WARREN T. ASHTON

HATCHIE, THE GUARDIAN SLAVE; OR, THE HEIRESS OF BELLEVUE

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Hatchie, the Guardian Slave; or, The Heiress of Bellevue

Enriched edition. A Tale of the Mississippi and the South-west

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Paige Caldwell

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INTRODUCTION.

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In the summer of 1848 the author of the following tale was a passenger on board a steamboat[2] from New Orleans to Cincinnati. During the passage—one of the most prolonged and uncomfortable in the annals of western river navigation—the plot of this story was arranged. Many of its incidents, and all its descriptions of steamboat life, will be recognized by the voyager of the Mississippi.

The tale was written before the appearance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin[1],"—before negro literature had become a mania in the community. It was not designed to illustrate the evils or the blessings of slavery. It is, as its title-page imports, a *tale*; and the author has not stepped out of his path to moralize upon Southern institutions, or any other extraneous topic. But, as its *locale* is the South, and its principal character a slave, the story incidentally portrays some features of slavery.

With these explanations, the author submits the tale to the public, hoping the reader will derive some portion of the pleasure from its perusal which he experienced in its preparation.

BOSTON, *November* 18, 1852.

HATCHIE:

THE GUARDIAN SLAVE.

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CHAPTER I.

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"*Antony*. You grow presumptuous.
Ventidius. I take the privilege of plain love to speak.
Antony. Plain love!—Plain arrogance! plain insolence!"

DRYDEN.

On the second floor of a lofty building in —— street, New Orleans, was situated the office of Anthony Maxwell, Esq., Attorney and Counsellor at Law, Commissioner for Georgia, Alabama, and a dozen other states. His office had not the usual dusty, business-like aspect of such places, but presented more the appearance of a gentleman's drawing-room; and, but for the ponderous cases of books bound in law-sheep**[3]**, and a table covered with tin boxes and bundles of papers secured with red tape**[4]**, the visitor would easily have mistaken it for such. The space on the walls not occupied by book-cases was hung with rich paintings, whose artistic beauty and elevated themes betokened a refined taste. The floor of the room was covered by a magnificent tapestry carpet. The chairs, lounges and tables, were of the most costly and elegant description. The windows were hung with graceful and brilliant draperies. Every arrangement of the office betokened luxury and indolence, rather than the severe toil and privation to which the aspirant for legal honors must so often submit. The costly appurtenances of the apartment seemed to indicate that the young lawyer's path to fame was over a velvet lawn, bedecked with beautiful flowers,

rather than the rough road, steep and crooked, over which the greatest statesmen and most eminent jurists have trodden.

The occupant of this chamber was stretched at full length upon one of the luxurious lounges, puffing, with an abstracted air, a fragrant regalia. He was a young man, not more than five-and-twenty years of age, and what ladies of taste would have styled decidedly handsome. His face was pale, with a certain haggard appearance, which indicates the earlier stages of dissipation. His complexion was of a delicate white, unbrowned by the southern sun, and the skin was so transparent that the roots of his black beard were visible beneath its surface. His jet-black hair hung in rich, wavy curls, which seemed to be the especial care of some renowned tonsorial artist, so gracefully and accurately were they arranged. His black eye was sharp and expressive when his mind was excited in manly thought; but now it was a little unsteady,—disposed to droop, and wander, as though ashamed to express the emotions which agitated his soul. Altogether, his features were classic; but there was something about them which the moralist would not like—a sort of lascivious softness mingling with the nobler intellectual expression, that warned him to beware of the Siren, while he admired the Apollo.

The marks of vice were visible in his countenance**[1q]**. They had not yet become canker-spots on the surface, but they rankled and festered beneath that fair field of physical and intellectual grandeur.

The young attorney was dressed in the extreme of fashion, yet in good taste. Though he wore all the fashion

demanded, he did not court ridicule by overstepping its flickering lines. He was not the over-dressed dandy, but the full-dressed gentleman of refined taste, in his external appearance.

