LAFITTE of LOUISIANA

BY MARY DEVEREUX

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DON C. WILSON

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CHAPTER XVIII.

When Lafitte and Greloire were ushered into Napoleon's cabinet, and the former's eyes fell upon him he had for so many years longed to see, his first sensation was that of pain.

The slender form was gone,—lost in the personality of the stout, middle-aged man, who, lounging in a velvet-cushioned chair, looked at Lafitte carelessly—coldly, as at an entire stranger.

His appearance and attitude bore out Greloire's remark,—that it was said the emperor was "strangely indifferent to everything." Every line of the listless face and relaxed form indicated this.

As the ex-soldier approached and bowed low, a faint smile lightened Napoleon's repellent expression, and he said graciously, "Greloire, I am pleased to see you, and to know that you have not forgotten one who thought highly of you in more prosperous days. Who is this you bring with you?"

"Sire, Captain Jean Lafitte, of Louisiana," answered Greloire, after a moment's hesitancy; and Lafitte, coming forward, bowed respectfully.

"Jean Lafitte," Napoleon repeated slowly, looking, not at the former, but at Greloire. "I have heard the name before, but not to the wearer's credit. I ask you, Greloire,"—and his voice took a yet icier note,—"you, who are his sponsor, why Captain Jean Lafitte, of Louisiana, dare present himself before me?"

"I, Jean Lafitte, will answer your question, Sire; I, Jean Lafitte, of Louisiana! And I say to the man whom my boyish heart adored, and whom my man's heart loves, that I dare present myself to him because I have ships, gold, men, at my command, and all these, with my own life, are his, if he can find use for them."

There was a short silence, and one that seemed heavy, after the passionate voice had ceased. Then an icy tone made sharp contrast as the emperor said, "These ships, men, and gold, Captain Lafitte—how is it that you come to have them?"

Lafitte found it difficult to control himself—to make his voice and bearing accord with the respect he felt, and had but now expressed, for the man whose sarcastic calm turned back the impetuous torrent of his feelings. But the tone in which he replied was quiet, although husky with repressed emotion.

"Despite, Sire, the tales which have distorted my name and acts, and which I perceive have reached your ears to prejudice you against me, I claim that what I have of property was personally gained by legitimate means—in trading, and also by warfare which was perfectly honorable in its way. I have come with the same heart for whose love you once cared, to pray that you let me serve you, if I may, and die happy, in winning back the peace of mind a reckless boy threw away."

A new light swept like a softening hand across Napoleon's austere face.

"Captain Lafitte, you are right," he said, with an entire change of voice and manner. He extended his hand; and Lafitte, with a rush of new emotions, bowed deeply, and pressed it to his lips.

As he raised his head, the emperor's fingers tightened their clasp, and he rose to his feet.

"A man whose heart can treasure such love for me during all these many years is surely one who should not be misjudged," he said, looking up into the younger man's face; "most surely not by me, and at such a time as the present."

As he uttered the final words he placed his arms around Lafitte's shoulders and embraced him.

"Sire!"

A volume of emotions spoke in that single word.

"Sire, my whole heart is grateful for these words of confidence and esteem. No one can realize better than myself how grave was the mistake I made; and no man would make greater sacrifices to undo it."

"Tut, tut, boy," replied Napoleon, with all his old air of affection, and tapping the shoulder upon which one of his hands still rested, "when you have reached my years you will know better than to waste time and thoughts in useless regrets. Let the past go, Jean, my lad, and look only into the future."

The emperor resumed his seat, and resting his hands upon the arms of the chair, stared straight before him, while Lafitte stood looking down at the seated form.

"And may I not do something for you?" urged Lafitte, making a final appeal.

"No—no. Go, you and Greloire; you must leave me, for I feel it unwise that you remain another moment. You can do nothing—nothing, for me. But I am glad to have seen you—both of you; and I thank you, Jean, my valiant ghost from the past, for your offer and your love."

The emperor, as he spoke, leaned forward in his chair; and there was a caress in his smile and tone, as well as in his touch upon Lafitte's hand.

"If ever a time should come, Sire, when I can serve you, may I have the honor and happiness of receiving your commands?" was asked longingly.

"And you would come to me?"

"Come to you?" said Lafitte, in a tone so emphatic that the emperor made a gesture of warning. "Yes, Sire, through all the ships England might seek to interpose."

"If this be so, Jean, then perhaps you may some day hear from me. Meanwhile your adopted country (and I hope I may some time see it) is at war with England, my most implacable enemy; and the conflict may afford you an opportunity for freeing the name of Lafitte from obloquy. And, when this is done, I would ask of you to assume again your rightful name—the one belonging to your father's title and estates."

