LAFITTE of LOUISIANA

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DON C. WILSON

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CHAPTER XVI.

As she looked about her, in the tangled and shadowy forest, where the night was already coming darkly, a new terror arose within her, and she sought to retrace by the way she had come, but this was only to find her steps cut off by still denser masses of forest growth. Even as she stood hesitating, there came a faint cry, like that of a child, and a rush of hopefulness thrilled her at the thought of something human being near in the gloom and oppressive stillness.

Then there fell upon her a freezing terror, as she suddenly recalled the slaves telling recently of a panther's voice having been heard at night, near the settlement; and she remembered that they had likened it to the crying of a child.

Trembling with fright, she stood, glancing about in terror, wondering which way to turn, when another sound came faintly. It was a sound she had heard before, and one no hearer could ever forget; a short, quick bark, followed by a prolonged howl—the cry of the timber wolf.

Gathering her draperies closely, she sprang forward again, all color gone from the dainty little face, now ashen with fear, against which the bushes and low branches beat unmercifully. Again and again the fiendish cry rang out, to be succeeded by another, and then another, as if the first call had summoned a multitude of wolves to the chase. But, for all her dainty femininity, she had a man's heart for courage in the face of danger, and, as she still kept on, with clenched hands and panting breath, a small cabin showed in a clearing before her.

A new strength came to her at sight of this refuge, and she rushed toward it, to find only an untenanted ruin, with its door fallen from the hinges.

But she saw upon the floor a large iron ring, which indicated the entrance to a cellar; and, seizing this, she pulled at it with all her strength.

He stood before her, speechless.

A small section of the floor lifted, creaking on rusted hinges, and dashing wildly through dust and cobwebs that rose with it, she plunged into the shallow opening, earth-walled and floored, the dust filling her eyes and nostrils, and half-choking her, as she panted sobbingly for breath.

A few moments later she grew cold with an agony of apprehension, when she heard the noise of her pursuers' feet upon the flooring over her head; and their snuffling at the cracks in the cellar door. How long it lasted she scarcely knew, cramped as she was in the darkness, aching, throbbing—half-swooning, with the dreadful creatures howling and snarling above her head; how long it was before the baying of beagles, faint at first, sounded in her ears.

Nearer and nearer came the sound, growing strong and clear; and then she heard the shouting of voices.

This brought a new fear—for night not these come from those fully as much to be feared as were the wolves? The island, as she knew, was several miles long, and she had always known that it held others besides her grandfather's household.

She listened, trembling, a new dread encompassing her as the voices of the beagles now broke out close to the cabin. Then there was a rushing sound, followed by an uproar indicating a fierce struggle. At length the combat seemed to surge through the cabin door, and a voice which she recognized as that of black Zebo, one of her grandfather's most trusted slaves, shouted, "Dar goes de last debbil, makin' for de woods! Shoot him, boys—shoot ebry hide yer can see!"

Rosette called to him, but her voice sounded faint and unnatural to her own ears. Then the door was lifted, and the blinding light of a torch flashed in her face.

"Take me out; take me home!" she cried, raising her arms appealingly, while she sobbed like a terrified child.

A man's voice, one she was too bewildered to recognize, murmured her, "Little Rose—my precious little Island Rose!"

A husky, shaking voice murmured these words against her ear, where she felt the pressure of warm lips.

"Ah, thank God, I have thee safe again!"

The touch and the words struck sharply through her benumbed senses; and with a cry of affright, she struggled to free herself.

"What is it?" asked Lafitte, now speaking firmly and quickly. "Are you hurt, child—are you injured in any way?"

"Do not—do not!" the girl commanded, now uncovering her face, and looking up at him with an angry light sparkling in her eyes. "How dare you?"

Drawing back a step, Lafitte stared at her in amazement, until suddenly recalling what Nato had told him a short time before, and realizing that what he had then feared was indeed true, he stood before her speechless, a new agony growing in his pale face.

For a moment she met his eyes unflinchingly. Then, dropping her own, turned from him with a shudder, as she said coldly, "I wish to be taken to the house, Captain——"

She stopped as if checked at the thought of uttering his name.

"In a moment, mademoiselle," he answered with the cool courtesy he would have shown a stranger. "Your grandpere has been alarmed on your account. He had sent for you to come and bid me adieu; and then, when your absence was discovered, it was quite late."

