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CHAPTER VIII. ARTICLE 3510.

THE cooling air of November had checked the fruiting of the cotton plant and quickened the sweetening of the sugar cane. The harvesting of the one was ending, of the other about to begin, when a small company came together at "L'Esperance" upon Oakfell's invitation. Though not numerous, it represented the best sentiment of the party. Baldoune, Brulleton from lower Bayou des Glaises, Millichaeze and Colmesotte from Borodino and Moreauville, Jewett and Fryth from Bayous Bouff and Huffpover, Bisset and Dufosse from Cocoville, Valin Moluillon from Bayou du Lac, Father Grbe from Mansura. A truly satisfactory dinner, topped by music and merriment, had maintained the good fame of the Oakfell board, and the servants being withdrawn by Mrs. Wyley, guests and host, ever their coffee, considered the case of the Jockey Leon.

Briefly and clearly Oakfell stated the result of his examination of the law and the facts. In proof of Quillebert's guilty knowledge that he had not even the shadow of a claim of ownership, he read the extract from a certified copy of the deed signed by Baldoune, the agent of the heirs of Quogrouse: "The oldest son of the said negro Olive, called Leon, is not included in the present sale, a condition without which the present sale would not take place and is void if the purchasers disregard it." And, as establishing Leon's right to freedom, he cited the article 3510 of the civil code: "If a master enters a slave to enjoy his liberty for 10 years during his residence in the state or for 20 years while out of it, he shall lose all right of action to recover possession of the slave unless the slave be a runaway or fugitive."

"This provision of the law," said Oakfell; "the distinct exception in the act of sale and Quillebert's perjury in anticipating the unsuspecting buyers determined me, gentlemen, to institute suit in behalf of Leon for freedom, and I have felt that I should declare my purpose to those friends and neighbors whose judgment and esteem I value most."

All looked to Baldoune, who after a moment of silent thought, confidently spoke their response: "Four reasons" increases our respect for you. Quillebert is a shameless demagogue, an evil influence in the community. His chief gains have notoriously been from gambling and usury. His instincts are low, and his practices are scandals hurtful to our young men. This theft of a man from

"You," said Father Grbe, rising near him and in an undertone commenting the particulars of the meeting at "L'Esperance" and the warning in the words of Fryth. In the struggle to suppress his anger Quillebert's face was that of a demon. It became knotted with swollen veins; his bloodshot eyes glared like a bated brute; his heavy lips, though tightly pressed together, shook like storm swept grass; a muddy sweat, and his fingers convulsively crunched the papers they clutched into a crumpled and shapeless lump. Father Grbe turned his eyes away from the revolting spectacle, but Laure gazed upon it fascinated.

"The cowardly creoles join the bullying Americans in threatening a Frenchman with lynch law, you, monsieur priest, are their herald, eh? That is the case!" at length Quillebert muttered hoarsely.

"It will only aggravate the situation to use insulting adjectives," answered Father Grbe. "Those citizens have but adopted a heroic mode of forestalling a possible and deplorable outcome of an appeal to the law in humanity's cause, and I have borne their message in the hope of preventing two murders. Monsieur Leneau, you seem to have the confidence of M. Quillebert." He accompanied these words with a significant look at the girl. "Advise him against his dangerous impulses."

Her face was instantly aflame, and her eyes became orbs of wrath, but she made no audible reply nor returned the bow of the priest and abbot as they rode away.

"You see, my little Gasconne," said Quillebert, "what flows from a combination of maudlin hysteria of the Estelle Latiolais type and abolition ambition and avarice of the Oakfell brand."

"The Horace Oakfell brand, your man, Laure retorted sharply. "M. Evariste, I am sure, has no part in these doings."

"So, so!" mused Quillebert, as if detecting something, yet doubting whether the discovery pleased him. "Not M. Evariste, eh? Ah! Well, let us see. Estelle, yes, Oakfell, yes. But not M. Evariste; no. She has lost her reason on Oakfell, but not M. Evariste, eh? And I have thought he was prying at her church?"

"Not so, I do not believe a word of it," snapped Laure.