Anthony Maxwell had been educated at a northern institution. A year before his introduction to the reader, he had entered his father's office in the capacity of a partner, where, by an assumed devotion to business, he had effectually deceived his father and his clients into the belief that he was a steady, industrious young man. His talents were of a very respectable order, which, superadded to a native eloquence and an engaging demeanor, had enabled him to acquit himself with much credit in the cases intrusted to his management. A few months after his professional *début*[5], his father's decease had placed him in possession of a very lucrative practice and a moderate fortune, thus enabling him in some degree to follow the bent of his own inclinations. To those whose habits and desires were similar to his own, he was not long in unfolding his true character, though not to a sufficient extent to destroy at once his professional prospects. The irresponsible life of the man of leisure had more charms to him than an honorable distinction in his profession. To labor in any form he had an intolerable repugnance. His fortune was not sufficient to allow an entire neglect of business; therefore he determined to practise law in an easy manner, until a rich wife, or the "tricks" of his craft, would permit an entire devotion to the pleasures of affluence.

In accordance with this idea, his first step, after the death of his father, had been to locate himself in the

magnificent apartments we have described. He gave up the house in which his father had dwelt, and, fitting up a sleeping-room in the rear of the office with oriental splendor, his life and habits were free from the scrutinizing gaze of friend and foe, and he found himself situated as nearly to his mind as his income would permit. These indications of a dissolute life were viewed with distrust by the more respectable of his clients. His subsequent actions were not calculated to increase their confidence; yet, for the respect they bore to the father's memory, they were slow in casting off the son.

Mr. Maxwell smoked his cigar, and occasionally uttered an impatient exclamation, as though some scheme he was turning in his mind refused to accommodate itself to his means. He was evidently engaged in the consideration of some complicated affair; and the more he thought, the more impatient he grew. He finished his cigar, and lit another; still the knotty point was not conquered. His haggard countenance at one moment was lighted up, as though success had dawned upon his mental contest; but at the next moment it darkened into disappointment, which he vented in an audible oath.

While thus laboring in his perplexity, the door communicating with the ante-chamber was opened, and the boy in attendance very formally announced "Miss Dumont."

This announcement seemed to dissipate the vexatious clouds which had environed the attorney, and a light and cheerful smile came, as if by magic, upon his care-worn features, as he apologized to the lady for the smoky atmosphere of the room.

"I trust your honored father is well," said he, after disposing of the usual commonplace introductions of conversation.

"I regret to say that his failing health is the occasion of this visit," replied the lady, in a cold and even serious tone. "I have called to request your immediate attendance at Bellevue. My father has some business matters upon which he requires your professional advice."

"Col. Dumout, I trust, is not seriously ill," returned Maxwell, with an appearance of sympathy.

"He is confined to his room, but not entirely to his bed. When shall I say you will come?" said the lady.

"I will be there within an hour after your own arrival, if you go direct."

"Very well, sir;" and she turned to depart.

This intention on the part of the lady did not seem to meet the approbation of the attorney.

"Stay a moment, Miss Dumont," said he, in an embarrassed manner; "pray, honor me with a moment's conversation."

"Nay, sir. I know too well your object in this request, and cannot accede to it," replied the lady, in a firm and dignified manner, while a rich crimson shade suffused her beautiful countenance.

"Be not so unkind,—a moment is all I ask," said Maxwell, with pleading earnestness.

"No, sir; not a moment. Your unopened letter, which I yesterday returned, should be enough to convince you that my mind is not changed," replied she, moving to the door.

The lawyer was vexed. The letter alluded to by the lady he had received, and it had troubled him exceedingly. He had a great purpose in view,—a purpose which, accomplished, would enable him to realize the cherished object of his life,—would enable him to revel in the ease and affluence he so much coveted. Something must be done. Here was an opportunity afforded by the providential visit of Miss Dumont which might never occur again, and he resolved to improve it. Determined to detain her, he adopted the first expedient which presented itself.

"Pardon me," said he, "I have not received the letter, and was not aware that you intended to return it."

"Indeed!" replied the lady, with evident astonishment, as she relinquished her hold of the door-handle, and returned to the table by the side of which the attorney stood.