She said nothing, nor did he, for the space of a full minute. Then, with his face turned to the darkness outside, he resumed:

"If the day may ever come when you can think of me with less condemnation, remember always what I tell you now. I do not, nor can I ever, blame you. And, if I can ever serve you, you have but to command me, always and forever."

Some of the slaves, who had returned from the hunt, now sent up a joyous shout at sight of their "lil' Ma'm selle" unhurt; and, rising, she smiled upon them as they gathered around her.

Two of them, upon Lafitte's direction, made a seat of their interlocked hands, and, bearing her between them, set out for the house, with flaring torches lighting the way.

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The proclamation of Gov. Claiborne resulted in inducing Count de Cazenaou to return to his New Orleans home earlier than usual; and Lafitte's house in the city was closed, while a trusted negro overseer was left in charge of the blacksmith shop, with orders to say that his master had gone away upon matters of business.

It was to Grande Terre that Pierre had gone, feeling that a time was near at hand for the joining of issues between his confreres and the government, and wishing, as always, to share the fortunes of his foster brother.

On the western shore of Grande Terre, with several miles of forest lying between it and De Cazenaou's house, was the so-called "fort" of the Baratarians, standing upon a grassy eminence dotted with magnificent live oaks, and terminating at a bluff not many feet above the sea.

It consisted of a private building and several smaller ones, all of wood, enclosed within a stockade; and a few cannon protected the fleet—now consisting of two brigantines, some small schooners and sloops, and a large number of smaller craft—anchored in the harbor at the rear of the island.

Outside the stockade were many huts, constructed of logs, and with thatched roofs, where were always lounging a small army of Lafitte's retainers, while he—when at Grande Terre—and a few of his sub-leaders had their quarters inside.

Shell Island, already mentioned as one of the almost inaccessible bayous, was his most frequent abode, where he kept about him only a few devoted followers; and here, amid impenetrable forests, was conducted the building of vessels.

War between the United States and Great Britain had been waging for a year or more; but it had not yet threatened Louisiana, nor had any preparations been made at New Orleans to resist an attack from the enemy.

But, in the summer of 1812, occurred the horrible massacre at Fort Mims, in the Mississippi valley, occupied by some two hundred and seventy persons, many of them women and children, of whom all but seventeen were put to death by the Creeks, one of the tribes which the English had won over for allies.

Gov. Claiborne had foreseen this threatened peril, but was powerless to avert it, for his forces were few and scattered, while the Indians seemed innumerable, and moved with wonderful activity. But the governor did all in his power to restore confidence; and not long afterward Gen. Jackson utterly destroyed the Creeks at Talladega.

"My heart may be telling me wrongfully, Pierre," Jean said, as the two sat talking in their abode at Grande Terre—a cabin outside, but luxurious within, "but I have a feeling that if I now go to the emperor I may find the opportunity for serving him; and that this may prove to him the love that has never died."

"Perhaps," answered Pierre, hesitatingly. "But what is it that makes you think you may be of service to the emperor and France?"

"To say truth, I have no idea that is definite; but I feel an irresistible inclination to go, and see if the opportunity offers."

"If you should find service over there—then what?"

"Why," replied Jean, "then you can wind up our matters here, and come over to join me. Why not?"

"Why not, indeed? That is assuredly what I would do, if—" and Pierre hesitated for an instant—"I could."

"And what can prevent?"

"In such a case," Pierre replied deliberately, "there would be a valuable cargo to come with me, and watchful enemies here to blind. Then possibly, or most probably, by summer or fall, with the English vessels patrolling the waters around us, the safe getting away might not be so easy a matter."

"Summer and fall are not now," was the oracular declaration; "and by the time they come, it may be that the English will have been made to think home again, as once before."

"I don't feel at all sure as to that," Pierre commented, as he rose to cover the embers upon the hearth. Then, turning to Jean, he continued, as though there had been no interruption, "I tell thee, lad, that Louisiana has always possessed a great attraction for Great Britain."

"Grant it," said Jean, rising and stretching himself. "Then all the more reason why, in case they succeed in obtaining it, that we should wish to live somewhere else."

"Ah, but I am not saying that they will rule here!" exclaimed Pierre, with a showing of anger at thought of the possibility suggested by Jean's words. "Good Orbis!"

"Amen to that," said Jean, laughing at the quick change in his foster-brother's manner and look; and they soon parted for the night.

It was a bright morning in May that the "Black Petrel," with Jean Lafitte and a picked crew, and bearing a cargo of rich merchandise, sailed from Barataria; and Pierre, his heart filled with loneliness and misgivings, sat on the bluff, watching her sails until they melted away on the horizon.

