

Adele is Chesapeake, a belle of New France, is forced into marriage with Cassion, a Frenchman, by the Governor La Barre, who is plotting to overthrow the British. Adele had inherited a great fortune from her father and they had kept it from her. La Barre and Cassion learned of the girl's knowledge—thus the marriage and the hurried departure of Cassion and a company for Fort St. Louis. The bride refuses to share sleeping quarters with her husband. She has a friend, young Rene D'Artigny, a guide. He is charged with helping her. Chevet, the girl's uncle, one of the party, is found murdered.

Her only kin dead by a murderer's hand, Adele feels more alone in the world than ever. Her husband's jealousy and rancor become pronounced, yet she is strangely hopeful of getting away from the man and from her present circumstance in life. Then comes death near to her. How she barely escaped, why she has more reasons than one to be profoundly thankful, is told graphically in this installment.

Following the discovery of Chevet, murdered, Cassion accuses D'Artigny of the crime—but not in D'Artigny's presence.

CHAPTER XII—Continued.

"True, so I did," he said at last. "They were to depart before dawn. The villain is yonder—see; well off that farthest point, and 'tis too late to overtake him now. Sacre! there is aught for us to do, that I see, but to beg Hugo Chevet and go our way—the king's business cannot wait."

On the beach all was in readiness for departure, and it was evident enough that Moulin had already spread the news of Chevet's murder among the comrades. Cassion, however, permitted the fellows little time for discussion, for at his sharp orders they took their places in the canoes and pushed off. The priest was obliged to assume Chevet's former position, and I would gladly have accompanied him, but Cassion suddenly gripped me in his arms, and without so much as a word, waded out through the surf, and put me down in his boat, clambering in himself, and shouting his orders to the paddlers.

I think we were all of us glad enough to get away. I know I sat silent and motionless just where he placed me and stared back across the widening water at the desolate, dismal scene. How lonely and heart-sickening it was, those few log houses against the hill, the blackened stumps littering the hillside, and the gloomy forest beyond. The figures of a few men were visible along the beach, and once I saw a black-robed priest emerge from the door of the mission house, and start down the steep path.

The picture slowly faded as we advanced, until finally the last glimpse of the log chapel disappeared in the haze, and we were alone on the mys-



Even D'Artigny Kept Within Sight.

tery of the great lake, gliding along a bare, uninhabited shore. I was aroused by the touch of Cassion's hand on my own as it grasped the side of the canoe.

"Adele," he said, almost tenderly. "Why should you be so serious? Can't we be friends?"

My eyes met his in surprise.

"Friends, monsieur! Are we not? Why do you address me like that?"

"Because you treat me as though I were a criminal," he said earnestly. "As if I had done you an evil in making you my wife. 'Twas not I who hastened the matter, but La Barre."

"'Tis not just to condemn me unheard, yet I have been patient and kind. I thought it might be that you loved another—in truth I imagined that D'Artigny had cast his spell upon you; yet you surely cannot continue to trust that villain—the murderer of your uncle."

"How know you that to be true?" he asked.

"Because there is no other accounting for it," he explained sternly. "The quarrel last evening, the early departure before dawn—"

"At your orders, monsieur."

"Ay, but the sergeant tells me the fellow was absent from the camp for two hours during the night; that in the moonlight he saw him come down the hill. Even if he did not do the

BEYOND the FRONTIER

A STORY OF EARLY DAYS

by RANDALL PARRISH

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deed himself, he must have discovered the body—yet he voiced no alarm."

I was silent, and my eyes fell from his face to the green water.

"'Twill be hard to explain," he went on. "But he shall have a chance."

"A chance! You will question him; and then—"

He hesitated whether to answer me, but there was a cruel smile on his thin lips.

"Faith, I do not know. 'Tis like to be a court-martial at the Rock, if ever we get him there; though the chances are the fellow will take to the woods when he finds himself suspected. No doubt the best thing I can do will be to say nothing until we hold him safe, though 'tis hard to pretend with such a villain."

He paused, as if hoping I might speak, and my silence angered him.

"Bah, if I had my way the young cockerel would face a file at our first camp. Ay! and it will be for you to decide if he does not."

"What is your meaning, monsieur?"

