

THE INHERITANCE OF JEAN TROUVE

By NEVIL HENSHAW

Author of "Alline of the Grand Woods," etc.

BOOK TWO.—BAYOU PORTAGE

CHAPTER XIV.

MADAME ALCEIDE

In the dawn of the following morning Le Bossu shook me awake and carried me off to breakfast with the Lasalles.

For the present we would eat there, he explained, as we tramped the short journey through the brisk morning air.

Also Toinette would remain under the care of Tante Odile until her future had been provided for.

Arriving at the Lasalles', we found Toinette waiting for us in the doorway. She was very pale, and very quiet, and to our greetings she replied only with a low mechanical.

"Well, Bossu! Well, Jean!" Afterward she slipped back against the wall, standing rigidly in one spot until Tante Odile called her to table.

It was a cheery meal, that breakfast, for throughout its brief length it was enlivened by the bright chatter of the tiny Lasalles.

Ordinarily Toinette would have made the most of her opportunity, laughing and teasing until she had produced a perfect pandemonium of merriment.

Now she sat as though frozen, deaf even to the all-absorbing conversation of the elders.

As was natural the talk turned upon the raid of the bayou in which Father Lasalle had played a prominent part.

It had all been as simple as it had been complete. Led by Dalfrey, the trappers had slipped down the bayou, and had surrounded the coffee-house without so much as a word of opposition.

Having broken inside, they had smashed all the casks and bottles before setting fire to the building.

Afterward they had stood by to see that the flames did not spread to the other huts or to the surrounding marsh.

Each move had been carried out with the care and deliberation of a legal proceeding. There had been no noise, no rowdiness. Of the large stock of liquor destroyed not one drop had been drunk by the invaders.

As for Monsieur Dugas, he had risked no chance on a wait in the marsh. Evidently he had been warned in advance, for he had taken to his boat and had escaped downstream some time before the arrival of the men from the upper camps.

Not until the last plate had been pushed aside did Toinette recover herself. Then, amid the clamor of the departing children, she suddenly arose.

"I am going home, Tante Odile," she announced. "You promised that I should go as soon as breakfast was over."

"And so you shall," began Tante Odile, when Le Bossu broke in upon her.

"A moment," he interposed. "Before we separate we must consider our arrangements."

As though the little man's words had recast her former spell, Toinette abruptly resumed her seat. She made no protest either by look or word. She was simply frozen again.

"You see?" whispered Tante Odile from behind the cover of her battered tin coffee-pot. "She has been like that ever since she came. You must speak to her, Jean. You must make her cry. She can not go on like this."

"Bien, Toinette," continued Le Bossu. "That is a good girl. And now for the first thing which is the informing of your father's family. To me it seems that we should at once send a message to your aunt, Madame Alceide. As for the others, they are scattered wide, and there is little time. Also we must count upon Madame Alceide to notify them if she considers it worth while. You agree with me in this?"

Toinette answered without raising her eyes. "You know best, Bossu," she muttered. "I only want to go home."

"Then, since you leave it to me, I will send to Bois Berard immediately," continued Le Bossu. "With a fast launch we should receive an answer long before sunset. Also I will instruct Madame Alceide to put off her coming until tomorrow. It would be hard to make her comfortable overnight, and there is little that she could do. For the rest, we can delay our other arrangements until we hear from her, since their details will depend wholly upon her answer."

Rising, he added to me, "You will take Toinette home, Jean. I will join you there once I have arranged for the launch."

A little later, as I prepared to depart with Toinette Tante Odile called me aside.

"Speak to her now, Jean," she urged. "You may not have a better chance."

Accordingly, once we were outside, I took firm hold upon my courage, and spoke to Toinette. It was not an easy task, and it was rendered especially hard by the consciousness that, for the first time, there was a sense of strain between us.

"Toinette," I began, "you must not grieve so. You must not let me falter to a standstill and Toinette, abandoning her grief for pity, made haste to answer me.