(To be continued.)

ABOUT THE AGE OF A CROW.

A Tag Would Indicate That One Lived More Than Twenty Years.

A farmer living near Orrville, Ohio, says a correspondent of the Toronto Globe, has just received a much prized little aluminum plate marked as follows: "Return to George McCarren, Orrville, O." with which an interesting story is connected.

George McCarren, Sr., father of the man who received the three bits of aluminum, was an eccentric naturalist and spent much time in the study of birds and insects. During McCarren's youth, about twenty years ago, he says he remembers being told by his father, the elder McCarren, of a dispute the latter had with a fellow naturalist at Akron, Ohio, as to the age to be attained by a common crow, and finally, to settle the matter, McCarren attached an aluminum tag to the crow captured in the fields and sent the bird forth with the plate securely fastened for its neck by wires. The legend on the plate requested the finder to return it to McCarren in case anything should happen to the bird.

As McCarren, Jr., remembers it, the two men made a bet as to whether the bird would be returned within twenty years. If the crow were killed or died they counted on the little billet being found and returned to the address on the plate. If this were not attached they believed it would be sufficient evidence that the bird would be still alive. McCarren bet that the plate would not be returned within that time; hence he won the bet. The crow was killed by a farmer boy named Angers in Holmes county last week, and the billet returned to the son of the better, the elder McCarren having died before he could realize the proceeds and the satisfaction of winning his wager. The little billet is highly prized by the McCarrens as a memento of the father's eccentricity.

Egg of Captive Rattlesnake.

One of a boxful of four rattlesnakes sent to Fred Kempel from California three or four days ago laid an egg, which is said to be almost without precedent, as snakes in captivity never breed.

The egg is only a little smaller than a hen's egg, and the small rattler can be plainly seen curled up inside of the opaque membrane. It is expected to hatch within a day or two. Few naturalists have ever been able to locate the eggs of the rattlesnake, owing to the fact that the snake is exceedingly torpid at the time, and seeks the bottom of its hole, so as not to be prey for the birds, which attack it.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Illinois Legislature

TAX EXEMPTION.

The senate passed the bill supported by the Illinois Manufacturers' association, exempting from taxation the capital stock of newspapers and manufacturing, mercantile and coal mining and selling companies. The same bill in the house was referred by the committee to a subcommittee for investigation.

It is probable that every member of both houses of the legislature heard from the manufacturing concerns in his district on this bill. Representative Arnold's desk was stacked high with telegrams. Forty-eight houses in Rockford alone telegraphed to him, but only one, a franchise corporation, is taxed on capital stock. Chicago concerns made a liberal use of the wires.

A delegation of twenty-five business men and manufacturers appeared before the house committee considering the bill and protested against what they called the double taxation provided by the present method. The board of equalization has been opposing the bill and has been working among the members to prevent its passage. The board does not interfere much with capital stock now, but it is endeavoring to retain the right to do so.

The manufacturing interests asserted that Illinois is being built up as a great manufacturing state of the country, but that all the progress would be stopped if any system of double taxation should be allowed to continue. They called attention to conditions at East St. Louis, which is being built up between that town and Alton by Missouri firms coming across the river, but which would return to Missouri if dealt with harshly.

The bill seems bound to have a harder time in the house than it had in the senate. It was passed by the senate by a vote of 32 to 4.

Omnibus Appropriations.

Omnibus bills carrying big appropriations for the state government were introduced in the senate and house. The bills carry a total appropriation of $8,767,531.16 for the next biennium. An important increase is made for the commissioners of state contracts, who are given $170,000, instead of $125,000, as in 1903, because of deficits in the printing and binding funds. The governor is given a special auditor at $10,000 for two years, and $1,500 expenses to check up the state institutions and keep the executive thoroughly informed of their condition. The national guard and naval reserve get $225,440. The committee recommended the appropriation of $22,125 for new khaki uniforms for the guardsmen and $8,750 for improvements at the state arsenal and Camp Lincoln.

Sleeping Car Rates.

The committee on corporations acted favorably on three bills—two by Mr. Hearn, fixing sleeping car charges at 50 cents for each 100 miles or fraction thereof for a lower berth and 35 cents for an upper, less than half the present rate, and requiring sleeping car companies to maintain iron safes in cars for the protection of the valuables of the passengers; and the third, by Mr. Sheen, requiring telephone companies to give interchangeable service at a reasonable rate where two or more companies are operating in the same town.

