

ANNETTE.

Continued. He was still, motionless— he could hear nothing, see nothing, for a long, long time. Then he felt a sense of being lifted and jerked. Gradually that chill, icy hand seemed to loosen its grip on his heart. He was feeling warmer now. His senses were returning. He wanted to sleep. Suddenly he came to himself, but the effort of opening his eyes seemed too much. He was not cold now, that was all nothing else mattered. He heard, as in a distance a man's voice saying, 'He'll come out, all right now, mate, he must have nourishment and plenty of heat. I'm going to bed now. Bonne nuit, cherie.'

'Bonne nuit,' came the answer in a sweet, musical voice, that seemed very near him. It startled him. He opened his eyes slowly and with great effort, and looked up into the face bent close to his. He could not distinguish in the dim light cast by the shaded lamp in the corner, but that voice, he knew that, he had heard that before. He was too exhausted to try to think where. He closed his eyes wearily and permitted his head to fall back gently. The effort had been too much for him.

After what seemed to him to be a very long time he again felt his head raised, and something warm, very warm, was passed to his lips. He looked up suddenly and found himself sitting on a couch, supported in an upright position by a young girl, with very black lustrous eyes, who was endeavoring with one hand to hold him up and with the other to keep a bowl of hot broth to his lips. He looked up at her, into those big, black eyes.

'Miss Lang?' he exclaimed. 'Hush,' she whispered, 'don't let them hear you.'

He straightened himself. 'Who?' he asked. 'My uncle Dubawnt,' she whispered, bending close to him. 'He has sworn to kill the first man from the lumber camp that he meets. I did not know you were the Mr. Bartlett of the lumber company till they brought you in. They think you are a trawler. Please don't let them know who you are, for they will surely kill you.'

'Dubawnt kill me?' he exclaimed. 'Why kill me? I have come up here to adjust that claim of his. Are there really as bad as that? How is it that you are here? You don't mean to tell me that Dubawnt is your uncle?'

These and a great many other questions followed in rapid succession. For fully an hour they sat there talking, each as surprised as the other at their unexpected and strange meeting. Their conversation was suddenly disturbed by the deep, solemn boom of the clock in the corner which announced that it was midnight.

'You must sleep now,' she whispered. 'It is getting late.' She put her arm across his shoulder and helped him to a reclining posture.

'Miss Lang,' he whispered. 'Do you think I will be able to go out to the camp tomorrow?'

She smiled. 'It is tomorrow now; why is it nearly one o'clock? He put out his hand to detain her.

'Today, I mean,' she smiled. 'When it gets daylight.'

'It's snowing too hard,' she answered, 'you must not be caught in any more blizzards. I shudder when I think what might happen if uncle had not gone out when he heard your cries yesterday. At first he thought it was one of the men from the camp or a bear, the police was trying to get him out in order to arrest him, but though he is big as a giant, he cannot see any one suffer, his heart is as big as himself—and bigger,' she added, giving the pillow a final pat.

'You just don't let him know who you are for a while and perhaps everything will turn out all right. Good night,' she said, then suddenly, 'Ah, I forgot that you speak French. Bonne nuit, monsieur, et bon sommeil.'

'Bonne nuit.' She was about to leave him. 'Miss Lang,' he called. She returned. He reached out and took her hand. He looked at her abstractedly for some minutes, then he said: 'Quand vous priez, vous priez aussi pour moi, n'est-ce pas?'

She looked down at him, and there might have been a gleam of pity in those eyes. 'Oui, monsieur.'

'Je vous remercie,' he said, pressing her hand, 'et priez pour moi.'

Next morning he awoke with a start, having been dreaming about blizzards, logs, giants and a number of other things all in one. He was feeling much better, and thought that if the weather permitted he could make the camp without any trouble. However, he would have liked to adjust that matter with Dubawnt before leaving his house; if for no other reason, to put Miss Lang's mind at rest. He was wondering how this could be done when he was aroused by a heavy foot fall, and a man, a moaning over six feet and proportionally broad, entered the room.

'Bon matin, monsieur,' was his greeting in a loud voice. 'Comment vous portez-vous? Mait, I forgot you do not speak French. How are you feeling?'

Bartlett assured him that he felt very good, and also that he spoke

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French, and after a short conversation, that he had been in France but a short time before, and one thing led to another, so that by the time breakfast was ready they were deeply engrossed in conversation. Mr. Bartlett's first impression of the man was that he was a man of deep sympathy. It was not till one of the men made mention of the fact that they had thought perhaps he had come from the camp that he had an opportunity to see the other side of Dubawnt's nature. His features immediately hardened, he grew excited, words could not come fast enough for him to express what he thought of their thievery.

Bartlett listened for some time to invectives poured on the head of the superintendent, and anyone who had anything to do with a corporation who would willingly and knowingly take from a man the property that represented all the savings of a lifetime, and then see the man practically starve, were it not for the fact that their neighbors took care that they were well provided for.

'But look here,' Bartlett broke in, assuring Miss Lang with a look that he would not prolong the conversation on that subject. 'Is it not possible that there is a misunderstanding somewhere? Probably the people in New York do not know of the case at all.'

Dubawnt interrupted. He seemed to be getting a trifle suspicious. 'Why, they say over there,' he indicated the direction of the camp, 'that they have sent down to New York to get their people to bring the Canadian police on me. But I tell you, sir, he brought his fist down on the table. "They got me dead, see dead, the first one of them I see die. They have stolen my land, they have killed my son. The law does nothing to them. But me! I am an outlaw. My sons, they are outlaws, and sir, if they find you here talking to us, you too are an outlaw. Is it right? Is that what the law is for?'

Bartlett had his answer ready, but seeing the look of fear in the eyes that were fixed on him apparently from the other side of the table, he let it die on his lips.