"My father's name and estates, Sire? Surely these are but phantoms of the past, with which I, Jean Lafitte, can have no connection."

The speculative eyes turned a smiling glance upon him as the emperor said, "It is scarcely a safe thing to aver what may or may not lie in the future. You, who seem so desirous of serving me, cannot you promise me this?"

"Indeed, yes, Sire," was the fervent answer as the speaker bent to touch with his lips the hand pressing his own.

"Be it so. Now"—and the clasping hand released its hold—"you must leave me; and be sure to remember my wish that you remain with Murier until you hear from me. Good-night, Greloire. Good-night, Jean.

"I, Jean Lafitte, will answer your question, Sire."

The gray eyes and dark ones exchanged a last fleeting glance of parting as Lafitte, following Greloire from the room, paused an instant in the doorway to look back.

Lafitte, quartered in one of Madame Teche's dimity-hung chambers, slept little that night. He reviewed again and again the meeting with Napoleon, until his brain was in a turmoil of thought that banished sleep.

If the emperor would go to America, might not he, Lafitte, be the means of getting him there in safety?

It was late when Greloire went to sleep, still half conscious of the footsteps in the room next to his own; and he awoke to see Lafitte standing by his bedside.

"It is scarcely an hour after sunrise, Greloire, and I regret to disturb you. But a messenger has just left a package with me, together with a written message from the emperor, requesting that you and I leave the island now, as speedily as possible."

"So?" said Greloire, rubbing his eyes. "Then it is best that I leave this comfortable bed. Did you say the emperor sent you a packet?"

"Yes. And when I tore off the outer wrapping, I found upon the inner one his request that I should not examine it until we had left the island. What do you suppose can be the meaning of this?"

"Wait, mon ami; wait until you open the packet. Then I must tell you something that has escaped my mind until now."

Breakfast was soon despatched; and, after thanking Madame Teche for her hospitality, her guests took their leave, pursued, until out of hearing, by voluble farewells and urgings to come again.

Murier walked with them to the beach, which they found deserted, with the full tide rolling in over the pebbled sand in a hushed way, as if its mood were depressed.

While drawing a scarlet handkerchief from his pocket, waved it above his head; and the master of the fishing-smack replied with a speedy hulloa that came faintly across the water.

The fisherman beached his boat near Greloire, who now called to them, and stood waiting as they strolled along to join him.

The captain of the smack was easily induced to land his passengers on the French coast; and they were scarcely under way before the former, asking Greloire to accompany him, went below, to open the package.

It was somewhat bulky, and as his fingers broke the last wrapping, a collection of papers, some of them discolored by years, others evidently of more recent date, fell upon the cabin table. And in their midst shone the dull gold frame of an ivory-painted miniature.

For a second Lafitte stared at this; then, picking it up, he looked intently at the gypsy-like face of the portrait.

"Ah, mon Dieu! How came the emperor by this?" he cried chokingly, the sight of the beautiful face, which Margot had taught him to love as the mother whom he had never known, making the past more real than the present.

Greloire, who was lighting a cigar, said dryly, "Examine the papers, and if they do not tell you, perhaps I can do so."

Lafitte glanced at them hurriedly. They comprised his parents' marriage-certificate, and all the other papers, together with the jewels, that had been in the small iron box so many years ago. There were also more recent papers, showing that the property in Languedoc had been released from sequestration, and held in trust by Napoleon, emperor of France, for "Jean, son and heir of the Baron ——, and surviving issue of Jean Lafitte, of Louisiana, in North America."

All the documents were there, showing in detail the legal proceedings, instituted and perfected under the Consulate, and confirmed under the Empire.

As the last paper fell from his hand, Lafitte buried his face in his crossed arms amid the heap of precious things upon the table.

All the past was rolling in upon him, a sea of living reality, so distinct and intense that the present appeared dim and vaporous.

What had, but last night, seemed to him legitimate in the light of his every-day world, as he met its events, now locked honor-stained when confronted with the appealing sweetness of the pictured face that had represented to his boyhood all that was best and purest, and the present sight of which had brought so vividly before his mental vision the dimmed face of faithful Margot, and that proud, stately man he had known as father, of whom he could recall no word or act dictated by other than a sense of the highest honor toward his fellows.

And Bonaparte, the idol of his youthful heart, but for so many years doubted and mistrusted,—he had obtained and treasured these proofs of the wayward boy's position as that father's son and heir, while the son himself was risking in alien lands the sacrifice of his rightful name and heritage!

An anguished silence kept him mute; and Greloire, as if understanding this, said nothing.

(To be continued.)

SOME PRANKS OF LIGHTNING.

