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WOLF MOON

A ROMANCE OF THE GREAT
SOUTHWEST

BY JOSEPH J. QUINN

CHAPTER XV.—CONTINUED

Louise could scarcely realize her situation, alone, above the world, with her beloved in her arms. Time stood still, the stars came closer in a body, as if a million witnesses to her happiness. It was all so quiet and lonesome up among the crags, among the scenes tragic and melodramatic. She felt it a glorious climax to a day of peril. In but a few short hours life seemed to have changed for her, she had been snatched from a burning hell to a paradise of peace.

Now and then imperious voices of the gypsies below came floating up to her. She recognized the orders, the same old sharp commands of camp breaking. It was good to sit there in the starlight and know that the gypsies were going away, perhaps out of her life forever. She listened again—more intently. There came to her the sounds of creaking wheels, the whinnying of horses on the start, guttural voices of the older gypsies and shrill cries of children. Out beyond the grove moved the cavalcade, out and to the north, down through the river channel swollen by the rain and across into the flats, until the caravan became silent and welded into the blue and brown where sky and mesa meet.

Jack stirred and opened his eyes. "Louise."

"Yes, Jack."

"You always come when I need you most."

"Do you need me now Jack? Can I help you?"

"Louise I'll always need you. You came to me before when I wanted help. And now you're here again, with me when I need to have you close."

"I'm happy to be with you, always happy when I'm with you. Why, Jack, I want to be with you always."

"Do you really, Louise? I'm glad to hear you say that. I wasn't ever sure that you cared."

"Jack I always cared. I cared weeks and weeks ago, even when I first met you. And then you saved my life, saved me from Pemella. But the gypsies have gone. They're out there in the North now."

"They couldn't have gone without a chief. Tulane must have—must have taken hold, for Pemella's dead."

"Dead, Jack?"

"Yes, the lightning struck him down. He fell back over the cliff. He must be dead."

"Louise clasped his hand passionately. "Then there's no one now but you—just you, Jack."

Jack started to raise himself to answer. But Louise held him close to her bosom.

"Jack I'll have you now to protect me always, won't I?"

"Now and forever Louise." His words echoed back and forth across the distance of her soul as she knelt closer to him and clasped him tightly to her breast.

A loud halloo from the plains reached their ears.

"Here come the boys," Louise ejaculated ringing.

Louise returned the call. A few minutes later the riders, led by Buster Christian, came puffing up the slope. A shout of delight rose in chorus as they perceived Jack safe in Louise's arms.

"Jack, Jack, how are you?" Buster cried, springing to his side.

"Stunned a bit but raring to go."

"At-a-boy, Jack," and she looked across the short distance that separated Jack from Louise as she saw the twinkle of happiness and contentment in Louise's eyes. "Louise it's great to see you safe and happy. Why from the way the Indian talked you were both just hanging on."

Louise laughed softly. "Well, we both want to get back to the ranch. It seems ages since I've been there."

"Well, the sooner the better. Mrs. Trichell is running up here afoot. John Trichell can't hold her back."

Buster lifted Jack in his arms. Slowly in the darkness the group passed down and out upon the plain to the ponies.

Near the bottom of the pass gray forms glided behind the rocks and watched the intruders pass. When they had gone they returned to snap and snarl and leap at the body held fast in the jutting rocks above.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SECRET OF THE PAST

"The beginning and the end came at the same time," replied Jack when Louise and the Trichells, in company with Buster Christian, after hearing him relate some of his experiences of the day before queried him the following evening about the fight at Roundtop.

"Pemella was in the act of leaping toward me when a ball of fire came right out of the sky and glanced off his shoulder. It spread everywhere, on the rocks, trees, in the air. He seemed wrapped in a flame. Something like the blast from an open furnace rushed on me. All my nerves tingled. Pemella was swaying back and forth. Then with a loud cry he fell backward off the cliff. The flash of vivid light blinded me and I experienced a sensation as if I were being swung

out into a pool of fire. That's about all I remember until I awakened." Jack looked recollectively upward Roundtop, where, hidden under a clump of trees, a fresh mound told its story.

