THE LITERARY BATTLE
BETWEEN
GEORGE W. CABLE AND GRACE KING

by
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Once I remember criticising a high school boy for having taken a prize which I felt he did not deserve because he had not had to work hard enough to win it. But as I thought it over, I began to feel that his whole life, his background of reading and thinking, had been the best sort of preparation for the very thing he had done.

So I feel about this subject. The weeks and months spent on it seem inadequate, but as far back as I can remember the South, and particularly that part of it in and around New Orleans, has fascinated me. My two dearest relatives, my father's only sisters, lived, as far back as I can remember, in Mobile, or New Orleans, or on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. Their frequent letters were full of the doings and sayings of a world that was strange to me. Sometimes their letters had a strange appearance even, for there were still fever epidemics, and at times the letters came well punctuated with jagged rents, showing they had been fumigated. I remember distinctly how rakishly the pictured face of one of the family looked out of his good left eye, the right having been lost in this puncturing.

And the visits of these Aunts suggested as much of the strange as their letters. The porch always became a gallery with their arrival, we walked on the banquette even instead of the sidewalk, received this or that little token as "lagniappe," and made our change in two-bits, four, or six as the case might be.

Their gifts were different, too. Chocolates and bon-bons did
not come out of their trunks, but pralines instead, and strings of Spanish moss, in which once a live lizard came safely and dispatched himself among the house-plants until he was gobbled one day by an incubator duck we were raising. Even our house-plants were different, the slips often sent or brought by these same aunts. We had a season of growing jasmines, the night jasmine with its insignificant flower but its overpowering fragrance; the Confederate, so completely covered with its white stars and breathing its heavy-sweet tropical odor; and the Cape with its glossy green leaves and perfect waxy blooms. Years later, when I saw houses fairly smothered in the climbing Confederate and lawns where the Cape was gigantic in size and thickly set with creamy flowers, these early house-plants seemed strangely dwarfed and insignificant, but to me as a child they were a tangible link between my own world and one of romance, of eternal summer, where ladies were always gay and beautiful and men were always brave and chivalrous.

Even in my school days, upon making the trip once or twice from Kansas to New Orleans, I had that same feeling which I have had on every visit since, that I could never get enough of it, that there was always something behind the real and the tangible that was elusive, baffling, - a romance, a glamour, a mystery, - that I could never quite penetrate or explain.

For two years and a half I lived in Lutcher, a little river town almost exactly half way between New Orleans and Baton Rouge and in the heart of the Creole country of Louisiana, in one of those Creole homes where French is the every day language of the family, where the
grandfather and grandmother, pa-pore and ma-mere, could neither speak nor understand English. I taught the children of the Creoles, who thought in French and translated laboriously into their prim, unidiomatic but perfectly correct English. I copied questionnaires for Creole soldiers of the late war to whom French was their native tongue and English the "other language" that they spoke.

All this has seemed preparation of a sort, a kind of stirring of the soil, in the field where my subject is found, and perhaps explains why, when the time for choosing a thesis subject came, the choice should fall on such a theme as "The Literary Battle between George W. Cable and Miss Grace King."

Critics writing about Southern literature have pointed out that there was a conflict between Miss King and Mr. Cable over the portrayal of Creole life and character. The examination of their lives, their books, and criticisms of their work to see in how far the one has portrayed Creole life better or in a manner more acceptable to the Creole than the other has been a labor both of pleasure and of profit to me. I have tried to select from their biographies those facts largely which might have influenced the attitude of Mr. Cable and Miss King towards those about whom they wrote. I have felt also that some discussion of the history and lineage of the Creole might be helpful in making the whole subject clearer, since it was over the characterization of the Creole that they differed.

One of the choicest pleasures the work has brought to me has been the opportunity of meeting Miss King in her New Orleans home. The gracious
reception she accorded me, a total stranger, and the interest she showed in the comparison of her work with Mr. Cable's, proved an added incentive to working in this field.

The University of Kansas Library and the Lawrence City Library have furnished most of the material upon which this study is based, but thanks are also due the Harper Memorial Library of the University of Chicago and the Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library for lending books, and to Mr. Manchester and Mrs. Clark of the University of Kansas Library for obtaining these.

Through the efforts of Mrs. E.H. S. Bailey, Miss Rose Morgan, Professor R. D. O'Leary, Mr. Henry Alden, and the librarians of the New Orleans Public Library books were made easily available which might otherwise have been hard to obtain.

To Professor John H. Nelson, for suggestion, criticism, and encouragement appreciation is gratefully tendered.
I. Introductory.

Literature is a reflection of human life. Fortunately for us there have been those in all nations and in all ages who, seeing more clearly than their kind the appealing side and brilliant color of some reality, have faithfully preserved for us the reflection in their books. Some of these writers we enjoy because their characters portray the universal traits common to mankind; some, because the images they have reflected are so different from our own. Among the most interesting pictures preserved to us are those of peoples who, because of isolation, of race, of unusual conditions, have ways that are strange, and a language that we can scarcely understand.

American literature is rich in instances of this kind. For picturing life in New England we have Mary E. Wilkins Freeman; for Virginia, Thomas Nelson Page; for early days in California, Bret Harte; for Georgia plantation life, Joel Chandler Harris; for the life of the Southern mountaineer, Lucy Furman and John Fox; for numerous other sections, other writers, — writers of local color, some critics call them. Among all these bits of our varied American life none is more fascinating than the life of the Creole of Louisiana, and none has had more interesting chroniclers than George W. Cable and Miss Grace King. Both have pictured the same people, but there is a difference in the image and a difference in the effect on those who peep over the shoulders of the writers and smile or frown at what they see.
II. The Combatants.

George W. Cable.

To most readers the mention of New Orleans or the Creoles suggests George W. Cable. Certainly his *Old Creole Days* has been to many their first introduction to Creole life and character, and from these stories are formed indelible impressions of a life and people fascinating because, while they live in our own country, they seem so little a part of it.

"In writing these stories their author opened an absolutely new field in the world's literature. The novelty alone would have given him some notoriety. But only the hand of a real artist could have compelled an abiding interest in these remote and up to this time little-heard-of people. To him belongs largely the honor of having preserved the history, traditions, and customs of a fast-vanishing form of civilization." 1

Cable's familiarity with the Creole type was made possible through years of daily association with these people.

George W. Cable was born in New Orleans on October 12, 1844. His father, George W. Cable also, was born in Virginia in 1811. He later moved to Indiana and married Rebecca Boardman, of English Puritan ancestry. George W. and Rebecca Boardman Cable removed to New

Orleans a few years after their marriage, because of business failure during the financial crisis of 1837. Here Mr. Cable did a thriving business in Western produce, and here in New Orleans his son, the author, was born.

Thus George W. Cable was of Southern birth and on his father's side of immediate Southern ancestry, though his paternal grandmother, Margaret Stott Cable, was Pennsylvania Dutch and so opposed to slavery that she and her husband very early freed their slaves. Though of Southern birth Cable was yet essentially Northern and distinctly Puritan in idea and temper of mind and poorly fitted for a sympathetic understanding and portrayal of the Creole people, — a gay, mercurial, pleasure-loving, slave-holding race.

His early childhood, spent in the family home at Race and Annunciation Streets — not a great way from Canal, that English Channel which divides the newer and American city from the old French quarter — was that of any other industrious school boy of his age and financially prosperous condition. But when Cable was fifteen his father died after business reverses that made it necessary for the boy to leave school and seek a clerkship to help support the family. He found employment with Violet and Black, a firm of commission merchants, and remained in their employ until 1863. As a clerk he was thrown into daily association with others of his kind, and it was no doubt during these days of rather uninteresting work that in other clerks he met the originals of his Narcisse and Raoul, and of such business men as Frowenfeld.

2. Dr. Servier.
3. The Grandissimes.
4. Ibid.
In 1863 he enlisted in the Fourth Mississippi Cavalry and took part in the Confederate campaigns and defense in Mississippi and Louisiana. He was so small and youthful in appearance that upon seeing him the Union soldiers inquired, "Are you sending babies to fight us?" While in camp he continued his studies, especially in Latin, mathematics, and the Bible. Wounded in battle, he returned to New Orleans where, destitute and physically broken in health, he obtained a clerkship in a mercantile firm. During this time he studied surveying, and a little later, perhaps 1865 or 1866, he went with a surveying party into the Atchafalaya region. While he contracted "break-bone" fever and was compelled to return to New Orleans, it was doubtless on this trip that he learned to know the Acadian and mentally gathered the material for such of his stories as deal with them, particularly Bonaventure.

