

LAFFITTE of LOUISIANA

BY MARY DEVEREUX
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DON C. WILSON
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CHAPTER III.

The gray was flushing with rose tints from the coming sun when a loud knocking upon the entrance door aroused the soldier on guard in the hall.

"Open the door!" a voice shouted peremptorily. "Tatro! Pierre! A thousand devils! You fools inside there, open the door, I say!"

The disturbance brought Greloire from his improvised couch at the rear of the hall; and climbing the ladder, he pushed his head through the broken window for a sight of who might be outside.

"Who are you?" demanded the young man standing before the door, his voice indicating surprise as he looked at the face of the soldier above him.

"That is what I should like to have you tell me of yourself, m'sieur," answered Greloire, in his usual dry manner, his not over friendly eyes noting the details of the attire worn by the aristocratically clad visitor.

"Dame!" now exclaimed the latter, evidently more angry than before. "What business can it be of yours? Who are you, that dare cavil over opening to me the door of my father's house?"

"He is but one; and there are two of us to handle such a cocksparrow as I could easily overcome alone, with one hand," said Greloire scornfully, as the bars fell, and Etienne entered, somewhat paler than usual, and his hair and raiment disheveled from an all-night's concealment in one of the outbuildings of the chateau.

Wishing to see the baron, in order to press his demand for more funds, the young man had, unannounced, come down from Paris, and chanced to arrive the evening before, during the wildest part of the melee.

He was by this time accustomed to

her to take the young officer into her confidence. Looking up into the cold, clean-cut face before her, she asked, "You will not leave here to-day, Monsieur?"

"Perhaps; I cannot decide until later."

"Before you go, monsieur, I would take it as a great favor should you let me ask of you some advice as to a matter concerning him you seem to love." And she glanced at Jean, who was standing in the doorway, with his back to them.

The officer, if he felt any surprise, showed none, for he answered her with kindly assurance. He then joined Jean, and the two went below, where breakfast awaited them.

The two dead soldiers were buried early in the afternoon; but the stars were coming out when the door of the great vault was closed, and the late baron left to sleep with his ancestors.

Etienne, silent and repelling, stood by, vouchsafing little notice of anyone about him. Jean had taken care to keep away from his half-brother; and the latter replied with scant courtesy to the lieutenant's salutation, when they met for the first time, as the baron's body was borne from the house.

Margot was not of those who had stood about the tomb. Etienne's temporary absence from the house being assured, she had improved the opportunity to open the secret panel and remove the metal box and bags of coin, which she hid away amongst her own belongings. She proposed, with Jean and Pierre, to seek a new home in Toulon, where a large number of Royalists, together with others who had suffered persecution from the Revolutionists, had found refuge.

Presently she saw Etienne enter the drawing room, where Jean had remained, having refused to leave the



"And springing upon Etienne, drove the rusted blade into his side."

such outbreaks; and suspecting quickly the position of affairs, had lost no time in finding a hiding place in a grove, not far from the house.

At the tidings of his father's death, a new expression came to Etienne's face, softening its coldness; but this quickly changed when, in reply to his query as to who was in command of the escort, Greloire answered, "Lieutenant Bonaparte."

An oath that made both soldiers stare burst from the young man's lips. "I will go to my apartments," he added, with a return of all his haughtiness; "and do both of you see to it that I am not disturbed by your officer."

With this he stalked through the hall, and up the stairway, shuddering as he passed the blood-stains upon the floor.

Etienne's steps on the upper stairs and along the oaken-floored hall brought Tatro to the door of the room where lay the two wounded soldiers, one of whom was evidently dying, while the other was sleeping quietly.

"Ah, Monsieur Etienne, is it you, sir?" Then, correcting himself with "Pardon—Monsieur le Baron," he burst forth in a quavering voice, "It is surely a sad return for you."

Somewhat softened by the old man's words, and now realizing more fully the horrors of the night before, Etienne replied in an unusually kind fashion. But when he ended by ordering that a repast be brought to his rooms, Tatro's face showed a surprise he dared not voice; for he wondered that his new master could think of sustenance for himself, so soon after coming upon the scene of his recent loss.