"Nor I now, I must have been misled by the frequency of his visits at the Latiolais house." Observing that Laure's vehemence was approaching the limit of restraint, he adroitly gave his comments another direction. "My hatred of the one made it too easy for me to do justice to the other. I should have remembered that Evariste has French blood. His grandfather was a grand rascal of '98. Estelle's great-grandfather was a grand gentleman of '80. There should be more puerile sympathy between him and the true Gasconne maid than between him and the simpering descendant of a supercilious and snipping emigre. We may have a friend in the enemy's camp."

"But the warning must be heeded," Laure said.

"For the present, yes," Quillebert reluctantly assented; "but my day will come."

"If you prudently employ those days which lie between,"

"You know my race."

"Yes."

"Well."

"That is enough." And with a stinging blow of the whip Laure started the big mule into a swinging trot toward the junction of the bayous. Reaching the point where the road cut the levee and wound down a soft, steep bank to the narrow bridge at the crossing, she bade Evariste on the other side riding briskly out of the swamp from the direction of the prairie, and, though she could well have passed over the stream before him, she chose to halt at the water's edge and await him, unseen from her grandmother's cottage. He had not observed her when he emerged from the forest, nor was he aware of her presence until he had begun to doze. He then, almost sheer drowsily with apparent recklessness, but with just confidence in the sure footed beast that bore him, checked his horse at the bridge's approach and saluting Laure laughing, he said:

"Avez vous, mademoiselle?"

"No, M. Evariste; pass over to this side. I have something to say to you," she replied, and in a moment he was at her buggy's wheel.

"Tell me," said she, "what is the meaning of this persecution of M. Constant? Is it neighborly? Is it abolitionist?"

"I have no part in the business, believe me," he answered. "It is not the sort of thing to interest me. My brother affects philosophy, humanitarianism, altruism and other terms which appeal to his emotional nature, but which have no charms for me, and it deceives me to undertake the affair as a knight of would sail forth to chop the head off a dragon."

"To win a fair lady?" Laure furnished the conclusion from her reading of the Trouveres in the old books sent to her grandmother by the brother who had served the emperor in Egypt.

"I do not comprehend, mademoiselle," said Evariste. "Who can be the fair lady of this exploit?"

"Estelle Latiolais." She shot the name at him, intently watching his face. It flushed; hers paled. But, forcing a smile, he answered:

"You are but guessing, mademoiselle. Horace has not seen Miss Latiolais since she went away to the convent ten years ago."

"It is not you, madame, and he is the grandmaster of the doctrine needs not to guess. Alas! to me, the right Leon has away he went to your neighbor, sent by Estelle, with her request that he would procure the reg's freedom. At the very moment M. Constant was leashing the witch as he deserved your brother was procuring the hand of Estelle Latiolais, a womanly and pleading maid to the wronged creature."

"How can you have knowledge of these things? His eyes and voice betrayed agitation."

"How can you be ignorant of them who see your brother every day and the lady but little less often?" She cast her eyes to the ground.

"This is an answer, mademoiselle," he said bravely.

"If I could feel under duty," said Laure, sighing, and catching a vestige

look in the young man's eyes, she added with an air of trusting frankness: "But I will tell you, M. Evariste, how I know, for, though I have not convent education and accomplishments, I am not one to smile and conceal, pretend and deceive. Know, then, that old Olive, Leon's mother, comes frequently to my grandmother and to her has told these things she learned from her daughter, Odette, the maid of Estelle. They are true. No one dares lie to the doctor's."

"Probably, I thank you, mademoiselle. Good night." The young man raised his hat with his right hand as he turned the bride with his left.

"But," exclaimed Laure, as if to stay him; then, suddenly changing her purpose, calmly repeated: "Good night, monsieur," and, crossing the bridge, rode slowly up one bank, while Evariste's horse bounded up the other like a chamois over an Alpine wall.

He gave bridle and spur to the feet animal, whose speed was timed to the storm that raged within his breast. His brows were drawn downward and together, and from under them his eyes looked fiercely, but saw only the images created by his frenzy. He could but believe that his frequent visits and warmth of manner had plainly notified Estelle his passion, though it was as yet undeclared in speech, and the ostentatious suavity of her reception of him, as he now regarded it, was sufficient warrant for confidence that his devotion would be acceptable. His brother's patronizing munificence and studied show of candor had lured him into a sense of security against any possible clash between their desires. Yet those two had met on a memorable day. An arduous task had been imposed by her and taken up by him, which necessarily implied reciprocal regard and trust, reward of the tenderest nature and the hope of marriage. Their hands had clasped, and he, for the guardian of her favor, had set forth in a venture perilous alike to his life and his political prospects.

