

Beyond the Frontier

By RANDALL PARRISH

A Romance of Early Days in the Middle West

Author of "Keith of the Border," "My Lady of Doubt," "The Maid of the Forest," etc.



SYNOPSIS.

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. Adele refuses to permit her husband to share her sleeping quarters.

Young Madame Cassion comes to the conclusion that she alone will be unable to cope with her husband who has designs on both her fortune and her person. She knows he has plotted against her and feels free to plot against him. Developments in the dramatic situation are here told vividly.

Adele has just declined to share sleeping quarters with her husband. He is furious when she refuses even to kiss him.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

Furious as the man was I felt no fear of him, merely an intense disgust that his hands should touch me, an indignation that he should offer me such insult. He must have read all this in my eyes, for he made but the one move, and I flung his hand aside as easily as though it had been that of a child. I was angry, so that my lips trembled, and my face grew white, yet it was not the anger that stormed.

"Enough, monsieur—go!" I said, and pointed to where the fires reddened the darkness. "Do not dare speak to me again this night."

An instant he hesitated, trying to muster courage, but the bully in him failed, and with an oath, he turned



"Enough Monsieur—Go!"

away and vanished. It was nearly dark then, and I sat down on a blanket at the entrance, and waited, watching the figures between me and the river. I did not think he would come again, but I did not know; it would be safer if I could have word with Chevet. A soldier brought me food, and when he returned for the tins I made him promise to seek my uncle and send him to me.

My only faith in Hugo Chevet rested in his natural resentment of Cassion's treachery relative to my father's fortune. He would feel that he had been cheated, deceived, deprived of his rightful share of the spoils.

I had been alone for an hour, already convinced that the soldier had failed to deliver my message, when my uncle finally emerged from the shadows, and announced his presence. He appeared a huge, shapeless figure, his very massiveness yielding me a feeling of protection, and I arose and joined him. His greeting proved the unhappiness of his mind.

"So you sent for me—why? What

has happened between you and Cassion?"

"No more than occurred between us yonder in Quebec, when I informed him that I was his wife in name only." I answered quietly. "Do you blame me now that you understand his purpose in this marriage?"

"How know you the truth of all you have said?" he asked. "Where learned you of this wealth?"

"By overhearing conversation while hidden behind the curtain in La Barre's office. He spoke freely with his aide, and later with Cassion. It was my discovery there which led to the forced marriage, and our being sent with this expedition."

"You heard alone?"

"So they thought, and naturally believed marriage would prevent my ever bearing witness against them. But I was not alone."

"Mon dieu! Another heard?"

"Yes, the Sieur d'Artigny."

Chevet grasped my arm, and in the glare of the fire I could see his excitement pictured in his face.

"Who? That lad? You were in hiding there together? And did he realize what was said?"

"That I do not know," I answered, "for we have exchanged no word since. When my presence was discovered D'Artigny escaped unseen through the open window. I need to meet him again that these matters may be explained, and that I may learn just what he overheard. It was to enlist your aid that I sent for you."

"To bring the lad here?"

"No; that could not be done without arousing the suspicion of Cassion. The two are already on the verge of quarrel. You must find some way of drawing the commissaire aside—not tonight, for there is plenty of time before us, and I am sure we are being watched now—and that will afford me opportunity."

"But why may I not speak him?"

"You!" I laughed. "He would be likely to talk with you. A sweet message you sent him in Quebec."

"I was drunk, and Cassion asked it of me."

"I thought as much; the coward makes you pull his chestnuts from the fire. Do you give me the pledge?"

"Ay! although 'tis not my way to play sweet, when I should enjoy to wring the fellow's neck. What was it La Barre said?"

"That just before he died my father's property was restored to him by the king, but the royal order was never recorded. It exists, but where I do not know, nor do I know as yet for what purpose it was concealed. My marriage to Cassion must have been an afterthought, for he is but a creature of La Barre's. It is through him the greater villains seek control; but, no doubt, he was a willing tool enough, and expects his share."

"Why not let me choke the truth out of him then? Bah! it would be easy."