Fantastic Tricks Played Upon Unfortunate Victims.

One of the fantastic tricks which lightning plays upon its unfortunate victims is a kind of flashlight photography. There are numerous instances of this which are more or less "authenticated," but they seem almost too wonderful to be believed. One of these is of a young man in New Jersey who was struck by lightning and was taken in an ambulance to the hospital at once. There seemed to be no wound except a small mark on the back, but while the doctors and nurses were examining him a picture began to develop on the skin. Soon before the wondering eyes of the watchers appeared a perfect picture of the figure of Christ nailed to the cross. The explanation is that on the wall opposite the bed on which the young man lay was the picture which was reproduced on his skin.

Another instance is of a man who was struck by lightning, and on his chest were red marks resembling the tree with all its branches under which the man was standing when he was killed. From France comes the story of a peasant girl who was driving a cow from the pasture when she was overtaken by a storm, and she and the cow took refuge under the tree. A bolt killed the cow and stunned the girl. When she recovered consciousness she found on her chest a picture of the cow she had been driving.

The chatelaine of the castle of Beautonnaire was sitting in a chair in her salon when the chateau was struck by lightning. She was quite unhurt, but on the back of her dress was found a perfect copy of the chair on which she had been sitting, down to its minutest ornament. These are a few of the many strange pranks which lightning plays upon us.

Might Be Called Hard Luck.

"Some years ago," said E. E. Moore, "when I lived down on the eastern shore of Maryland, where I was born, I had passed a whole day gunning for rabbits and I had not killed one. On my way home through the woods I met a boy who had a live rabbit. Ashamed to go home empty handed I gave the boy twenty-five cents for his rabbit.

"I then said to myself, 'I will tie Mr. Rabbit to a bush and kill him, and the folks at home will say Ed shot a rabbit.' I took a shoestring and fastened the rabbit to a bush, and then stood off, took aim and fired.

"When the gun had stopped kicking I saw Mr. Rabbit flying through the woods. My bullet had cut the shoestring in twain and had set the animal free."—Baltimore American.

"A Rolling Flat."

The time seems to be approaching when the motor car will be like a gypsy caravan, only more commodious. At the automobile show in Paris there is a vehicle which a lady describes in these caustic terms: "Just fancy! It is a rolling flat. There you are with your salon dining room, bedroom and dressing room. How delightful to flit about the world without leaving your home, and to carry your own fireside through all the wonderful countries you want to see!" Charming news for hotel keepers! Instead of putting up at their pleasing, but expensive caravanseries, the automobilist will take his domestic interior about with him on wheels. It only remains now to christen it the Romany Car.—London Chronicle.

WASHINGTON IN YOUTH

In the year 1729 Rev. James Marye, a Huguenot refugee, and his bride landed on Virginia soil. This man was destined to fill a position of great trust and importance. He was to be the spiritual guide and adviser of Mary, the mother of Washington, and her family. After years of research it has lately been proved that it was he that gave to the young George those famous "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation," which bore fruit in the production of that most consummate flower of American manhood, George Washington. That these "rules" played a most important part in the formation of Washington's character has been acknowledged by all of his biographers; in fact, the wisest and noblest of these "rules" are familiar in nearly every home in the country, but whence they came; whether they were the product of Washington's own brain, or whether they came from some outside and unknown source, and what his source was, has been for over a century a matter of dispute and conjecture.

This learned clergyman, Rev. James Marye, belonged to a prominent Catholic family of Rouen, France, and was educated for the priesthood in the Jesuit college of that city. In 1726 he renounced the Catholic faith, went to England and was ordained in the Church of England by the bishop of

London. There, in 1728, he married Letitia Maria Anna Staige, a sister of Rev. Theodosius Staige, a famous minister in the early days of Virginia, and who was at that very time rector of a church in St. George's parish, a few miles from Fredericksburg.

On first coming to Virginia Rev. James Marye became the minister of a settlement of Huguenots at Manacan, or Manakinton, in Goochland (now Powhatan county), on the James river, above Richmond, and so excellent was his reputation that the good people of Fredericksburg desired him for a rector. Accordingly, in 1735, as shown by the early vestry book, the church wardens asked leave of Gov. Gooch, as was the colonial custom, to call Rev. James Marye to their pulpit. This request was granted, and in October of the same year he assumed charge of St. George's parish, the principal church of which was in Fredericksburg, succeeding Rev. Patrick Henry, uncle of the famous orator of that name. Thus began the long and eventful pastorate of the Marye family over this historic church, the first Rev. James Marye serving for thirty-four years, and being followed by his son, Rev. James Marye, Jr., who ministered until his death, in 1789. As was the custom of clergymen in those days, the first Rev. James Marye conducted an academy in connection with his church. It was this academy that Washington attended.