Only a perfect understanding of the most ardent character could explain all this, so skillfully hidden from him. Horace, taking advantage of his (Evariste's) dependence in fortune, was ruthlessly trampling his heart underfoot. He would not but have known his love for Estelle. Should he submit to be so ignored in that which was most vital to his happiness? Would life in such submission be worth living? No; a thousand times no! Horace boasted American bravery. Evariste would meet it with a trait, inherited from his ancestor, which had contributed to deepen the red of the French revolution. The unadvised courage of his love for Estelle was a gift; his own talent was a patient, calculating engineer. He would await the proper time for its employment, and the effect would be the horrid crash of all that had been built on his wrongs. This was the first shadow that had fallen upon his life, and his soul surged darkly as a tempest tossed sea when the windowed horse stopped at the gate of the Oakfell home. Seeing Horace advance toward him, he gave the command of Gloster—"Dive, thoughts, down to my soul! See Charles come!" and greeted his brother with a smile.

CHAPTER IX. QUILLEBERT ENTERTAINS.

It is in the nature of some men to maintain and defend the wrongs they do more obstinately and courageously than their rights and to stake more for the retaining of an unjust acquisition than a just inheritance. There are those who would die rather than restore ill gotten wealth, yet would yield their honest earnings to avoid a threatened inconvenience. Such are they who restlessly cultivate calumny to the undoing of the victim and laugh at the truth which damps themselves.

Constant Quillebert was no weakling. There was no lack of vigor in his character. He was a strong mentality, his vision straight, though his conduct was warped by ambition, because a saucy infidel. Wife and children would have sobered and softened his progress to the grave had he willed, but domestic restraints were as distasteful as moral limitations, and hence he scoffed at matrimony. Nothing was less difficult or expensive than to become an American citizen, entitled to his rights and honors equally with his neighbors; but, weighing the inducements on either side of the proposition, he refrained from swearing fidelity to the constitutions and laws which protected him and his accumulations and remained the subject of a foreign potentate. His genius and accomplishments would have enabled him to achieve by approved industry and honorable means a comfortable competence and wealth, in the generous country where he dwelt, yet chicanery, commerce in the fallings of his fellow men and freebooting excursions to the horizons of the law appealed to him more cogently, and, as said by Baldoune, "his chief gains were notoriously from gambling and usury," and he was rated a rich man with a modest store of gold. What he had been potentially he is to be in the community an elder, giving judgment, he enjoyed eminence among the elders against order. Shrewd, bold, unscrupulous, restless, he was no mean foe whom Oakfell had called into the arena.

During the quadrennial period preceding the civil war no other word was so eloquent to stir popular wrath in Louisiana as the word "abolitionist." His disposition came from a nose and a head with a modicum of gold. What he had been potentially he is to be in the community an elder, giving judgment, he enjoyed eminence among the elders against order. Shrewd, bold, unscrupulous, restless, he was no mean foe whom Oakfell had called into the arena.

ment should be those who apparently would be least damaged by its accomplishment.

The cunning wit of Quillebert was instant to see advantage in this condition of the popular mind. He had never pretended a legal right or title over Leon. He knew he had never purchased him. He had not forgotten the exception in the deed. He was conscious that his possession resulted from a shameful kidnapping, and his dominion had no other basis than might. He felt that, tried upon its merits of law and fact alone, the issue would be determined against him. Therefore other influences must be brought to bear upon the jury and ready to his hand lay the anti-American prejudice and antislavery passion. The thought of Oakfell triumphing over him stung as an ox lash. The barrenness and unworthiness of his cause stimulated him to exertions and inspired tactics which were revelations of endurance and ingenuity many nights he rode to Mansura, La Cogue, Bordelon slough, Ile de Cote, Markville, Bayou Blanc, Paren Haut, Coude d'Or, Bout de Bayou and Pointe Malgre and sounded the head man of each of these settlements. Laure Leneau was his embassador to the women of Coude du Francais. These were the colonies of his countrymen or their descendants, small planters of the non-slaveholding class, keepers of cabarets and roadside shops, blacksmiths, shoemakers, gardeners, charcoal burners, fishermen and hunters of the mallard and the papabote. The insinuation was dropped among them that the suit was a move on the part of the abolitionists and Oakfell was their agent, and close upon it followed the rumor, traceable to no source, that while in Baton Rouge he received numerous letters from Boston, Albany, Philadelphia and Oberlin.