"Bien, Jean," said she. "You need say no more. I understand, and I will do my best if only for your sake. But do not expect too much. Just now there is something between me and everything. Perhaps it is my sorrow. Perhaps it is death itself. I do not know. When this something is gone I will be myself again."

The effect of this was to throw me into a perfect torment of self-consciousness. For the first time I became unpleasantly aware of those awkward penalties that attend a sudden growth. At once I felt all legs and arms, and I was also painfully conscious that not only were my clothes very old and ragged, but that they were several sizes too small for me.

Toinette alone was undisturbed. Clad in a white dress over which Tante Odile had labored patiently the night before, she stared out over the marsh with the fixity of a statue.

"Dieu," muttered Le Bossu, interrupting his admonitions. "This is too much. Will nothing move her?"

As he spoke the launch rounded the mud flat and swung in toward the landings. In its stern seated between the *cure*, and a small, brown-clothed stranger, was Madame Alceide.

Despite the disadvantages of her position, my first sight of Madame Alceide was an imposing one. She was a large woman, tall and broad, yet without a suggestion of stoutness. Also there was about her an air of stately repose, so that even on the narrow backless seat of the launch she held herself comfortably erect.

She was dressed in a plain black skirt, a loose black sacque, and upon her head she wore a black sunbonnet.

This sunbonnet was the crowning touch of her apparel. Not only did it proclaim her caste, it went further and made possible the dignity of her arrival. Seated in the launch in a bonnet or hat she would merely have appeared ridiculous. In the sunbonnet she was mistress of the situation.

As the launch alighted she made no movement of greeting or recognition. Waiting until the craft had been made fast, she arose at a word from her companions, and allowed herself to be assisted on to the landing. It was then that I had a look at her face, a strong yet placid face, finely molded, generously proportioned, and set with a pair of shrewd gray eyes.

The mouth and straight, betrayed the character and determination of its owner, and when Madame Alceide spoke, there was blended with the graciousness of her tone a well-defined note of authority.

"This is M'sieu Jean Le Bossu?" she questioned.

The little man made his best bow. "At your service, Madame."

"You have my thanks for all that you have done, M'sieu," said Madame Alceide simply. "And these, of course, are my niece and the boy of whom I have heard."

Bending she kissed Toinette upon the brow, after which she studied her intently for a moment.

"Yes, you are Oton's child," was her verdict. "You are Laval all through."

In my case she contented herself with a pat upon the shoulder, yet I was well-nigh overcome. Done by Madame Alceide it was like an accolade.

"You are a big boy, Jean Trouve," she observed. "I could have had but little trouble in finding you."

These greetings over, she beheld herself of her duty to her companions. They stood as they had sat, upon either side of her, while the visitors, drawn up in a rough semicircle upon the bank, regarded with frank curiosity. Observing this, Madame Alceide embarked upon a general introduction.

"Pere Parmentier is, of course, well known to you, my friends," said she, whereupon the *cure* stepped forward. He was a small wiry man, with vague blue eyes, and a great shock of snow-white hair. As he advanced he smiled as though in recognition of many well-remembered faces.

"M'sieu le Docteur Pousseard," Madame Alceide next announced, and the brown stranger, clicking his heels together, performed a courtly bow that was half bow and half military salute. Like the *cure* he was small, and he was wrinkled after long exposure to the elements. For the rest he was brown, in his dress, his complexion, in the coloring of his eyes and his scant thatch of hair. Even his voice gave one an impression of brownness since it had the dry, crackling rasp of ancient leather. Yet for all this there was nothing vivid or startling about the Doctor's appearance. He was as neutral as a withered leaf in a winter forest.

"I am honored, my friends," said he with the composure of extreme nervousness. "Also, in my capacity as physician, I am here to do what I can."

"Come, Pousseard," interrupted Madame Alceide. "My poor brother is dead. He has been dead for more than a day. A thousand doctors could not bring him back again."

