

A FINE OF LOUISIANA

BY MARY DEVERUX
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DON C. WILSON
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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—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 head had been filled was too terrible to be longer endured; and they began to discuss the idea of surrendering the city, its magazines, forts, 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 mistake, 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 almost to most of her compatriots—the sym-



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onym of what was utterly detestable. Her fears were increased 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 it. Of the French army 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 was committed, he bade him ask himself if his father would have approved the act, and started back, as from a man's threat, and a siege was begun which for three months made but little apparent progress.

"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 Lafitte, and I am his brother, Jean Lafitte. And, be I saint or devil, to the end of my life I am Jean Lafitte!"

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. When 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 absent, these being mostly soldiers, who were seeking excitement and pos-

sip 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, turned 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 up as speedily as possible, he sent himself some distance away from the group at the door.

But Pierre had been staring open-mouthed at the man, and 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 about to depart.

"Greloire!" he breathed.

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

"Laro is my friend," declared Jean, his quick temper rising like a flash of fire. "He is my friend, and 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 suspicious eyes aroused, he has sufficient craftiness to surprise your secret, and use it for his own."

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 kuper—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, "and regret that I was so. Forgive 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 colonel?"

"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 he had come, while the two boys, after watching him a few moments, bent their steps toward the cottage.

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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 as he was wishing to know of me?" asked Jean eagerly. But there was no answer.

"Well, yes, and so," 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 exclaimed away from Greloire.

"Sh!" whispered the soldier. "These streets may seem deserted; but 'tis well not to speak loud words in every wind, and let them to whom the wrong ears may hear them."

"Jean laughed softly, and came closer to Greloire.

"Ah—I see how it is."

"Be all the more careful, then, my young master," warned the soldier. "There is 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 the windows cast a faint gleam of light, Jean pointed out to Greloire as his present abode.

"And so that in where you are living," said the soldier, as they were 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 wanting into such chambers 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 it will be the best place for me to see you. But if you are to undertake the mission on which I spoke, the less you see of that scoundrel Laro, the better will it be."

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"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 he had come, while the two boys, after watching him a few moments, bent their steps toward the cottage.

(To be continued.)

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

"Much better for the 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 as he was wishing to know of me?" asked Jean eagerly. But there was no answer.

"Well, yes, and so," 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 exclaimed away from Greloire.

"Sh!" whispered the soldier. "These streets may seem deserted; but 'tis well not to speak loud words in every wind, and let them to whom the wrong ears may hear them."

"Jean laughed softly, and came closer to Greloire.

"Ah—I see how it is."

"Be all the more careful, then, my young master," warned the soldier. "There is 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 the windows cast a faint gleam of light, Jean pointed out to Greloire as his present abode.

"And so that in where you are living," said the soldier, as they were 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 wanting into such chambers 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 it will be the best place for me to see you. But if you are to undertake the mission on 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 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 suspicious eyes aroused, he has sufficient craftiness to surprise your secret, and use it for his own."

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 kuper—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, "and regret that I was so. Forgive me."

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