The night of the Sunday preceding Christmas found Quillebert presiding at the barge covered table in the back room of Dede's cabaret at Mansura. There were no cards or chips on the cloth, but in their stead were dishes and a great bowl of steaming gumbo prepared by Dede's wife (he had no negroes) and glasses and pitchers of hot rum spiced by Dede himself. Around the board were Dr. De Roux, Aristides Portive, Fulgence Jadot, M. Brille, Alsoe Robelin, Homer Tibout, Norbert Casabet and Tibourne Pratjean. The last was a swarthy, big jawed, low browed man, short and broad shouldered, a lawyer who in the last election had been an unsuccessful candidate for the judgeship. His eyes, nose and mouth were close together, black teeth, nose and twitching lips over an assertive chin revealed the spirit and faculties suited to further the purposes of Quillebert. The outer doors were locked and windows barred. Nine saddled horses stood under the long low shed at the rear of the cabaret enclosure.

"Listen, Constant," said Pratjean. "In the court I shall sue the plaintiff for libel. I have my master never emancipated him. Emancipation must be expressed; it cannot be inferred from conduct. Born a slave, never emancipated, whence got he the right to sue and stand in judgment? Answer me that! First, the question, has he the right to sue? If you can answer you to that, only then the second question, ownership, will arise. If you meet another man, though M. Quillebert swears him not, the plaintiff is out of court and cannot be heard. No right, no suit; that's all."

"That's so!" came from his auditors in enthusiastic chorus.

"Softly! Softly! Not so fast!" exclaimed Quillebert, thumping the table with his glass. "All that fine logic may do for the day of trial or it may do for the judge's pocket. The judge trucks to the American too much for my taste."

"He does," assented Pratjean.

"Therefore," Quillebert continued, "we would be fools to run to him. Slow is the word. Delay, postpone, put off, tire them out, threathare the case, starve it, so that when it finally gets into court it must be carried on a litter. You can do that, eh, Tibourne?"

"That is my forte," the lawyer answered, chuckling.

"Meanwhile," Quillebert went on, "prove to your neighbors, your wives and daughters that it is all an abolitionist trick; that the people are being betrayed by this bragging American and the aping lawless emigre. Why, the Latiolais girl is already ashamed to speak French in company."

"Bah!" ejaculated three of the listeners and spit on the floor.

"When the true French get to understand rightly what this case means, Oakfell will not have courage to try it, or, if he does, the judge will not dare decide in favor of the negro." Quillebert emphasized his first point with a nod. "But, Constant," De Roux inquired, "what about Leon in all this delay?"

"I have considered that," Quillebert replied. "The racial has gone, spirited away, of course, by Oakfell. I sneaked him to the steamboat wood pile on the Atchafalaya near Stumpport and will hunt for him no farther. If I win this case, I will sue Oakfell for \$20,000 damages for abducting my jockey and \$30,000 more for defaming me. I will teach him what it is to threaten a Frenchman with lynch law. And old Latiolais shall weep a bucketful of tears for the wedding of his peary granddaughter, for I hold \$4,000 of his notes."

"Aye, yil yil Loucades be hanged!" cried Dede, and the glasses clattered approval.

"So you see there is a fine campaign, with spoils for you, Tibourne," said Quillebert.

"And planned with the skill of a general," the lawyer declared, his mouth filled with sparkling wine, while his tongue curviced the jutting lip.

"No!"—"Quillebert produced notebook and pencil—"which of you has heard Leon admit he was my slave?"

"I at the race track," answered Jadot, Brille and Tibout.

"And I at the church," said Portive.

"And I—Dede's utterance was thick and his pose unsteady—"right here with me."

"Remember, Dede; you can be spared. But the rest of you will remember this when called as witnesses at court," he said to the others, writing in his notebook.

"We will, sure, sure, sure," they protested, and he returned the book to his pocket.

"Bon!" said Quillebert. "Fulgence, tell old grandpère to let you have that gun, and I will pay him for it next Thursday. Aristides, come to me tomorrow and sign a new note at once. I'll give you the old one and not count the interest. Martin, you can come and drive those two sows home any time after tomorrow. Homer, tell Tatn to pay your taxes and bring the receipt to me, and I have a pretty silver cross for your little girl Felice. Fill your glasses, my friends. It is late. Dede, have you the flasks ready, as I wished?"

