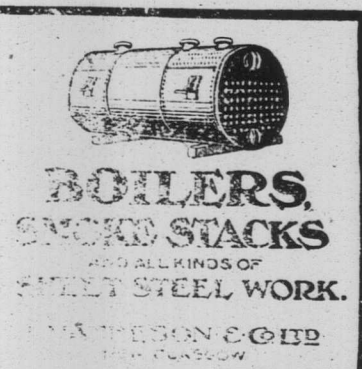


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## Notice.

Notice is hereby given that The Restigouche Boom Company has deposited in the Office of the Minister of Public Works, Ottawa, a Plan of their Booms and description of the site thereof in the Restigouche River; and that duplicates of the said Plan and description have been deposited in the Office of the Registrar of Deeds in and for the County of Restigouche in the Province of New Brunswick, and in the Office of the Registrar of Deeds in and for the Second Registration Division of the County of Bonaventure in the Province of Quebec.

And further take notice that at the expiration of one month from the date of the first publication of this Notice, application will be made to the Governor in Council for approval of said Plan and Site.

Dated this 1st day of June, A. D., 1907.

John McAlister,  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Restigouche Boom Co

36 5

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By HENRY SETON MERRIMAN  
Author of "The Sowers," "Roder's Career," "From One Generation to Another," Etc.

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Jack Meredith gave her the lead before long.

"Millicent," he said without a vestige of embarrassment, "has consented to be openly engaged now."

Lady Cantourne nodded comprehensively.

"I think she is very wise," she said. "I know she is very wise," she added, turning and laying her hand on Jack's arm. The two phrases had quite a different meaning. "She will have a good husband."

"So you can tell everybody now," chimed in Millicent in her silvery way.

Lady Cantourne was not very communicative during that refined little tea a tris, but she listened smilingly to Jack's optimistic views and Millicent's somewhat valueless comments.

"I am certain," said Millicent, at length boldly attacking the question that was in all their minds, "that Sir John will be all right now. Of course, it is only natural that he should not like Jack to—to get engaged yet. Especially before, when it would have made a difference to him in money, I mean. But now that Jack is independent—you know, auntie, that Jack is richer than Sir John."

Lady Cantourne was rather thoughtful at that moment. She could not help coming back and back to Sir John. "Of course," she said to Jack, "we must let your father know at once. The news must not reach him from an outside source."

"I will write and tell him," said Jack quietly.

Even minerals and lovers must bow to necessities, and Jack Meredith was not the man to outstay his welcome.

He saw Lady Cantourne glance at the clock. Clever as she was, she could not do it without being seen by him.

So he took his leave, and Millicent went to the head of the stairs with him.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF late Sir John had felt a singular desire to sit down whenever opportunity should offer, but he had always been found standing on the hearth rug by the butler, and, hard old aristocrat that he was, he would not yield to the somewhat angular blandishments of the stiff backed chair.

He stood for a few moments with his back to the smouldering fire, and, being quite alone, he perhaps forgot to stiffen his neck, for his head drooped, his lips were unsteady; he was a very old man.

A few minutes later, when he strode into the dining room, where butler and footman awaited him, he was erect, imperturbable, impenetrable.

At dinner it was evident that his keen brain was hard at work. He forgot one or two of the formalities which were religiously observed at that solitary table. He hastened over his wine, and then he went to the library. There he wrote a telegram, slowly, in his firm, unerring hand.

It was addressed to Gordon, Loango, and the gist of it was—"Wire whereabouts of Oscar—when he may be expected home."

At half past 8 Jack arrived. Sir John was awaiting him in the library, sitting in his high backed chair, so carefully dressed as for a great reception.

He rose when his son entered the room and they shook hands. There was a certain air of concentration about both, as if they each intended to

say more than they had ever said before. The coffee was duly brought. This was a revival of an old custom. In bygone days Jack had frequently come in thus and they had taken coffee before going together in Sir John's carriage to one of the great social functions at which their presence was almost a necessity. Jack had always poured out the coffee—tonight he did not offer to do so.

"I came," he said suddenly, "to give you a piece of news which I am afraid will not be very welcome. Millicent and I have decided to make our engagement known."