"That I am tired of your play-acting; of your making eyes at this forest dandy behind my back. Sang dieu! I am done with all this—do you hear?—and I have a grip now which will make you think twice, my dear, before you work any more sly tricks on me. Sacre, you think me easy, hey? I have in my hand so," and he opened and closed his fingers suggestively, "the life of the lad."

I had one glimpse of his face as he leaned forward, and there was a look in it which made me shudder and turn away. His was no idle threat, and whether the man truly loved me or not, his hatred of D'Artigny was sufficient for any cruelty.

I realized the danger, the necessity for compromise, and yet for the moment I lacked power to speak, to question, fearful lest his demands would be greater than I could grant. I had no thought of what I saw, and still that which my eyes rested upon remains pictured on my brain, the sparkle of sun on the water, the distant green of the shore, the soldiers huddled in the canoe, the dark shining bodies of the Indians ceaselessly plying the paddles, and beyond us, to the left, another canoe, cleaving the water swiftly, with Pere Allouez' face turned toward us, as though he sought to guess our conversation. I was aroused by the grip of Cassion's hand.

"Well, my beauty," he said harshly, "haven't I waited long enough to learn if it is war or peace between us?"

I laughed, yet I doubt if he gained any comfort from the expression of the eyes which met his.

"Why I choose peace of course, monsieur," I answered, assuming a carelessness I was far from feeling. "Am I not your wife? Surely you remind me of it often enough, so I am not likely to forget; but I resent the insult of your words, nor will you ever win favor from me by such methods. I have been friendly with D'Artigny, it is true, but there is nothing between us. Indeed no word has passed my lips in his presence I would not be willing for you to hear. So there is no cause for you to spare him on my account, or rest his fate on any action of mine."

"You will have naught to do with the fellow?"

"There would be small chance if I wished, monsieur; and do you suppose I would seek companionship with one who had killed my uncle?"

"'Twould scarce seem so, yet I know not what you believe."

"Nor do I myself; yet the evidence is all against the man thus far. I confess I should like to hear his defense, but I make you this pledge in all honor—I will have no word with him, on condition that you file no charges until we arrive at Fort St. Louis."

"Ah!" suspiciously, "you think he has friends there to hold him innocent."

"Why should I, monsieur? Indeed, why should I care but to have justice done? I do not wish his blood on your hands, or to imagine that he is condemned because of his friendship for me rather than any other crime. I know not what friends the man has at the Rock on the Illinois. He was of La Salle's party, and they are no longer in control. La Barre said that De Baugis commanded that post, and for all I know De Tonty and all his men may have departed."

"'Tis not altogether true, and for that reason we are ordered to join the company. De Baugis has the right of it under commission from La Barre, but does not possess sufficient soldiers to exercise authority. La Salle's men remain loyal to De Tonty, and the Indian tribes look to him for leadership. Mon dieu! it was reported in Quebec that 12,000 savages were living about the fort—ay! and D'Artigny said he doubted it not, for the meadows were covered with tepees—so De Baugis has small chance to rule until he has force behind him. They say this De Tonty is of a fighting breed—the savages call him the man with the iron hand—and so the two rule between them, the one for La Barre, and the other for La Salle, and we go to give the governor's man more power."

"You have sufficient force?"

"Unless the Indians become hostile; besides there is to be an overland party later to join us in the spring and Sieur de la Durantaye, of the regiment of Carignan-Salliers is at the Chicago portage. This I learned at St. Ignace."

"Then it would seem to me, monsieur, that you could safely wait the trial of D'Artigny until our arrival at the fort. If he does not feel himself suspected, he will make no effort to escape, and I give you the pledge you ask."

It was not altogether graciously that he agreed to this, yet the man could not refuse, and I was glad enough to escape thus easily, for it was my fear that he might insist on my yielding much more to preserve D'Artigny from immediate condemnation and death. The fellow had the power, and the inclination, and what good fortune saved me, I can never know. I think he felt a certain fear of me, a doubt of how far he might presume on my good nature.