About 1867 his first contribution of critical papers, poems, and humorous sketches appeared in the New Orleans Picayune under the pen name "Drop Shot." These were well received, and in 1869 he became a reporter for that paper. In a few months, however, he lost his position because he refused to write the dramatic criticisms for Sunday theatrical performances. He objected very strenuously to the theater, to dancing, and all sorts of "worldly amusements," to all forms of Sabbath breaking, even having a cold dinner served in his home on Sunday. And yet he thought he wrote sympathetically about the Creole who loved all these things, and for whom Sunday seemed the day set apart for any and every form of merrymaking.

5. The Grandissimes
From reporting Cable returned to a mercantile life and became accountant for a large cotton firm. In 1879 his employer died, and having had considerable success with his pen before this time, Cable decided to devote himself to literature. Early in the 70's a commission had been sent by the old Scribner's Monthly to write and illustrate The Great South Papers. Mr. Edward King, a member of the commission, at Cable's request, sent one of Cable's stories to the magazine only to have it returned. Cable tried again; this time his story was accepted and highly praised by Richard Watson Gilder, associate editor of the magazine. The story was 'Sieur George.' Others followed at intervals during a period of two years. They were well received by the magazine and its readers in the North, but in New Orleans and the South the people were resentful of the pictures of Creole life that were being given to the public. The publication of The Grandissimes in 1880 only augmented this feeling. The murmured unfriendliness and disapproval became loud and outspoken hostility, not only by the Creoles but by the people of the South in general. The atmosphere became so uncongenial that in 1884 Cable removed to Northampton, Massachusetts. Here, he felt, his work would be more sympathetically received, and better opportunity would be afforded for the education of his four daughters.

Mr. Cable was the impassioned advocate of the black man, not only in the presentation of the negro as a character in his fiction but in his political writings as well. Naturally this sympathy would not be pleasing to the Southerner who, at this time, was undergoing the
darkest hours in his history, those of the reconstruction period. Miss King says that in his zeal to champion the cause of the freedman he sometimes went too far even for his Northern admirers. She tells of one such occasion—a party given at Northampton to which some college boys, among them a negro, had been invited. Mr. Cable insisted on one of his daughters, a beautiful and refined young girl, dancing with this negro even though she pleaded to be excused from doing it. She had been brought up in New Orleans and naturally felt some of a Southern girl's antipathy to any social intercourse between the races. Upon Mr. Cable's continued insistence that his wishes in the matter be carried out, even some of the staunchest advocates of the rights of the negro were displeased.

In Northampton Mr. Cable built for himself a comfortable home and developed about it the lovely grounds so charmingly described in *An Amateur Garden*. Here he continued to write, still using Louisiana and the Creole as his themes, but his later novels and short stories lack the power and interest of his earlier ones, either because he had exhausted his field or because the man with a mission had throttled the artist. He continued to be active in all sorts of civic improvement, was deeply interested in home culture clubs and city beautifying, and remained one of Northampton's loved and honored citizens until his death in 1925.

6. In a personal interview at her home in New Orleans on January 1, 1927, Miss King talked very informally about the Creole, her own literary work, and that of Mr. Cable, and answered some questions asked her by the writer. I shall refer to this interview a number of times.
Not long after Cable gained some fame as a writer, and before he had removed from New Orleans, he engaged in work of another sort. He gave public lectures and readings which gained him added renown. These were well received and made not only his name but his writings familiar over all the United States. He even carried this sort of work to England, where he was popular with the masses and the prominent literary men as well — James M. Barrie was one of his admirers and particular friends. Besides readings from his novels and short stories, cuttings from the Grandissimes and the reading of 'Peson Jone' were favorites, the singing of negro plantation melodies to the accompaniment of the banjo formed a part of the entertainment. All this only added to the popularity of his already popular fiction, even though a contemptuous Creole said of Cable that "he had gone on a lecture tour to inflict his books on those people that won't take the trouble to read them."

In still another field the literary ability of Cable found expression, that of editor. In his Strange True Stories of Louisiana we find one example of work of this kind, and in 1897 he became editorial supervisor of Current Literature.

Summing up the accomplishments of his eighty-one years we can say that he was the first and continues the best known writer about Creole Louisiana, that he was an editor of some note, a popular lecturer and entertainer both in this country and England, a strongly partisan champion of the negro, and a man deeply interested in civic betterment and social reform.

7. Critic, March 28, 1885.
III. The Combatants (continued).

Grace Elizabeth King.

If we grant to George W. Cable that he was the first writer to popularize Creole life in his writings and remains today its best known portrayer, I think we shall have to claim for Miss King that she has given the most sympathetic and intimate pictures of the half French, half English life of southern Louisiana. By temperament and by training she has been fitted to understand her people.

According to most accounts, Grace Elizabeth King was born in New Orleans November 29, 1852, the eldest daughter of William Woodson and Sarah Ann Miller King. Her father was one of the prominent civil lawyers of the days before the war, and was prominently identified with the political and social life of old New Orleans. There were few questions of municipal or riparian law that he did not argue, and his briefs serve as texts for judges now on the bench. Like most of his contemporaries of means he was interested in sugar culture and owned a great plantation in St. Martin's parish, a parish in the Atakapas or Acadian country.

William Woodson and Sarah Ann Miller King were Southerners, he born in Georgia and she in Covington, Louisiana. They were the descendants of Southerners, and the family history on both sides forms a part of that of the lawyers and plantation owners of Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina. The impression has been current that Miss King is of Creole descent. This, she says, is not

8. Interview, Jan. 1, 1927.
quite true, though her mother did sometimes claim to be a Creole. The impression probably arises from the fact that four generations back on her mother's side a Huguenot ancestor, Hari Anne de Laybach, appears who spoke only in French.

Miss King spent her childhood in New Orleans and on her father's plantation, and was a part of the life she so vividly portrays in her stories. Her education was received in the Creole schools of New Orleans and from private tutors, and following the educational standards of her day great attention was paid to the study of language. Miss King is a master not only of the French and English languages, but of their literatures also, and is accomplished in Spanish and German as well. So thorough had been her training in French, - the language, the history, and the literature, - that it is said of her that when she went to France to study the records relating to the colony of Louisiana, she felt as much at home in Paris as in New Orleans.

Miss King still lives in a pleasant home in New Orleans facing Coliseum Place. She is active in the affairs of the Louisiana Historical Society, and is untiring in her efforts to engender and keep alive an interest in the romantic past of Louisiana. While she is keenly interested also in the today's affairs of her beloved Louisiana and New Orleans, yet hers seems to be a backward turning eye, and she takes genuine pleasure in preserving in her writings the history and the romance of the past.

So modest is she, and so confident that there is nothing
noteworthy or unusual in her life, that biographical details are meagre and hard to find. Yet so closely allied are her writings and her life that one feels safe in drawing from the former inferences concerning the latter. In the scant information about her life we read that her father was one of the prominent civil lawyers of the days before the war, and it seems as if the picture of the dignified and scholarly Mr. Talbot, one of the best of the old-time lawyers in The Pleasant Ways of St. Medard must have had its original, partly at least, in her own father, and that one of the little girls in the same book must have been Miss King herself. In Bayou L’Ombre we feel that Miss King is giving us some of her own wartime experiences, with the family tucked away on the inaccessible plantation for protection during those turbulent times when the able-bodied were all with the fighting forces.

Again in her biography we read that her childhood was passed in New Orleans and on her father’s plantation. In Madame Larevaillère Miss King so faithfully portrays the routine of a sugar planter’s life, particularly at the strenuous time of grinding and sugar making, that one feels certain she must have been present on many of these occasions and taken part in the events of those busy and anxious days when the fate of every one seemed to hang on the results of the season’s grinding. She received her education in the Creole schools of New Orleans and from private tutors. Her pictures of the life at St. Denis9 are so vivid and the characters so real that one guesses Miss King must

have been one of those little girls so carefully drilled in French history and so fearful when the day for the prize contest arrived, and that part of her education, too, must have been received around the copy-book-piled dining table under the Madame Girard, of *An Old French Teacher of New Orleans*.

While Miss King's work may not be as well known as Mr. Cable's, yet,

"She is known and recognized abroad, some of her stories having been translated into French, German, and Russian. Madame Blanc has thought her work worthy of a review in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. In this review she reveals what Miss King is in relation to her people and surroundings - their most typical representative voice."10
IV. The Subject of Dispute.

The Creoles of Louisiana.

What is a Creole? Who is a Creole? What of his history? While with Miss King's statement that "there can be only one definition," Cable would probably agree, yet the name has had such a long and varied history that the repetition of some of the facts can not but be of interest to all. The compilers of dictionaries seem to have a kind of agreement as to the origin of the word, but the users of the term have not the same agreement as to the meaning.

To some the word connotes a person having a tincture of negro blood, which is not strange, for in some places and at some periods of its history it has been used with such a meaning. According to some eighteenth century writers Creole was a term applied by South American negroes to their own children born in America to distinguish them from negroes freshly imported from Africa. But now the term usually means Creole white, and is applied to descendants of European settlers born and naturalized in the colonies and more or less modified in type by the climate and the surroundings.