"Every one full, corked and in the hot ashes," Dede assured him pompously.

"Then"—Quillebert raised his glass—"I drink confusion to Americans and abolitionists and success to the sons of old Gascony."

"Down with the American Victory to the Gascones!" cried every man, clinking to his feet and emptying his glass. Dede brought forth the nine flasks of hot rum and distributed them among the company for sustenance on their ride in the chill night air, and, quietly mounting horses and ponies, this remarkable gathering dissolved. The last to leave were Quillebert and Pratjean. The latter said admiringly: "You are a genius, Constant."

"No fool, at least, I hope," laughed the latter, disappearing into the darkness of the swamp road.

There were but two sessions of the court each year for the trial of suits of a civil nature, and these were arranged to meet the agricultural convenience of the people, one in February in advance of planting, the other in September before the commencement of harvest. Hence the procrastination prescribed by Quillebert was no very difficult feat. Dilatory pleas put in by Pratjean served to toll the case over two terms, spanning a year. His professional engagement in the court of another parish and the sudden sickness of Portive, an important witness for Quillebert, certified in writing by Dr. De Roux, sufficed to carry it over the second year without trial. Throughout this space the interest and activity of Quillebert's adherents never flagged. It was the theme of talk at every store, cabaret and steamboat landing in the highlands, at every Saturday night gumbo ball and Sunday mass. At sessions of the court and police jury the attending crowds discussed it with ever increasing out and bitterness, the prosecution of Quillebert and message to Gasconian superiority constituting the beginning, middle and end of each symposium. Inevitably it took on somewhat of a sectional character, the rich planters of the lowlands being the sympathizers with Oakfell and the critics of Quillebert.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Hard to Understand.

Matt G. Robson, proprietor of the Riverside poultry yard, Fort Leyden, N. Y., writes to A Few Hens about his experience with eggs for hatching the past season. Mr. Robson states that he had a hen set on a lot of eggs and got none. At the same time another hen hatched four out of a sitting, and still another hatched 12 chicks out of 13 eggs. Two hens afterward set or brooded nothing. He shipped 100 eggs to a party, and all hatched but five. Same week he shipped three sittings to a party, and only nine hatched, and so on.

Cabbage For Ducks.

In feeding ducks cabbage Waldo F. Brown says he holds the plant in his left hand, head downward, and slashes it in slices with a corn cutter. He says he can cut a head in less time than it takes to write this sentence. Unmerchandise heads, those that burst and lose heads, are just as good for the poultry as any, and if cabbage is grown for market there will be enough of these to feed a large number of fowls.

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Babies and children need proper food, rarely ever medicine. If they do not thrive on their food something is wrong. They need a little help to get their digestive machinery working properly.

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will generally correct this difficulty.

If you will put from one-fourth to half a teaspoonful in baby's bottle three or four times a day you will soon see a marked improvement. For larger children, from half to a teaspoonful, according to age, dissolved in their milk, if you so desire, will very soon show its great nourishing power. If the mother's milk does not nourish the baby, she needs the emulsion. It will show an effect at once both upon mother and child.

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North Carolina. In the Superior Court—Alamance County.

W. H. Walker, W. H. Trolinger and wife E. A. Trolinger, J. C. Walker, Mary C. Walker, Levi J. Walker and Jno. W. Smith and wife Annia, vs.

J. M. Walker.

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This is a special proceeding to sell the lands of L. J. Walker, deceased, for partition among the heirs at law. It appears that J. M. Walker is one of said heirs at law, one seventh undivided interest in and to said lands having descended upon him.

AUCTION SALE!

Horses, Cattle, Farming Utensils, at my stables, Elton College, N. C. Dec. 3, 1901. Nov. 14-15 W. B. LONG.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE!

Having qualified as the administrator of the estate of J. M. Walker, deceased, I hereby notify all persons having claims to present them to me, or to J. A. Long, my attorney, by payment within the time specified by law, or the action will be filed in favor of a surety company.

AUCTION SALE!

Horses, Cattle, Farming Utensils, at my stables, Elton College, N. C. Dec. 3, 1901. Nov. 14-15 W. B. LONG.