

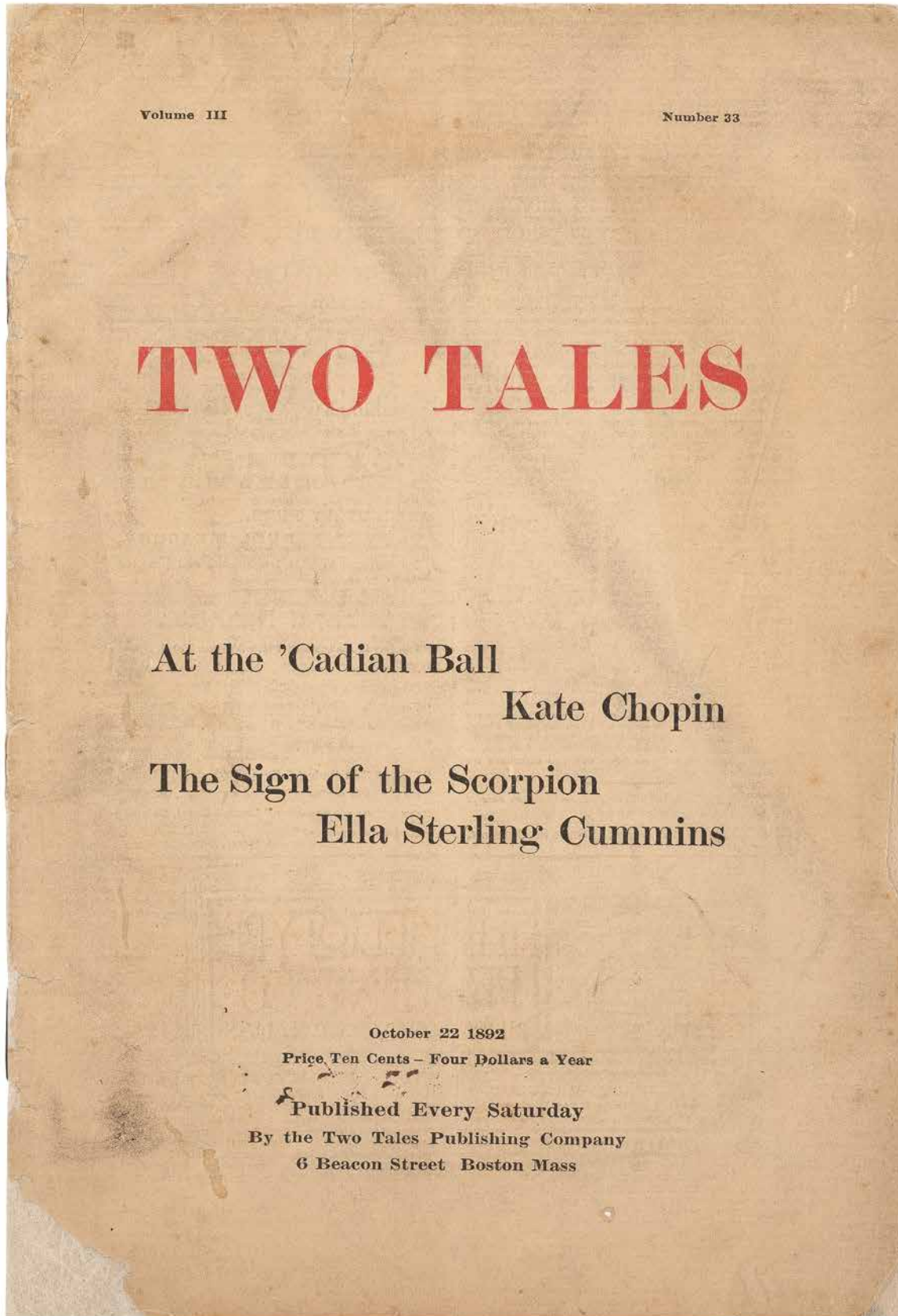


Kate Chopin [and] Ella Sterling Cummins

At the 'Cadian Ball [and] The Sign of the Scorpion [in] Two Tales. Vol 3, No. 33

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TWO TALES

At the 'Cadian Ball

Kate Chopin

The Sign of the Scorpion

Ella Sterling Cummins

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First edition. Tall octavo. [20]pp. paginated [145]-164. Stapled wrappers printed in red and black. Wrappers repaired on the wrappers with rice paper, especially on the rear wrap which has a few words lacking, and a little overall soiling, else very good.

One of the earliest appearances in print by Kate Chopin, *At the 'Cadian Ball*, one of her famous Bayou stories which later appeared in her collection *Bayou Folks*. It appears here in the magazine *Two Tales* which began publishing in 1891 and, which not surprisingly, published two stories in each issue. Fragile and rare. *OCLC* locates four copies with *BAL* referencing two more for a total of six.

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AT THE 'CADIAN BALL.

By Kate Chopin.

BOBINÔT — that big, brown, good-natured Bobinôt — had no intention of going to the ball, even though he knew Calixta would be there. For what came of those balls but heartache, and a sickening disinclination for work the whole week through, till Saturday night came again and his tortures began afresh? Why could he not have loved Ozéina, who would marry him to-morrow; or Fronie, or any one of a dozen others, rather than that little Spanish vixen? Calixta's slender foot had never touched Cuban soil; but her mother's had, and the Spanish was in her blood all the same. For that reason the prairie people forgave her much that they would not have overlooked in their own daughters or sisters.

Her eyes — Bobinôt thought of her eyes, and weakened — the bluest, the drowsiest, most tantalizing that ever looked into a man's; her flaxen hair that kinked worse than a mulatto's close to her head; that broad, smiling mouth and tip-tilted nose, that full figure; that voice like a rich contralto song, with cadences in it that must have been taught by Satan, for there had been no one else to teach her tricks on that 'Cadian prairie. Bobinôt thought of them all as he ploughed his rows of cane.

There had even been a breath of scandal whispered about her a year ago, when she went to Assumption — but why talk of it? No one did now. "*C'est Espagnol, ça,*" most of them said with lenient shoulder-shrugs. "*Bon chien tient de race,*" the old men mumbled over their pipes, stirred by recollections. Nothing was made of it, except that Fronie threw it up to Calixta when the two quarrelled and fought on the church steps after mass one Sunday, about a lover. Calixta swore roundly in fine 'Cadian French and with true Spanish spirit, and slapped Fronie's face. Fronie had slapped her back: "*Tiens, cocotte, va!*" "*Espèce de lionèse; prends ça, et ça!*" till the curé himself was obliged to hasten and make peace between them. Bobinôt thought of it all, and would not go to the ball.

But in the afternoon, over at Friedheimer's store, where he was buying a trace-chain, he heard some one say that Alcée Laballiere would be there. Then wild horses could not have kept him away. He knew how it would be — or rather he did not know how it would be — if the hand-