowest dungeon in the citadel, there were vaults intended for the national treasure, and a treasure was actually deposited therein amounting to thirty million dollars. It was well known that the king greatly desired to buy the Spanish portion of the island, and that a part of the national treasure had been accumulated for that purpose.

The people laughed when they knew about this treasure. If Henry could amass and save this vast sum for the state, how much could he subtract from these receipts for himself? It was believed he had amassed as much for himself as he had for the state. For this reason he was watched that the hiding place of this treasure might be discovered. Such a discovery meant robbery. All this fortune belonged to the state, they argued, and they were citizens of the state; so the logical conclusion could be no other than that a part of it belonged to the searchers, unless it be the forty thousand dollars that annually went into the king's pockets as salary.

It had been known for some time previous to Queen Marie's discovery, that the king spent his nights at La Ferriere and laid additions to the wall. It was a non-understandable proceeding to them. Because there was so much to do and life was so short was not a satisfactory explanation to this sun-wilted people. There must be some other reason than just a desire to push the work; and they could think of no other incentive than to construct hiding places for his treasure; so they daily torn down a portion of the wall erected by him during the night in the early morning to see if there were any cavities within which the treasure could be secreted.

The king had gathered a treasure -- a vast one. He was no miser. He cared little for money as money. He wanted to spend it; but he had objects of solicitude, and these were the queen and his daughters. The

Prince Royal, who was fat and lazy, should be able to take care of himself; but he was chivalrous to that degree that the feminine portion of his household should be provided for. The queen he loved. He owed everything he had attained to her. She must be protected and provided for. He had enemies all about him, so he must invest a fortune for her if she should be left alone with spies all about her.

How to dispose of it troubled him. He knew he was watched --his every movement -- and he distrusted almost every one around him. There was one of his barons, however, that he trusted. He had been a fellow-general in the army of Dessalines, and was now commandant of the citadel.

One night after the short hours had began, the king knocked at his door. The baron arose and unbarred the door. He was startled and affrighted when he saw who his visitor was, but saluted bravely. The king's visit at such an hour presaged something of importance, perhaps something dangerous. Traitors, or suspected traitors were thus summoned. His frightened wife also appeared in the background, with a lighted candle held high above her head.

The king viewed the affrighted pair and the sardonic grin he sometimes assumed came to his face. "It's all right, Madame. I simply have a little job for the baron. I will wait until he dresses." The baron disappeared, while his lady twisted about in uncertainty whether it was best to retire and leave the king in darkness or stand unceremoniously before his majesty bare-footed in her nightdress. The grin on the face of the king increased in size but he met the situation by rising and closing the door.

The baron soon appeared dressed and together the pair left the house. The baroness, agitated and trembling, sat on the side of the bed, the candle guttering on a stand near her -- sat until cocks crew in the morning, before her husband reappeared. The baron gave a whispered greeting, but she leaped to her feet and gave a scream.

Her husband had on the king's uniform.

"Hush!" hissed her husband. The king is abroad tonight, and is afraid of assassins; so he made me change uniforms with him."

"What did he want of you?" inquired his wife.

"The king and I have been burying a treasure in the queen's garden. It is for Queen Marie-Louise. She does not know anything about it, and I am to keep guard over it if he dies and tell her where it is, when in need of the sum. I have sworn to secrecy on forfeit of my life. That was what the king wanted."

The baroness was silent a few moments, with eyes looking toward the floor. Then she remarked

"Well, the king loves the Queen!"

## **CHAPTER XVI**

### *A Visit from the Sea*

So the state and the court functioned, presided over by the king, stately and stern, and by the queen, stately and sweet; but outside the populace grumbled. They looked askance at the royal luxury.

"We might as well have Napoleon and his minions," they chorused.

A little later they muttered:

"The king may go the way of the emperor."

The grumblings increased and reached the ears of the king. It maddened him, but was not unexpected. His kingdom would go the way of the empire of Dessalines. The people of the tropics were too enervated to work strenuously. Existence was too easy and indolence was to be desired more than riches or pomp.

So the face of the king hardened and the frown that habitually haunted it hardened into a permanent expression. Rumors of the disaffection reached foreign powers, so there were war ships continually prowling about the coast. The king worked harder and harder on La Farriere. If these foreign ships tried to gain an entrance, he would give them a taste of the ancient Haitian reception of such trespassers.

Nevertheless he worried. Every morning at the breakfast table he would look at the queen with a troubled expression on his face, and every night at supper, as he again looked the expression intensified.

Visiting representatives of foreign nations have to be treated with courtesy, even if they are known to be looking for weaknesses of defence. They have to be entertained and impressed with strength even by strategem.

King Henry determined to gain the friendship of England; so he invited the admiral of her fleet to visit him.

He came. The king showed him the beauties of his palace. He pointed to the imposing citadel. He invited him to review his troops, when all day long the royal guards circled around the palace and with each circle appeared in a different uniform.

The admiral counted the troops as they passed. "Thirty regiments," he said, "and superb ones. I think your majesty is impregnable," he added with a peculiar smile, which signified that with such a magnificent army, Haiti would be safe from England and might claim her as a friend. The king, for a second time, smiled, a replica of the smile called forth by his rape of the gourds. When the admiral concluded his visit, he was intrusted by the king with an oaken box, steel-bound, for the Bank of England.