"For two reasons," I said earnestly. "First, I doubt if he knows the true conspiracy, or can lay hands on the king's restoration. Without that we have no proof of fraud. And second, coward though he may be, his very fear might yield him courage. No, Uncle Chevet, we must wait and learn these facts through other means than force. 'Tis back in Quebec, not in this wilderness, we will find the needed proofs. What I ask of you is, pretend to know nothing; do not permit Cassion to suspicion that I have confided in you. We must encourage him to talk by saying nothing which will put him on guard."

"You—you will try, as his wife, to win confession?" he asked finally, grasping vaguely the one thought occurring to him.

"No; there is a better way. I despise the man; I cannot bear that he touch me. More than that, if I read him aright, once I yield and confess myself his property, he will lose all interest in my possession. He is a lady killer; 'tis his boast. The man has never been in love with me; it was not love, but a desire to possess my fortune, which led to his proposal of marriage. Now I shall make him love me."

"We shall be alone in the wilderness for months to come. I will be the one woman; perchance the only white woman into whose face he will look until we return to Quebec. I am not vain, yet I am not altogether ill to look upon, nor shall I permit the hardships of this journey to affect my attractiveness. I shall fight him with his own weapons, and win. He will beg and threaten me, and I shall laugh. He will love me and I shall mock. There will be jealousy between him and D'Artigny, and to win my favor he will confess all that he knows. Tonight he sulks somewhere yonder, already beginning to doubt his power to control me."

"You have quarreled?"

"No—only that I asserted independence. He would have entered this tent as my husband, and I forbade his doing so. He stormed and threatened, but dare not venture further. He knows me now as other than a weak girl, but my next lesson must be a more severe one. 'Tis partly to prepare that I sent for you; I ask the loan of a pistol—the smaller one, to be concealed in my dress."

"You would kill the man?"

"Pooh! small danger of that. You may draw the charge if you will. For him to know that I possess the weapon will protect me. You do not grasp my plan?"

He shook his head gloomily, as though it was all a deep puzzle to his mind, yet his great hand held forth the pistol, the short barrel of which gleamed wickedly in the fire glow as I thrust it out of sight.

"'Tis not the way I front enemies," he growled stubbornly, "and I make little of it. Mon dieu! I make them talk with these hands."

"But my weapons are those of a woman," I explained, "and I will learn more than you would with your brute strength. All I ask of you now, Uncle Chevet, is that you keep on friendly terms with Monsieur Cassion, yet re-

peat nothing to him of what I have said, and gain me opportunity for speech alone with Sieur d'Artigny."

He growled something indistinctly in his beard, which I interpreted as assent, but I watched his great form disappear in the direction of the fire, my own mind far from satisfied; the man was so lacking in brains as to be a poor ally, and so obstinate of nature as to make it doubtful if he would long conform to my leadership. Still it was surely better to confide in him to the extent I had than permit him to rage about blindly and in open hostility to Cassion.

CHAPTER IX.

We Attain the Ottawa.

It was not yet dawn when the stir in the camp aroused me, and the sun had not risen above the bluffs, or begun to tinge the river, when our laden canoes left the bank and commenced their day's journey up stream. D'Artigny was off in advance, departing indeed before I had left the tent, the chief seated beside him. I caught but a glimpse of them as the canoe rounded the bend in the bank, and slipped silently away through the lingering shadows, yet it gladdened me to know his eyes were turned toward my tent until they vanished.

A new distribution had been arranged, Chevet accompanying the sergeant, leaving the commissaire and me alone, except for the pere, who had position in the bow. I observed this new arrangement from underneath lowered lashes, but without comment, quietly taking the place assigned me, and shading my face from the first rays of the sun.

At noon we landed in a sheltered cove, brilliant with wild flowers, and partook of food, the rearward canoes joining us, but D'Artigny was still ahead, perhaps under orders to keep away. To escape Cassion I clambered up the front of the cliff, and had view from the summit, marking the sweep of the river for many a league, a scene of wild beauty never to be forgotten. I lingered there at the edge until the voice of the commissaire recalled me to my place in the canoe.