Originally in Spanish American and southern French colonies the term was applied to a person of European descent, but born and bred in the colonies, to distinguish him from the immigrants of European blood, and from the aborigines, negroes, and natives of mixed-Indian.

11. Interview, Jan. 1, 1927.
or European and negro-blood.

In 1604 we find this in Grimstone’s translation of D’Acosta’s *History of the West Indies*, "Some Crollos – for so they called the Spaniards born at the Indies."

In 1697 in Dampier’s *Voyages* occurs this, "An English native of St. Christopher, a Cirolo, as we call all born of European parents in the West Indies."

In Juan and Ulloa’s *Voyage* of 1760–72 we read, "The Whites may be divided into two classes, the Europeans and Creoles, or Whites born in the Country," and in the same volume, "French families, some Europeans, and others Creoles of the place itself and from Newfoundland."

It may be worth noticing that by this time – 1760 – the r and e or r and i had been transposed, and the word appeared in the same form as it does today.

In 1832 Captain Narayat in *Navton Forster* says, "She was a Creole, that is, born in the West Indies of French parents."

In 1836 in *Astoria* Washington Irving writes, "A French Creole; one of those haphazard wights of Gallic origin, who abound upon the frontier, living among the Indians like one of their own race."

The *Saturday Review* in 1864 said, "In Mexico there are about a million Creoles – that is whites of pure Spanish extraction."

In the United States, particularly in Louisiana, the term Creole – and this is Miss King’s definition – applied only to the French speaking descendants of the early French settlers in Louisiana. Creole
does denote French rather than Spanish descent. Certainly the foundation of Creole speech was French rather than Spanish, but Spain as well as France was early in founding colonies in the southern United States. Indeed, for more than forty years Spain held the colony of Louisiana, and through the inter-marriage of sons and daughters of these "first families" the blood of the pioneers became Spanish as well as French. Cable himself says:

"The title did not first belong to the descendants of Spanish, but of French settlers. But such a meaning implied a certain excellence of origin, and so came early to include any native of Spanish or French descent by either parent, whose non-alliance with the slave race entitled him to social rank. Later the term was adopted by, not conceded to, the natives of mixed blood, and is still so used among themselves. Besides French and Spanish there, even, for convenience of speech, 'colored Creoles'; but there are no Italian or Sicilian, nor any English, Scotch, Irish, or Yankee Creoles, unless of parentage married into and themselves thoroughly proselyted in Creole society."

And again, in the same volume:

"Many Spaniards of rank cast their lots with the Creoles. But the Creoles never became Spanish; and in society balls when the Creole civilian met the

Spanish military officials the cotillion was French
or Spanish according as the one or the other party
was the stronger."13

A Creole, then, in the strictest sense, is the French speak-
ing descendant of the early French colonists. But this definition does
not take into account any difference between Creole and Acadian, and
the Creoles particularly are rather jealous of this distinction. Of
course we know that the Acadians were that particular group which,
driven from their homes when England conquered French Canada in 1765,
found their way to their old relatives and countrymen in Louisiana, but
they were the French speaking sons and daughters of the colonists from
France just as the Creoles were — Iberville and Bienville, and their
followers who settled at Biloxi, at Mobile, at Dauphin Island were
descendants of the French Canadians. The differences seemed to be two:
one of temperament, and one of geography.

The Creoles, Iberville, Bienville, and their Canadian fol-
lowers, were venturesome explorers, soldiers of fortune, founders of
colonies and of cities; the Acadians were peaceful and stay-at-home
farmers. In these two capacities the band with Bienville and Iber-
ville settled in inhospitable places, enduring hardships and suffer-
ings to wrest advantages from nature and the Indians, while the Ac-
cadians from their farms and peaceful villages of Nova Scotia sought the
farming and pasture lands of central and western Louisiana. Miss King
says that originally the Acadians were rather a rough, uncouth popula-

13. The Creoles of Louisiana, Chap. XVI.
tion, and for that reason the Creoles did not want to share their name with them, but that the differences have grown less and less until now the term Creole includes both indiscriminately.\textsuperscript{14} And yet, while an Acadian may be a Creole, a Creole is never an Acadian.

In the Creoles of Louisiana Cable defines both Acadian and Creole geographically.

"Take the map of Louisiana. Draw a line from the southwestern to the northeastern corner of the state, let it turn thence down the Mississippi to the little riverside town of Baton Rouge, the State's seat of government; then draw it eastward through Lakes Maurepas, Pontchartrain, and Borgue to the Gulf of Mexico; thence pass along the gulf coast back to the starting point at the mouth of the Sabine, and you will have compassed rudely but accurately enough the State's 18,750 square miles of delta lands. . . .\textsuperscript{14}

"North of the marshes (the haunts of myriads of birds and water fowl, serpents and saurians, hares, raccoons, wild cats, . . . and a few hunters and oystermen) and within the bounds already set lie two other sorts of delta country. In these dwell most of the French speaking people of Louisiana, both white and

\textsuperscript{14} Interview, Jan. 1, 1927.
colored. Here the names of bayous, lakes, villages and plantations are, for the most part, French; the parishes (counties) are named after saints and church feasts, and although for more than half a century there has been a strong inflow of Anglo Americans and English-speaking blacks, the youths still receive their education principally from the priests and nuns of small colleges and convents, and two languages are current; in law and trade, English; in sanctuary and at home, French.

"These two sorts of delta country are divided by the Bayou Teche. West of this stream lies a beautiful expanse of faintly undulating prairie, some 3,900 square miles in extent, dotted with artificial homestead groves, with fields of sugarcane, cotton and corn, and with herds of ponies and keen-horned cattle feeding on its short nutritious turf. Their herdsmen speak in ancient French patois; and have the blue eyes and light brown hair of Northern France.

"But not yet have we found the Creoles. The Creoles smile and sometimes frown at these; these are the children of those famed Nova Scotian exiles whose banishment from their homes by British arms in 1755 has so often been celebrated in Romance; they still bear the name of Acadians. They are found not
only on this western side of the Teche but in all this French speaking region of Louisiana. But these vast prairies of Attakapas and Opelousas are peculiarly theirs, and here they largely outnumber that haughtier Louisianian who endeavors to withhold from him as from The 'American' the proud appellation of Creole.

"Thus we have drawn in the lines upon a region lying between the mouth of the Red River on the north, and the Gulf marshes on the south, east of the Teche and south of Lakes Borgue, Pontchartrain and Maurepas, and the Bayou Manchac. However he may be found elsewhere, this is the home, the realm, of the Louisiana Creole." 15

Such is the Creole geographically. It is interesting also to know whence came the inhabitants of this Creole country, what were the sources from which this population was drawn.

Iberville and Bienville, two of the sons of Charles Le Moyne and Catherine Primot — both French colonial emigrants from Dieppe to Canada — with their band of French-Canadian followers were commissioned by the King of France in 1698 to locate the mouth of the Mississippi River and establish a colony and trading-post for him that would control commerce on this river. Sailing along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico these French-Canadian adventurers found the Spanish already established at Pensacola and were obliged themselves

15. The Creoles of Louisiana, pp. 2-4.
to go farther west. They settled in 1699 at Biloxi, at Mobile, and at Dauphin Island, explored the mouth of the Mississippi and the river itself to the mouth of the Red, and took possession of the territory in the name of the King of France. And with this settlement was established also the colony of the Creoles of Louisiana.

On the first exploring trips of these new colonists a passage from the Gulf to the Mississippi was discovered through lake and bayou rather than through the shifting mouths of the river. To make the trip thus from gulf to river required a short portage between the two, and at the point of this portage Bienville's eyes looked longingly as the strategic point for the capital of his infant colony. In 1718 his persuasions prevailed, the ground was surveyed and laid out in town squares by the king's engineer, and New Orleans, which was destined from that time forth to be the center of the Creole world, was established.

The early years of all the colonies were filled with fighting, fighting to wrest and hold the colonies not only from the hostile Indians and Spanish and English, but from hostile nature as well. To do this successfully new recruits were constantly demanded, and they were gathered from undesirable as well as desirable sources. The King, while the colony was his care, and Crozat and Law, when they held it for commercial companies, sent, from time to time, whatever numbers they could master to help in the undertaking. Not always were they such as first families would choose for their ancestors, for "there was no time to choose, select, or examine, and no disposition. It was a dogcatchers work; and dog-catchers performed it. Streets were scourred at night
for their human refuse; the contents of hospitals, refuges, and reformatories were bought out wholesale, servant girls were waylaid, children were kidnapped," all to swell the fighting forces on these unfriendly shores.