In after years it was found this box contained six million gold gourdes deposited to the credit of Queen Marie-Louise.

## **CHAPTER XVII**

### *The Fiery Furnace*

King Henry's country prospered, but the hatred of the people increased. More and more he worked and more and more he caused his people to work. He had erected monuments to himself -- the palace and citadel -- but he wished to leave the country to be a monument also -- paved roads, forts, schools and those things which make a country great; but his people did not appreciate. They frowned.

"Vive le Roi," they shouted as they marched by him; but when away it was "A bas le Roi." Echoes of this last shout came to the king's ears and he moaned. Once to his court doctor he said:

"Toussaint, the Tiger and I. We have dreamed so much and have done so little!"

And then again, as the echoes of that shout "A bas le Roi," reached his ears, he cried --

"To be great is to be lonely. To be magnificent is to have men hate you!"

So he worked and worried, and the combined result was that the body rebelled and was shocked. So he lay in a partial coma and realized his work was done. He also realized that his people would rejoice in his death, and hasten to tear down what he had built.

He lingered several days with the end approaching.

One day the court physician said:

"Henry, I am going to send Marie-Louise and the children to you. I shall remain in the hall where you can send for me, if you want me."

They came to him and something of his old self reasserted itself as he kissed them and bade them goodbye. To Marie-Louise he gave the papers entitling her to the fortune he had sent to England. Then he sent them away and asked for his chief ministers. To them he entrusted the care of his family, and commanded them to take everything they could carry by the back trail to Cap Haitian and place them in the care of the British consul.

News of the coming demise of the king reached the populace. They became a mob in waiting and the drums began to beat.

"Fly!" commanded the king to his ministers; but when they reached the weeping queen, she refused "Whatever happens, I will not leave Henry's body to the anger of the mob. They would mutilate it as they did that of Jean Jacques !"

The murmurs of the populace became louder and beat upon the ears of the king. He stirred and the doctor entered, but he asked to be alone for a little while.

Unsteadily he got upon his feet and tremblingly hobbled to a little cabinet on the wall and took there from a golden ball. It had been specially cast and had been in the cabinet some years. It had been cast for a special purpose and its time of use had come! He slipped it into the barrel of a pistol. There was a report, a fall and a crash.

The doctor entered.

The king was dead.

With the report of the pistol the mob became strangely quiet. Then it broke into a shout:

*"Le Roi est mort."*

They proceeded to loot the palace.

Then came Marie-Louise -- the gentle Marie-Louise. There was a new look on her face, something the attendants of the palace had never seen there before. It was the look such as her husband would have worn under like circumstances. To her servants she commanded

"Give the mob anything it wants to keep them quiet; then wind the king's body in sheets and follow me." She led the way by a secret door to the trail to the citadel. It was a heavy load and the men staggered; and the weight staggered the queen and the two young girls who followed.

The citadel had not been finished -- was never finished -- and building material lay about; also a vat of newly slacked lime. Into this the queen commanded the body of her husband to be thrown.

"The mob shall not have it," she exclaimed.

With an effort this was done; and the body of the king slowly sank into the corrosive.

There was no time to lose. The roar of the mob could be heard behind them, so they took a secret trail down the mountain to the British consulate in Cap Haitian.

\* \* \*

The queen and two princesses arrived in England in safety; but the mob wreaked its vengeance on the Prince Royal. There should be no successor of the blood of Christophe.

## **NEMESIS**

Oh, there is an isle –  
A happy isle –  
Down in the Caribbee;  
And the days are long  
And life's a song  
On this isle in the Carib Sea.

And we sit and dream  
In evening's gleam,  
Down in the Caribbee ;  
For the stars shine bright  
For dreams by night  
On this isle in the Carib Sea.

--Creole Song.

More than a century has passed since Christophe's body was carried to its place of extinction, and the island of Haiti has sweltered in the fierce beams of a tropic sun, and her people have dozed in the same beams.

Life is easy in Haiti. The inhabitants simply have to gather what grows, and, with such a climate, few articles of clothing are needed. The stately mansions of the planters, which the revolutionary fires destroyed, have given place, mostly, to thatched huts. Swine, dogs and hens wander in the neglected fields and along the muddy roads; but the people are happy. They talk and laugh and sing. Only when they look to the hills and the ruins of Christophe's palace and fortress do they remember the days of their greatness, and even then they do not mourn its departure.

Yes, Haiti is asleep -- present and past. Dessalines, the Tiger, sleeps in the unmarked grave where Defilee placed him; and, following the course of nature, Defilee the uncrowned empress, sleeps; but no one knows where. The spirit of the calcined Christophe never has left the brush and weed-covered parade ground of the fortress La Ferriere ; and, among his enemies, were found three faithful generals, who kept watch over the place night and day for thirty years. They encased the calcined lime in a structure of stone as a mausoleum. Toussaint, the humane, died a prisoner in the land of the brotherhood of man, which he tried to emulate and embellish, and, through the jealousy of Napoleon, sleeps there; and Marie-Louise, gentle Marie-Louise, lived thirty years to mourn her king, her husband and her lover. Outlived her two daughters -- and, after them, dozed her days away in sunny Italy, dreaming, like all her country's people --dreaming, perhaps, of the pepper tree in her father's court yard. All that is mortal of her sleeps in a little cemetery in the rear of the Capuchin's monastery in Pisa, Italy.