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TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

BY LADY FULLERTON.

CHAPTER II.—Continued

"You are so clever," the latter pleaded. "You know all about this concession, and you manage your own so beautifully, and you understand so well how to behave to the laborers. When I speak civilly to them they laugh, and if I find fault they turn their backs upon me, and make remarks in their own language, which I have every reason to suppose are not over and above polite. We are not in any particular hurry about profits; I do not mind letting you into the secret. We have got a large sum of money at the bankers at New Orleans, and I can draw upon them if necessary. You would then make all the bargains for us with Messieurs les Sauvages, and I need not have anything to say to them. I cannot tell you how happy it would make me, and Madame de Moldau also."

"Indeed!" d'Auban said, with a rather scornful smile.

"Of course you would make your own conditions. I assure you that I look upon it as a providential event to have met with such a friend as you are in this land of savages and alligators. By the way, I forgot to tell you how narrowly I escaped yesterday one of those horrible animals."

"Your reliance on Providence seems to me to have been carried to excess," d'Auban observed, still in a sarcastic tone. "Suppose we had not met, what would

you have done? Your daughter could not have endured the ordinary hardships of a settler's life. Had it not been for St. Agathe—"

"Aye, and for Colonel d'Auban, what would have become of us? But you see she would come to Louisiana, and when we got to New Orleans nothing would serve her but to come on to this place. What could I do?"

D'Auban laughed. "Is it, then, the new fashion in France for parents to obey their children?"

"Ah, ce que femme veut Dieu le veut! One cannot refuse her anything."

"Perhaps she has had some great sorrow. Has she lost her husband lately?"

"I suppose she suffered everything a woman can suffer," the old man answered, in a tone of feeling which touched d'Auban.

"She has one great blessing left," he kindly said—"an affectionate father."

"O no, no! what can such a one as I do for her? But what I meant was that if she is bent upon a thing—"

"She cannot be dissuaded from it," said d'Auban, again smiling.

"Well, I could never say nay to a lady, and when you see Madame de Moldau—"

"I shall understand that her wishes are not to be resisted. I am quite willing to believe it."

"But with regard to the partnership, M. d'Auban."