"You know," said Sir John gravely, "that I am not much given to altering my opinions. I do not say that they are of any value; but, such as they are, I usually hold to them. When you did me the honor of mentioning this matter to me last year, I gave you my opinion."

"And it has in no way altered?"

"In no way. I have found no reason to alter it."

"Will you, at all events, give me your reasons?" he asked. "I am not a child."

"I think," he said, "that it would be advisable not to ask them."

"I should like to know why you object to my marrying Millicent," persisted Jack.

"Simply because I know a bad woman when I see her," retorted Sir John deliberately.

"I am sorry you have said that," said the son.

"Just," continued the father, "as I know a good one."

He paused, and they were both thinking of the same woman, Jocelyn Gordon.

Sir John had his say about Millicent Chyne, and his son knew that that was the last word. She was a bad woman. From that point he would never move.

There was a long silence, while the two men sat side by side gazing into the fire.

"I am getting too old to indulge in the luxury of pride," said the father at length. "I will attend your marriage. I will smile and say pretty things to the bridesmaids. Before the world I will consider under the condition that the ceremony does not take place before two months from this date."

"I agree to that," put in Jack.

Sir John rose and stood on the hearth rug, looking down from his great height upon his son.

"But," he continued, "between us let it be understood that I move in no degree from my original position. I object to Millicent Chyne as your wife. But I bow to the force of circumstances. I admit that you have a perfect right to marry whom you choose—in two months' time."

So Jack took his leave.

"In two months' time," repeated Sir John, when he was alone, with one of his twisted, cynical smiles—"in two months' time—qui vivra vera."

There are some places in the world where a curse seems to brood in the atmosphere. Masala was one of these. Perhaps these places are accursed by the deeds that have been done there. Who can tell?

Could the trees—the two gigantic elms that stood by the river's edge—could these have spoken, they might perhaps have told the tale of this little inland station in that country where, as the founder of the hamlet was in the

habit of saying, no one knows what is going on.

All went well with the retreating column until they were almost in sight of Masala, when the flotilla was attacked by no less than three hippopotamuses. One canoe was sunk and four others were so badly damaged that they could not be kept afloat with their proper complement of men. There was nothing for it but to establish a camp at Masala and wait there until the builders had repaired the damaged canoes.

The walls of Durnovo's house were still standing, and here Guy Oscar established himself with as much comfort as circumstances allowed. He caused a temporary roof of palm leaves to be laid on the charred beams, and within the principal room, the very room where the three organizers of the great simlacine scheme had first laid their plans, he set up his simple camp furniture.

Oscar was too great a traveler, too experienced a wanderer, to be put out of temper by this enforced rest. The men had worked very well hitherto. It had, in its way, been a great feat of generalship, this leading through a wild country of men unprepared for travel, scantily provisioned, disorganized by recent events. No accident had happened, no serious delay had been incurred, although the rate of progress had necessarily been very slow. Nearly six weeks had elapsed since Oscar with his little following had turned their backs forever on the simlacine plateau. But now the period of acute danger had passed away. They had almost reached civilization. Oscar was content.

When Oscar was content he smoked a slower pipe than usual, watching each cloud of smoke vanish into thin air. He was smoking very slowly this third evening of their encampment at Masala. There had been heavy rain during the day, and the whole lifeless forest was dripping with a continuous, ceaseless clatter of heavy drops on the foliage, with an amaginated sound like a widespread whisper.

Oscar was sitting in the windowless room without a light, for a light only attracted a myriad of heavy winged moths. He was seated before the long French window, which, since the ash had gone, had been used as a door. Before him in the glimmering light of the mystic Southern Cross the great river crept unctuously, silently to the sea. It seemed to be stealing away unperceptibly while the forest watched it. In its surface the reflection of the great stars of the southern hemisphere ran into little streaks of silver, shimmering away in darkness.

All sound of human life was still. The natives were asleep. In the next room Joseph in his hammock was just on the barrier between the waking and the sleeping life, as soldiers learn to be. Oscar would not have needed to raise his voice to call him to his side.

