Beyond the Frontier

By RANDALL PARRISH

A Romance of Early Days in the Middle West

SYNOPSIS.

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Adele la Chesnayne, a belle of New France, is among conspirators at her uncle's house. Cassion, the commissaire, has enlisted her Uncle Chevet's aid against La Salle. D'Artigny, La Salle's friend, offers his services as guide to Cassion's party on the journey to the wilderness. The uncle informs Adele that he has betrothed her to Cassion and forbids her to see D'Artigny again. In Quebec Adele visits her friend, Sister Celeste, who brings D'Artigny to her. She tells him her story and he vows to release her from the bargain with Cassion. D'Artigny leaves promising to see her at the dance. Cassion escorts Adele to the hall. She meets the governor, La Barre, and hears him warn the commissaire against D'Artigny. D'Artigny's ticket to the ball has been recalled, but he gains entrance by the window. Adele informs him of the governor's words to Cassion. For her eavesdropping at the ball Adele is ordered by the governor to marry Cassion at once and to accompany him to the Illinois country. He summons Chevet and directs that he attend them on the journey. They leave in the boats, Adele's future depending on the decision of D'Artigny, whom she now knows she loves. Cassion and D'Artigny have words. Uncle Chevet for the first time hears that his niece is an heiress, and begins to suspect Cassion's motives.

A man marries a girl against her will. She determines to be his wife only in name, and, though associated with him constantly in a company of rough men in the wilderness, plans to keep her maidenhood until death parts them. Commissionaire Cassion is equally determined to enjoy matrimony to the fullest. Their first clash is described in this installment.

Commissionaire Cassion accuses his bride of intimacy with Rene d'Artigny. This she indignantly denies, but expresses a fear for the young man's safety.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

"You appear greatly concerned over his safety."

"Not at all; so far as I have ever heard the Sieur d'Artigny has heretofore proven himself quite capable of sustaining his own part. 'Tis more like I am concerned for you."

"For me? You fool! Why, I was a swordsman when that lad was at his mother's knee." He laughed, but with ugly gleam of teeth. "Sacre! I hate such play acting. But enough of quarrel now; there is sufficient time ahead to bring you to your senses, and a knowledge of who is your master. Hugo Chevet, come here."

My uncle climbed the bank, his rifle in hand, with face still bloated and red from the drink of the night before. Behind him appeared the slender black-robed figure of the Jesuit, his eyes eager with curiosity. It was sight of the latter which caused Cassion to moderate his tone of command.

"You will go with Chevet," he said, pointing to the fire among the trees, "until I can talk to you alone."

"A prisoner?"

"No; a guest," sarcastically, "but do not overstep the courtesy."

We left him in conversation with the pere, and I did not even glance back. Chevet breathed heavily, and I caught the mutter of his voice. "What meaneth all this chatter?" he asked gruffly. "Must you two quarrel so soon?"

"Why not?" I retorted. "The man bears me no love; 'tis but gold he thinks about."

"Gold!" he stopped and slapped his thighs. "'Tis precious little of that he will ever see then."

"And why not? Was not my father a land owner?"

"Ay! till the king took it."

We Left Him With the Pere, and I Did Not Even Glance Back.

"Then even you do not know the truth. I am glad to learn that, for I have dreamed that you sold me to this coxcomb for a share of the spoils."

"What? a share of the spoils! Bah! I am no angel, girl, nor pretend to a virtue more than I possess. There is truth in the thought that I might benefit by your marriage to Monsieur Cassion that. Have you not cost me heavily in these years? Why should I not seek for you a husband of worth in these colonies? Wherefore is that a crime? Were you my own daughter I could do no less, and this man is not ill to look upon, a fair-spoken gallant, a friend of La Barre's, chosen by him for special service—"

"And with influence in the fur trade."

"All the better that," he continued obstinately. "Why should a girl object if her husband be rich?"

"But he is not rich," I said plainly, looking straight into his eyes. "He is no more than a penniless adventurer; an actor playing a part assigned him by the governor; while you and I do the same. Listen, Monsieur Chevet, the property at St. Thomas is mine by legal right, and it was to gain possession that this wretch sought my hand."

"Your legal right?"

"Ay, restored by the king in special order."

"It is not true; I had the records searched by a lawyer, Monsieur Gautier of St. Anne."