She spoke without a trace of heat, nor did the Doctor appear in any way to resent her rebuke. Later I came to know that their friendship was of a kind where even the greatest frankness failed to bring offense. Also, whereas Madame Alceide always spoke to the Doctor

myself, led the way to the landings. The little man was plainly excited, and as we waited he admonished us earnestly as to our behavior.

"Do not forget your manners," he kept repeating. "You must show Madame Alceide that, even though you are of the marsh, you know what is due such a visitor."

At once Le Bossu led the way, Toinette and I following, and the *cure* and the Doctor bringing up the rear. Passing through the ranks of the silent and staring visitors, we arrived at the hut where Madame Alceide bent to a brief prayer beside the bunk before taking her last look at her brother. It was a long look, and when Madame Alceide spoke her words contained a pity beyond the power of expression.

"So this is what he ran away to," said she.

She choked silent while two great tears gathered in her eyes and fell unheeded to the floor.

"Come," she muttered. "I have seen enough." And she added as we left for Tante Odile's, "Death is not so bad after all."

Half an hour later the funeral started, a great affair that was the topic of the coast for many a day. I recall it as a long procession of bareheaded marsh-folk led by one of the little Lasalles who, clad in white robes, held proudly aloft a golden cross. Back of the huts, at the edge of the marsh, a grave had been dug in the clayey soil, and here the partners, Father Lasalle and three chosen men from the upper camp, lowered the rough box that they had carried so reverently.

It was a still warm day, and only when the *cure* raised his voice in prayer did a little breeze spring up. Then, while the marsh-folk knelt in the sunlight, the whole great sweep of grass rustled slowly and solemnly as though each tiny blade bowed its head in honor of a brave soul that was gone.

Of all the incidents of Papa Ton's funeral I remember best that awaying marsh and the rigid white face of Toinette who, to the very end, preserved her stony calm.

"So," said Le Bossu, when all was over and we turned away. "It is right that he should be there where he fought and won."

The *cure* understood why Papa Ton had wished to lie in the marsh, holding in death the spot that marked his final victory over the ever-encroaching grass.

FOUR LECTURES ON MCGEE

By REV. JOHN J. O'GORMAN, D. C. L.

LECTURE TWO.—MCGEE THE CATHOLIC LAY APOSTLE

MCGEE'S CATHOLIC CONSERVATISM

One must not exaggerate McGee's change of front. He had never been a red and he never became a reactionary. Accident of circumstances had made him in 1848 the participant in an attempted revolt in Ireland, and an apologist of the same in New York. In his excitement he had blamed the priests who had prudently opposed an unprepared and futile insurrection in Ireland and he had idealized the revolutionists who on the continent of Europe too often sought national rights and necessary reforms by un-Christian principles, by unjust means and for anti-Catholic purposes.

He could not ascend the intellectual heights where his liberalized mind would be based on such a firm conviction of the righteousness of freedom as that possessed by Lord Acton for example; that "he had to work out his problem with his own tools and training" and "consequently he was unable to reconcile certain political and social liberal tendencies with the teachings of his Church."

Having thus to her own satisfaction convicted McGee of intellectual unfitness in the manner described, Mrs. Skelton proceeds to show how, in her mind, the problem was so very simple. The "liberalism" which McGee sacrificed owing to his not being able to ascend the intellectual heights "meant only a broad-minded impulse towards popular movements of independence. (Life of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, pages 189, 196 and 197.)

Remarks such as these cited mar an otherwise generally sympathetic biography of McGee. They are simply impertinent. Mrs. Skelton shows herself to be as wide of the mark in her condemnation of McGee's political philosophy as she is in her curiously incorrect criticism of his religious apologetics.