"I regret that I did not, as it would have saved you from further annoyance, and me from a few of the hours of anguish with which I have awaited your reply," returned the lawyer, in accents of humility, which were too well feigned to permit the lady to suspect them. "The bitterness of a blighted hope were better than the agony of suspense."

A smile of pity and contempt rested upon the fair face of the lady, as she turned her glance from him to the papers on the table. There lay Maxwell's letter, with the envelope in which she had returned it! She only pointed to it, and looked into his face to read the shame and confusion her discovery must create.

Maxwell's pallid cheek reddened, as he perceived that his deceit was exposed; but he instantly recovered his self-possession, and said,

"Pardon this little subterfuge. I permitted myself to descend to it, that I might gain a moment's time to plead with you for the heart which is wasting away beneath your coldness. You do not, you cannot, know the misery I have endured in possessing the love upon which you so cruelly frown."

The passionate eloquence of Maxwell might have melted a heart less firm than that of Emily Dumont. As it was, the cold expression of contempt left her features, and, if not disposed to listen with favor to his suit, she was softened into pity for his assumed misery. Under any other circumstances, the lie he had a moment before uttered would have forever condemned him in her sight. But her charitable disposition compelled her to believe that it was the last resort of a mind on the verge of despair.

"Mr. Maxwell," said she, "I am deeply grieved that you should have suffered any unhappiness on my account."

"I will bless you for even those words," returned Maxwell, hastily, feeling that he had gained the first point.

"But I do not intend to encourage your suit," promptly returned the lady.

"Be not again unkind! Veil not that heavenly sympathy in the coldness of indifference again!"

"I wish not to be harsh, or unkind. You have before given me an index of your sentiments, and I have endeavored, by all courteous means, to discountenance them."

"Yet I have always found something upon which to base a flickering hope."

"If you have, I regret it all the more."

"Do not say so! Changed as has been your demeanor towards me, I have dared to fan the flame in my heart, till now it is a raging fire, and beyond my control."

"I cannot give my hand where my heart is uninterested," replied the lady, feelingly. "I love you not. I am candid, and plain, and I trust this unequivocal declaration will forever terminate any hope you have cherished in relation to this matter. Painful as I now feel it must be for you to hear, and painful as it is to me, on that account, to declare it, I repeat —I can never reciprocate the affection you profess. And now let this interview terminate. It is too painful to be prolonged;"—and she again moved towards the door.

"Do not leave me to despair!" pleaded Maxwell, earnestly, as he followed her toward the door. "At least, bid me wait, bid me prove myself worthy,—anything, but do not forever extinguish the little star I have permitted to blaze in the firmament of my heart—the star I have dared to worship. Do not veil me in utter darkness!"

"I can offer no hope—not the slightest, even to rid myself of an annoyance," replied Miss Dumont, with the return of some portion of her former dignity; for the perseverance of the attorney perplexed and troubled her exceedingly.

"You know not to what a fate you doom me," said Maxwell, heedless of the lady's rebuke.

"There is no remedy;" and Miss Dumont grasped the door-knob.

"There is a remedy. Bid me wait a month, a year, any time, till you examine more closely your own heart. Give me any respite from hopeless misery."

"You have my answer; and now I trust to your honor as a gentleman to save me from further annoyance," said Miss Dumont, with spirit, for her patience was fast ebbing out.

"I will not *annoy* you," replied Maxwell, with emphasis, as he assumed an air of more self-possession. "I have been pleading for exemption from the direst of human miseries. But I will not *annoy* you, even to save myself from endless woe."

"Forget this misplaced affection; for he assured my sentiments will continue unchanged."

"I can never forget it; but I will strive to endure it with resignation. I feel that I must still cherish the presumptuous hope that you will yet relent."

"Destroy not your own peace; for the hope must be a vain one. Good-afternoon;" and the lady departed before the attorney had time to add another hyperbolical profession of a passion which, however well acted, was not half so deeply grounded as he had led the unsuspecting object of it to believe. That he really loved her was to some extent true. That his love was earnest and pure, such as the blight of coldness and inconstancy would render painful, was not true,—far from it. He had sought her hand, not to lay at her feet the offering of a hallowed affection, but to realize the object we have before mentioned,—to enable him, by the possession of her vast wealth, to live a life of ease and pleasure.