Soldiers needed wives and homes to give them an incentive to win and keep territory; so from time to time the paternal government would respond to this need and send shipments of girls and women, as it had of men to fill the other great needs of a new colony. Among them came the casket girls, the caskets a gift from the king to the girls as the girls were a gift to the colony, and to these some of the Creoles today proudly trace their lineage.

Nominally from 1764, when the territory was secretly ceded to Spain, — though Spain did not actually take possession until the arrival of Ulloa in 1766, or perhaps 1769 with the coming of bloody O'Reilly, — until the treaty of ILdefonso late in 1800 or early in 1801 gave the colony back to France, the vast territory of Louisiana was under Spanish rule. During this period of Spanish occupancy, there were, naturally, stationed in New Orleans and the territory of Louisiana many officers, soldiers, and merchants of Spain, and just as naturally alliances between French and Spanish families were frequent, and the French-Creole blood received a Spanish strain. The wife of the Spanish governor Galvez was a Creole; the first Gayarré was one of the Spanish civil officers of the Colony who came with Ulloa; Almonaster, a name synonymous with priceless benefactions to the

16. *New Orleans, the Place and the People*, p. 38.
infant city, was Spanish. All these names through alliances with noted Creole families, are now regarded as previous heritages by their Creole descendants.

During the same period of years two revolutions - the French and the insurrection of the blacks at St. Domingo - occurred, which sent refugees fleeing from bloody scenes to the hospitable shores of Louisiana. During the century after the founding of the colony intercourse with France, as it has continued until today, was kept up, and though the journey was laborious and even dangerous messages and messengers passed back and forth, visits diplomatic and social were paid and received, and the children of the wealthier colonists were sent to the mother country to be educated. Family ties and friendships continued and were strengthened by such intercourse, and when the Revolution burst upon France what more natural than that terror stricken fugitives should think of the colony on distant shores and seek their own across the vast Atlantic? So we find more names of the French nobility added to the roster of the colonies during this period.

A little later the uprising of the blacks at St. Domingo drove more exiles, French and Spanish, from the sugar country of the island to the plantations of Louisiana and the welcoming homes of its capital city. With the coming of the refugees a certain change found its way into Creole life and manners.

"It is still current opinion in the city that it was the refugees from the West Indies that brought the love of luxury into the colony, the Creoles before that time, many believing and maintaining, being simple in
their tastes and plain in their living. It would seem from the constant mention made of it in family legends that the tropical ease and languor of the West Indian women were indeed as much a novelty then in the feminine world as the always emphasized distinction, the literary tastes and accomplishments of the West Indian men were in the masculine world.17

These are the chief facts concerning the origin of that great Creole population which for more than two hundred years has lived in our country and been so little a part of it; a people more loyal to France and the king than the government under which they lived, clinging to the customs, the ideals, the beliefs, the language of another time and another race; resenting change, innovation, and those things which come as the results of progress; and holding themselves proudly aloof from Americans and Americanism. These are the people about whom Mr. Cable and for whom Miss King wrote.

17. *New Orleans, the Place and the People*, p. 172.
V. The Weapons Used.

The Writings of Cable and King.

Such, then, is the Creole of history. The story itself reads like a romance, but here and there interested writers have found bits more than usually striking, or situations particularly appealing, and have preserved them for us in the pages of their books.

George W. Cable began his recognized literary career with the publication of 'Sieur George in the old Scribner's Monthly of October, 1875. Other short stories similar in character followed in succeeding numbers of the magazine and in 1879 were collected in the volume Old Creole Days. A new field was opened to the reading public, and a new name added to America's men of letters. Those who read his stories were fascinated not only by the art of the story teller but by the romance, the unusualness, and the appeal of the life and times about which he wrote. Mr. Cable created the Creole character in fiction and remains today its best known and most widely read portrayer.

Or, as Mr. Baskervill, writing of Mr. Cable for his Southern Writers, says:

"These stories made a two fold revelation - a new field of romance, rich in the contrasts of an old, unique, and varied civilization, steeped in sentiment and enveloped in the poetic, many-tinted haze of a semi-tropical clime, and also the master hand of
literary artist, who, to the moral energy and sinewy fibre of English character, added the grace, delicacy, airy lightness, and excitability of the Latin race.”

Cable’s first volume was of short stories, a type of writing to which he later added two or three other collections, including Strange True Stories of Louisiana, and Strongheart. Perhaps Bonaventure could be included in this list also, since the three parts which make up the story are very loosely connected, and were published separately. His publications were of several other types as well. The novel, of which he wrote none, is best exemplified by The Creoles of Louisiana, published first as a serial in Scribner’s between November, 1879, and October, 1880, and later in book form in 1880. It is his first and his best. The later novels seem melodramatic, obscure in parts, and more the weapons of a reformer than the artistic creations of a man of letters.

Mr. Cable was interested in the history of the Creole as well as his romance, and in the Century Magazine of 1883 appeared the chapters of Louisiana history which were later collected in book form as The Creoles of Louisiana. Mr. Baskerville says of this book that “the sketches are so highly colored and suffused with prejudices, that the value of this vivid, charmingly written volume as history has been greatly lessened.” Some of the other historical writings of Mr.

19. His other novels are, The Cavalier, John March, Southerner, Kincaid’s Battery, The Flower of the Chandelaines, Lovers of Louisiana, Bylow Hill, Dr. Sever, Gideon’s Band.
Cable which appeared either as magazine articles or in pamphlet form were the sketches of New Orleans in the Census of 1880 and in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, New Orleans before the Capture, The Creole in the American Revolution, Flatters and Pirates of Louisiana, and some of his particular and sympathetic studies of the Negro in The Dome in the Place Congo, and Creole Slave Songs.

Mr. Cable turned his pen to yet another and a very different kind of writing and produced some very able and thoughtful sociological and political pamphlets, — The Negro Question, The Silent South, The Convict Lease System, and The Freedman's Case in Equity. Published first in the magazines, as so many of his writings were, they were later collected and published in two small volumes as The Silent South and The Negro Question. 21

The early stories of Mr. Cable were received by Northern readers with all the enthusiasm and warmth of praise that an author could desire, but Southerners, and particularly the Creoles, received them at first coldly and later with marked and bitter hostility.

Henry W. Grady shows something of the Southerner's feeling toward Cable when he says:

"It is not my purpose to discuss Mr. Cable's relations to the people for whom he claims to speak.

21. Another book which cannot be classified as either fiction or history or politics or sociology, and yet which is charming to read and instructive as well, is An Amateur Gardener. In only one chapter—Midwinter Gardens in New Orleans—does Mr. Cable touch upon his Louisiana field, but the other chapters are of equal interest because they deal with his own gardening attempts in Northampton and so give a glimpse into the life of the author."
Born in the South, of Northern parents, he appears to have had little sympathy with his Southern environment, as in 1882 he wrote, 'To be in New England would be enough for me. I was there once, — a year ago, — and it seemed as if I had never been home until then'. It will be suggested that a man so out of harmony with his neighbors as to say, even after he had fought side by side with them on the battle field, that he never felt at home until he had left them, can not speak understandingly of their views on so vital a subject as that under discussion.'

Much more violent was the language of the Creole in speaking of Mr. Cable. The Critic quotes a remark made by M. Canonage in announcing a lecture by M. Gayarré which amounts to a bitter personal attack. He calls Mr. Cable "a needy reporter whose distorted delineations of Creole character were made, not in the interest of truth or art but in the interest of his pocket which he sought to fill by pandering to the national and the race prejudices of the Yankees. He is a sign painter attempting a water color sketch; a bear dancing a schottische. He has gone on a lecture tour to inflict his books on those who won't take the trouble to read them.'

When he gave one of his lecture-readings in New Orleans most of the Creoles refused to endorse him by their presence. One,

22. Henry W. Grady: In Plain Black and White, Century; April, 1885.
23. Critic, March 26, 1885.
more liberal than the majority - or more curious - attended and had
this to say of Mr. Cable afterwards:

"He confined his selections and delineations altogether to lower grades of the Creole po-
pulation. New Orleans is being misjudged from his writ-
ings. It is not fair to picture Jules or Narcisse as
the highest type, or that the Creole of the highest
type speaks the Negro-French or Creole patois, or that
they are ignorant of the English language or liter-
ature or of the French." 24

Miss King says 25 that the population of New Orleans — par-
ticularly the Creoles — were as bitter as these quotations would in-
dicate and spoke just as harshly. She herself took no part in the
verbal attack but felt that the better and more dignified way to put
him right would be for some one to write stories that would give the
world a nobler and, as she felt, truer picture of the Creole. With
this idea somewhat in mind she began some sketches which were first
published in the New Princeton Review between 1886 and 1888 and which
were later collected under the title *Monsieur Lotte* and published in
book form in 1888.

