



BY MARY DEVERUX
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CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

The wide prevailing... it was not until an evening in early July that the "Black Petal" anchored in the harbor of Bordeaux.

Knowing the location of Greloire's house, Laftite lost no time in reaching it, and was admitted by a sleepy-eyed servant, who led the way through a spacious hall to a closed door at the farther end; this he opened noiselessly, and announced Jim's presence.

At the sound of the servant's voice Greloire started hastily, with a joyful exclamation he jumped to his feet with outstretched hands.

"Jean, Jean, lad! It is truly thy very self! And thou art at last broken way, and come back to the old fold!"

Lafite grasped the welcoming hands and shook them cordially, but his eyes, still searching Greloire's face, saw beneath its look of momentary gladness, one of keen anguish; and the younger man wondered what trouble had come to his friend.

"I cannot say as to that, old comrade," was his startled reply. "I have certainly broken away, for a time, at least; but for how long, and to what purpose, the near future must decide not I."

Greloire's face clouded again, but only for an instant; and, placing a chair for his guest, he pressed him to take breakfast.

"This, however, Lafite declined, explaining that he had already partaken of the meal aboard ship.

"I feel greatly flattered, Jean, that you should be in such haste to see me," said Greloire, as he began to eat, doing it in a perfunctory fashion that indicated the performance of a duty.

"You are very welcome, but"—with a keen glance—"why have you come?" To ask you to take me to the emperor, and, if it may be, help me to find some way of serving him."

"What!" cried Lafite, starting from his chair. Then he added lightly, "You are jesting, or trying to surprise me. Perhaps you will tell me that he is a new ruler of all Europe."

of Muriel's question. "Cannot you do this without having seen?" "Indeed yes, my dear Muriel," replied Muriel, in a tone of strong emotion. "Are there many hearts in America, may I ask, who hold him thus?"

Laftite hesitated a moment before answering with an emphasis on the word "France," as if he were more so than in Louisiana. No, Muriel Muriel, will you not answer my question?"

"Certainly," Muriel to Captain; I will answer you frankly. Whenever I have seen the emperor, which has been frequently, it has been to see his mother, Madame Teche, whose husband is a farmer. We will go first to Muriel; he is close to the emperor, and I doubt not that he will be able to arrange for an interview. But of this I am certain—that he will welcome us, and do all in his power to serve us.

"Good!" exclaimed Lafite, for whose face the reminiscence look had vanished. "And now, Greloire, let us consult as to the details. How soon can we depart?"

Then while the day drew, the two departed. Lafite and Greloire set out on horseback that same evening, making no prolonged stop until Toulon was reached, where they remained the early afternoon, and rested until the following morning; and the two—Lafite more especially—felt like ghosts returned to former scenes as they rambled about the slightly changed streets.

They left their horses at Toulon, and pushed on by hired conveyance to Cannes. Then, in order to avoid suspicion, they crossed over to Lehigh, and, chartering a large fishing smack, returned to former scenes as they rambled about the slightly changed streets.

The Teche farm was about a mile inland; and one of the younger men offering his services as guide, he led the way from the beach, across a grassy field, through the early one across upon an eminence overlooking a fertile valley, planted with vines, as they went to take me to the emperor, and, if it may be, help me to find some way of serving him."

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