

THE INHERITANCE OF JEAN TROUVE

By NEVIL HENSHAW
Author of Alline of the Grand Woods, etc.
BOOK TWO—BAYOU PORTAGE
CHAPTER XV.

I MOVE ON
We returned to the Lasalles' where Madame Alcide, refusing all offers of rest and refreshment, entered immediately upon a final adjustment of Papa Ton's affairs.

"I thank you, Madame, but I seldom tire myself," said she in reply to Tante Odile's protestations. "As for food, I have neither the time nor the heart for it just now. It is necessary that I be home tonight, and there is much to attend to. With your permission, and with the aid of yourself and the rest, I will make my arrangements."

Accordingly, once Madame Alcide was seated in the best of the few ancient chairs, the others gathered about her, Tante Odile, Father Lasalle, Le Bossu, the cure and Doctor Poussard. I sat with Toinette upon one of the bunks, feeling very much as a prisoner must feel who awaits the findings of a jury. It seemed a wholly unnecessary nuisance, this eternal settling of one's future. Why, I wondered, did they not let Toinette and me go on as before? We would miss Papa Ton terribly, but except for this we could manage as well as ever.

Some such thought must have troubled Toinette, for suddenly her hand crept into mine. "You will not leave me, Jean? You will not let them take me away," she begged.

"I do not wish to be unkind," she began, "On the other hand this is a matter deserving of some thought. I had planned to take my niece into my home. If this boy comes with her, I must arrange all over again."

"That depends upon what you mean by, of value, Madame," he replied. "He leaves a daughter and a boat, both of the name of Toinette. There is also the hut, but that must belong to the first one who cares to claim it. We know nothing of rent upon the marsh."

"I am sorry, Madame, but I can not go with you," said she. "I must be here to look after Jean." Madame Alcide received this announcement with a composure wholly uncomplimentary to Bayou Portage. One could see that, since arriving at the camp, she was prepared for anything.

"You must call me, Tante Aurore, not Madame, Toinette," she corrected. "As for you staying here with Jean, it is out of the question. It would not be right or proper, as Pere Parmentier will tell you."

"Most certainly not," agreed the cure. "And why is it not right that Jean and I should keep on as before?" questioned Toinette. "This proved too much for Madame Alcide's powers of endurance. Evidently she had remembered that, after all, Toinette was a Laval.

will understand. But we are wasting time. You will go home with me, and there is an end of the matter." Before replying Toinette gazed appealingly at Le Bossu. The little man's face was sad, but his nod was unmistakable.

"Bien," gave in Toinette. "I will go then. But Jean must go with me." "As you wish," temporized Madame Alcide. "I will see to it, once you are settled. It is probable that it can be arranged."

Toinette shook her head. "Jean must go with me," she repeated. "He must go when I go, and he must stay where I stay. Otherwise I will not leave."

Having spoken, Toinette released my hand and returned to the bank where she froze at once into her former attitude of stark indifference. There was something so decisive, so wholly final about the action, that Madame Alcide was impressed beyond the power of argument.

"Well?" she questioned a little breathlessly, turning to her advisers. "Pardon, Madame," put in Le Bossu. "It is this way with Toinette. She does not mean to be bad or stubborn. It is only that Jean here has become as a brother to her, and she can not bear to be away from him. It would be kind if you were to satisfy her in this. As for the boy, I, myself, will vouch for him in every respect."

"As he spoke the little man gave me a look that seemed to say, 'Now is the time for them to know who you really are. If, however, this is not your wish, you may count upon my silence.'" There fell a brief pause during which Madame Alcide looked me carefully up and down. Evidently she found nothing to offend her, for when she spoke her tone was one of frank capitulation.

"I do not wish to be unkind," she began, "On the other hand this is a matter deserving of some thought. I had planned to take my niece into my home. If this boy comes with her, I must arrange all over again."

"That depends upon what you mean by, of value, Madame," he replied. "He leaves a daughter and a boat, both of the name of Toinette. There is also the hut, but that must belong to the first one who cares to claim it. We know nothing of rent upon the marsh."

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my feelings of the last few moments. "It is not so hard to leave," she muttered, half to herself. "It is no longer home. It is only a box of boards."

"That was it, and now that I knew, I understood the wisdom of our going. Madame Alcide was right. I told myself. Toinette and I could not have gone on together. There could have been no Bayou Portage for us without Papa Ton."

Reaching Tante Odile's we found the council over and its participants engaged in considering a miraculously discovered pot of coffee. At sight of us Madame Alcide at once set down her cup.

"You are prompt, you two," she declared. "Also yours is a good example to follow. Come, Pere Parmentier. Come, Poussard. Remember the tide."

"At this came a bustle of leaving-taking, during which I was kissed by Tante Odile, soundly smacked upon the back by Father Lasalle, and more or less pulled about by the various children. Also, at the landings, there was a second outburst of farewells in which I said good-bye to every one over again, this time receiving a silent handgrip from the partners, and a long, incoherent blessing from old Valant before Le Bossu called me aside. The little man's eyes were suspiciously bright, and he spoke with a catch in his voice, for he had just taken leave of Toinette."

"Adieu, Jean," he began. "Adieu and good luck." "But, Bossu," I exclaimed, alarmed by his choice of words. "You speak as though I am not to see you again. Will you not come to the woods?"

"Of course," he replied. "But Bois Berard is not Bayou Portage. It is out of my way as it is out of the way of these other friends of yours. You will not see us often."

"Then I will come back," I cried. "I will come back as soon as I can." The little man shook his head.