Miss King's writings, like Mr. Cable's, naturally fall into
several distinct classes, leaving a few pieces unclassified. While her
short stories made her famous, and it was by means of these that she
attempted to combat the injustice which she felt had been done the

Creole by Cable, she is perhaps better known for her histories and sketches. Such books as Jean Baptista la Homa, Sieur De Bienville and De Soto and his Men in the Land of Florida are known by historians and recognized by them as authoritative. Most of her short stories have been gathered into the three volumes, Monsieur Matte, Balcony Stories, and Tales of a Time and Place.

The Pleasant Ways of St. Louisard might be called a novel, though it scarcely has plot or purpose enough for such a classification, but is, rather, a delightful chronicle of an interesting family. Her other novels are Earthlings, which appeared in Lippincott's Magazine of November, 1889, and was never republished in book form; La Dama de Santa Hermine, which supplements her history of New Orleans and Bienville and gives us the romance of the founding of the early colonies, and Chevalier Alain de Triton.

In two other fields Miss King has tried her pen, drama and biography. In March, 1926, A Splendid Offer was published in Drama. So far as bibliographies may be trusted, this is her only play. In biography her most pretentious work is the volume Creole Families of New Orleans, though perhaps her most sympathetic and delightful sketches are An Old French Teacher of New Orleans and A Southern Educator.

Miss King's biographer in The South in the Building of the Nation sums up her contribution to literature thus:

26. Both her History of Louisiana and Stories from Louisiana History, written with John R. Ficklen, have been used as text books.
"Since that time (1888, the publication date of *Monsieur Hotte*) Miss King's name has become familiar to the readers of the magazines through many stories, chiefly about the Creole life she understands and expresses with sympathy. Her work, whether fiction or history, makes an appeal rather through its fidelity in interpreting real conditions than through sensationalism."

Added to this fidelity in interpretation we find an intensity of purpose that makes each story a study of character and a vivid record of incident. Miss King deals chiefly with two themes, the passing of the old aristocracy of feudalism into the commercialism of the present, and the struggle of the women-folk since the war to meet "the dire needs of an inconceivably changed existence." In carrying out these purposes the greatest defect is in multiplicity of details, and though the stories are undoubtedly true to Creole life, this defect confuses and blurs our impression as to character and events.

VI. The Points of the Combat.

Differences in the Writings of Cable and King in Method of Presentation.

In Cable and King we have two writers who have used the same field, have known the same New Orleans, and yet have achieved a very different interpretation of the city and the people. Wherein lies the difference? Has one portrayed the Creole more truthfully than the other, or is one merely more acceptable to the Creole because of what is suppressed or revealed? What differences will an analysis of their books show? Some differences are those of method of presentation, some in the interpretation of Creole character.

Of the former the most noticeable difference—one that can be detected merely by a glance at a few pages of the writings of each—is in the use of dialect. In the stories of Mr. Cable dialect abounds; in those of Miss King it is utterly lacking. A writer in one of the magazines of 1882 characterizes the dialect which Cable uses as "that slightly known dialect, without which no true portrayal of the character of this people could be possible," and in an issue of the Century Magazine of 1884 James Herbert Morse says, "The dialect is another excellence in Cable's work. We find in it the piquant charm of a lapse from the French rather than the lazy drawl of deteriorated English, but it is the grace of the author to
hold back dialect conversation except when it can be made telling."

In spite of these opinions that stories of the Creole could not be effectively told without the use of dialect, Miss King has so told hers, which do portray the true character of the Creole, and which proved acceptable to the reading public not only of the North but of the South as well.

Although dialect is often effectively employed, one fault in Mr. Cable’s writings is its overuse. Moreover, in some places he uses words which are obscure in meaning, and thus his work is hard to understand. This, with the amount, makes it wearisome to the reader. Even with the context to help, such language as this of Raoul’s is a little puzzling, "Louisy-anna rief-using to hantre de n-Union! * * *
If you insist to know who make dat pigshoe – de harris’ stan’ biff-ore you!"30 And just as puzzling is Anora’s query about this same “harris”, "’E pain’ dad pigtu’ wat ’angin in yo’ window?" Multiply the puzzle several fold on page after page of the story and one turns with relief to something more plainly American, even though it is less artistic and less suggestive of the Creole in atmosphere.

Again, it is very difficult to reproduce any so-called American dialect without making of it merely the speech of illiteracy. Actually the Creole speech is different from the American-English, but the difference comes largely from the inability of French speaking

people to produce certain sounds (as illustrated in the quotations above), and from a way of saying things that seems quaint and foreign to our Anglo-Saxon ears rather than from ignorance or illiteracy. The Creole dialect, if such it can be called, is delicate, refined, cultivated, charming; but from the employment of grotesque spelling, it often suggests only vulgarity.

That Cable intended his dialect to suggest charm and beauty the following passage surely proves:

"Alas! the phonograph was invented three-quarters of a century too late. If type could ensnare one-half the pretty oddities of Aurora's speech,—the arch, the pathetic, the grave, the earnest, the matter-of-fact, the ecstatic tones of her voice, may, could it but reproduce the movement of her hands, the eloquence of her eyes, or the shaping of her mouth,—ah! but type— even the phonograph—is such an inadequate thing!

But how far short of charm and beauty he often falls this little paragraph may suggest:

"Yes sir! Didn' I had to run from Bras-Coupé in de haidge of de swamp be'ine de 'abitation of my co'sin Honoré one time? You can hask 'oo you like!"

Another marked difference in method between Mr. Cable and

32. Grandissimes, Chap. 2.
Miss King lies in their treatment of the setting for their stories. As to place, Mr. Cable is so definite that one almost feels as if he could walk down the street named and enter the doorway designated. Madame Delphine begins, "A few steps from the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans, brings you to and across Canal Street," and immediately you have your bearings. In the first paragraph of Jean-ah-Poquelin you read, "There stood, a short distance above what is now Canal Street, and considerably back from the line of villas which fringed the river-bank on Tchoupitoulas road, an old colonial plantation house half in ruins." And in Poisson José, "He idled about one Sunday morning where the intersection of Royal and Conté Streets formed a central corner of New Orleans." An air of reality, of authenticity is thus built up. So real does it seem that the reader feels sure he could find his way about the old French quarter almost as well from Cable's stories as from the Picayune Guide Book.

In the matter of time, Cable creates this same feeling of definiteness. Madame Delphine made her great sacrifice in renouncing her motherhood "somewhere about the Christmas holidays of the year 1821"; the Café des Exilés harbored its band of refuges "in 1835 - I think he said thirty-five - in the Rue Burgundy - I think he said Burgundy"; and the tragedy of Jean-ah-Poquelin was lived out, "in the first decade of the present century when the newly established government was the most hateful thing in Louisiana."

Miss King has little or none of this seeming definiteness of time or place. One knows that her characters come from Creole
Louisiana, and vaguely to what period of its history they belong, but that time or place are made so little of in her stories seems immaterial. The character and what happens to him are paramount.

This concreteness is shown in still another direction in Cable's writing. In his description of characters he seems to have the faculty of making individuals out of them; Miss King makes rather a type. Bras-Coupé is not merely a slave nor an African negro but an individual after one reads Cable's descriptive paragraph:

"Bras-Coupé, they said, had been, in Africa and under another name, a prince among his people. • • • There is Bras-Coupé, towering above all heads, in ridiculous red and blue regimentals, but with a look of savage dignity upon him that keeps every one from laughing. • • • Oh, Bras-Coupé - heroic soul!" 33

Again, Palmyre appears to us vividly real after one brief paragraph:

"While yet a child she [Palmyre] grew tall, lithe, agile; her eyes were large and black, and rolled and sparkled if she but turned to answer to her name. Her pale yellow forehead, low and shapely, with the jet hair above it, the heavily pencilled eyebrows and long lashes below, the faint red tinge

that blushed with a kind of cold passion through
the clear yellow skin of the cheek, the fullness
of the red voluptuous lips and the roundness of
her perfect neck, gave her, even at fourteen, a
barbaric and magnetic beauty, that startled the
beholder like an unexpected drawing out of a
jewelled sword. " ** To these charms of per-
son she added mental acuteness, conversational
adroitness, concealed cunning, and noiseless but
visible strength of will; and to these, that rarest
of gifts in one of her tincture, the purity of
true womanhood." 34

This is the type of beautiful and irresistible quadroon found too
frequently in the South of an earlier period, but it is also Palmyre
la Philosophie, as unmistakably as our own reflection in the glass.

As opposed to these individual descriptions note the splen-
did example of type description Miss King has given us in a paragraph
of the Little Convent Girl:

"She was known on the boat only as the
'little convent girl'. Her name, of course, was
registered in the clerk's office, but on a steam-
boat no one thinks of consulting a clerk's ledger.
It is always the little widow, the fat madam, the
tall colonel, the parson, etc. The captain, who

34. Grandissimas, Chap. 12.
pronounced by the letter, always called her the little convent girl. She was the beau-ideal of the little convent girl. She never raised her eyes except when spoken to. Of course she never spoke first, even to the chambermaid, and when she did speak it was in the wee, shy, furtive voice one might imagine a just budding violet to have; and she walked with such soft, easy, carefully calculated steps that one naturally felt the penalties that must have secured them — penalties dictated by a black code of deport-ment."

