

Fournier, what lives up de hill. I stop in that night an' leave it for him, and I think no more about it. But three day' after I find another; and again it belongs not to me. This time it's for Emilie Dupont. Emilie, she's old fuss-cat; so this time I take it back to Marcelite herself.

"Who's this?" Marcelite say, when I come in. She stare at me, she peer sharp. 'Michél? Louis? Raoul? Why are there so many shadows in this room? what ails this lamp, that I cannot see?"

"Me, I could tell her. But the words, they choke me. The lamp burns clear; and there is but one shadow in that room. And that lies black across the tired eyes.

"In a little while, what we feared most is come. No matter how bright the day, how white the sun upon the snow, it is all night for Marcelite.

"When M'sieu le Commandant hears he bring down the Fort surgeon, to see if he can help. They go away without one word. Then Madame comes to me, and the tears stream down her face like rain.

"Octave, they can do nothing," she say. 'Marcelite is 'most seventy, but she's young woman yet in her body. And to think she must live on, none may say how long—blind! For Monsieur le Surgeon has said it. And it must be so."

"Then I feel the anger burn in me, hot and quick.

"So speaks Monsieur le Surgeon, hein? I say. 'Now, Madame, hear me. Monsieur le Surgeon is both great and wise; but in the city there may be others, greater and wiser still. All my life Marcelite has been as my mother, though there's not ten years between us. Now I shall be as son to her. Tomorrow I take her to the city. And not till the greatest of them all shall refuse me will I yield my hope."

"Oh, Octave, it is no use!" Madame say. "And then, think! It is only the one week till Christmas! Would you keep her from home upon that day? And how can we believe it Christmas without her here?"

"I not say back one word. It is no use. But my mind is set; and for all Madame can cry and argue, for all Marcelite's amaze, I will have my way.

"Bien, it was the hard journey, down the coast, in all that bitter cold. We cross the frozen Strait in Jawny's sledge; but then we must go sixty mile' by wagon to get to the railroad; an' when at last we reach the city I know I'm fool, and worse than fool, to run that risk. That city, so big, so black, so terrible! And Marcelite, she's so worn, so tired, it seems like she can't take one step more.

"But at last we find our way to the hospital. And there it is more like home, for it's still and clean, and they're all patient with me, and to Marcelite they are most kind. Tomorrow, they say, the great doctors will be there. Then they will look at her eyes. We have nothing to do but wait.

"And so we waited.

"They also are good to her, those wise men, when the time comes. One is old, old, white as Père Antoine, with the kind eyes, and the voice that soothes. Another is maybe sixty, like me, and very slow, and says little. The third is young, on'y boy, no older than my Jean, with the big body, straight as a young tree, and the dark face, strong and grave, like it's hewed from stone. After they've looked at her, ver' careful, I took Marcelite back to de ward; an' then—

"Madame, that was the first time, I know—and the last time, I pray—that a Troyez has made himself flat-footed, a sneak. But—

"I perceive that by their door stands a high screen of leather. And la petite fenêtre above—transom, not so?—is wide open. And before I can command them to pause my legs carry me straight behind that screen.

"The oldest one, he speak first. And his voice is tender as the voice of Père Antoine himself.

"Hopeless, of course," he say. "Only a miracle could restore her sight. With her years there is no chance."

"No possibility," said the other,

with his slow-thinking speech. "And she has the face of an angel."

"Quite so," says another voice, *bien différent*, strong and deep and clear. "And while she has not even the fighting chance, I shall take the risk without it. Nothing but a miracle will save her sight. True. But for such a woman as she a miracle might be done. She's one in a thousand. I can't give her up. You'll both stand by me, I know. So I'll count on you tomorrow, Doctor Girard. And you, too, Stevens."

"Then those others they both talk at once.

"It is too great a risk, MacDon-

ald."

"We cannot countenance this. No reputable surgeon could."

"And think, if you should try, yet not succeed—"

"It shall succeed!" His voice comes down like a shut fist. "We'll not discuss it further, gentlemen. Will nine o'clock be convenient? Thank you. I knew that I could depend upon you both. I go now to make arrangements. Good-morning."

"And just then, Madame, it seems to me *expédient* that I depart too.

It all happened as he commands. Even a block-head like me can *comprend* that. That will of his is as the east wind in the spring. He chose the nurses, he ordered medicines, he demanded the best room in the whole hospital for her, with the big windows, and flowers and pictures, like a palace. I tell him she stay in de ward; the best I kin do, I ain't got money for this magnificence. He shrug those big shoulders an' grin at me.

"She's my patient now, M'sieu," he says. "It is up to me to make her comfortable. When it comes to a settlement—that also will be up to me. And off he goes, whistlin' like he's maybe nine years old and caught his first big fish. Not for one breath is he scared, Madame, of what he undertakes. That's because he's so young. An' the young, they always win, because they ain't got sense enough to be afraid. Me, I have taken my boat out in the teeth of the wind, when I'm young, like him.

"Who is this vantard, who takes upon himself the universe?" I ask the nurse. She look queer, then she laugh, too.

"He is Doctor Roger MacDonald, an' there's no finer surgeon in this country," she say. "He was a great doctor in Edinburgh, but since his people are all dead he's come here. He's Lord MacDonald's son, an' he's pretty bad spoiled, but he's a nice boy, for all that."

"Lord MacDonald's son?" says the other nurse. *Fils adoptif*, I have heard. Lord MacDonald and his wife were great travelers; and somewhere on their journeys they saw him, and, being childless, loved him and desired him. He is of good blood, they say; that is very like. But he is all too hot-headed to please me. Hand of iron, will of steel—

"Hand of pity, heart of gold," snaps the other nurse, pretty mad. And the first one won't say no more.

"All this gave me *grand espérance*. But by next morning all my courage was ashes. I dare not stay in the hospital through that awful hour. I go out in those black, roaring streets. I tramp, tramp, all day. When I come back, late night, the nurse tell me Marcelite is living. But nothing more is there to say.

"So the next day, Madame. And the next, the next. Always she lies in some strange sleep; always the nurses watch, silent; always the doctor sits by her bed, his face as cut from the live rock, his hands clinched like he's ready to fight Death. It is like everything is eager to fight for her, even the air, the sunshine. And if just her tired body will do its part she'll be all our Marcelite again. For now the shadow that lay on her eyes is taken away.

"After three days comes the eve of Christmas. And that night, for the first, I dare to hope. The nurses, they smile; the doctor, he touches her wrist, then he pulls himself up straight like a tree, so high that his head mos' touch the ceiling; he grins like a boy. For Marcelite's lips are mov-



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