The leader of this hurried retreat had been through there for two hours. The slimy moving surface of the river had entered into his brain; the restless silence of the African forest alone kept him awake. He hardly realized that the sound momentarily gaining strength within his ears was that of a paddle—a single, weakly irregular paddle. It was not a sound to wake a sleeping man. It came so slowly, so gently through the whisper of the dripping leaves that it would enter into his slumbers and make itself part of them.

Guy Oscar only realized the meaning of that sound when a black shadow crept on to the smooth evenness of the river's breast. Oscar was eminently a man of action. In a moment he was on his feet and in the darkness of the room there was the gleam of a rifle barrel. He came back to the window—watching.

He saw the canoe approach the bank. He heard the thud of the paddle as it was thrown upon the ground. In the gloom, to which his eyes were accustomed, he saw a man step from the boat to the shore and the canoe up. The silent midnight visitor then turned and walked up toward the house. There was something familiar in the gait—the legs were slightly bowed. The man was walking with great difficulty, staggering a little at each step. He seemed to be in great pain.

Guy Oscar laid aside the rifle. He stopped and looked to the open window.

"Is that you, Durnovo?" he said, without raising his voice.

"Yes," replied the other. His voice was muffled as if his tongue were swollen, and there was a startling break in it.

Oscar stepped aside and Durnovo passed into his own house.

"Got a light?" he said in the same muffled way.

In the next room Joseph could be heard striking a match, and a moment later he entered the room, throwing a flood of light before him.

"Good God!" cried Oscar. He stepped back as if he had been struck, with his hand shielding his eyes.

"Save us!" ejaculated Joseph in the same breath.

The thing that stood there, sickening their gaze, was not a human being at all. Take a man's eyelids away, leaving the round balls staring, blood streaked; cut away his lips, leaving the grinning teeth and red gums; shear off his ears—that which is left is not a man at all. This had been done to Victor Durnovo. Truly the vengeance of man is crueler than the vengeance of God!

Could he have seen himself, Victor Durnovo would never have shown that face, or what remained of it, to a human being. He could only have killed himself. Who can tell what cruelties had been paid for, piece by piece, in this loathsome mutilation? The slaves had wreaked their terrible vengeance; but the greatest, the deepest, the most inhuman cruelty was in letting him go.

"They've made a pretty mess of me,"

said Durnovo, in a sickening, staccato voice, and he stood there with a terrible caricature of a grin.

Joseph set down the lamp with a groan and went back into the dark room beyond, where he cast himself upon the ground and buried his face in his hands.

"O Lord!" he muttered. "O God in heaven, kill it, kill it!"

Guy Oscar never attempted to run away from it. He stood slowly gulping



"Good God!" cried Oscar.

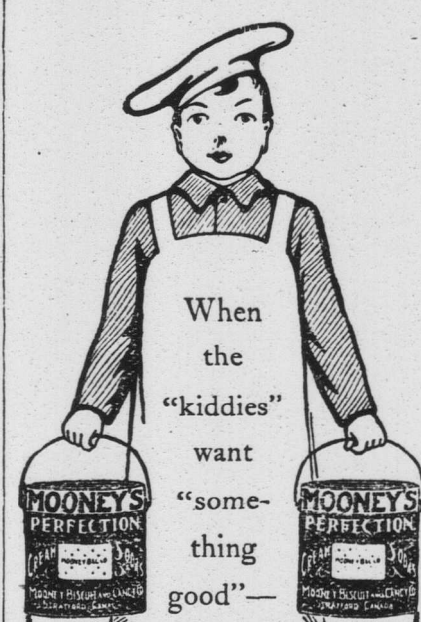
ing down his nauseating horror. His teeth were clenched; his face, through the sunburn, livid; the blue of his eyes seemed to have faded into an ashen gray. The sight he was looking on would have sent three men out of five into gibbering idiocy.

Then at last he moved forward. With averted eyes he took Durnovo by the arm.

"Come," he said, "lie down upon my bed. I will try to help you. Can you take some food?"

Durnovo threw himself down heavily on the bed. There was a punishment sufficient to expiate all his sins in the effort he saw that Guy Oscar had had to make before he touched him. He turned his face away.

(To be continued.)



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