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—It is not an easy thing to describe one’s first impression of New Orleans; for while it actually resembles no other city upon the face of the earth, yet it recalls vague memories of a hundred cities. It owns suggestions of towns in Italy, and in Spain, of cities in England and in Germany, of seaports in the Mediterranean, and of seaports in the tropics. Canal street, with its grand breadth and imposing facades, gives one recollections of London and Oxford street and Regent street; there are memories of Havre and Marseilles to be obtained from the Old French Quarter; there are buildings in Jackson Square which remind one of Spanish-American travel. I fancy that the power of fascination which New Orleans exercises upon foreigners is due no less to this peculiar characteristic than to the tropical beauty of the city itself. Whencesoever the traveler may have come, he may find in the Crescent City some memory of his home—some recollection of his Fatherland—some remembrance of something he loves.

New Orleans is especially a city of verandas, piazzas, porches and balconies; and the stranger is liable to be impressed with this fact immediately upon leaving the levee. All the streets in the

business portion of the city are shaded with broad piazzas of wood and iron, which cover the whole sidewalk; and on the main streets, such as Canal, side awnings of canvas are also used, so that during the hottest portion of the day the sun can not cause discomfort to pedestrians from any possible direction. The front and also the back windows of most private houses have balconies at every story up to the roof; and in the old French quarter these are often multiplied and superimposed in the most picturesque way;—you see them right under the angle of gable ends, jutting out from queer corners, in a fashion half-medieval. They are often hung with large pieces of cloth or carpet, or stuffs brightly dyed, especially above the French dry goods stores; and thus draped the effect is quite odd and pleasing. I find much to gratify an artist's eye in this quaint, curious, crooked French quarter, with its narrow streets and its houses painted in light tints of yellow, green, and sometimes even blue. Neutral tints are common; but there are a great many buildings that can not have been painted for years, and which look neglected and dilapidated as well as antiquated. Solid wooden shutters, painted a bright grass-green, and relieved by walls painted chocolate color, or tinted yellow, have a pretty effect, and suggest many memories of old France. Few houses in the quarter are without them.

A stranger can not avoid being also impressed with the solid character of the streets here throughout the business portion of the city. They are raised like causeways, and are usually either level with the sidewalks or above them, being separated from the curb by gutters of great depth and breadth. The street pavement consists mostly of square blocks of stone set diamond-wise; and this pavement is almost everlasting. It is very handsome and clean looking, and I am told that no other pavement can resist the wear and tear of the cotton traffic or the undermining effect of the rains which loosen bowlders and roll them from their beds.

Most of the finer public buildings must have been erected at a time when expense was the least consideration in the construction of an edifice. They are generously and beautifully built; yet it is sad to see that many of them are falling into decay. Especially is this the case in regard to the old St. Louis Hotel—now the State House—with its splendid dome, frescoed

by Casanova, and its grand halls. To repair it would now require an outlay of hundreds of thousands. It has been outraged in a manner worthy of Vandals; soldiers have been barracked in it; mold and damp have written prophecies of ruin within it. Hither it was that the great planters of the South dwelt in the old days when they visited New Orleans, and under their rich patronage the hotel prospered well, till the wars swept away their wealth, and, for a time at least, ruined New Orleans. I doubt if any of the great hotels here are now doing well.

The St. Charles, with its noble Greek facade, is the handsomest of these. From the entrance of the rotunda looking outward and upward at the vast Corinthian columns, with their snowy fluted shafts and rich capitals, their antique lines of beauty, their harmonious relation to each other, the sight is magnificent. I find a number of noble Greek facades in the city; the City Hall, the Methodist Church, on Carondelet street, and other structures I might name, are beautiful, and seem to illumine the streets with their white splendor. This elegant, gracious architecture appears adapted to this sky and this sunny clime; and, indeed it was under almost such a sky and such a sun that the Greek architecture was born.

But, after all, the glory of the city is in her Southern homes and gardens. I can not do justice to their beauty. The streets broaden there; the side-paths are bordered with verdant sod as soft and thick as velvet, and overshadowed with magnolias; the houses, mostly built in Renaissance style, are embowered in fruit-bearing trees and evergreen gardens, where statues and fountains gleam through thick shrubbery, cunningly trimmed into fantastic forms. Orange and fig trees; bananas and palms; magnolias and myrtles; cypresses and cedars; broad leaved, monstrous-flowering plants in antique urns; herbs with leaves shaped like ancient Greek sword-blades, and edged with yellow; shrubs exotically luxuriant, bearing blossoms of curious form and equatorial brilliancy of color; and flowers so rich of hue, so sweet, so fragrant, that they vary the varied green with a thousand tints, and make the tepid air odorous with drowsy perfume. And you can walk through this paradise hour after hour, mile after mile; and the air only becomes yet more fragrant and the orange trees more heavily freighted with golden

fruit, and the gardens more and more beautiful, as you proceed southwardly.

Color and light and bright contrasts,—those warmly picturesque effects which artists seek to study in tropical climes, may be studied in perfection at the French Market. The markets of London are less brightly clean and neatly arranged; the markets of Paris are less picturesque. It consists of a succession of huge buildings, extending for nearly a quarter of a mile, and covering an area of about four squares. Oh, the contrasts of color, the tropical picturesqueness of a morning market-scene here; the seductiveness of the succulent fruits; the brilliancy of the brightly dyed stuffs in the hosiery and notion booths; the truly French taste exhibited in the arrangements of vegetables, and fowls and fruits and fish; the costumes of the quadron girls; the Indian squaws selling droll trinkets; the blue jackets from the ships of all Nations; the red-shirted fishermen from the luggers; the Spaniards, Mexicans, Italians, Englishmen, Portuguese, Greeks, Frenchmen, Acadians, Creoles! One may see almost everything, and buy almost anything in the French market; and he must have a hard heart or an empty pocket who can always withstand the softly syllabled request of some bright-eyed Creole girl to buy something that he does not want.

You never smell an unpleasant odor in the French market; there is nothing to offend the nostrils, nothing to displease the eye. You inhale the fragrance of fruits and flowers—such fruit, such flowers!—you breathe the odor of delicious coffee from the lunch booths. What coffee it is, too—Oriental in strength and fragrance, but clear as wine. Oranges are selling at ten cents a dozen; bananas “five for a picayune;” and mountains of them are coming in from the Picayune landing, where all the luggers lie. Here are huge fruits that resemble oranges, but are nearly eight inches in diameter; pomegranates piled up in blushing pyramids; red bananas from Spanish America arranged in towers; figs, ripe and green; fresh dates; pale green grapes in giant clusters; apples rosy enough to have tempted rosy Eve; citrons and lemons; cocoanuts and pecans and pine-apples; and strange-looking fruits peculiar to the tropics. Here are flowers of a hundred kinds, in pots, in boxes, in nosegays, in bouquets, in bunches for the button-hole. Here are boots and shoes, silks