A nameless little girl this is — many of Miss King's characters are nameless — but beyond a doubt a convent girl, just one speck in those long files that wind about the quiet paths of convent gardens.

Because of this very concreteness Cable's art surpasses Miss King's, and undoubtedly also this very concreteness got him into difficulties with the Creoles. Cable himself has said that the Creole never forgives a public mention, but by his own literary method he seems to have drawn his readers into the most sacred territory of the Creoles and exhibited it to the view of the interested. Cable's method is one to meet with favor from readers to whom the Creole and his land are unfamiliar, for they soon feel a nearness and actual familiarity with the geography of the Creole from his writings that they can not get from Miss King's. But from the Creole, on the other hand, to whom all this was sacred ground, too intimate and too personal
for all the world to see — just as his courtyards were — such
treatment called forth only bitterness and hostility.
VII. The Points of the Contest.

The Character of the Creole as Depicted by Cable and King.

To discuss the differences exhibited in the character and the characteristics of the Creole as portrayed by Cable and King is more difficult — and more important — than any discussion of mere externals in their portrayal. Concerning some Creole traits the writers are in perfect accord, concerning some they agree except in emphasis or shade of meaning, concerning some they disagree entirely. These differences arise in large part from the attitude and temper of the authors themselves, a thing I have hinted at in their biographies, but which it may be well to dwell upon a little more fully here.

Mr. Cable was born in the South but with a heritage of New England ancestry and a New England conscience. Miss King was not only born in the South, but her ancestry runs back in an unbroken line of Southern forebears to the very beginnings of American colonization. Southern ideas and ideals were her birthright. Southern attitudes on social and political questions were with her a matter of course, something that was not even thought about or questioned but taken for granted. Miss King, by birth, association, and education belonged to the inner circle of New Orleans aristocracy, her position unquestioned, unassailable. Cable, by the same standards of birth, of association, of education, was excluded from this inner circle and moved
rather in the commercial world which the Creole looked down upon. Miss King knew her characters as part of her own life; Cable knew his by close observation and association with them. Perhaps Miss King was so close to them as to be blinded to traits which Cable could see clearly; perhaps Cable misjudged or exaggerated traits which he saw from the outside only and did not truly appreciate or understand.

Probably the characteristic about which there would be the heartiest agreement between Mr. Cable and Miss King would be the Creole's love of family, his clannishness, his standing by his kindred come what may. Mr. Cable has more to say about this, Miss King rather taking it as a matter of course and showing it by the general atmosphere more than by specific instances.

This regard for family ties above everything else is one of the central themes in Cable's novel The Grandissimes. Here Honoré is torn between his sense of right and the feeling that he is betraying his family if he does what seems to him to be right -- if he restores the property to Aurora and Clothilde. Raoul learns to honor and respect Joseph Frowenfeld but has the feeling that in this honor and respect he has proved untrue to his own flesh and blood. Agricola himself, the arrogant, tyrannical leader of the Grandissimes, is disturbed to find that after his acquaintance with Frowenfeld, he now and then discovers that his ideas of right and justice are in opposition to the interests of the family. Again, in Belles Demoiselles Plantation, Cable makes this observation, "One thing I never knew a Creole to do. He will not utterly go back on the ties of
blood, no matter what sort of knots those ties may be. For one reason he is never ashamed of his father's sins; and for another, he will tell you — he is 'all heart'." In Sideon's Band he expresses the same sentiment in the words of two of his characters, Ramsey Hale and Hugh Courtney:

Ramsey, — "No, I won't — can't — ever again help you against my kin."

Hugh, — "There are things stronger than kin."

Ramsey, — "I'd like to know what!"

The beautiful and tragic story of Jean-ah-Paquelin is pointed comment on this same theme.

While Miss King shows this same intense love of family in many of her stories it is rather in the general atmosphere than in quotable passages. In Monasur Motto we have Marie Modeste loyally honoring the mysterious uncle whom she has never seen, imagining and planning the life and home that will be hers when she leaves St. Denis and he finally takes her home to her own people. In Bonne Naman the family had all been renounced because Bonne Naman was too proud to let them know her changed condition, but they all came hurrying back to rally around Claire Blanche and claim her as one of themselves at Aza's summons. Surely the devotion of Jeanne Marie to Anne Marie rivals that of Jean-ah-Paquelin to his leprous brother.

Akin to this intense love of family is an intense love for race, a trait which both writers stress. It was Louisiana and the
Creole against, above the rest of the world. I think this quality, this tenacity with which the descendants of French colonists hold to their race and language is the foundation stone upon which the Creole civilization rests, and the reason for their peculiar type having remained separate and distinct when others have been absorbed by and become a part of America. Cable expresses the feeling thus, "Do the people at large repudiate these men? In no wise - a Louisianian is a Louisianian; touch him not." and again in the last words of the patriarch of the Grandissimes, words which proved his patriotic loyalty and became his epitaph, "Louisiana, Louisiana - forever."

Miss King suggests the same loyalty to a French rather than an American civilization in such remarks as, "Theodora, I used to say, your father is preparing us for a heaven presided over by Louis XIV as God," or this from In a French Quartet:

"Friends! French and Prussians! Friends!"

"But we are in America; we are Americans."

"Americans!"

"Ah, yes; Americans!"

"Americans! a la bonne heure! * * * France! She is the first of countries for us; she is the divine incarnation of 'la patrie' as the Virgin, as the madonna, is the incarnation of womanhood. * * * When I say France, it is as if every drop of blood in my body

35. Destiny.
had a voice. Expatriation may change the body, but
the blood, the blood, it is always the same, always
remains Gallic!"

Both writers dwell upon beauty as the heritage of the
Creole. In Cable's women it is a beauty of face and perfection of
form and feature. In Miss King's women to this sort of beauty is
added perfection of manner as well. The beauty and charm of Aurora
and Chlothilde permeate the Grandissimes like an aroma:

"There was something about the ladies -
in their simple but noble grace, in a jocund buoyancy
mated to an amiable dignity - that made them appear
to the scholar as though they had just bounded into
life from the garlanded procession of some old fresco."36

Our first glimpse of Aurora as she lifts her mask at the great charity
ball is one so charming that we feel Honoré's two hundred and fifty dol-

lars for charity were not so ill spent to obtain it.

"She lifted her own mask a little, and
then a little more; and then shut it quickly down
upon a face whose beauty was more than even those
fascinating graces had promised which Honoré Grand-
issime had fitly named the Morning."

And that Aurora was conscious of her beauty and knew how to use it to
best advantage, you may be sure. That, too, was a Creole trait. Miss
King says of one of her characters, Idalie Sainte Foy Mortemart des

36. Grandissimes, p. 178
"Whether she was beautiful or not, it is hard to say. It is almost impossible to appreciate properly the beauty of the very rich. The unfettered development, the limitless choice of accessories, the confidence, the self esteem, the sureness of expression, the simplicity of purpose, the ease of execution—all these produce a certain effect of beauty behind which one really cannot get to measure length of nose or brilliancy of eye. This much can be said; there was nothing in her that positively contradicted any assumption of beauty on her part; or credit of it on the part of others."37

One knows at least that this proud girl would be worth a second glance, and that all those little girls of St. Denis who "held their lunch baskets like bouquets, and their heads as if they wore crowns," who had "a grace of ease, the gift of generations; a self-composure and polish, dating from the cradle," would grow into other Idalie Sainte Foyas and, like her, would grace the high place they were destined to fill.

Impracticality is a Creole trait. Mr. Cable shows it in the housekeeping affairs of Aurorá and Clothilde:

"From a Creole standpoint they were not bad managers. They could dress delightfully on a very small outlay; could wear a well-to-do smile over an inward

37. *La Grande Demoiselle.*
sigh of stifled hunger; * * * but as to estimating the
velocity of bills payable in their orbits, such sagacity
was not theirs." 38

Miss King confirms it in the splendid soirée "Madame Edmond Fleurissant" 39
gives for her granddaughter when there is not money enough with which to
pay the butcher or the baker — a soirée of which Madame Montyon who "has
the manners of a policeman" scornfully says:

"Giving balls, going to balls, and not pay
house-rent, not pay office rent, not even pay interest
on their debts! debts reduced to ten cents on the
dollar!"