"But the best piece of news," Jack brightened and continued, "is that Tulane has gone."

"Well, Jack, now that he's gone we might as well tell you that he swore he would get you," Buster spoke.

"Yes? Well now that he's gone I might as well tell you that he came mighty close to getting me. Do you remember the night of the stampede? Well, Tulane was the boy who shot me in the shoulder?"

A cry of astonishment flew from their lips.

"And you never said a word!" exclaimed Mrs. Trichell. "Jack, that's just like you. If you had, the boys would have riddled him. But thank God he's gone."

"And young lady," counseled John Trichell, turning toward Louise. "Hereafter I believe it would be a good idea for you to stay at home and not snoop around gypsy camps."

"There won't be much occasion to, hereafter," put in Mrs. Trichell. "Tulane's going to a good rideance. By the way, Louise, was there any mail yesterday? I'm beginning to think that you're a mighty poor mailman."

"Oh, yes, two letters for you and one for Jack. I left them in the mail pouch; I'll get them."

"From Dad," announced Jack in eagerness. "Excuse me; I'll read it. You won't mind will you?"

"At times during the reading of the letter Jack's eyes brightened. At the end he read aloud:

"The Gallagers and Janet are to visit the Grand Canyon this summer. I have induced them to stop off at Teriton and I shall go along with them. We will leave here Sunday night and should arrive in Teriton by Wednesday. You probably know what time the Golden State stops there. I will be so glad to see you, but let me say that Janet has lost some of her seashore ardor. So don't be disappointed."

"Can you imagine that? Dad thinks the Golden State Limited stops here regularly. If he can arrange in Chicago to have it stop here, I'll be lucky. Gee! but it will be great to see them all again."

Later the same day Louise joined Jack upon the porch that swung around the side of the house. Jack's head was throbbing not only from the stunning lightning flash but from wondering how his father would like Louise, what he would say when his eye fell upon her. How should he introduce Louise to him, explain her family?

The appearance of Louise brought on a question.

"Janet is the same girl you were telling me of recently, isn't she?"

"If you mean the one who has forgotten me, yes. You see what Dad says, 'has lost some of her seashore ardor.' How well Dad puts it. In other words, Jack old boy, you have dropped plumb out of her mind."

"Are you sure?"

"Just as sure as a jack rabbit hops. There's plenty of evidence. She hasn't written me a line in a month. Does that look as if she's running over with affection?"

"But perhaps when she sees you again the old friendship will come back."

"Not when she takes a peep at you. You'll startle her, really you will. She probably thinks the West as wild as in '80 and that there's nothing here but Indians and tepees. But you'll like Janet even if she is a bit independent. Wouldn't you call a girl who refused to answer your letters independent?"

"Rather. Jack I'm wondering if your father will want you to go back East with him." She failed to cloak her grave concern.

"Hardly unless I've told him that I've won a fortune. After all that's what I came West for, to win a fortune and I believe I've done that."

"When?" was Louise's startled whisper.

"Oh, in the last few months. Fortunes don't always come out of the earth. Sometimes they walk on top of the earth."

"No, in the west, in Oklahoma." Leaving the intimation to Louise he continued, "But won't I be glad to see Dad again and explain everything to him? I've told him all about you, or as much as I know, at least. But you will have to tell me all about yourself before Dad comes. If you don't, how in the world can I explain your family to him?"

To Louise came the resurgence of feeling that she had experienced once before when Jack had questioned her about her family. In searching for an answer only an immense void met her straining mind. How she could piece together a reply from the fragments of broken memories, vague, indefinite.

