

**MADAME
DELPHINE**

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Madame Delphine by George W. Cable

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GEORGE W. CABLE

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DELPHINE**



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BY

GEORGE W. CABLE

Author of "Old Creole Days," "The Grandfather," etc.

NEW YORK
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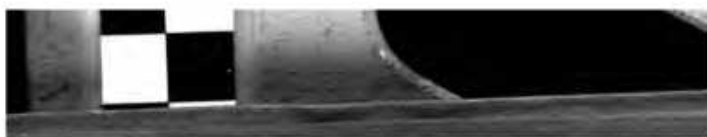
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at home
with
Catherine Delphine
in 1874
and 1875

MADAME DELPHINE.

CHAPTER I.

AN OLD HOUSE.

A FEW steps from the St. Charles Hotel, in New Orleans, brings you to and across Canal street, the central avenue of the city, and to that corner where the flower-women sit at the inner and outer edges of the arcaded sidewalk, and make the air sweet with their fragrant merchandise. The crowd—and if it is near the time of the carnival it will be great—will follow Canal street.

But you turn, instead, into the quiet, narrow way which a lover of Creole antiquity, in fondness for a romantic past, is still prone to call the Rue Royale. You will pass a few restaurants, a few auction rooms, a few furniture warehouses, and will hardly realize that you



have left behind you the activity and clatter of a city of merchants before you find yourself in a region of architectural decrepitude, where an ancient and foreign-seeming domestic life, in second stories, overhangs the ruins of a former commercial prosperity, and upon everything has settled down a long Sabbath of decay. The vehicles in the street are few in number, and are merely passing through; the stores are shrunken into shops; you see here and there, like a patch of bright mould, the stall of that significant fungus, the Chinaman. Many great doors are shut and clamped and grown gray with cobweb; many street windows are nailed up; half the balconies are begrimed and rust-eaten, and many of the humid arches and alleys which characterize the older Franco-Spanish piles of stuccoed brick betray a squalor almost oriental.

Yet beauty lingers here. To say nothing of the picturesque, sometimes you get sight of comfort, sometimes of opulence, through the unlatched wicket in some *porte-cochère*—red-painted brick pavement, foliage of dark palm