Margot had slept little during the night, but lay thinking of what changes were likely to come, now that the baron was dead. An intuition warned her to secure the money and valuables which the baron had entrusted to her care; to take them from their present hiding place, and have them at hand, in case some additional disaster should come. And, too, bearing in mind her master's command that she remove Jean from Etienne's care in case of that befalling which now had come to pass, her paralyzed brain had at length evolved a plan which seemed both wise and feasible.

But before attempting to put it into execution, a certain impulse urged

lieutenant, who was now seated at a table, examining some papers found upon the dead Fauchel; and considering this an opportune time to make known her plans, she had turned toward the door, when Etienne's voice, full of its old-time arrogance, came to her.

"Jean, leave the room instantly, and go to your bed!"

Margot paused in the doorway and saw Jean's head raised with a beligerent poise. "I will not go for you, Etienne, when you order me in such a rude fashion," he said, his voice shaking with rage.

Uttering a vile oath, Etienne strode forward, and seizing him by the collar, dragged the boy from the chair and began striking him.

"Monsieur Etienne, do not you do that!" cried Margot, rushing toward him. "Ah, mon Dieu! How can you have the heart, and at such a time as this?"

Jean was struggling in a wild fury, using feet and hands to defend himself, which he did in a way that brought to the lieutenant's mind the scene of two years before, in the Tuilleries garden.

"Hold, Monsieur le Baron," he said, distinctly and calmly. "I have the right to tell you that you cannot thus assert your authority in my presence."

Etienne, as once before, released Jean, and turned to face the speaker, to whom the boy now rushed, clinging to him with a storm of passionate sobs, coming partly from anger, and partly from a bruised heart.

Margot had drawn nearer to his side; and, as Jean's sobs ceased, the three confronted Etienne, who now burst into a loud, derisive laugh.

"What can a bastard, and the friends and champions of a bastard, expect better?" he demanded, now speaking deliberately, his pale face distorted by malice.

Margot started indignantly, an angry flame springing into her eyes; and the lieutenant said in a low tone, whose very calmness was a menace, "It is scarcely the act of a gentleman to insult the defenseless and the dead."

"What?" asked Etienne, now letting loose all the vitals of his nature with malignity. "Peste! How can he be calmer than I call him, when his mother—as no wife?"

"'Tis false!" declared Margot, forgetting everything like habitual respect.

"It is not," Etienne retorted; "and you are a liar when you say otherwise."

Jean, with paling face, his burning eyes fastened upon his brother, seemed stunned.

"It is not," Etienne repeated less vehemently, "as Pere Huot could tell you, if you asked him. My mother, the late baronne, died but three years ago, in, I regret to say, a madhouse, at Paris. But mad, or sane, she was the baronne; and that other woman, the mother of your young whelp there, was no wife of my father's, as you must now admit. The church would never recognize her as his wife, he being a true Catholic, and no priest performing the marriage ceremony between him and that cursed Huguenot—"

Etienne uttered an epithet too vile for repetition—an epithet that stung to madness the listening boy, who, with a cry of rage, such as might come from a new Cain wakened to life, snatched a dagger from a bric-a-brac strewn upon a near-by table, and, springing upon Etienne, drove the rusted blade into his side.

The slight form reeled and fell, a crumpled heap, upon the floor, while Margot, with a shriek that brought the soldier flying from his post in the hall, fell upon her knees, and tried, with her apron, to staunch the flowing blood.

Jean had turned to flee; but an iron grip on his shoulder held him, and, looking up, he felt to trembling and shivering, as he met the stern eyes of his friend, looking as he had never before seen them.

"Where would you go?" inquired a low voice, whose measured calm matched the look of the eyes.

The boy stood silent.

The lieutenant, still holding him fast, moved to where Margot and the soldier were kneeling beside Etienne, and Jean met the wild-eyed regard of the wounded man, from whose white lips now poured a flood of profanity, mingled with threats of vengeance against the boy, whom he ordered to leave the apartment.

The lieutenant turned away with a scornful laugh, half-suppressed, but which Jean heard; and, taking heart, the lad looked beseechingly upward, as if asking pardon for his mad act.

"Come away—come away, my De Soto," whispered the officer; and bending he kissed the tear-wet cheek. "He has a venomous nature, truly, and one cannot be greatly blamed for treating a dog as he deserves."

Then, gathering up the papers at which he had been looking, he thrust them into his pocket, and motioned Jean to follow him from the room.

