

THE KEY-LOG

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fifteen, twenty feet high. In those days they had no dynamite, and, mon dieu, what a time there was, hurrying the men off for ropes and irons, sending for cables, hunting for the key-log that held back all the others. Philomene she heard about the jam, and she came hurrying up the river, her face as white as a sheet, wringing her hands. And when she saw the logs and the water, and all the men waiting on the shore, she walked up and down among the little pine-trees. They say she was praying, m'sieu.

"Patrice, he looked up and happened to see her there. But he shut his jaw so and said nothing. Then he called Cyprien Latour down to the edge of the river. He looked at him, then he said: 'Cyprien, I am the boss of this river gang.' And Cyprien said yes, he was. 'Then there will be no mistake,' Patrice said next. 'I have decided that you are the best man to go out and cut that key-log!'

"Cyprien, he said nothing, but he looked at the other man, and they both understood. Twice, they say, he started to speak with Patrice, and then he shut his teeth together. Then he took his ax and started to go out on the jam, with his face white, but with his head up high, so.

"Well, Patrice he watched him from the bank. Then, quick-like, he called him back. 'Cyprien,' he said, 'I think maybe you feel that I am a hard man. Maybe you think what I do is not right? That may be true. So we will both go out on that log-jam—and the man who comes back—well, I think you understand! . . . So, m'sieu, they both took their axes, and went out on the logs together, like two cats, from one log to the other.

"Philomene, she walked up and down like something in a cage and watched them all that time. When she saw them go out, she stood still, and gave one scream. Then she waited there, with her hand on her heart, so, and her face white, like the foam at the foot of the decharge there. She said nothing; she just stood there, and watched.

"Then one of the men went down. It was Patrice. A log 'bired' with him at the head of the jam, and he went through to the waist. Cyprien climbed back to him, but the logs had settled in on him, and held him there. Then Cyprien made his way back to the shore, and crawled out with a rope. But still they could not pull the gang-boss out. It the logs moved again, from behind, he would be crushed, killed. Cyprien saw that, and he called to the men on the bank. 'Boys,' he called out, 'you look after the boss. When the logs give way in front, pull hard!' Then he waved his hand so, and he climbed down the face of that jam, quick, like a monkey. He felt and looked about for the key-log. Then he threw off his hat, and stood on the key-log and, mon dieu, how he made those chips fly! He chopped the log one-half, three-quarters in two. Then it bent, and snapped, like a willow whistle. The whole jam broke, then, like a gun-shot. She made a noise like thunder; everything went down, with the logs rolling and twisting and jumping as high as a pine-tree out of the water.

"Philomene, she watched it all. She saw the two men go under, and the jam break, and the water tear down the river-bed. Then she staggered two or three steps toward the river, with her hands out, so, and fell down in a faint, and some of the men came and carried her away.

"They pulled Patrice out, but his leg was broken. The rest of the gang ran down the river, first on one side, and then on the other, looking for Cyprien. They found him, three miles down. He was dead, m'sieu, for all the bones in his body were broken.

"So when they came back to the mill somebody said it was best to tell Philomene first. Old Beaupre he went to Philomene, and shook his head very solemn, he told me afterward.

She was waiting there, with her hands folded, so. But when she saw him she turned round and screamed, 'Where is he? Where is he?' And old Beaupre, he thought Philomene meant young Cyprien Latour. So he shook his head, two or three times, and he said 'Dead!'

"Philomene, she said nothing. She went to the little cupboard, while he watched her, and poured a powder into a glass and drank it. Old Beaupre, he asked her what she meant when she did that. Philomene, she smiled very quiet. 'That is the medicine,' she told him, 'to cure the pain in my heart.' Then she looked round at Beaupre, and at the walls, and then she fell back on the floor.

"While he was lifting her up, the boys came in with Patrice, on a mattress, and when he turned his head and spoke to her, she looked at him, the way you would look at a ghost, m'sieu. Then she began to beat her heart with her hands, and crawled to his feet. Then she caught hold of his arm. Then she cried out twice, 'I thought it was you! Oh, I thought it was you!'

"And that, m'sieu, was the way she died, holding close to her husband. And old Beaupre, he told me many a time how Patrice had the boys lift her over, and put her in his arms, like she was a baby. Then he held her there, most all night long. And every time old Beaupre tells me about that night, he cries, like a woman, and keeps saying over and over again, 'Antoine, I made the big mistake about that pauvre Philomene of ours! . . . And I hope m'sieu will forgive me when he sees me cry here a little, like the old fool I am. . . . But that Philomene of ours was the prettiest girl on all the river, with her hair down to the knees, m'sieu, in two braids—and the way she used to sing, when she was young, with a laugh for everybody. . . . There, m'sieu, I must beg your forgiveness!'

Sweet Revenge.—Householders who are plagued with moneylenders' circulars might do worse than adopt the plan of a correspondent. "I used to be pestered with them," he writes, "until I began to retaliate by returning them to the senders in unstamped envelopes. I very seldom receive one now."—M. A. P.

A Printer's Blunder.

"My pigmy counterpart," the poet wrote
Of his dear child, the darling of his heart;
Then longed to clutch the stupid printer's throat
That set it up, "My pig, my counterpart."—

Precocious Baby.—A professor of the University of Pennsylvania, who has greatly endeared himself to the students on account of his kind-heartedness, has one particular failing—that of absent-mindedness.

He visited his married nephew a few days ago and had listened to the young wife's praise of her first born. The gentleman felt that he must say something to give the impression that he was interested.

"Can the dear little fellow walk?" he inquired quietly.

"Walk?" shouted the mother. "Why he has been walking for five months!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the professor, lapsing again into abstraction. "What a long way he must have got!"—Philadelphia Times.

The Cost of Peace.—"How do you keep peace in your family?" "Go to church with my wife once in a while and let her drag me to a dance occasionally."—Detroit Free Press.

An Important Distinction.—"I wish Fritz would write his figures plainer. I can't possibly tell from his letter whether it is one thousand or ten thousand kisses that he sends me."—Fliegende Blatter.

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7 POINTS

—THE PERFECT NUMBER—