Except the tutors in families, the educational advantages in Virginia in 1745 were extremely limited. It was the custom of the wealthier families to send their sons to England to finish their studies at some of the great universities. Washington's two elder brothers received this advantage, but the death of his father made a change in the family affairs. A large property was left to them, but there was little ready money and there were several children to educate and provide for. Hence the education of Washington, to his lifelong regret, was limited. It was under the care of this Huguenot that our great statesman received his most valued instruction.

John Fiske, in his "Old Virginia and Her Neighbors," states that at this time Washington attended an excellent academy in Fredericksburg, of which Rev. James Marye was master. Paul Leicester Ford, in his "The True George Washington," page 63, gives the following interesting account: "On the death of his father, Washington went to live with his brother Augustine, in order, it is presumed, that he might take advantage of a good school near Wakefield, kept by one Williams, but after a time he returned to his mother and attended the school kept by Rev. James Marye, in Fredericksburg. It has been universally asserted by his biographers that he studied no foreign language, but direct proof to the contrary exists in a copy of Patrick's Latin translation of Homer, printed in 1742, the flyleaf of which bears in a schoolboy hand the inscription:

"Hune mihi quaeso (bove Vir) Libellum
"Redde, si forsan tenues repertum
"Ut Seias, qui sum sine fraude scriptum
"Est mihi nomen
"George Washington.

"It is thus evident that the reverend teacher gave Washington at least the first elements of Latin, but it is equally clear that the boy, like most others, forgot it with the greatest facility as soon as he ceased studying."

Among the manuscript copies of George Washington preserved in the State archives at Washington, the earliest of which bears the date of 1745, is a large manuscript book, in which in a boyish handwriting are 110 "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation."

But these "Rules of Civility," as they are generally called, have been ascribed by the biographers to an absolutely apocryhpal source. Washington Irving, Chief Justice Marshall and Henry Cabot Lodge knew not whence they came.

One of the latest of his biographers, Henry Cabot Lodge, has the following to say: "It was reserved for the storms of war to reveal the source of the 'rules.' A little volume was found in a Virginia library." On the flyleaf, he says, was the name of George Washington, written in a boyish hand. It was entitled "Young Man's Companion." It contained general truths and precepts, which, together with Hale's "Contemplations," so he says, may have furnished the basis of the "rules." This "Young Man's Companion" was by W. Mather, written in a plain and easy style, and was printed in 1742, and seemed to contain much varied and useful information, such as lessons in arithmetic, surveying, the drawing up of legal documents, measuring land and lumber, gardening, etc.

But Mr. Lodge is in error. Moncure D. Conway has recently brought to light the true history of the "Rules of Civility." Mr. Conway, after an investigation extending through years, with the aid of Dr. Garnett, of the British museum, found in that great institution a volume containing these self-same rules, written in French. One edition of this volume was printed in Rouen, and was among the textbooks studied by young James Marye when attending the Jesuit college of that city. This proves conclusively that it was he who translated these rules to his pupils in Fredericksburg, since he was the only man there who understood the French tongue, his native speech.

With these revelations it would seem that the dispute of historians and biographers over the history of these famous "rules" has at length been settled.

Washington's Diffidence

Gen. Washington never made a speech. In the zenith of his fame he once attempted it, failed, and gave it up confused and abashed. In framing the Constitution of the United States, the labor was almost wholly performed in a committee of the whole, of which George Washington was the chairman, but he made only two speeches in the convention, which were of a very few of each. The convention, however, acknowledged the master spirit, and historians affirm that, had it not been for his personal popularity and the thirty words of his first speech, pronouncing it the best that could be united upon, the Constitution would have been rejected by the people.

The reserve and taciturnity of Washington were proverbial; but as the one was the result of diffidence and not of austerity or pride, so the other proceeded from his habitual prudence rather than coldness or want of the sensibility that inspires eloquence. In proof of this, again referring to his public career, it is related of him that when the famous meeting of officers was held at Newburgh to consult upon measures to be taken in consequence of the disbandment of the army at Congress without securing the reward due to its services, Washington, who was known to disapprove of the proceedings, though he sympathized with the feelings which gave rise to them, resolved to be present. Unwilling to trust to his powers of extempore speaking, he reduced what he meant to say to writing, and commenced reading it without his spectacles, which at that period he used only occasionally. He found, however, that he could not proceed without them, and exclaimed, "I have grown blind, as well as gray, in the service of my country!" This sudden burst of natural eloquence produced more effect than anything in his premeditated address.—"The Sunday Magazine."

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