Here Margot joined them, on her way to summon Tatro, that he might assist the soldier in getting Etienne to his own apartments.

Early next morning the household was astir—all save Etienne, who, although his wound proved to be but slight, kept to his bed, with Tatro in attendance; and before noon all but these two had left the chateau and set out upon their various routes—Margot with Jean and Perry, for Toulon, in company with the soldier Greloire, sent by the lieutenant to escort them.

At a fork in the highway, where their roads parted, Jean turned in his saddle to look after the slender figure riding away at the head of his men.

Turning his head, as if he felt the boy's longing eyes, the lieutenant smiled and waved his hand. Then, putting spurs to his horse, he rode swiftly from sight, followed by his soldiers.

After a last backward look toward the vacant space that had held the one he loved best on earth, Jean started his horse onward, to overtake the lumbering vehicle, driven by Pierre, and containing Margot and all the travelers' belongings.

(To be continued.)

He Obeyed His Orders.

John was the new English butler in the employ of a Philadelphia family. When John first came he was told by the mistress of the house that she was always at home to her sister, who was a frequent visitor to the house. The sister in question was pointed out to John on her next visit, and the mistress was satisfied in her mind that John would obey orders.

Every time the sister called John would admit the welcome guest with reverent respect. It was her custom to ask him before entering if his mistress was in, and it always happened that she was, so John would nod and profoundly bow her in.

But one day it happened that his mistress was out when the sister called. When John went to the door, as usual, asked if his sister was in, to which John nodded in the affirmative and bowed her in. John's business at that moment took him out in the yard, and he left her in the parlor.

Diving herself of her wraps, the visitor began to look for her sister but seeing no signs of her downstairs concluded that she was on one of the upper floors, and went upstairs. Of course, she failed to find her, and thinking that the butler might be mistaken, went downstairs to inquire of him again. She found him out in the yard, and calling to him, asked if he thought his mistress had gone out, as she could not find her in the house.

John, after meditating a moment replied:

"Yes, mum, she 's h'out."

"Out!" exclaimed the sister; "why I thought you said she was at home?"

"Yes, mum," came the solemn reply, "but she 's out 'at she was at ways at 'ouse so you!"—Lippincott, Margaine.

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CHAPTER IV.

Toulon, on the Mediterranean, was at this time the great military depot of France. Its inhabitants numbered about twenty-five thousand; and more than fifty frigates and ships of the line rode at anchor in its harbor, while within its spacious magazines was collected an immense quantity of military and naval stores.

Scarcely a day passed during the fall and early winter of 1793 that did not bring to the city families and individuals from all parts of France, seeking protection from the Revolutionists' cruelties—outrages which the Committee were either unable to control, or to which they were indifferent.

At Toulon, the friends of the old monarchy argued among themselves that the violence with which their land had been filled was too terrible to be longer endured; and they began to discuss the idea of surrendering the city, its magazines, forts and ships, to the combined English and Spanish fleets lying outside its harbor, and thus help to bring about a return of law and reason to insane France.

Among those in Toulon who heard of the proposed surrender was Margot, who, with Jean and Pierre, safe under the humble roof of their new home, had for these many months enjoyed a security she had never before known. In a measure her own mistress, and removed from the dread of Etienne, she found reliance and peace in the kindly guidance of Pere Huot, to whom the boys went each day for instruction, his abode being some distance from Margot's small house, which was in a retired part of the city, near the suburbs.

A surrender suggested to her the possibility of bringing scenes of bloodshed and violence; and the very name of "English" was to her—as also to most of her compatriots—the syn-

onym of what was utterly detestable. Her fears were realized when the surrender was accomplished, and the English ships sailed triumphantly into port, landing five thousand of their own troops and eight thousand Spaniards.

This proceeding was regarded with the greatest alarm and indignation by the Revolutionists, who, considering the surrender an act of treachery, resolved to retake Toulon, and drive the allies from the soil of France. Two armies were marched upon Toulon; and a siege was begun which for three months made but little apparent progress.

Affairs within the city became unsettled, and were soon almost demoralized; and Pere Huot having fallen seriously ill, Margot's heart grew heavy, as Jean, seeming to throw off all restraint, wandered day after day about the streets, associating with soldiers and rough characters.