I gave a gesture of indignation.

"A country advocate at whom those in authority would laugh. I tell you what I say is true; the land was restored, and the fact is known to La Barre and to Cassion. It is this fact which has caused all our troubles. I overheard talk last night between the governor and his aide-de-camp, Colonel Delguard—you know him?"

Chevet nodded, his interest stirred.

"They thought themselves alone, and were laughing at the success of their trick. I was hidden behind the heavy curtains at the window, and every word they spoke reached my ears. Then they sent for Cassion."

"But where is the paper?"

"I did not learn; they have it hidden, no doubt, awaiting the proper time to produce it. But there is such a document: La Barre explained that clearly, and the reason why he wished Cassion to marry me. They were all three talking when an accident happened, which led to my discovery."

"Ah! and so that was what hurried the wedding, and sent me on this wild wilderness chase. They would bury me in the woods—sacre!—"

"Hush now—Cassion has left the canoe already, and we can talk of this later. Let us seem to suspect nothing."

This was the first meal of many eaten together along the river bank in the course of our long journey, yet the recollection of that scene rises before my memory now with peculiar vividness. Cassion had divided us into groups, and, from where I had found resting place, with a small flat rock for table, I was enabled to see the others scattered to the edge of the bank, and thus learned for the first time the character of those with whom I was destined to companion on the long journey. There were but four of us in that first group, which included Pere Allouez, a silent man, fingering his cross, and barely touching food. His face under the black cowl was drawn, and creased by strange lines, and his eyes burned with vagueness. If I had ever dreamed of him as one to whom I might turn for counsel, the thought instantly vanished as our glances met.

A soldier and two Indians served us, while their companions, divided into two groups, were gathered at the other extremity of the ridge, the soldiers under discipline of their own underofficers, and the Indians watched over by Sieur D'Artigny, who rested, however, slightly apart, his gaze on the broad river. Never once while I observed did he turn and glance my way. I counted the men, as I endeavored to eat, scarcely heeding the few words exchanged by those about me. The Indians numbered ten, including their chief, whom Cassion called Altuda. Chevet named them as Algonquins from the Ottawa, treacherous rascals enough, yet with expert knowledge of watercraft.

Altudah was a tall savage, wrapped in gaudy blanket, his face rendered sinister and repulsive by a scar the full length of his cheek, yet he spoke French fairly well, and someone said that he had three times made journey to Mackinac, and knew the waterways. There were 24 soldiers, including a sergeant and corporal, of the regiment of Picardy; active fellows enough, and accustomed to the frontier, although they gave small evidence of discipline, and their uniforms were in shocking condition. The sergeant was a heavily built, stocky man, but the others were rather undersized, and of little spirit. The same thought must have been in the minds of others, for the expression on Monsieur Cassion's face was not pleasant as he stared about.

"Chevet," he exclaimed disgustedly, "did ever you see a worse selection for wilderness travel than La Barre has given us? Cast your eyes down the line yonder; by my faith! there is not a real man among them."

Chevet, who had been growling to himself, with scarce a thought other than the food before him, lifted his eyes and looked.

"No worse than are the scum. De Bougis had no better with him, and La

right leadership you can make them do men's work. 'Tis no kid-glove job you have, Monsieur Cassion."

The insulting indifference of the old fur trader's tone surprised the commissaire, and he exhibited resentment.

"You are overly free with your comments, Hugo Chevet. When I wish advice I will ask it."

"And in the woods I do not always wait to be asked," returned the older man, lighting his pipe, and calmly puffing out the blue smoke. "Though it is likely enough you will be asking for it before you journey many leagues further."

"You are under my orders."

"So La Barre said, but the only duty he gave me was to watch over Adele here. He put no shackle on my tongue. You have chosen your course?"

"Yes, up the Ottawa."

"I suppose so, although that boy yonder could lead you a shorter passage."

"How learned you that?"

"By talking with him in Quebec. He even sketched me a map of the route he traveled with La Salle. You knew it not?"

"'Twas of no moment, for my orders bid me go by St. Ignace. Yet it might be well to question him and the chief also." He turned to the nearest soldier. "Tell the Algonquin, Altudah, to come here, and Sieur d'Artigny."