It is of no consequence now what we conversed about during that long afternoon, as we pushed steadily on against the current. Cassion endeavored to be entertaining and I made every effort to encourage him, although my secret thoughts were not pleasant ones. He had set out to overcome my scruples, to conquer my will, and was merely biding his time, seeking to learn the best point of attack. It was with this end in view that he kept me to himself, banishing Chevet, and compelling D'Artigny to remain well in advance. He was testing me now by his tales of Quebec, his boasting of friendship with the governor, his stories of army adventure, and the wealth he expected to amass through his official connections. Yet the very tone he assumed, the conceit shown in his narratives, only served to add to my dislike. This creature was my husband, yet I shrank from him, and once, when he dared to touch my hand, I drew it away as though it were contamination. It was then

that hot anger leaped into his eyes, and his true nature found expression before he could restrain the words:

"Mon dieu! What do you mean, you chit?"

"Only that I am not won by a few soft words, monsieur," I answered coldly.

"But you are my wife; 'twill be well for you to remember that."

"Nor am I likely to forget, yet because a priest has mumbled words over us does not make me love you."

"Sacre!" he burst forth, yet careful to keep his voice pitched to my ears alone, "you think me a plaything, but you shall learn yet that I have claws. Bah! do you imagine I fear the coxcomb ahead?"

"To whom do you refer, monsieur?"

"Such innocence! to that bootlicker of La Salle's to whom you give your smiles and pretty words."

"Rene d'Artigny!" I exclaimed pleasantly, and then laughed. "Why how ridiculous you are, monsieur. Better be jealous of Pere Allouez yonder, for of him I see far the most. Why do you pick out D'Artigny on whom to vent your anger?"

"I like not the way he eyes you, nor your secret meetings with him in Quebec."

"If he even sees me I know it not, and as for secret meetings, knew you not that Sister Celeste was with me while we talked?"

"Not in the governor's palace."

"You accuse me of that then," indignantly. "Because I am your wife you can insult, yet it was your hand that drew aside the curtain and found me alone. Do you hope to gain my respect by such base charges as that, monsieur?"

"Do you deny that he had been with you?"

"? Do I deny! It is not worthy my while. Why should I? We were not married then, nor like to be to my knowledge. Why, then, if I wished, was it not my privilege to speak with the Sieur d'Artigny? I have found him a very pleasant and polite young man."

"A pauper, his only fortune the sword at his side."

"Ah, I knew not even that he possessed one. Yet of what interest can all this be to me, monsieur, now that I am married to you?"

That my words brought him no comfort was plain enough to be seen, yet I doubt if it ever occurred to his mind that I simply made sport, and sought to anger him. It was on his mind to say more, yet he choked the words back, and sat there in moody silence, scarce glancing at me again during the long afternoon. But when we finally made landing for the night, it was plain to be seen that his vigilance was in no wise relaxed, for, although he avoided me himself, the watchful Jesuit was ever at my side, no doubt in obedience to his orders. As we were eating a party of fur traders, bound east, came ashore in a small fleet of canoes and joined the men below, building their fires slightly up stream. At last Pere Allouez left me alone and descended to them, eager to learn the news from Montreal. Yet, although seemingly I was now left alone, I had no thought of adventuring in the darkness, as I felt convinced the watchful priest would never have deserted my side had he not known that other eyes were keeping vigil.

From that moment I never felt myself alone or unobserved. Cassion in person did not make himself obnoxious, except that I was always seated beside him in the boat, subject to his conversation and attentions. However it was managed I know not, but my uncle never approached me alone, and only twice did I gain glimpse of Sieur d'Artigny—once, when his canoe returned to warn us of dangerous water ahead, and once when he awaited us beside the landing at Montreal. Yet even these occasions yielded me new courage, for, as our eyes met I knew he was still my friend, waiting, as I was, the opportunity for a better understanding. This knowledge brought tears of gratitude to my eyes and a thrill of hope to my heart. I was no longer utterly alone.

We were three days at Montreal, the men busily engaged in adding to their store of provisions. I had scarcely a glimpse of the town, as I was given lodging in the convent close to the river bank, and the pere was my constant companion during hours of daylight.