Were she to lay bare her soul she could find no echo of the unknown early days. But she could equivocate no longer, she must cry out that her past was as nameless as the soft stirrings of her soul within. It would be running counter to her conscience to keep silent under it all. The only way left was to throw open her life and bow to the inevitable. There was shame, yes, but not the burning consciousness of wrong done. It clung to her from association. It could not be scored against her yet it was hers to fester and pain. Were some kind providence to whisper but one word

—her name—within her ears she could rise and face the world. She would be transformed from a nameless unit to a high womanhood in a fleeting second. The stigma would fade under the light of knowledge. Louise was overcome with an eager desire to unburden her soul to Jack, to tell him her innermost secrets, to depend upon his understanding, his friendship, perhaps his love, to see it all. Before she could gain weight the situation she found herself speaking.

"Jack the secret of my family went last night when the gypsies moved to the north."

"Why, what do you mean?" he asked, startled with the enigma.

"I mean that the only person in the world who knows my family is Nava, the gypsy queen."

"Nava? How did she come to know?"

"She claims that I am a gypsy." "A gypsy?" gasped Jack, astounded. "You don't believe that?"

TO BE CONTINUED

OLD JOHN, THE SEXTON

My brother, Mr. Jim, the servants call him, is a great story-teller, and to these many years it has been his wont to entertain my little folks with his wonderful stories, especially of Winter evenings does he so while away the time, seated before the bright open fireplace, with its huge black and brass andirons, its big back-log and piles of smaller wood, all burning and crackling so merrily. With little Jimmie, his name-sake on his knees and Willie and Johnny and Mary, all little stair-steps sitting around him, and he with his big brier pipe in his mouth, the smoke curling about him, is sure the very picture of contentment, and the children—why, their smiling faces and bright eyes tell their childish pleasure. I am rather proud of my big brother Jim, my old-bachelor brother who has made his home with us these many years, and Oh! but wouldn't we all miss him! Fairy stories and the like are the sort brother generally tells the children and I enjoy them most as much as the little folks; but this particular evening he seemed rather sober-like, and after supper we all huddled up close to the fire, the weather being winterish, and he told us this true story.

I was so much taken with it and its beautiful lesson that as soon as I got the children to bed that night I sat down and made some notes on the pretty story, and I will now try to give it just as Jim told it to the children and me.

"Sister, you recall the funeral of John, the sexton, at St. Mary's some six weeks ago, and do you remember Father James in his short sermon on the occasion referred briefly to a most splendid example of the power of the Rosary?"

"Of course I remember the funeral of poor simple old John, who had been sexton at St. Mary's for a dozen years or more, and the children, too, remembered him kindly, for the little ones at the parish school all loved old John; he was always so kind and friendly with them, keeping to the play-ground in such nice shape for them always, the school rooms so clean and neat."

"Well, you remember, too, that Father James in his short talk said in his opinion John Randolph in one ever heard his last name until Father mentioned it, then, was a near saint and he believed his departed soul was then enjoying the beatific vision; that he would at some future time give a sermon on the Rosary devotion, using incidents in the life of this humble old sexton to show the great power of God's Holy Mother with her Divine Son."

Father James, you must know is our assistant pastor and has been ordained only a few years; furthermore, he is named for Brother, as his father and James are very close friends, in fact old classmates in college years and years ago when he was a young man, he was naturally reticent; that, in fact, it was only a year or so before that he by the merest accident got an inkling of the real character of the sexton and only by the greatest tact did he learn the outline of the old man's history; but I'll let Father James tell it in his own way as nearly as I can remember his language:

"About a month or so before John's death I had a sick call about one o'clock in the morning and it was necessary for me to call John to hitch up my horse to our old buggy. Then it was hell for my poor soul, now please God, it will be heaven and my dear old mother again!"

—F. L. Clements.

Everything we read makes us better or worse, and by a necessary consequence increases or lessens our happiness.

If our hearts were inflamed with love of our heavenly country we should easily bear exterior cold.—St. Francis of Assisi.