Banking Bill Is Dead.

All hope of banking reform was killed by the action of the senate committee on banks and banking, which killed the three bank bills which were aimed to give some additional protection to depositors. Senator Mueller's bill is among the dead. It was designed to make all institutions using the word bank subject themselves to the state banking laws, including inspection. Private bankers outside of Chicago were instrumental in killing the bills.

Pass $5,441,420 in Appropriations.

Appropriation bills carrying a total of $5,441,420 were passed by the house. One appropriation is for $2,000 to pay for the treatment of poor persons stricken with rabies. Counties are to settle for transportation to the institute where the treatment is given and the state is to pay for the treatment itself.

Steam and Electric Roads.

Senator Bartley introduced a bill to compel steam and electric railroads to establish a system of interlocking and automatic block signals, to be approved by the railroad and warehouse commissioners.

Bills That May Pass.

Among bills advanced by the house were senate bill 226, establishing a state board of dental examiners; senate bill 137, authorizing fire insurance companies to insure against damage by sprinklers; senate bill 158, placing physicians, nurses and interns of the Cook county hospital under civil service and senate bill 20, the delinquent "anti-policy" bill, which was referred to the committee on miscellaneous subjects.

Anti-Cigarette Law.

It seems likely that the sale of cigarettes will be stopped in Illinois by the present legislature. Both the senate and house committees referred the anti-cigarette bills to the subcommittees to incorporate amendments which have been agreed to since the bills were introduced. Both committees are favorable to the legislation and will work in harmony to get up a bill together which both the house and senate can pass.

University Tax.

Representative Hill introduced a bill providing for a tax of four-fifths of a mill on each dollar of assessed property for the maintenance of the University of Illinois. It is to be levied with other state taxes and to be set apart as a fund from which amounts are to be appropriated by the legislature. The fund will be used only for current expenses, or, in case of great need, for additional buildings or repairs.

Labor Legislation.

Labor representatives were before the house railroad committee, where the fellow servant, safety appliance, and full crew bills, applying to railroads, were discussed and referred to a subcommittee of which Representative Trautmann is chairman. He has declared himself in favor of the bills, and the probabilities are that they will be reported back to the committee with favorable recommendations.

Kills Retail Merchants' Bill.

On the ground that it gave an advantage to the loan sharks, the Illinois retail merchants' bill was killed by the judiciary committee. The bill made subject to garnishment proceedings the salary and wages of officers and employes of counties, cities, villages, school districts, and departments of either.

Questions Wheat Grading.

Mr. Lindly introduced a resolution calling on the railroad and warehouse commissioners for an immediate explanation of an order under which Russian red wheat is being inspected at East St. Louis and given an arbitrary grading as No. 2 wheat, notwithstanding it is alleged to be inferior to Illinois grain.

Recommend Auto Bill.

The house committee voted to report favorably senate bill 296, the Chicago Automobile club's bill regulating speed, after S. S. Gorham, attorney for the club, had explained the measure. Mr. Gray of Macon gave notice that he would move to reconsider the bill at the next meeting of the committee.

County Board of Review.

The house passed a bill requiring county boards of review to finish their work by Sept. 1 and the state board of equalization to complete its work by Dec. 1, and thus allow an earlier collection of taxes.

Primary Legislation.

The senate is holding up the primary bill, and there is not likely to be any action before next week, as the committee is anxious to hear from Cook county persons interested in the measure.

Increase Judges' Salaries.

House committees acted favorably on bills to increase the salaries of judges of circuit and superior courts from $3,500 to $5,000 annually, and to require mine owners to furnish shot-firers.

Favors Poolroom Bill.

The house judiciary committee recommended for passage Mr. Bush's bill requiring sheriffs to swore representatives of five voters to raid poolrooms and close gambling resorts.

Trust Funds.

The house passed the McKenzie bill providing that investment of trust funds, when it is not provided otherwise, shall be in United States bonds or in bonds of other states.

No Boys in Mines.

The house committee on mines and mining reported favorably Felzer's bill providing that boys under the age of 16 shall not be employed in mines.

Limits Sale of Liquor.

The house passed a bill making it illegal to sell liquor in five-gallon quantities two miles outside of the limits of a town.

May Kill Racing Bill.

Sam Erickson's race track bill, which removes from the anti-poolselling act the exemption of county fairs and racing associations, probably will be amended or killed, as sentiment seems to favor racing at county and state fairs.