He had commenced his attack upon her affections with some prospect of success. To the occasional professional visit he paid her father he had added frequent social calls, in which he had used all his eloquence to enlist the

sympathies of the fair daughter. She had regarded him as an agreeable visitor; and, indeed, his natural abilities, the unceasing wit and liveliness of his conversation, had well earned him this distinction. Flattering himself that he should be able to win her affections, he had gradually emerged from the indifference of the mere formalist to the incipient attentions of the devoted lover. These overtures were not well received, and, if she had before treated him with the favor which the agreeable visitor always receives, she now extended to him only the stately courtesy of entire indifference. The visible change in the cordiality of her receptions had opened his eyes, and revealed the nature of his unpromising position. But his disposition was too buoyant, his character too energetic, to allow him to despair.

Latterly, however, a new obstacle to his suit had presented itself, in the person of a rival, upon whom the object of his ambitious wishes appeared to bestow unusual favor. This individual was a young officer in the army, a sort of *protegé* of the lady's father, who had been spending a furlough at Bellevue. In the matter of fortune Maxwell's rival was not to be dreaded, for he knew the lady was not mercenary in her views. The young captain was penniless; but his family was good, and he had the advantage of being a favorite with the father. He had won for himself a name on the fields of Mexico, which went far to enlist a lady's favor. He was a universal favorite both with the public and in the private circle.

Maxwell considered this young officer a formidable rival, and he resolved to retrieve himself at once. Upon his

personal attractions he relied to overcome the lady's disfavor; and, notwithstanding the unequivocal intention of discountenancing his suit she had manifested, he resolved to open his campaign by addressing her, eloquently and tenderly, through the medium of a letter. He felt that he could in this manner gain her attention to his suit,—a point which his vanity assured him was equivalent to a victory. But his philosophy and his vanity were both sorely tried by the return of the letter unopened. His point was lost, and he was harassing his fertile brain with vain attempts to suggest any scheme short of honest, straight-forward wooing,—which the circumstances seemed to interdict,—when the visit of the lady herself rendered further efforts useless.

His position, resting, as it did, on the purpose of marrying the heiress,—a purpose too deeply incorporated with his future prospects to be resigned,—was now a desperate one. Through the long vista of struggles and difficulties he saw his end, and the fact that he had to some extent compromised his heart stimulated him still more to meet and overcome the barriers that environed him.

For an hour after the lady's departure the young lawyer pondered the obstacles which beset him. With the aspect of an angry rather than a disappointed man, he paced the office with rapid and irregular strides. He could devise no expedient. A lady's will is absolute, and he must bend in submission. He blamed his own tardiness one moment, and his precipitancy the next; then he cursed his ill luck, and vented his anger and disappointment in a volley of oaths.

His meditations were again interrupted, by his attendant's announcement of "Mr. Dumont."

"Ah, good-morning, sir! I was just on the point of going to Bellevue. Nothing serious has happened, I trust," said Maxwell, laying aside, with no apparent effort, his troubled visage, and assuming his usual bland demeanor.

"Nothing," replied the visitor, gruffly.

"Your niece left the office an hour since," continued Maxwell. "She requested me immediately to visit your brother."

"Which you have not done," returned the visitor, whom we will style Jaspar, to distinguish him from his brother, Colonel Dumont.

"But which I intend to do at once, a little matter having detained me longer than I supposed it would."

"I will save you the trouble. The business upon which my brother wished to see you was concerning his will."

"Indeed, sir! I hope he is not dangerously ill," said Maxwell, in apparent alarm.

"Not at all. The doctor says he will be out in a week; but he thinks otherwise, and is now engaged in putting his house in order," replied Jaspar, with a sickly smile.

"I am glad he is no worse, though it is better at all times to be prepared for the final event."

"Perhaps it is," said Jaspar, coldly. "Here is a rough draught of the will, which he wishes reduced to the usual form with all possible haste. Will it take you long?"

"An hour or two."

"I will wait, then, as he requested me to bring you with me on my return."

"It shall be done with all possible haste. There are cigars, and the morning papers. Pray make yourself comfortable."