As a result of the criticism from McGee's political philosophy, his religious outlook on life is that of the Catholic Church, that defended by such intellectual giants as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Newman. Its political outlook is soundly philosophical. McGee took as his guide the greatest philosopher of politics that the English-speaking world ever produced, the Irishman, Edmund Burke. As Mrs. Skelton contrasts Lord Acton's love of freedom with McGee's alleged fear of it, it may perhaps be worth while noting that, while Lord Acton's judgment was not always equal to his erudition, he pronounced himself as strongly in favour of Burke as a political philosopher as ever did McGee.

Lord Acton and His Circle edited by Abbot, now Cardinal Assistant.

It is very naive for Mrs. Skelton to say that McGee was unable to reconcile "a broad-minded impulse towards popular movements of independence" with the teachings of his Church. McGee understood Catholic doctrine and he knew that while it condemned irrational liberty, whether for the individual or for the nation. Throughout his life he took a prominent part in supporting movements toward a fuller and more rational freedom. We see this broad-minded impulse towards popular movements of independence in his first book written when only twenty years of age, namely O'Connell and His Friends, where he devoted glowing paragraphs in praise of the efforts of Robert Emmet and Daniel O'Connell on behalf of liberty. We see it in his Young Ireland days when by impassioned oratory, inspiring verse and studious essay, he vindicated his country's right to freedom. We see it in the New York Nation, during that paper's short life in 1848 and 1849. We see it in the American Cent newspaper which McGee founded in Boston in 1850. Nor did this love of guiding popular movements toward a fuller and more rational freedom, which McGee abandoned his policy of military revolution and returned to his earlier policy of political evolution. By 1852 he had realized that some of those who were talking liberty and plotting revolutions were endeavouring to overturn democratic governments for the purpose of establishing a socialist regime where property would be confiscated, religion proscribed and liberty non-existent. "The modern mind," he writes that same year in 1852 in his second edition of the Irish Settlers in North America, "has been filled with a new morality and new theories of duty which it is inclined to put into operation. It

MEXICAN CATHOLICS TO MEET IN CONGRESS

Mexico City, Nov. 6.—The Arch-

bishop of Mexico has called upon all Catholic groups and organizations to attend a National Catechetical Congress, to be held from December 8 to 12 for the purpose of organizing the advance guard of the Mexican Catholic Youth.

This is in line with the statement given out recently by the Archbishop to a Mexican paper following a meeting of the Hierarchy. The statement is, in part as follows:

"The laws which oppose the natural rights of Catholics; those which destroy marriage through the medium of divorce; those which deprive fathers of the right to give their children a Christian education; those which prevent freedom of worship, will be opposed by the national Hierarchy. Methods similar to those adopted by the Cardinals and Archbishops of France will be followed for this campaign. Active propaganda will be carried on by means of Pastoral Letters, tracts and lectures; petitions will be addressed to the Chambers of Deputies, popular manifestations will be organized and all possible efforts will be made to convince the Executive, Federal and local authorities of the justice of a constitutional and legislative reform. Catholic groups are in process of organization and a national action against lay legislation will soon begin."

ANDERSON INVITES THE ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE HEADS TO JOIN KLAN

Washington.—William H. Anderson who was deposed as head of the Anti-Saloon League in New York after he had been convicted and sent to Sing Sing for perjury in connection with alleged misuse of the funds of the League, is the author of a violent attack upon that organization printed in the Fellowship Forum, a Klan organ published here.

In the form of an open letter to Jay to those of Anderson's attack, Wayne B. Wheeler and F. Scott McBride, officials of the League, is also an invitation to the League to identify itself openly with the Ku Klux Klan. He wrote:

"You gladly accept financial, political and moral support from members of the Klan. You are glad enough to have it nominate dry candidates for you to support. Without it Governor Al Smith could not possibly have been defeated for the Presidential nomination last year. If the Anti-Saloon League management has become pacifist and a servile lackey of the fiscal agent of John D. Rockefeller Jr's agent then you ought to stand out for a fair price."

Anderson charged that after his conviction in New York the Anti-Saloon League solicited and obtained a \$25,000 contribution from the younger Rockefeller.

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