

bottle or two of Frontignac, besides fruit and brandy, we bade farewell to the pretty Catalina and the old tower, for it was time to go drumming. Fair Anastasia, how delightful thy sunny beach and the blue sea that kisses buxomly thy lonely shore! Before me rolls the eternal ocean, mighty architect of the curious masonry on which I stand, the animal rock which supports the vegetable soil. How many millions upon millions of these shell-fish must have been destroyed to form a substratum for one rood of land! But it was time for drumming, the magic hour (between the fall of the ebb and the rise of the flood) for this delightful sport, whose superior enchantment over all others in the Walton line I had so often heard described with rapture—the noble nature of the fish, his size and strength, the slow approach which he makes at first to the hook, like a crab; then the sudden overwhelming transport that comes over you when you feel him dashing boldly off with the line is comparable to nothing save pulling along a buxom lass through a Virginia reel. What do you say to that, Mokes? That part about the Virginia reel, now, is not to be despised.”

But Mokes had never danced the Virginia reel—had seen it once at a servants' ball, he believed.

“What are you doing, Sara?” I said, sleepily, from the majestic old bed, with its high carved posts and net curtains. “It is after eleven; do put up that pencil, at least for to-night.”

“I am amusing myself writing up the sail this afternoon. Do you want to hear it?”

“If it isn't historical.”

“Historical! As though I could amuse myself historically!”

“It mustn't be tragedy either: harrowing up the emotions so late at night is as bad as mince-pie.”

“It is light comedy, I think—possibly farce. Now listen: it begins with an ‘Oh’ on a high note, sliding down this way: ‘Oh-o-o-o-h’”

“MATANZAS RIVER.

“Oh! rocking on the little blue waves,
While, flocking over Huguenot graves,
Come the sickle-bill curlews, the wild laughing loons,
The heavy old pelicans flying in platoons
Low down on the water with their feet out behind,
Looking for a sand-bar which is just to their mind,
Eying us scornfully, for very great fools,
In which view the porpoises, coming up in schools,
Agree, and wonder why
We neither swim nor fly.

“Oh! sailing on away to the south,
There, hailing us at the river's mouth,
Stands the old Spanish look-out, where ages ago
A watch was kept, day and night, for the evil foe—
Simple-minded Huguenots fleeing here from France,
All carefully massacred by the Spaniard's lance
For the glory of God; we look o'er the side,
As if to see their white bones lying 'neath the tide
Of the river whose name
Is reddened with the shame.

“Oh! beating past Anastasia Isle,
Where, greeting us, the light-houses smile,
The old coquina beacon, with its wave-washed walls,
Where the spray of the breakers 'gainst the low door
falls,
The new mighty watch-tower all striped in black and
white,
That looks out to sea every minute of the night,
And by day, for a change, doth lazily stand
With its eye on the green of the Florida land,
And every thing doth spy—
E'en us, as we sail by.

“Oh! scudding up before wind and tide,
Where, studding all the coast alongside,
Miles of oysters bristling stand, their edges like knives,
Million million fiddler-crabs, walking with their wives,
At the shadow of our sail climb helter-skelter down
In their holes, which are houses of the fiddler-crab
town;
While the bald-headed eagle, coming in from the sea,
Swoops down upon the fish-hawk, fishing patiently,
And carries off his spoil,
With kingly scorn of toil.

“Oh! floating on the sea-river's brine,
Where, noting each ripple of the line,
The old Minorcan fishermen, swarthy and slow,
Sit watching for the drum-fish, drumming down below;
Now and then along shore their dusky dug-outs pass,
Coming home laden down with clams and marsh grass;
One paddles, one rows, in their outlandish way,
But they pause to salute us, and give us good-day
In soft Minorcan speech,
As they pass, near the beach.

“Oh! sweeping home, where dark, in the north,
See, keeping watch, San Marco looms forth,
With its gray ruined towers in the red sunset glow,
Mounting guard o'er the tide as it ebbs to and fro;
We hear the evening gun as we reach the sea-wall,
But soft on our ears the water-murmurs fall,
Voices of the river, calling ‘Stay! stay! stay!’
Children of the Northland, why flee so soon away?
Though we go, dear river,
Thou art ours forever.”

After I had fallen asleep, haunted by the marching time of Sara's verse, I dreamed that there was a hand tapping at my chamber door, and, half roused, I said to myself that it was only dreams, and nothing more. But it kept on, and finally, wide awake, I recognized the touch of mortal fingers, and withdrew the bolt. Aunt Diana rushed in, pale and disheveled in the moonlight.

“What is the matter?” I exclaimed.

“Niece Martha,” replied Aunt Di, sinking into a chair, “Iris has disappeared!”

Grand tableau, in which Sara took part from the majestic bed.

“She went to her room an hour ago,” pursued Aunt Di; “it is next to mine, you know, and I went in there just now for some camphor, and found her gone!”

“Dear, dear! Where can the child have gone to?”

“An elopement,” said Aunt Di, in a sepulchral tone.

“Not Mokes?”

“No. If it had been Mokes, I should not have—that is to say, it would have been highly reprehensible in Iris, but— However, it is *not* Mokes; he is sound asleep in his room; I sent there to see.” And Aunt Diana betook herself to her handkerchief.