Jaspar seated himself, and lit a cigar, without acknowledging his host's courtesy, while Maxwell applied himself to the task before him. The first part of the will was speedily written; but those parts which alluded to the testator's daughter, foreshadowing the opulence that awaited her, he could not so easily pass over. They were so strongly suggestive of the fortunate lot of him who should wed her, that he could scarcely proceed with the work. An hour before, she had veiled *his* prospects in darkness; now he was preparing a will which would, at no distant day, place her in possession of a princely fortune. His mind was so firmly fixed upon the attainment of this treasure that it refused to bend itself to the task before him.

Jaspar had finished his cigar, and began to be a little impatient. Thrice he rose from his chair, and looked over the lawyer's shoulder.

"This is an important paper," said Maxwell, noticing Jaspar's impatience, "and must be executed with great care."

"So it is; but the colonel may die before you get it done," observed Jaspar, coarsely, and with a crafty smile, which was not unnoticed by the attorney.

"O, no! I hope not," replied Maxwell, exhibiting the prototype of Jaspar's smile.

A smile! What is it? What volumes are conveyed in a single smile! It is the magnetic telegraph by which sympathetic hearts convey their untold and unmentionable purposes. To the anxious lover it is the bearer of the first tidings of joy. Long before the heart dare resort to coarse, material words, the smile carries the messages of affection.

To the villain it reveals the sympathetic purposes of his according fiend. What the lead and line are to the pilot, the smile, the cunning, dissembling smile, is to the base mind. By means of it he feels his way into the heart and soul of his supposed prototype.

Maxwell knew enough of human character to read correctly the meaning of Jaspar's crafty smile. The attorney had long known that he was cold and unfeeling, a bear in his deportment, and sadly lacking in common integrity; but that he was capable of bold and daring villany he had had no occasion to suspect. As he turned to the document again, the base character of the uncle came up for consideration in connection with his suit to the niece. Might not this circumstance open the way to the attainment of his grand purpose?

But, while he considers, let us turn our attention to the development of the history and circumstances of the Dumont family.

CHAPTER II.

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"*Lorenzo*. You loved, and he did love!
Mariana. To say he did
Were to affirm what oft his eyes avouched,
What many an action testified—and yet,
What wanted confirmation of his tongue."

KNOWLES.

On the right bank of the Mississippi river, a few miles above New Orleans, was situated the plantation of Colonel Dumont, which he had chosen to designate by the expressive appellation of "Bellevue;" though, it would seem, from the level nature of the country, it could not have been chosen on account of any fitness in the term.

In territorial extent, in the number of slaves employed, and in the quantity of sugar annually produced, the plantation of Colonel Dumont was one of the most important on the river. This fact, added to the possession of immense estates in the city, rendered its owner a man of no small consequence in the vicinity. But, more than this, Colonel Dumont was beloved and respected for his many good qualities of mind and heart. In the late war with England he had served in the army, and as an officer had won an enviable distinction by his courage and his talents. Coming unexpectedly into the possession of this estate by the death of an uncle, he retired, at the close of the war, from a profession to which a genuine patriotism alone had invited

him, and devoted himself entirely to the improvement of his lands.

Colonel Dumont had been married; but, after a single year of happiness in the conjugal state, his wife died, leaving him an only daughter in remembrance of her. This child, at the opening of the tale, was within a few years of maturity,—the image of her father's only love,—not less fair, not less pure and good.

Emily Dumont was a beautiful girl, fair as the lily, gentle as the dove**[2q]**. She was of a medium height, and of slender and graceful form. Her step was light and elastic, and, if there was any poetry in her light, elegant form, there was more in her easy, fairy-like motion. Her features were as daintily moulded as her form. Her eye was light blue, soft, and beautifully expressive of a pure heart. She was a little paler than the connoisseur in female loveliness would demand in his ideal, and her expression was a little inclined to sadness; but it was a sadness—or rather a sweet dignity —more winning than repulsive to the gazer.