We departed at dawn, and the sun was scarce an hour high when the prows of our canoes turned into the Ottawa. Now we were indeed in the wilderness, fronting the vast unknown country of the West, with every league of travel leaving behind all trace of civilization. There was nothing before us save a few scattered missions, presided over by ragged priests, and an occasional fur trader's station, the headquarters of wandering couriers du bois. On every side were the vast prairies and stormy lakes, roamed over by savage men and beasts through whom we must make our way in hardship, danger and toil.

Our progress up the Ottawa was so slow, so toilsome, the days such a routine of labor and hardship, the scenes along the shore so similar, that I lost all conception of time. Except for the Jesuit I had scarcely a companion, and there were days. I am sure, when we did not so much as exchange a word.

The men had no rest from labor, even Cassion changing from boat to boat as necessity arose, urging them to renewed efforts. The water was low, the rapids more than usually dangerous, so that we were compelled to portage more often than usual. Once the leading canoe ventured to shoot a rapid not considered perilous, and had

a great hole torn in its prow by a sharp rock. The men got ashore, saving the wreck, but lost their store of provisions, and we were a day there making the damaged canoe again serviceable.

This delay gave me my only glimpse of D'Artigny, still dripping from his involuntary bath, and so busily engaged at repairs as to be scarcely conscious of my presence on the bank above him. Yet I can hardly say that, for once he glanced up, and our eyes met, and possibly he would have joined me, but for the sudden appearance of Cassion, who swore at the delay, and ordered me back to where the tent had been hastily erected. I noticed D'Artigny straighten up, angered that Cassion dared speak to me so harshly, but I had no wish then to precipitate an open quarrel between the two men, and so departed quickly. Later, Father Allouez told me that in the overturning of the canoe the young sieur had saved the life of the Algonquin chief, bringing him ashore unconscious, helpless from a broken shoulder. This accident to Altudah led to the transferring of the injured Indian to our canoe and caused Cassion to join D'Artigny in advance.

It was five days later, and in the heart of all that was desolate and drear, when the long-sought opportunity came in most unexpected fashion. We had made camp early, because of rough water ahead, the passage of which it was not deemed best to attempt without careful exploration. So, while the three heavily laden canoes drew up against the bank, and prepared to spend the night, the leading canoe was stripped and sent forward, manned only with the most expert of the Indian paddlers to make sure the perils of the current. From the low bank to which I had climbed I watched the preparations for the dash through those madly churning waters above. Cassion was issuing his orders loudly, but exhibited no inclination to accompany the party, and suddenly the frail craft shot out from the shore, with D'Artigny at the steering peddle, and every Indian braced for his task, and headed boldly into the smother. They vanished as though swallowed by the mist, Cassion and a half dozen soldiers racing along the shore line in an effort to keep abreast of the laboring craft.

It was a wild, desolate spot in which we were, a mere rift in the bluffs, which seemed to overhang us, covered with a heavy growth of forest. The sun was still an hour high, although it was twilight already beside the river, when Cassion and his men came straggling back to report that the canoe had made safe passage, and, taking advantage of his good humor, I proposed a climb up an opening of the bluff, down which led a deer trail plainly discernible.

"Not I," he said, casting a glance upward. "The run over the rocks will do me for exercise tonight."

"Then will I assay it alone," I replied, not displeased at his refusal. "I am cramped from sitting in the canoe so long."

"'Twill be a hard climb, and they tell me the pere has strained a tendon of his leg coming ashore."

"And what of that?" I burst forth, giving vent to my indignation. "Am I a ten-year-old to be guarded every step I take? 'Tis not far to the summit, and no danger. You can see yourself

the trail is not steep. Faith! I will go now, just to show that I am at liberty."

He laughed, an unpleasant sound to it, yet made no effort to halt me. The rude path I followed was narrow, but not steep enough to prove wearisome, and, as it led up through a crevice in the earth, finally emerged at the top of the bluff at a considerable distance above the camp I had left. Thick woods covered the crest, although there were open plains beyond, and I was obliged to advance to the very edge in order to gain glimpse of the river.

Once there, however, with footing secure on a flat rock, the scene spread was one of wild and fascinating beauty. Directly below me were the rapids.

