

THE INHERITANCE OF JEAN TROUVE

By NEVIL HENSHAW Author of "Aime of the Grand Woods," etc. BOOK TWO.—BAYOU PORTAGE CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED

Thus the year dragged itself out to hot weather and one departure after the other.

This second summer there were but the three of us upon the Toinette, for Le Bossu was unable to join us.

His companionship was the one thing needed to complete Papa Ton's ruin.

It was late in the afternoon, and our day's work done, Toinette and I had gone down to the landing.

They got Papa Ton to the hut and into his bunk, where he lay upon his back, panting in great strangled gasps that tore the very soul of him.

Thus, with two travelers to look out for, we kept watch both up and down-stream.

For the first time in many months we had found a rift in the dark clouds of the future.

"Come, Jean," said Toinette finally. "Why twist our heads off in trying to look both ways at once? Let us make a game of it. I will look up and you will look down, and the first to see boat or launch will be the winner."

"Bring help. There has been an accident."

By now the pirogue had shot alongside, and the partners had seized upon its occupant.

"Well?" they questioned. "It is your two from here—Laval and Valsan," panted the man.

"They were blind with drink. From what I heard the engine would not start, and Valsan went forward for gasoline with which to prime it.

"He is bad," he muttered. "Up there at the tank it was like a wall of flame. Not being himself he sought to drown his troubles in drink."

"You had better be inside," said he. "But then the boats had come, and it was too late to go."

CHAPTER XII. PAPA TON SETS FORTH AU LARGE

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"It is no use," he said. "I am—through. Leave me with my own."

"No," he struggled. "No—tears. It is best—this way. I was going—down. I—could not—stop."

"A pause, and he added, 'I—have seen—those old—half-dead—men binned up—before—the—coffee-house. I—escape—that—at—all—events.'"

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