Emily Dumont, highly as fortune had favored her in the bestowal of worldly goods and personal beauty, was still more blessed in the gifts of an expansive mind and a gentle heart; and mind and heart had both been faithfully cultivated by the assiduous care of her devoted father. She was a true woman,—not a mere plaything to while away a dandy's idle hours, not a piece of tinsel to adorn the parlor of a nabob, but a true woman,—one fitted by nature and education to adorn all the varied scenes of life. Although brought up in unclouded prosperity, amid luxury and

affluence, she was still prepared for the day of adversity, if it should ever come.

As the heiress of immense wealth, her hand was eagerly sought in the aristocratic circle around her; but thus far she had resisted all these attacks upon her heart, and upon her prospective riches. In the crowd of suitors who gathered around her was Anthony Maxwell. In the item of wealth his fortune was comparatively small; and in that of a noble character, smaller still. Emily could have forgiven him the want of the former, but the latter was imperatively demanded. At the young lawyer's return from the North, and on his first appearance at the bar, Emily had regarded him with more than ordinary attention. But, after the death of his father, the reports which reached her ears of his dissolute habits and inclinations caused her to regard him with distrust. His wit, accomplishments and native suavity, had procured him admission into the circle of her more favored friends. But the report of his vices had as promptly produced his expulsion.

The return of the army from Mexico brought with it the young officer whom we have before mentioned. The father of this young man had been a companion-in-arms of Colonel Dumont, and a strong friendship had grown up between the veterans. The tie was severed only by the death of the former, after a life of mercantile misfortunes, and finally of utter ruin. At the period of the father's insolvency and death, Henry Carroll, the son, was a cadet at West Point**[6]**, and was about abandoning his chosen profession, for the want of means, when Colonel Dumont wrote him an affectionate letter, offering all that he required to complete

his studies. This offer, coming from one who had been a heavy loser by his father's bankruptcy, was highly appreciated, and the young student had allowed no false delicacy to prevent his acceptance of the generous proposal, though with a stipulation to repay all sums, with interest. Colonel Dumont, in his regular summer tour to the North, never failed to visit his young friend, whose noble bearing and lofty principle entirely won his heart, and he charged himself with a father's duty towards him. A regular correspondence was kept up between the self-constituted guardian and his *protegé*; and the more the former read the heart of the young man, the more did he rejoice that he had befriended him. He read with mingled pride and affection the repeated instances of his daring courage and matchless skill which found their way into the newspapers; while the record of his humanity to a fallen foe contributed to swell the tide of the old gentleman's affection.

On his return from Mexico, Henry's first care was to see his devoted friend and guardian, and he accepted his pressing invitation to spend a month at Bellevue.

As an inmate of her father's family, he was, of course, a constant companion of Emily. Her radiant beauty had captivated his heart long ere the month had expired; and he saw, or thought he saw, in the heart of the fair girl, indications of a sympathetic sentiment. In the rashness of his warm blood he had allowed himself to cherish a lively hope that his dawning love was not entirely unrequited. He had seen that *his* bouquet was more fondly cherished than the offerings of others; that *his* hand, as she alighted from the carriage, was more gladly received than any other; that

operations during the Mexican–American War; it appears in period accounts as a place where American troops served or suffered casualties.

16 A 19th-century medical term used in civilian and military accounts for a severe febrile illness with vomiting—often applied to yellow fever or similar tropical fevers that caused high mortality along the Gulf Coast; the word appears frequently in contemporary sources.

17 Faro was a popular 19th-century card game of chance played at gambling tables in the United States and Europe, often run in public gaming rooms and associated with professional gamblers.

18 Roulette refers to a wheel-based casino game; 'roulette boards' here denotes the tables or gaming setups used for that game at nineteenth-century gambling houses.

19 In 19th-century usage, 'hells' meant disreputable places of vice such as illegal gambling dens or vice establishments rather than a religious sense of hell.

20 In this context 'cabarets' denotes taverns, saloons, or drinking-and-entertainment establishments (often with gambling) common in 19th-century towns and cities.

21 Natchez is a historic port city on the Mississippi River in southwestern Mississippi, an important antebellum river landing and commercial center in the 19th century.

22 A safety-valve is a mechanical device on steam boilers that releases excess pressure to prevent explosions; the passage describes deliberate tampering with or extra weighting of that valve, increasing boiler danger.