They approached together, two specimens of the frontier as different as could be pictured, and stood silent, fronting Cassion, who looked at them frowning, and in no pleasant humor. The eyes of the younger man sought my face for an instant, and the swift glance gave harsher note to the commissaire's voice.

"We will reload the canoes here for the long voyage," he said brusquely. "The sergeant will have charge of that, but both of you will be in the leading boat, and will keep well in advance of the others. Our course is by way of the Ottawa. You know that stream, Altudah?"

The Indian bowed his head gravely and extended one hand beneath the scarlet fold of his blanket.

"Five time, monsieur."

"How far to the west, chief?"

"To place call Green Bay."

Cassion turned his eyes on D'Artigny, a slight sneer curling his lips.

"And you?" he asked coldly.

"But one journey, monsieur, along the Ottawa and the lakes," was the quiet answer, "and that three years ago, yet I scarce think I would go astray. 'Tis not a course easily forgotten."

"And beyond Green Bay?"

"I have been to the mouth of the great river."

"You!" in surprise. "Were you of that party?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"And you actually reached the sea—the salt water?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Saint Anne! I never half believed the tale true, nor do I think overmuch of your word for it. But let that go. Chevet here tells me you know a shorter journey to the Illinois?"

"Not by canoe, monsieur. I followed Sieur de la Salle by forest trail to the straits, and planned to return that way, but 'tis a foot journey."

"What will be your course from Green Bay?"

"Along the west shore, monsieur; it is dangerous only by reason of storms."

"And the distance?"

"From St. Ignace?"

"Ay! from St. Ignace! What distance lies between there and this Fort St. Louis on the Illinois?"

"'Twill be but a venture, monsieur, but I think 'tis held at a hundred and fifty leagues."

"Of wilderness?"

"When I passed that way—yes; they tell me now the Jesuits have mission station at Green Bay, and there may be fur traders in Indian villages beyond."

"No chance to procure supplies?"

"Only scant rations of corn from the Indians."

"Your report is in accordance with my instructions and maps, and no doubt is correct. That will be all. Take two more men in your boat and depart at once. We shall follow immediately."

CHAPTER VIII.

I Defy Cassion.

Our progress was slow against the swift current of the St. Lawrence, and we kept close to the overhanging bank, following the guidance of the leading canoe. We were the second in line, and no longer overcrowded, so that I had ample room to rest at ease upon a pile of blankets, and gaze about me with interest on the changing scene.

Ahead of us, now sweeping around the point like a wild bird, amid a smother of spray, appeared the advance canoe. As it disappeared I could distinguish D'Artigny at the stern, his coat off, his hands grasping a paddle. Above the point once more and in smoother water, I was aware that he turned and looked back, shading his eyes from the sun. I could not but wonder what he thought, what possi-

garding my presence in the company. In some manner I must keep him away from Cassion—ay, and from Chevet—until opportunity came from me to first communicate with him.

Insensibly my head rested back against the pile of blankets, the glint of sunshine along the surface of the

Before I Knew It I Slept Soundly.

water vanished as my lashes fell, and, before I knew it, I slept soundly. I awoke with the sun in the western sky, so low down as to peep at me through the upper branches of trees lining the bank. Behind us stretched a space of straight water, and one canoe was close, while the second was barely visible along a curve of the shore. Ahead, however, the river appeared vacant, the leading boat having vanished around a wooded bend. My eyes met those of Cassion, and the sight of him instantly restored me to a recollection of my plan—nothing could be gained by open warfare. I permitted my lips to smile, and noted instantly the change of expression in his face.

"I have slept well, monsieur," I said pleasantly, "for I was very tired."

"'Tis the best way on a boat voyage," assuming his old manner, "but now the day is nearly done."

As we skirted the extremity of shore I saw the opening in the woods, and the gleam of a cheerful fire amid green grass. The advance canoe swung half hidden amid the overhanging roots of a huge pine tree, and the men were busily at work ashore. As we nosed into the bank, our sharp bow was grasped by waiting Indians and drawn safely ashore. I reached my feet, stiffened, and scarcely able to move my limbs, but determined to land without aid of Cassion, whose passage forward was blocked by Chevet's huge bulk. As my weight rested on the edge of the canoe, D'Artigny swung down from behind the chief, and extended his hand.

"A slight spring," he said, "and you land with dry feet; good! now let me lift you—so."