BELGIUM'S CATHOLIC LEADER MOURNED

GEO. A. HELLEPUTTE, DEPUTY, CABINET MINISTER AND COLLEGE PROFESSOR

By Rev. J. Van der Heyden (Louvain Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

The city of Louvain, its university, and in fact the whole of Belgium, are mourning the passing of a citizen, whose work as teacher, social worker, statesman and economist proclaimed for generations a greatness that was wholly built upon love for the Church and love for the people.

George A. Helleputte, Deputy, Minister of State, Professor of Architecture, co-founder, with the late Abbe Mellaerts, of the powerful League of Peasants, was for years one of the great leaders of the Catholic party in Belgium, an orator and debator who could sway the masses at will and in the Chamber, compelled attention, even when disorder reigned.

He was but twenty-one years of age when, in 1872, he graduated, the first of his class, from the Engineering School of Ghent University. His college achievement won him at once a place as an engineer of the Belgium State Railways and a year later a professorship at the Catholic University of Louvain, where he created the course in architecture.

A lover, for Christ's sake, of the poor and lowly, George Helleputte could not be content with devoting his talents to the teaching of the sons of the well-to-do. The children of the workers claimed his attention as well. To assure to them the advantages of a sound technical preparation for their respective tasks in life, and to see them thoroughly imbued with Christian and Catholic principles, he founded in Louvain, in the shadow of the University, a model trades school.

It has interested the best of his University students and with them made it a flourishing institution, of which the city and the country at large are justly proud. He remained paternally devoted to it all through life. It trains mechanics and craftsmen in their various trades and at the same time preserves them from the influence of socialism, which has made sadly destructive inroads in many industrial centers in Belgium.

His great dream was at one time the restoration of the Middle Age Guilds, in a form adapted to modern conceptions and circumstances. The nearest approach to the realization of this dream were the Democratic League, which owes its existence to him and the Peasants League. Both, especially the latter, have been mighty bulwarks against further development of Marxist theories.

The concern manifested by Professor Helleputte for the welfare of the masses, his activity and his oratorical talents, sent him, in the year 1889, to the Chamber of Deputies. The voters kept him there uninterruptedly till the day of his death. For twenty-two years of this long parliamentary career, he sat on the Ministers' Bench, in Belgium the King's Ministers are generally chosen from among the Members of Parliament—either as Minister of Railways, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Public Works, or of two of these departments at the same time.

His democratic tendencies drew him early into the long-drawn-out fight, still going on, of the Flemish-speaking people for the same linguistic rights enjoyed by their Walloon fellow-citizens. Though Flemish was not Helleputte's mother tongue, he mastered the language so thoroughly that the Flemish Academy elected him to membership and the Davidsons, a Catholic association for the promotion of Flemish literature and art, hailed him for years as its president.

His country, his King, and many foreign lands showered honors upon the man who wrought on and on for half a century to foster his land's weal; but of all the honors and titles that became his, there was none that he prized, with any degree of comparison, as he prized his title of Christian and Catholic.

On his obituary, the long nomenclature of distinctions heaped upon him at home and from abroad begins with the modest mention: "Member of the Third Order of St. Francis and of the Men's Sodality of the Blessed Virgin." He was, indeed, a Tertiary and a Socialist who assisted at Mass daily to the day of his death inclusive; for it was while a Jesuit Father celebrated the Holy Sacrifice in a private chapel opening into his bedroom that George A. Helleputte breathed his last.

In the Chamber of Deputies, after the homage paid to the departed colleague by the Socialist President, M. Brunet and by the Prime Minister, M. Theunis, the Catholic Deputy, M. De Bue, speaking in the name of the Catholic members said: "We mourn with parliament and country over the loss that is ours as well; but I ask to be allowed to add the expression of the sorrow of the right wing of this assembly for the loss of so grand a Christian, whose whole life was an apostolate, and one of unusual activity. The thought of it prompts our hope that God has already conferred the merited reward upon his faithful servant."

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