23 A river engineering and geomorphology term for channels where a river breaks through a meander neck and

creates a new, shorter course; on the Mississippi such cut-offs often leave isolated islands or oxbow lakes.

24 Common name for fast-growing Populus species (often eastern cottonwood, Populus deltoides) that line floodplains of the Mississippi River; noted for cottony seed tufts and frequent occurrence on newly deposited soils.

25 Camlet was a woven fabric used in the 18th and 19th centuries—originally from camel or goat hair and later from silk, wool or blends—so a "camlet cloak" denotes an outer garment made from that material.

26 A smaller fore-and-aft sail set between the mast and the forestay or between masts to provide additional drive or control; the text shows the doctor hoisting a stay-sail to increase his boat's speed.

27 The name of another river steamer mentioned as assisting the burning vessel Chalmetta; mid-19th-century river craft commonly bore distinctive names (sometimes with numbers) and performed towing and rescue work.

28 A written legal document evidencing the transfer of property from seller to buyer; in the antebellum U.S. South bills of sale were commonly used to document transactions in enslaved people, and here a forged bill of sale is used to claim the heroine as property.

29 A small traveling bag often made from carpet material; in 19th-century literature it refers to a personal traveling trunk or satchel rather than the later political sense of 'carpetbagger'.

30 A large fixed-blade fighting knife popular in the early-mid 19th century in the United States, named after

frontiersman Jim Bowie and commonly carried as a weapon in that era.

31 Hygeia (or Hygieia) is the Greek goddess/personification of health; in 19th-century usage the name could be applied figuratively to a nurse, healthful influence, or instrument of healing.

32 A flammable, resin-derived fluid (distilled from pine resin) used historically as a lamp/torch fuel and solvent; the text refers to torches 'besprinkled with turpentine' to make them burn brightly.

33 Vicksburg is a city on the Mississippi River in western Mississippi that was a major 19th-century river port; it later became famous for the Civil War siege of Vicksburg (1863), though that event postdates this novel's setting.

34 'Calaboose' is an informal 19th-century American term for a small jail or lockup, derived from the Spanish calabozo (dungeon or prison).

35 A 'half-eagle' was a United States gold coin with a face value of five dollars, minted in various designs from the late 18th century into the early 20th century.

36 'Montezuma' here names a steamboat in the story; naming river steamers after historical or exotic figures was common for nineteenth-century vessels on U.S. rivers.

37 In this context 'levee' refers to the riverfront landing or wharf where steamboats docked in cities like New Orleans, not solely to an embankment against flooding.

38 Baron Trenck likely refers to Friedrich von der Trenck (1727–1794), an 18th-century adventurer and author known in Europe for imprisonment and escape stories; the

reference conjures notorious prison exploits, with some details dependent on contemporary popular accounts.

39 Stephen Burroughs (c.1765–1840) was an American figure known in the early 19th century for criminal exploits, prison escapes, and autobiographical tales; the name was often invoked then to suggest notorious escape-artists.

40 The phrase 'as the scripter says' is a dialectal rendering of 'Scripture says,' i.e., a colloquial reference to the Bible, presented in the speech of a character.

41 Refers to the exploded boiler of a steamboat named the Chalmetta; boiler explosions on 19th-century Mississippi-river steamers were a common and deadly hazard, so the phrase alludes to a steamboat disaster (the exact historical incident is not specified in the text).

42 Used as a proper name here for a vessel ('the Flatfoot'), likely a boat that picked up survivors after the steamboat accident; the word functions as the ship's name rather than the common noun 'flatfoot.'

43 A French loanword meaning coolness or composure under pressure; used in 19th-century English to describe calm self-possession in stressful situations.

44 Refers to a type of early friction match (a 'vesuvian') sold under patent in the 19th century, used for lighting cigars or pipes; 'patent vesuvian' denotes a manufactured match rather than volcanic reference to Vesuvius.

45 A French expression meaning 'formerly' or 'previously'; in the phrase 'ci devant desperado' it indicates someone who had previously been a desperado (an outlaw or violent person).