

grandfather placing himself between me and the rest of his family and meeting my gaze with angry stare.

"Henri North," he said, hoarsely, "the bans have b'en forbid! It is spoken!"

"What!" I cried. "You're—you're joking."

"Prenez garde!" retorted the old man. "It is spoken. The bans have b'en forbid!"

"But—"

"It is spoken."

I TRIED to catch a sign from Alede, or from the grandmother. Here at least obedience was absolute. I mounted the horse and rode slowly back to the house of the cure. I roused him and bluntly stated what had happened.

"I want Alede," I said. "And that is all there is to it. Now, what's happened against it?"

"M'sieu—Teet 'Om came back to-day."

"But what has Teet 'Om got to do with it? Who is he?" I shouted.

"Teet 'Om is back," he repeated.

That was all he would say.

I mounted again and rode to the house of a store-keeper who sometimes had a room for paying guests. He took me in and watered the horse.

Maybe you think I am telling you merely an ordinary love story. Maybe you think Alede Robitaille is a mere story-book heroine. Maybe you think I am just sentimental. The men in our battery don't call me sentimental. When other men I used to know at school and at college were reading novels I was playing football, and when they had got jobs in offices I was running a chain with a surveying party out in the foothills. When I say I was in love with Alede Robitaille I don't mean what other people mean any more than I do when I say she was beautiful. Do you know what it feels like to be so thirsty that you get to figuring on licking the dew off the rocks when night would come on? And then did you come suddenly upon a pool of clear cold water, water so beautiful that you just had to stand and look at it before drinking?

That was Alede. A pool of water in a desert. A gentle, cool wind in a sweltering afternoon. A tinkle of sleigh bells coming down the concession line on a crisp, still night. Never mind her hair or her eyes or her complexion or the way her voice sounded—like a queer kind of music. I was bound I was going to marry Alede Robitaille. I swore I would find who Teet 'Om was—and break his head if necessary. I took, that night, vow after vow upon my soul—anything to cool my temper. In the morning came the cure and old man Robitaille. They addressed me politely and formally, the cure doing the main talking for the two.

"It has been t'ought for the bes'," lisped the white-haired priest. "That there should be no marriages between the people of the one race and the people of the other race. You are an English-Canadian. The young lady is of the French-Canadian—"

"Has my father been putting this stuff into your heads?" I demanded, struck by a sudden familiar note in the wording of the argument.

They said "No" in a puzzled way, but went on to explain, with much politeness, that they were sorry an injustice had been done to me in allowing me to hope that the marriage with Alede might be carried through. But it was unwise—indiscreet.

"But the young lady? Hasn't she any say?" I demanded.

"She is an obedient daughter."

"Obedient be damned!" I shouted. "I know what it is. I saw friend Teet 'Om riding off last night. It's Teet 'Om that's mixed up in this thing and I'm going to stick till I settle with him."

"Teet 'Om," they echoed, in unison. "But—but m'sieu—"

"That's all right," I interrupted. "You don't need to bother explaining. I'll get all the information I need."

AND I could see by their faces that the name Teet 'Om had told on them. The shadow I had seen riding away from the ring of lantern light in the road had been the cause of my troubles.

I rode back to Valcartier and I went straight to my C. O.

"Well," he said, sharply, as I clicked heels and saluted.

"Colonel," I said, "I need a week's leave."

"You NEED a week's leave!"

"I'm getting married, sir."

"Married?"

"May I have the leave, sir?"

"By gad, you're in a hurry, and you don't look overly pleased about it, either. Mm! Her parents object?"

I flushed. How the devil did he know that?



Ottawa loses the Princess Pat and gets in exchange these four young ladies, daughters of the Duke of Devonshire. Their shadows will never grow less. And when they leave Canada they will all be good Canadians, even though they never come back again.

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"Hope the lady herself is willing," he went on. "For I can see by your eye you intend to take her."

"I shall win out, sir. Do I get the leave?"

"Yes."

## II.

IN the village of Pont Bleu no one would say who Teet 'Om might be. Alede Robitaille was kept in the gloomy interior of the toll-house. I enquired in two other villages, one on the west and one on the east of Pont Bleu, and learned nothing of the stranger I sought.

"Teet 'OM," echoed one villager, to whom I managed to make myself understood. "Why—is m'sieu certain that such is the name? Is that the name which is correct?"

"It is the only name I have been given," I replied. "I had no intention of telling him the circumstances of my quest. 'But why do you ask?'"