I had but the instant; I knew that, for I heard Cassion cry out something just behind me, and, surprised as I was by the sudden appearance of D'Artigny, I yet realized the necessity for swift speech.

"Monsieur," I whispered. "Do not talk, but listen. You would serve me?"

"Ay!"

"Then ask nothing, and above all do not quarrel with Cassion. I will tell you everything the moment I can see you safely alone. Until then do not seek me. I have your word?"

He did not answer, for the commissaire grasped my arm, and thrust himself in between us, his action so swift that the impact of his body thrust D'Artigny back a step. I saw the hand of the younger man close on the knife hilt at his belt, but was quick enough to avert the hot words burning his lips.

"A bit rough, Monsieur Cassion," I cried, laughing merrily, even as I released my arm. "Why so much haste? I was near falling, and it was but courtesy which led the Sieur d'Artigny to extend me his hand. It does not please me for you to be ever seeking a quarrel."

There must have been that in my face which cooled him, for his hand fell, and his thin lips curled into sarcastic smile.

"If I seemed hasty," he exclaimed, "it was more because I was blocked by that boor of a Chevet yonder, and it angered me to have this young gamecock ever at hand to push in. What think you you were employed for, fellow—an esquire of dames? Was there not work enough in the camp yonder, that you must be testing your fancy graces every time a boat lands?"

There was no mild look in D'Artigny's eyes as he fronted him, yet he held his temper, recalling my plea, no doubt, and I hastened to step between and furnish him excuse for silence.

"Surely you do wrong to blame the young man, monsieur, as but for his aid I would have slipped yonder. There is no cause for hard words, nor do I thank you for making me a subject of quarrel. Is it my tent they erect yonder?"

"Ay," there was little graciousness to the tone, for the man had the nature of a bully. "'Twas my thought that it be brought for your use; and if Monsieur d'Artigny will consent to stand aside, it will give me pleasure to escort you thither."

The younger man's eyes glanced from the other's face into mine, as though seeking reassurance. His hat was instantly in his hand, and he stepped backward, bowing low.

"The wish of the lady is sufficient," he said quietly, and then stood again erect, facing Cassion. "Yet," he added slowly, "I would remind monsieur that while I serve him as a guide, it is as a volunteer, and I am also an officer of France."

"Of France? Pah! of the renegade La Salle."

"France has no more loyal servant, Monsieur Cassion, in all this western land—nor is he renegade, for he holds the Illinois at the king's command."

"Held it—yes; under Frontenac, but not now."

"We will not quarrel over words, yet not even in Quebec was it claimed that higher authority than La Barre's had led to recall. Louis had never interfered, and it is De Tonty, and not De Baugis who is in command at St. Louis by royal order. My right to respect of rank is clearer than your own, monsieur, so I beg you curb your temper."

"You threaten me?"

"No; we who live in the wilderness do not talk, we act. I obey your orders, do your will, on this expedition, but as a man, not a slave. In all else we stand equal, and I accept insult from no living man. 'Tis well that you know this, monsieur."

The hat was back upon his head, and he had turned away before Cassion found answering speech.

"Mon Dieu! I'll show the pup who is the master," he muttered. 'Let him disobey once, and I'll stretch his dainty form as I would an Indian cur."

"Monsieur," I said, drawing his attention to my presence. "'Tis of no interest to me your silly quarrel with Sieur d'Artigny. I am weary with the boat journey, and would rest until food is served."

I walked beside him among the trees, and across the patch of grass to where the tent stood against a background of rock. D'Artigny had disappeared, although I glanced about in search for him, as Cassion drew aside the tent flap, and peered within. He appeared pleased at the way in which his orders had been executed.

"'Tis very neat, indeed, monsieur," I said pleasantly, glancing inside. "I owe you my thanks."

"'Twas brought for my own use," he confessed, encouraged by my graciousness, "for, as you know, I had no previous warning that you were to be of our party. Please step within."

I did so, yet turned instantly to prevent his following me. Already I had determined on my course of action, and now the time had come for me to speak him clearly; yet now that I had definite purpose in view it was no part of my game to anger the man.

"Monsieur," I said soberly "I must beg your mercy. I am but a girl, and alone. It is true I am your wife by law, but the change has come so suddenly that I am yet dazed. I appeal to you as a gentleman."

He stared into my face, scarcely comprehending all my meaning.