Fagotte confirms it in her affectionate monologue regarding her old
mistress:

"And I said I will go to Mamzelle Liane.
I have seen her take from her back to give to the
beggars in the street; I have seen her give her poor
little picayune of potatoes to a hungry dog. I have
seen her give up her property, all her mother's pro-
erty, her fine house and furniture and gold and
silver, rather than quarrel with her family about it.
She hasn't got food or clothes or a house any better
than for a dog herself; but she will take in her poor
old dog of a servant. God, He is changed; but Mamzelle

38. Grandissimes, p. 152.
39. The Drama of an Evening.
Liane, she is always the same."40

Gambling is another trait that both have ascribed to the Creole. It must be instinctive for the Creole to gamble, else the Louisiana lottery would not have flourished so nearly into our own time. But Cable makes of gambling a monumental vice among Creole gentlemen; Miss King treats it more as a matter of course that a gentleman should gamble mildly, for it was as much a part of his code as avenging insult, or protecting ladies, or loving his family. Cable hinges the tragedy of 'Sieur George on his overmastering passion for gambling; the undercurrent in the Grandissimes is the ownership of Fausse Riviere Plantation by the Grandissimes because of the weakness of Aurora's husband, and the moral obligation of Honoré to return it because it came in payment of a gambling debt; Jules St. Ange was overwhelmed with debt and involved in all sorts of difficulties with family and loved ones on the memorable Sunday that he met Poisson Jone' because of his weakness for gambling. Miss King pictures for us Mr. Thomas Middleton, that lovable and convivial gentleman, as gambling in a mild and graceful way, and while her story of Anne Marie and Jeanne Marie is tragic, it is not because of their putting aside a coin each week to invest in a lottery ticket but because in the end Anne Marie had something to hide from her sister.

There are some qualities portrayed by one or the other author which I believe both would admit are Creole but which are not clearly

40. An Interlude.
drawn so that one can say, "This is the proof of my statement." For example, Miss King has frequently pictured her elderly men and women as testy and irascible. Perhaps it is impatience that is the Creole characteristic. Miss King says in The Marriage of Marie Modeste that patience is not a Creole virtue — and this impatience takes the form of testiness in Miss King's delineations. General B. in A Drama of Three is a lovable but fussy old gentleman, fussing at his faithful Honorine over things that are in no way her fault; fussing at Pompey, because he is a trifle late; fussing at everything and everybody and threatening all sorts of dire calamities to now this one, now that, because he is himself impatient and unreasonable. Of the same type is Madame Josephine in A Delicate Affair who blames Jules first for too much light, then for none at all; for bringing her peas when he might have known she wanted mushrooms, for anything and everything that does not suit her and in which one much more intelligent than Jules would have had a hard time anticipating her wishes. A third example of the type was Monsieur Felix when he was ill who, "with his bright red face with its fierce gray moustache, could be seen looking out, and his excited voice heard screaming, scolding, ex-postulating, and threatening, until even the pet chickens and ducks deserted their favorite feeding-place, and the little crawling, black children, with their skirts tied up under their arms, learned to imitate their elders and crept nimbly under the gallery or dodged behind the out-houses to avoid him."41

41. Madame Lareveillere,
But if Cable did not use the word "testiness" at least he knew the quality and shows it in the arrogance and self-esteem of the doughty old Creole, Agricola Fusilier, who assures Frowenfeld, "My young friend, when I, Agricola Fusilier, pronounce you a professor, you are a professor. Louisiana will not look to you for your credentials; she will look to me!"42

The Creole character in fiction, particularly in some of Cable's stories, is delightfully childlike, especially the lower class Creole, but there are some childlike traits exhibited by Cable's most noble and aristocratic characters that I am sure neither Miss King nor the Creoles would excuse. Superstition in Raoul, or Jules, or Narcisse would not be unpardonable, but superstition in Aurora Becanun or Agricola Fusilier is not so easily accepted. Nor is it merely a shadowy superstition, as we today exhibit it in jokingly referring to some outgrown belief, but an overpowering faith in the working of voodoo, and the power of imps and magic. A sprig of basil to coax money into the empty purse might have been passed off as a four leaved clover in the shoe, but not so all the rites Aurora was willing to go through with at Palmyre's suggestion to gain what she wanted, nor the widespread acceptance by Agricola and most of his clan of the idea that the evil spirits were pursuing him and that he was the victim of a voodoo and a sorceress. Such superstition would be found in Miss King's characters only among the negroes and

42. Grondissimes, p. 66.
children. One cannot imagine Madame Edmond Fleurisant, or Madame Lareveillere, or Monsieur Felix, or Idalie St. Nte Foy betraying any such weakness. There is a form of superstition but of a very different sort that runs like a colored thread through most of Miss King’s writings, but it is that of religious superstition or belief. A common superstition of this kind is exemplified in Madrilena:

"And the dead will have their festival tomorrow, and she will be among them. It will be a birthday to her. Tonight at twelve o’clock she will come out of her new tomb with them, and they will walk down the paths visiting one another, and talking and laughing."

One of the most marked differences in the characters of Cable and King is found in their attitude towards slavery. No Creole would admit — and I doubt whether many Yankees really believed it — that the Southern attitude towards slavery was accurately reflected in the story of Bras-Coupé, that horrible record of atrocity of man towards man, of white towards black. Uncle Tom’s Cabin seems mild in comparison, and had Mr. Cable’s story appeared before the war it would surely have proved as much a firebrand among the abolitionists as Uncle Tom. One hates to think that he belongs to a race of beings that could produce even one who could be guilty of such crimes against any living thing. That there were some instances of brutal

43. Grandissima, Chaps. 28, 29.
treatment of slaves by masters probably no one would deny, but that such heartless cruelty and inhuman depravity as that of Don José Martinez towards the Jaloff prince, Bras-Coupé, was universal or even common we can hardly accept.

Nor is the story of Madame Lalarie reflective of the Creole sentiment on the subject of slavery. The torture of her slaves by that beautiful and most attractive lady who with her "graces and graciousness quite outshone her husband and his step-daughters" forms another story the mere reading of which makes the blood run cold, and, as Cable writes of the day on which the Haunted House was entered and the slaves freed, "the sight inspired us with so much horror that even at the moment of writing this article, we shudder from its effects." One feels that it is small wonder that the angry mob, mad with the lust for destruction of life and property in payment for the debt of human suffering, "stopped the horses - killed them - * * * what they did with the driver * * * one can guess. They broke the carriage into bits. Then they returned to the house. * * *

The doors and windows were broken open, the crowd rushed in. * * * In a single hour everything movable disappeared or perished. The place was smashed; the very stair banisters were pulled piece from piece; * * * they mounted and battered the roof; they defaced the walls." And one somehow feels that justice was once more vindicated in the report of Madame Lalarie's death in France, where she had taken refuge.

44. *The Haunted House of Royale Street*.
"She had engaged with a party of fashionable people in a boar-hunt, and somehow meeting the boar while apart from her companions had been set upon by the infuriated beast ... and had been torn and killed." These are Cable's most striking pictures of master and servant, and he leaves the impression that this was the usual attitude of a Southerner and a Creole towards his slaves. Never once does he show us the pleasant or ideal relation with which Miss King's stories abound.

The lifelong devotion of Marcelite to Marie Modeste is a sketch of an idyllic time and of a situation not so rare but that many a like instance could be related by almost any one who lived in those times and knew intimately the life of that day.

"The nurse, a slave no longer ... took the child to herself and nursed it, nursed it as the Virgin Mary must have nursed her Babe. Nursed it on her knees, in adoration; lodging it in her room, which became not a room but a sanctuary; couching it in her own bed, which became an altar; feeding it, tending it, as imagination can conceive a passionate heart in a black skin tending a white child under the ghostly supervision of dead parents. ... She placed the child at a school that the child's memory could not antedate. She gave the child a responsible white guardian, which the child's knowledge could not contradict. She took her forever out of the homely surroundings..."
which love had made sumptuous and self sacrifice holy, but which would prove social ostracism. To maintain this fiction, patience, money, time were needed. Patience? did a woman ever need patience for a child? Was money ever needing from an inferior to a superior? Time? The good God gives the same time to the slave as to the free, the black as the white, the ignorant as the wise, the weak as the strong."

As fitting as the punishment of Madame Lalaurie seems the reward of Marcelite that it was she who followed immediately after Marie in the procession and gave her beloved mistress in marriage, and even though black there seems nothing incongruous in her taking this prominent place at a Creole wedding.

The same devotion is shown by Joe, the body servant of Thomas Middleton, who became a worthless, no-account scamp at the death of his master, because, as he explained, he was driven almost frantic by his memories of his old master and his services to him and now "his work was dead and gone."

In The Drama of an Evening, Miss King has given such a delightful picture of the usual relation of mistress to her black retainers that it seems worth quoting.