"Because, m'sieu," the villager replied, "I have the idea maybe what you t'ink is hees name is only hees nick-name—eh? You see, m'sieu, when a mother calls her son in Quebec she often names him for the moment—Petit Homme—Teet 'Om—Little Man! Does m'sieu not understand? And sometimes the pet name—"

"Oh, the deuce!" I said, and rode off. I did not mean to hurt his feelings, but he had shown me the difficulty of my task in a light stronger than I could

stomach. I rode off once more along the road to Pont Bleu.

Now as I followed the road it brought me presently into the hollow by the cedar swamp once more, the place where I had smelled the wild briar not so many nights before. The road was soft here and the friendly sound of my horse's feet was suddenly missing. At the same time I heard a rider coming from behind. Just why I cannot say, but I slowed Napoleon to a walk, and waited for the other man to pass.

Presently his horse, too, struck the soft road, and the only sound was the creaking of saddle leather and the occasional snort of his animal coming up behind me.

Then a man's voice, that somehow made me think at once of Alede Robitaille, so pleasant was it to the ear:

"Bon soir, m'sieu!"

"Night!" I retorted.

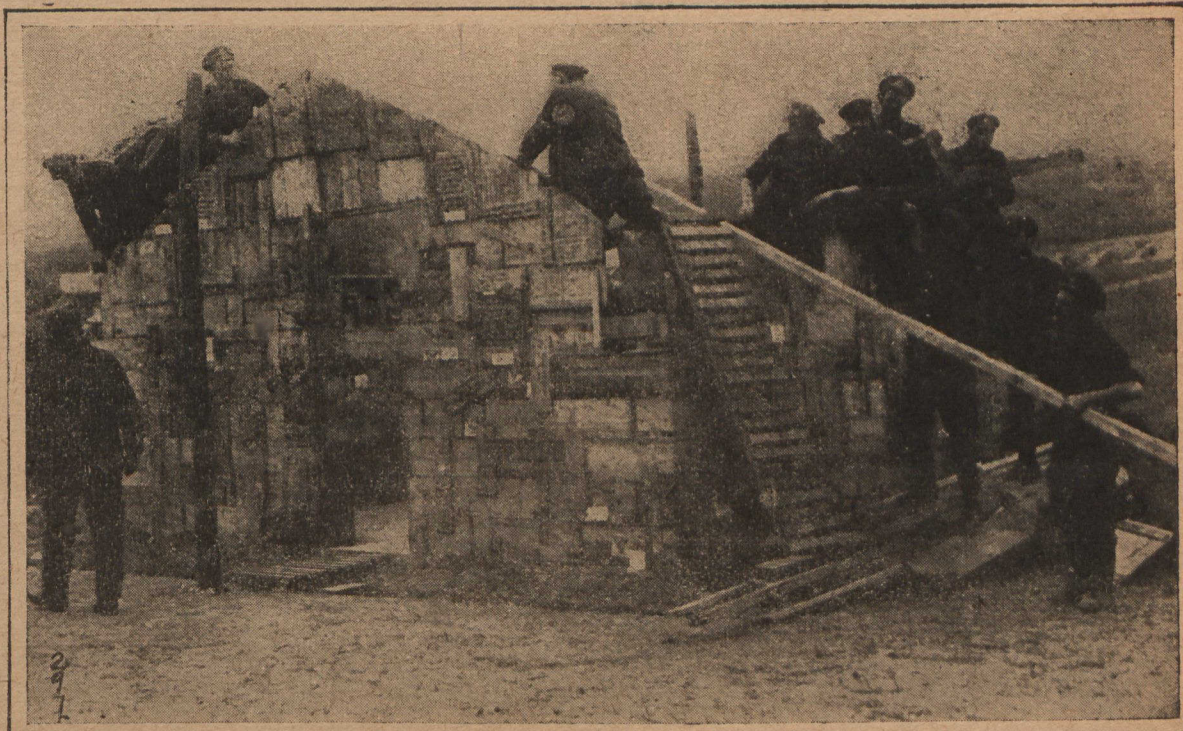
His horse slackened its pace as though it wished to keep the company of Napoleon.

"A good spot for a canter!" I said, meaning it as a hint for him to leave me to myself.

"I will race m'sieu to the end of the swamp," said the suave voice.

I turned to look at him. He was a lieutenant, like myself, in uniform, but if he was an inch high he was six feet four, and if he weighed a pound he

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This is the house that Jack built on the Western front. Winter quarters cunningly contrived out of petrol tins. "I say, Bill, wot 'o? Ankey-pankey it is." "Strike me pink, Jack, if it ain't as good as any Canadian beaver could build."