Margot had not dared to communicate much of her misgivings from the day, now several weeks past, when, after remonstrating warmly as to some offense he had committed, she bade him ask himself if his father would have approved the act, and started back, as from a man's threatened attack, when the boy turned fiercely upon her.

"Never name him to me again!" he cried, with heaving breast and flashing eyes. "I have no father. Do you know my name here in Toulon? It is the same as Pierre's. He is Pierre Laffitte, and I am his brother, Jean Laffitte. And, be I saint or devil, to the end of my life I am Jean Laffitte!"

He looked so big and terrible in his rage that Margot, silent and frightened, felt that he was almost a stranger to her—this boy she had carried in her arms, and whom she had loved and watched over for so many years.

It was the last night of November, when darkness fell early over the city, and Margot was preparing her lonely evening meal. Where Jean and Pierre were, she knew not, but presumed that, as was often their habit, they would sup with some of their soldier acquaintances.

Although the evening was cold, the usual number of pedestrians were abroad, these being mostly soldiers, who were seeking excitement and gos-



"And, be I saint or devil, to the end of my life I am Jean Laffitte!"

sp at the various eating and drinking places frequented by them.

One of these was called "Le Chien Heureux," a two-story house situated down near one of the quays. Lights were blinking brightly from its small windows, and inside several stoves were burning, where Thiel, the landlord, and his one assistant, were preparing supper for several civilians and soldiers who sat about, talking and drinking, at the various small tables.

Sitting near the fire, two soldiers and a citizen, together with Jean and Pierre, were listening to a man in their midst, who, from his talk and appearance, seemed to have been an extensive traveler. This was Laro, an habitue of Le Chien Heureux when on shore from the "Aigle," a rakish-looking brigantine, of which he was owner and captain.

Jean listened with an attention which, for some reason, appeared to amuse Laro, who, now and then, with a quizzical smile lighting his black eyes, glanced askance at the boy's enraptured face.

Laro's story had been listened to by others seated around the tables, who occasionally reminded Thiel to hurry their suppers.

The next minute a soldierly-looking man came in, the uniform of a petty officer showing as he unclasped and threw off the heavy cloak that had enveloped him. After demanding supper as speedily as possible, he seated himself some distance away from the group at the fire.

But Pierre had been staring open-mouthed at him; and now the sound of his voice caused Jean to start, and turn his head quickly in the direction of the shadowy corner where the soldier was seated.

"Greloire!" he breathed.

"What is that, my cocksparrow? Toulon harbors many a stranger tongue, to be sure, but I speak only my own."

"Come, gentlemen, all," said Thiel, now bustling amongst them with a huge platter. "Your suppers are ready."

Neither Laro nor the others paid any further heed to the soldier, who, seated apart from them, ate his supper with an appetite that bore witness to previous fasting. But at odd moments, when unnoticed, his eyes, with a smiling warning in them, met those of the two boys; and once, while Jean was staring at him, he laid a finger upon his lips with a swift cautioning gesture of silence.

His supper finished, Jean strolled back to the fire, before which Greloire had seated himself, while the others remained at the tables, some still eating, and all of them discussing matters pertaining to the siege.

Leaning carelessly against the fireplace, after a quick glance about, to make sure he was not observed, the boy looked at the soldier with a world of inquiry in his dark eyes. Greloire replied with a comprehending smile, but again laid his finger against his lips, as if impressing silence, and then turned to the fire.

He had picked up his long cloak, and was putting it on. And no one noticed the suggestive motion of the head and hand, as, with slightly arched eyebrows, he looked once more toward Jean, who was still standing beside the fireplace. But the boy was quick to see these, and understood that he might expect to find Greloire outside.

Allowing what he felt to be a proper amount of time to pass after the latter had closed the door behind him, Jean put on his cap, and having motioned to Pierre, they both followed, regardless of Laro's declaration that it was earlier than usual, and not yet time for them to start for home.

The two boys, with occasional sharp glances around, passed along the almost deserted street. Presently Pierre, after a quick look over his shoulder, gripped Jean's arm.

"There is a man who looks like Greloire coming on just behind us."

He had scarcely spoken when a swift but cautious footfall came close behind him, and a hand caught his shoulder, while Greloire said in a carefully lowered voice, "Tiens! My quick-witted comrade, how are you?"

"As you see, or might, were it not

so dark," replied Jean, grasping the soldier's hand. "And you?"