Marriage Consent.

The senate passed the Haas bill forbidding the marriage of girls under 16 years of age, even with the consent of parents.

Common Law Marriage.

The senate bill abolishing common law marriages and providing that persons under the age of 16 shall not marry was advanced to third reading, after an amendment had been adopted raising the age limit for boys to 17.

Protection for Children.

The house passed house bill 83, by Mr. Breidt, making the alluring of children a felony and punishable by from one to twenty years' imprisonment.

AGRICULTURE

Experimental Plots.

I must acknowledge that I have been slow in taking advantage of my opportunities. I farmed the old place for many years without attempting to find out what it needed in the way of fertilizer. In fact, I robbed a part of the farm and kept up another part and did not know what I was doing. I used to haul out the manure every spring and put it all onto the fields in which I grow potatoes and corn. That was very good for those particular fields, but was a little hard on the land that did not get any of the manure. I put it on the same fields every year because I believed that every year the corn and potatoes took out all I put on. I am now satisfied that there was a residue left that was not really needed on those fields and would have been paying me better interest had it been put on some of the fields that have never had any barnyard manure.

In attending a farmers' institute I heard the matter of experimental plots discussed and thought I would try one on some of the poorest parts of my farm. I measured off two acres and put no fertilizer on one and various kinds of fertilizers on the other in strips. I left the first strip for a check. I put on the other acre about 1,000 pounds of lime and some phosphates, and a strip on that acre was treated with nitrogen and another with both phosphorus and nitrogen in a commercial form.

The results were remarkable, and I have since been wondering why I did not do it before. I found that the phosphorus and nitrogen were both deficient. I made an application per acre of about 150 pounds of bone meal on a forty-acre field and put on some barnyard manure, enough to give a little more nitrogen and humus to each acre.

It is astonishing how we will run along in the same rut for many years and never think of what is and what might be, till we have an object lesson that brings the truth home to us. I am but just beginning to teach myself by the help of experimental plots and I intend to continue the good work.

Adams Co., Ill. Augustus Mihill.

Seed Corn in the Ear.

A circular letter sent out from the Ottawa, Canada, station, says:

The cost of the small quantity of seed corn that is required to plant an acre, in comparison with the cost for labor in cultivating and handling and the ultimate value per acre of a good crop, would seem to make it clear that the best available seed of the most satisfactory type and variety should be obtained at any reasonable cost. It would be much better for Canadian farmers if they were able to obtain their supplies of seed corn in the ear; they would then have a fair idea of what they were getting. While in the ear, the danger of injury to the vitality of the seed from damp and its after effects is reduced to a minimum. Corn that is shelled by a machine and left in sacks for six weeks or more will seldom germinate more than 75 per cent, unless the conditions for storage have been exceptionally good. The average vitality of seed corn, tested in the seed laboratory last year, were, for corn received in the ear, 95 per cent, and for shelled corn 68 per cent. It is much to be recommended then that, wherever possible, farmers obtain their supplies of seed corn in the ear only. To meet the demand for seed corn in this condition growers would do well to adopt the style of shipping crate that is used for this purpose in the states of Iowa and Illinois. This crate is two feet nine inches long, one foot wide, and one foot deep, and is made of half inch lumber three inches in width. Its capacity is one bushel, or between one hundred and one hundred and twenty ears. If the corn can be planted in hills, this crate will hold sufficient seed for five acres. While it is true that there may be some additional cost for freight, on account of the weight of the cob and of the crate, and that extra work is required in shelling the corn, these become insignificant when the difference in value between an acre of good matured corn and an acre of unsatisfactory corn is considered.

No Cabbage Snake.

Recently an absurd fear has developed in the minds of some eaters of cabbages relative to the so-called "cabbage snake." The superstition is that the snake poisons the cabbages and so renders them unfit to eat. The existence of such a creature is denied by our scientists, but so prevalent is the belief that at least one experiment station has issued a circular denying the existence of the so-called snake. In some parts of the country a small whitish "cel-worm" has been found to infest cabbages. The larvae of this worm prey upon the common green cabbage worm and hence are doubtless a benefit rather than a detriment to the cabbage-growing industry. Some of the more superstitious people in the South imagined that these worms poisoned the cabbages, and tests were made by scientific people to clear up the matter. Extracts were made from the worms and injected into the human system. These injections failed to produce the least effect. It is therefore considered that the character of the little worm has been cleared of the accusation.