"No, Jean," said he. "You will not come back, nor will you wish to. You are through with the marsh. You have all that it can give you. It is time to move on. And that is another thing. Here the paths of our lives will separate, going different ways. For me it is the same old round of skins and game. For you—"

He paused while his arms went about me in a final embrace. "But we will see," he finished. "And now you must go since the others are waiting."

that the name on the card was that of a world-famed scientist. A man who had devoted his life to the study of the causes and cures of diseases of children; and yet with all his research and study he could not save the life of the one most dear to him, for three years ago an infection of the spine caused a lameness, which resulted finally in the death of his only son, a lad of seven years.

Only by plunging into his work was he able to fight off the grief which threatened to engulf him. To him there was no God—no hereafter—death ended it all. His one thought and aim in life was to combat that mysterious enemy, that had robbed him and others of their loved ones. Seeing the lame boy in front of him, he wished to help the lad for the sake of that other boy who died.

Ten days later a little boy was in the reception room of the scientist, Dr. Peabody's office. His face bore the shining evidence of having come in vigorous contact with soap and water. His pleasant smile could not hide the nervous shifting of his cap from one hand to the other. At last the door of the private office opened and the uniformed nurse told him to come in. The boy walked over to Dr. Peabody's desk and said, "I'm Jimmie Foley, you told me to come and see you after the Novena and it finished last night."

Dr. Peabody was amazed and exclaimed to the nurse. "Ask Dr. Lombard to come in here please." When his friend entered he said, "Look at this boy, this is the case I spoke of last week! What do you make of it?"

The elderly man looked the boy over critically for a while and then answered, "There is nothing permanent in this. As soon as the excitement wears off the trouble will return."

"Well, I would like to observe this case," said Dr. Peabody in a puzzled voice. "Would you like to be my office boy, Jimmie?"

The prospect of being able to "do something" and help his mother who had done so much for him, made the boy so happy he could hardly speak and the doctor told him he could begin work tomorrow.

It is now more than a year since Jimmie started to work for Dr. Peabody. What a happy short time it seemed, for the Doctor was like a kind father to the lad! The doctor was never able to satisfy himself regarding the boy's mysterious cure though he tried to attribute it to a freak of "nature."

One morning Dr. Peabody told Jimmie that he need not come to the office for a week as he was called to Canada to attend a conference. Jimmie took a medal of Blessed Teresa from his pocket and asked Dr. Peabody to carry it in his pocket. The doctor laughingly asked if it was a better talisman than a rabbit's foot. Noting the disappointed look on the lad's face he promised he would keep it "but of course Jimmie must understand he thought this all nonsense."

On his way home that day Jimmie stopped at the Carmelite convent and asked to have a special novena started that day for his intention, which was that Dr. Peabody might believe in God and then become a Catholic, but to no one, not even his mother, did he dare express this wish.

Nearly a week later the Montreal express was tearing along at almost lightning speed to make up lost time. A severe storm broke over the country the train was passing through and the engineer, ever on the alert, suddenly closed the throttle, but all in vain, for the bridge that spanned the river was torn down by the floods and the cars piled one on the other as they rolled down the embankment to the river below.

At the hospital where the injured were rushed was the unconscious form of a man in whose pocket was found a medal of Blessed Teresa. The nurse believing him to be a Catholic called a priest, who prayed and waited for the return of consciousness. After a while they found the man's name and so Jimmie, reading of the accident, learned that Dr. Peabody was one of the victims. Hurrying into the chapel he prayed long and earnestly for the salvation of a dear friend.

Meanwhile the surgeon at the hospital felt he could not save the right arm of the doctor, but the priest asked him to wait a little longer, hoping that consciousness might return, and as if in answer to a prayer, the sick man's eyes opened and looking around he saw the priest and weakly asked him why he was there. They explained that they had found the medal and thought he was a Catholic.

"No, I do not profess any faith, for I do not believe there is anything beyond the grave," he said. Then, in a little while, he spoke again. "My office boy gave me the medal."

The priest looked at him for a moment, then placed the medal in the palm of the injured arm. To the astonishment of all, the man lifted the arm to see the medal—suddenly the man's face brightened and pressing the medal to his lips he cried out, "I have found God!"

The roses were in bloom and their fragrance flooded the little rustic church where the June sunshine streaming in through a little window above the altar formed a halo around the young priest's head. After Mass the children gathered

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TO BE CONTINUED

HE CAME TO SCOFF

The last rays of a November sun stretched forth their purple beams into the melancholy sky. The spires of the Carmelite convent gleamed and glistened, while on the air stole softly the sounds of the convent bell.

Below, leaning close to the wall near the chapel gate was a crippled lad, whose bright eyes eagerly scanned the faces of the groups of people who had promised to meet him here after his school closed. His deformity attracted the sympathetic interest of a gentleman who was passing by. "Well, my boy, why are you standing here in the cold, and where are all these people going?" he asked in a kindly voice.

"Gosh! Don't you know?" replied the boy, "they're going to the Novena, and so am I when my mother comes. I'm praying for my leg to be cured." "Poor child, do you think that going in there will cure your leg?" asked the man in surprise. "Why not go to a doctor?" "Say, we've been in every specialist in this city in three years. They can't cure me, but I know Blessed Teresa will if I make this Novena in her honor."

As the boy spoke the earnest look that came into his eyes kept the Doctor from making a scornful reply. Instead he said, "Well, when you are better will you come to see me?" Then handing the boy his card he said "Good night" and left him. Little did Jimmy Foley dream