"Much better for the fine supper I have been eating," said Greloire, a note of laughter in his voice.

Pierre now fell behind, and the three stepped more briskly.

"What have you to tell me?" inquired Jean, after they had gone a few paces, and Greloire remained silent.

"Did your lieutenant send you—was he wishing to know of me?" asked Jean eagerly. But there was no answer.

"Well, yes, and no," replied Greloire, speaking slowly, as if considering his words, and adding, as he looked down into the boy's upraised face, which even the dim light of the stars showed to be filled with keen disappointment, "Surely you have every reason to know his love for you; and he is one who never forgets. But his days are now filled with that which leaves little time for him to think of anything but this siege. He is outside the city, with the Revolutionary forces."

"He without, and you within, fighting against him!" burst from Jean's lips, as he drew himself away.

"Sh!" whispered the soldier. "These streets may seem deserted; but 'tis as well not to speak loud words for the winds may carry them to where the wrong ears may hear them."

Jean laughed softly, and came closer to Greloire.

"Aha—I see how it is."

"Be all the more careful, then, my young master," warned the soldier.

There was silence for a time, while the three walked slowly along until they reached a street where the houses were far apart; and the last one of all, from whose windows came a faint gleam of light, Jean pointed out to Greloire as his present abode.

"And so that is where you are living," said the soldier, as they stood looking toward it. "I tell you, lad, that had I the chance to possess so quiet a home, I should stop within it, and not be wandering into such shambles of carnage and blood as is the city now. Take my advice, and keep away from Le Chien Heureux. I can now come to your house; and that will be the best place for me to see you. But, if you are to undertake the mission of which I spoke, the less you see of that scoundrel Laro, the better will it be."

"Laro is my friend," declared Jean, his quick temper rising like a flash of fire. "He is my friend, and even you must not name him in such fashion to me."

"So?" said Greloire calmly, taking his hand from the boy's arm. "Then I doubt if you are to be trusted, and regret telling you as much as I have. Laro is not to be trusted. He is almost old enough to be your father; and, his suspicions once aroused, he has sufficient craftiness to surprise your secret, and use it for our harm."

Jean was silent, and Greloire went on in a milder tone. "Now tell me, were you in my place would you not think twice before risking secrets with such a keeper—one who cares so much for Laro as to have temper with an older friend, who, knowing the man's reputation, warns you against him?"

"I am not angry, Greloire," declared Jean penitently, "and regret that I was so. Pardon me."

"All right—all right, mon ami," was Greloire's hearty reply. Then, again lowering his voice, he asked in a half quizzical tone, "And do you wish to see our little colony?"

"Yes—indeed yes! You know that I would not give one of my fingers in exchange for a dozen Laros."

"Bien," said Greloire. "Now I must be going. So adieu, and my compliments to the good dame Margot."

With this he turned about, and whistling softly, went back the way they had come, while the two boys, after watching him a few moments, bent their steps toward the cottage.

(To be continued.)

ILLS OF TELEPHONE GIRLS.

Customary Salutation Constantly Rings In Their Ears.

"When a central operator hears somebody crying 'Hello' to her on the street, nine times out of ten she ignores the greeting," said a telephone expert. "Why? Because she takes the salute to be a delusion."

"A girl who, day after day, hears 'Hello, hello,' dinned into her ears, and who is constantly responding with 'Hello, hello, hello,' in time grows to hear and repeat the word mechanically; and when she leaves her work that word is still ringing in her ears. She can hear people saying 'Hello' to her on all sides, but the greeting of the real thing is so confused with the ghosts of dead labor that she seldom notices the first salutation of a friend."

"And did you ever know, by the way, that nine out of ten persons who habitually use the telephone have what we call 'telephone ear'?" In its first stage the telephone ear becomes acute and sensitive; but after long use the hearing becomes more or less blunted, and half the complaints against poor telephone service may be attributed rightly to the 'telephone ear.' Try it some time. If you habitually use the right ear, next time use the left and see if it isn't twice as satisfactory. It is a good plan for those who use the telephone much to frequently switch ears. This keeps the hearing equally balanced, and might ward off a permanent deafness."

Two Recommendations Needed.

Slowly—Doctor, I suppose you can recommend your tailor to me?

Doctor—Certainly, but you will have to get some one else to recommend you to my tailor.