"You would bar me without? You forbid me entrance?"

"Would you seek to enter against my wish?"

"But you are my wife; that you will not deny! What will be said, thought, if I go elsewhere?"

"Monsieur, save for Hugo Chevet, none in this company know the story of that marriage, or why I am here. What I ask brings no stain upon you. 'Tis not that I so dislike you, monsieur, but I am the daughter of Pierre la Chesnayne, and 'tis not in my blood to yield to force. It will be best to yield me respect and consideration."

"You are a sly wench," he said, laughing unpleasantly, "but it may be best that I give you your own way for this once. There is time enough in which to teach you my power. And so you shut the tent to me, fair lady, in spite of your pledge to Holy church. Ah, well! there are storms a plenty between here and St. Ignace, and you will become lonely enough in the wilderness to welcome me. One kiss, and I leave you."

"No, monsieur."

His eyes were ugly.

"You refuse that! Mon Dieu! Do you think I play? I will have the kiss—or more."

Will the girl wife win this opening battle with her wits—she has no other defense—or must she succumb to the strength and brutality of Cassion?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Halting Between Two Opinions

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TEXT—How long halt ye between two opinions?—I Kings 18:21.

There are many people more or less under conviction of sin who are halting just in this way. They know they ought to renounce sin for righteousness, and they also know that the only way to do that successfully is through faith in Jesus Christ. They have been taught that if they will commit themselves to him as their Redeemer and confess him as their Lord and Master, he will not only deliver them from guilt, but endue them with the power to overcome sin and lead a godly life. And yet for all this they are halting, and trying to decide whether to put their trust in him and openly confess him or not.

What are some of the reasons given for this indecision? Or, to put it in another way, what are some of the obstacles which the evil one is setting before them to hinder them in their progress towards salvation through Christ?

Not long ago we were speaking of this subject from another point of view, and dwelt on two or three very common objections such as that there are hypocrites in the church, or the profit and pleasure that must be given up if one becomes a Christian, or the fear of not being able to hold out in Christian life, etc.

But there are other objections than these. One is the remark, "I am not good enough to become a Christian." This sounds like humility, but in reality is spiritual pride, for it is based on the supposition that one can make himself good enough without Christ. But if so why need a Savior, and why should the Son of God have suffered and died? If we can make ourselves partially holy, we can make ourselves absolutely holy, and therefore the work of atonement was unnecessary and a crime. A convincing answer to this is the testimony of our Lord himself that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The great Augustine prayed, "O Lord, I am so great a sinner, I must flee into thine arms!" That is the place for the sinner to flee just because he is a sinner.

(2) "I do not know how to believe." is sometimes put forth as a reason. And yet "believe" means simply "to trust," "to commit one's self" to the Saviour in order to be saved. Indeed, the difficulty is not so much in the meaning of the word, "believe," as in waiting for feeling to accompany the belief.

A woman once gave this excuse to a pastor who was urging her to accept Christ. And he said to her, "Do you own the house you live in?" To which she answered, "Yes." And then he added, "How do you know you do?" After reflection she said, "Because my title deed is recorded in the office of the county clerk."

She was not waiting for feeling to know that she owned her house, and no more should we wait for feeling to know that we are saved. It is recorded in the word of God, that "God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And it is written again, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave his Son."

The sinner who is waiting for feeling before he believes that faith saves him is not only doing himself the greatest injury, but is dishonoring God.

3. Another common reason for halting is no reason at all, viz., that the time has not yet come to take the step. It is the excuse of Felix, who trembled when, in his presence, Paul reasoned of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," and who answered, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

How often have you heard this invitation and warning, and turned a deaf ear to it? Does it influence you as strongly today as it did the first day you heard it? It may be doubted if it does, and that fact in itself should sound the alarm causing you to hasten from the impending doom.

Every temptation resisted makes the next one easier to conquer. The devil repulsed weakens his power of attack.

Carrots and Peas Creamed.

Scrub and cut into dice enough carrots to make a pint. Let stand in cold water for half an hour. Drain and cook in an uncovered kettle of boiling water until carrots are tender. (Old carrots require about one-quarter of an hour.) Add a pint of peas and a pint of cream sauce.

Yellowness in Clothes.

Three things will cause white clothes to yellow—the iron in the water, a too free use of soda, or improper