'Uncle,' asked the owner of those eyes, 'don't you think Mr. William would be safer at the camp?'

'I didn't know your name was William,' said Dubawnt.

'It is,' answered Bartlett.

'Well, Mr. William, I do think you would be safer at the camp, though you would not be in such good, well-to-do company. However, you'll have to stay here for the remainder of the day. The storm is too heavy now to venture out, and after all, I think you are safe here; for if we cannot get out, neither can they get in.'

The greater part of the day was spent in talking, reading (for the average Northwestern lumberman is, as a rule more educated than we are inclined to think), and in smoking bid tobacco. The subject of the lumber deal was rejected every little while, and more than once Bartlett was about to explain to them who he was and what was his purpose in coming from New York, but the scowls and threats of the three giants made him realize that he would not stand a show with them, although something of an athlete, and he did not fancy for a moment having the throat of killing the first man from the lumber company that they should meet executed upon him. Another time he might have taken the chance, but now that he had met and grown to like Miss Lang somewhat differently than he liked even his friends, life held something for him which it had not held before.

Finally when the evening drew on, they all knelt about the statue of the Madonna, as is the custom in all the Catholic homes of Canada, for the evening prayer. There was Dubawnt, his two sons and Miss Lang, Bartlett having been forced to retire early in the afternoon. The prayers were said in French, Dubawnt leading. There were voices raised through the small house.

'Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.'

'Uncle, what ever made you say you would kill the first man from the lumber company that you met?'

He looked at her kindly. 'I was mad with grief, child,' he answered.

'Oh, you wicked uncle,' she said, 'teasingly.' 'Now, Dubawnt,' she asked, 'if Mr. Bartlett himself hap-

paused suddenly, their faces hard as Miss Lang's voice, entirely feminine, but with a unmistakable determination, all was continued.

'Annette,' interrupted the elder Dubawnt. She paused. 'Yes, uncle,' she said, a touch of inquiry in her tone.

'Annette don't say that. Don't call down the curse of God upon us.'

'But uncle, I forgive those who trespass against us.'

'You forgive the murderers of my son! You forgive the thieves who have stolen my property, my land, who have left me penniless, made me an outlaw! You forgive them?'

There was a moment of deadly silence. Dubawnt, his face white with hate, was staring a most strangely at the girl.

'Do you forgive them?' he finally asked.

The girl's face and voice was full of sweetness. A sweetness born in Heaven. 'Uncle,' she asked, with determination, 'do you remember how, when Christ was dying on the cross, He raised his eyes to Heaven and prayed for his murderers?'

'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they say.' He was God. He forgives His murderers. Should we not forgive our enemies also? She paused. Dubawnt made no reply.

'Uncle, can you forgive them? 'Unless you forgive every man his brother from his heart, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'

'Annette,' said Dubawnt, 'leave the room.'

She rose and without reply withdrew from the room and went directly to her own.

Stolidly the three men repeated the prayer. After the words, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' they passed. They understood the words that followed too well to repeat them unless they forgave their enemies, and yet they had not the moral courage to forgive. Then they continued: 'and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.'

It seemed to Annette, who could hear them from her room, that she had never before realized the full meaning of those words. The night passed slowly for her. She could not sleep. She thought of what would be Bartlett's fate should they discover his identity, and she felt sure that he would declare himself shortly; they put the question directly to him. Four star hours passed, each longer than the other. She thought of a uncle, her cousin, of their hate, their thirst for revenge, and finally unable to bear it any longer, buried her face in the pillow and gave vent to the tears that were straggling to her eyes. For a long time, she wept silently then came the relief of sleep.

She was awakened in the morning by the big clock, which had just finished striking six, and hastily dressing, she left the room and gently knocked at the door beyond which Bartlett lay. 'Do you wish anything?' she whispered.

'I would like a little water,' he answered.

Hastily filling the glass she brought it to him.

'The fever seemed to be lifting up a trifle now,' he said in answer to her inquiry as to how he felt.

She related to him the event of the preceding night, of how her uncle had renewed his threat, and reprimanded her.

Bartlett became very angry, and feeling that he was the cause of Dubawnt's anger, wanted to go to him at once and endeavor him in regard to the injustice of the lumber company, but she restrained him.

'Mr. Bartlett,' she pleaded, 'be patient. In a day or two you can get out of the camp, and then you can send uncle the money and explain how your superintendent had kept the matter from you, and I am sure he will understand. Suppose you should tell him and in a angry impulse he would kill you; think of what it would mean to me! She buried her face in her hands.

'Come, come,' he said gently; 'I won't tell him.'

She heard her anle moving about the living room and stirring the fire. Then there was several moments of silence.

'Excuse me, Mr. Bartlett,' she said, and leaving him she went out to the other room, where she saw her uncle seated on a long bench before the fireplace, his head in his hands, looking intently at the burning logs. He did not realize that he was not alone till she came over and seated herself beside him.

He started and looked up at her, then putting his arm about her neck, and bending over kissed her gently on the cheek.

'Annette,' he said, 'I'm sorry I spoke to you that way last night. I forgive them, child. They have done me a great injustice, but I forgive them. All night I was thinking of what you had said. I could not sleep I forgive them entirely.'

'Oh, uncle, I'm so glad,' she said, and throwing her arms about his neck she kissed him.

She took his big hand between her dainty fingers, and looking up into his eyes, asked:

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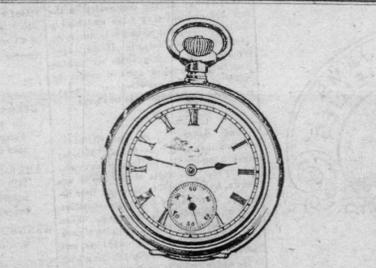
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