"As night fell, it [the old gray stucco building] arose through the darkness glittering with

light, and opened its portals for the reception of guests; the great wide port-cochère in front, and the little back gate on the street in the rear. This gate had been thoughtfully propped open, that the mistress might not be disturbed by its continual opening and shutting by the procession of the expected if uninvited. Having come within the radius of the news that Madame Edmond was going to give a soirée, they, naturally considering their former intimate relations with the family, came to the soirée itself. Those who had ante-emancipation costumes of flowered mouseline-de-laine gowns, black silk aprons, and real bandanna head-kerchiefs, put them on for volunteer service in the dressing-room. Those who had shawls put them on to hide toilet deficiencies, and, also, a prudently provided basket. Those victims of constitutional improvidence who had neither baskets nor shawls came in untempered shiftlessness to gloat their eyes and glut their bodies on whatever chance might throw in their way. All entered alike boldly and assuredly, in consciousness of their unabrogated funeral and festal privileges, inspected with their heaven-given leisurely manner, the provisions for refreshments, commented on the adornments, reconnoitred
the rooms, and finally selected advantageous positions for observation behind the shutters of the ladies' dressing rooms, or posted themselves in obscure corners of the hall. What sights to take home to their crowded shanties! * * * When the arrivals entirely ceased, the lookers-on upstairs had to advance their positions to be at all repaid for the trouble of peeping. The hair-dressers and maids in virtue of their superior appearance had the privilege of the steps down to the floor beneath. They sat, their bright bandanna heads looking like huge posies, exchanging their bold, frank, and characteristically shrewd comments on their chilom masters and mistresses, giving free vent to their versions and theories, but aggressive toward each other in their loyal partnerships and their obstinate servility to family and name. It was a pleasure to look up and see them, to catch a furtive greeting or a demonstration of admiration. Their unselfish delight in the enjoyment of others gave a consecration to it."

From Miss King's writings one could go on quoting such instances at length. The stories of Aza, of Betsie, of the Clodhopper, of Jerry and Milly, of Nourice, of Fagotte, are felt to be not only true, but common as well.

Bound up in the social evil of slavery - perhaps an out-
growth of it - is that other social evil - miscegenation. Both writers have touched upon this in their stories, but the impression gained from these stories is very different. From Cable's writings one feels that the practice was so common as to excite little comment and to be accepted as a matter of course. Miss King has fewer examples, and one feels from her presentation that the practice was not one to be accepted with complacency even by the Creole, but one that excited pity for the innocent victims and horror at the practice.

Furthermore, Cable manages in every case to gain the reader's sympathy for the black, while Miss King turns our pity towards the white. In Cable's *Sideoin's Band* we have Harriet the black prototype of the lovely Creole, Ramsey Hale - so like her that in the indistinct light of the ship's improvised stage Harriet plays the part taken earlier by Ramsey without the difference being detected by the audience - and throughout the story the reader feels that Harriet and not Ramsey is the one sinned against. And yet in calmly thinking it over one feels a horror at Ramsey's position and a pity for her rather than for - or perhaps as well as for - Harriet. In the *Grandissimes Honoré, f.m.c.* is pictured as the sufferer and the other Honore as the recipient of all honor and favor, but again one wonders how Honore could bear such a situation and feels that after all Honore, f.m.c., is the more fortunate of the two. In the story of *Zôphire Dural* and the quarmac, Philomèle, Zôphire, the Creole, is presented as the rascal, Philomèle as the victim, and we are filled with wrath at the practice and

47. *Free man of color.*
48. *Lovers of Louisiana.*
a system that makes it possible, and with rage at the Creole, for somehow the vice and its consequences seem imputed to him. Miss King, on the other hand, in The Little Convent Girl, like Kate Chopin in Desiree's Baby, emphasises the tragedy of the one who thinks herself white and finds the evidence of the drop of black blood. Surely this, in America and particularly in Creole Louisiana, is the greater tragedy of the two.

In Cable's later books the reformer has overshadowed the artist. Indeed as early as his first novel, the Grandissime, the hand of the crusader is seen - and reform or progress was not a Creole virtue. Content with things as they were, "fonder of pleasant fictions regarding the salubrity, beauty, and advantages of their town than of measures to justify their assumption," they were not in sympathy with any measures for social uplift nor with any one who advocated them. Such characters in fiction would be as little acceptable to them as in the flesh. But Cable dreamed of a greater progress for his state and native city than any she had ever made, and he could not keep these ideas of the reformer out of his books. Frowenfeld in the Grandissime, Dr. Seyler and John Richling in Dr. Seyler, Hugh Courtney in Gideon's Band, John March in John March, Southerner, Godfrey Winslow in Bylow Hill, Philip Castleton in Lovers of Louisiana are all trying to do something for the moral and social betterment of a people who, Cable frankly says, are in sad need of improvement. There are obscurities as to just what each reformer was trying to accomplish, but none as to the fact that

49. George E. Waring, Jr.: George W. Cable, Century, Feb., 1892.
Cable intends the reader to understand that reform was needed.

These are some of the most striking features of the stories of Cable and King. It would seem from the analysis that some of the charges made against Cable by the Creoles had their foundation in fact. They accused him of exaggeration and inaccuracy. He often portrays characteristics which are admirable in themselves and which are truly Creole in quality but which through overemphasis become objectionable. Love of kindred and intense patriotism are traits that are rightly held in high esteem, but a love of kindred which leads one to say, "I would not offend my people. Peace first and justice afterward," and a patriotism that would protect a rascal and condone a crime only because the perpetrator is of the same race are not so estimable.

Again, the Creoles said that Cable did not accurately portray the higher type of Creole. However, pleasing such a character as "Jules, the gay, pleasure-loving, kind-hearted, volatile little Creole" may be, he lacks a dignity, a culture and an assurance of manner, and the Creole felt that such characters, together with the dialect of Cable's Creoles, conveyed to the world at large a wrong impression of the culture and character of the aristocratic Creole.

Still another charge was that Cable intended his books as weapons of reform rather than as contributions to the fine art of literature, and as such the Creole considered them an intrusion.

51. W. M. Baskervill: *George W. Cable*. 
and an impertinence. Certainly the note of reform is increasingly felt after his first volume - Old Creole Days - was published, and the work of the artist was marred by this fact. To a people suspicious that "an unkind critic had been making free with the sacred traditions of a proud and over-sensitive people," it might well seem that this was the first intention of the author.

There is much truth in the accusations of the Creoles of inaccuracy, of exaggeration, of misrepresentation, and of attempts to reform. To one who has made some study of their history and ancestry and is looking critically for expressions and impressions that might give offense to this peculiar people, with their tenacious clinging to the past, and impractical disregard of the future, the occasions for resentment are numerous; but to the casual reader looking for a thrilling tale well told about a strange and fascinating people, the evidence of such accusations might easily pass unnoticed.

52. George H. Waring: George W. Cable, Century, Feb., 1882.
VIII. The Results of the Struggle.

After the smoke of battle has cleared away the interested look over the field and try to reckon what has been gained or lost by the struggle. Of many a battle the result has been written down as indecisive, nothing definite gained or lost by either force. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle often reads, "The Angles won the victory, but the Danes held the field." Perhaps if we tried to formulate definite results and determine which writer has most truly portrayed the Creole our verdict would be similar - "Miss King won the victory, but Cable held the field."

Miss King says that Cable missed the romance of the people and the glamour of the times about which he wrote. It might be more accurate to say he missed the romance and glamour of the everyday life of the city and the people about him which Miss King has pictured with such grace and fidelity, but that with the instinct of a reporter who scents a good story he found instead the romance and glamour in the strange, the unusual, the sensational. Her characters are truer to the Creole type, to the rank and file found in old New Orleans and Creole Louisiana; his are the out-of-the-ordinary individuals, more striking because unusual and more memorable because they are so striking. Her situations are those of the everyday life of city and plantation, "experiences, reminiscences, episodes, picked
up as only women know how to pick them up from other women's lives—
or other women's destinies, as they prefer to call them—and told as
only women know how to relate them"; his are the mountain peaks
that tower above the dead level of everyday existence. Her method
in fiction is that of the historian; his in history that of the
fictionist. And yet we would not miss her fiction nor his history.
Taken together they form a beautifully wrought tapestry of the roman-
tic life of the Creole of an earlier day, Miss King's stories the rich
but quiet background of romantic history, Mr. Cable's, the fantastic
ornament of romantic fiction. Miss King might have written just as
well and just as much without the incentive of correcting Mr. Cable's
pictures of Creole life, but if resentment at his misrepresentation
of Creole character was the force that brought forth her delightful
stories, the battle was worth while.

Old animosities are being forgotten, the bitter feeling
against George W. Cable is passing away, and Creole Louisiana par-
ticularly, as well as all America, is proud to write high on the roll
of writers peculiarly American the names of George W. Cable and Grace
Elizabeth King. In the pages of Old Creole Days and Monsieur Lotive
still live anew for us and for our children's children the loves and
hates and heartaches, the toil and joys and sorrows, the sacrifices
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