On this rocky eminence Adele finds opportunity to draw her web more tightly around Commissaire Cassion. What sudden turn of events do you believe is imminent?

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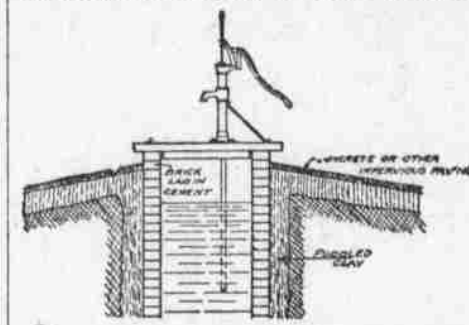
HOME TOWN HELPS

GUARD THE WATER SUPPLY

Subject That is of Immense Importance in Every Home in the Country.

In thousands of farm homes it is now possible to find up-to-date water systems, providing both hot and cold water for the bathroom, the laundry, the kitchen sink, and various other parts of the house and barn.

When a water system is once installed the farmer and his family usually wonder how they ever managed to get along without it before, and seldom regret the cost. Yet, in spite of the comparative ease with which the average farm home can be equipped with many of these conven-

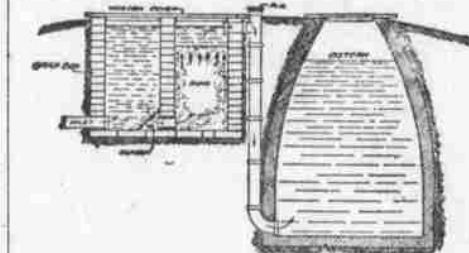


A Well Properly Protected From Surface Water. Brick Laid in Cement and Backed Up With Puddled Clay Makes a Practically Impervious Casing.

iences, how often do we find the country household still depending upon the distant spring, the open well, or at best the out-of-doors lift pump to supply the hundreds of tons of water required for each household every year?

Inquiry usually develops the fact that the old methods are still retained for one or the other of the following reasons, namely: The cost of sewer systems is assumed to be prohibitive, or else the possibilities of fully utilizing the existing water supply have never been carefully explained and brought to the farmers' notice.

A well can be protected from pollution by extending the tight casing or lining six or eight inches above the ground and covering with a water-tight concrete curb having a slope away from the center in every direction. This cover should extend at least one foot beyond the edge of a dug well, and should never be less than seven feet in diameter for a driven well. A drain trough should, of course, be provided to catch the drip and convey it away to a safe dis-



Sand-Box Filter for Cistern. All Water Entering the Cistern Must Pass Through the Filter. The Sand Can Easily Be Removed and Replaced With Clean Sand.

tance. An open drain passing around the well at a distance of four or five feet from this curb and leading off to the drip drain tile will help prevent the entrance of surface waters that wash down from a higher point.

In many cases, however, the difficulty is of a more serious nature. The stratification of the clay, gravel and rocks through which the well is sunk may be such as to cause percolating water from a nearby source of infection to be led directly into the well. In other instances the soil surrounding the well may become so thoroughly and so constantly saturated with polluted seepage waters that it will no longer perform its function as a filter, and germ-laden waters are allowed to pass into the well. For these reasons the location of the well is of prime importance.

Considered from the standpoint of convenience, the well should be located as near the kitchen as possible. But whenever such location would involve any danger of contamination due to surface drainage or to an inadequate kitchen sewerage disposal system, a location on higher ground and above this source of contamination should be selected. Select a site where drainage and seepage from barnyards, stock pens and manure pits lead away from the well rather than toward it.

Gardens in Crowded Cities. Nothing brings the country more near to the city than a garden.

The vacant-lot gardens are good in congested places.

But there are few who can have a vacant-lot garden compared to those who can have window boxes.

Get ready to put up the window boxes in the crowded sections and thus gladden thousands.

Gay geraniums and graceful vines that trail their leaves over the sides of the box are the things to plant.

The window-box garden should also contain saucy geraniums, wide-eyed petunias and bright verbenas.

The placing of window-box gardens in crowded city streets is one of the happiest ways of easing the lot of those who must live and work in the city all summer.