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'The Courier Of Lyons' a Tragedy

By REGINA CREWE.

Ante-dating "L'affaire Dreyfus" by a century, the tragic tale of Joseph Lesurques, excitingly told in this French film import, is another gripping drama of injustice in which an innocent man is convicted of a crime through circumstantial evidence plus prejudice. It may lack the proximity of the Dreyfus Case to our time, and the glitter of the gold lace and high misdemeanors, but, if anything, its tragedy is greater inasmuch as the victim isn't saved by a happy ending, or any manner of vindication.

The cause celebre, resurrected from the legal archives of France, concerns a highwayman, one Dubosc, and a worthy citizen named Lesurques. The former was one of five who stuck up the Lyons coach and committed murder in the course of robbing a courier of money marked for Napoleon's Italian campaign. Four of the bandits were promptly apprehended, but in place of Dubosc, the fifth, Lesurques was arrested, tried, convicted and felt the chill necking of Mlle. Guillotine.

This, then, is the factual case upon which Scenarist Aureche and Director Lehmann have founded their legend, which, it is understood, adheres closely to actuality. The piece is well put together and excellently played by an unusually competent cast. Pierre Blanchar has the dual Dubosc-Lesurques role, and gives both brilliant interpretation. Dita Parlo, Jacques Copeau and Jean Tissier are outstanding. There are titles in English, which are of assistance in following the more complex aspects of the picture.

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