Certainly I gave him small encouragement to venture further, and yet had he done so I would have been at my wit's end. Twice the words were upon his lips—a demand that I yield to his mastery—but he must have read in my eyes a defiance he feared to front, for they were not uttered. 'Twas that he might have this very talk that he had found me place alone in his canoe, and I would have respected him more had he dared to carry out his desire. The coward in the man was too apparent, and yet that very cowardice was proof of treachery. What he hesitated to claim boldly he would attain otherwise if he could. I could place no confidence in his word, nor reliance upon his honor.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Break of Storm.

We had no more pleasant weather for days, the skies being overcast and the wind damp and chill. It did not rain, nor were the waves dangerous, although choppy enough to make paddling tiresome and difficult.

A mist obscured the view and compelled us to cling close to the shore so as to prevent becoming lost in the smother, and as we dare not venture to strike out boldly from point to point, we lost much time in creeping along the curves.

The canoes kept closer together, never venturing to become separated, and the men stationed on watch in the bows continually called to each other across the tossing waters in guidance. Even D'Artigny kept within sight, and made camp with us at night, although he made no effort to seek me, nor did I once detect that he even glanced in my direction. The studied indifference of the man puzzled me more than it angered, but I believed it was his consciousness of guilt, rather than any dislike which caused his avoidance. In a way I rejoiced at his following this course, as I felt bound by my pledge to Cassion, and had no desire to further arouse the jealousy of the latter, yet I remained a woman, and consequently felt a measure of regret at being thus neglected and ignored.

I had no knowledge of the date, nor a very clear conception of where we were. The night before we had camped at the mouth of a small stream, the surrounding forest growing down close to the shore, and so thick as to be almost impenetrable. The men had set up my tent so close to the water the waves broke scarcely a foot away, and the fire about which the others clustered for warmth was but a few yards distant.

Wrapped in my blankets I saw D'Artigny emerge from the darkness and approach Cassion, who drew a map from his belt pocket and spread it open on the ground in the glare of the fire. The two men bent over it, tracing the lines with finger tips, evidently determining their course for the morrow. Then D'Artigny made a few notes on a scrap of paper, arose to his feet and disappeared.

They had scarcely exchanged a word, and the feeling of enmity between them was apparent. Cassion sat quiet, the map still open, and stared after the younger man until he vanished in the darkness. The look upon his face was not a pleasant one.

Impelled by a sudden impulse I arose to my feet, the blanket still draped about my shoulders, and crossed the open space to the fire. Cassion, hearing the sound of my approach, glanced around, his frown changing instantly into a smile.

"Ah, quite an adventure this," he said, adopting a tone of pleasantry. "The first time you have left your tent, madame?"

"The first time I have felt desire to do so," I retorted. "I feel curiosity to examine your map."

"And waited until I was alone; I appreciate the compliment," and he removed his hat in mock gallantry. "There was a time when you would have come earlier."

"Your sarcasm is quite uncalled for. You have my pledge relative to the

Sieur D'Artigny, monsieur, which suffices. If you do not care to give me glimpse of your map, I will retire again."

"Pouf! do not be so easily pricked, I spoke in jest. Ay, look at the paper, but the tracing is so poor 'tis no better than a guess where we are. Sit you down, madame, so the fire gives light, and I will show you our position the best I can."

"Did not D'Artigny know?"

"He thinks he does, but his memory is not over clear, as he was only over this course the once. 'Tis here he has put the mark, while my guess would be a few leagues beyond."

I bent over, my eyes seeking the points indicated. I had seen the map before, yet it told me little, for I was unaccustomed to such study, and the few points, and streams named had no real meaning to my mind. The only familiar term was Chicago Portage, and I pointed to it with my fingers.

"Is it there we leave the lake, monsieur?"

"Ay; the rest will be river work. You see this stream? 'Tis called the Des Plaines, and leads into the Illinois. D'Artigny says it is two miles inland, across a flat country. 'Twas Pere Marquette who passed this way first, but since then many have traversed it. 'Tis like to take us two days to make the portage."

"And away up here is Port des Morts, where we crossed the opening into Green Bay, and we have come since all this distance. Surely 'tis not far along the shore now to the portage?"

"Mon dieu, who knows! It looks but a step on the map, yet 'tis not likely the distance has ever been measured."

"What said the Sieur D'Artigny?"

"Bah! the Sieur D'Artigny; ever it is the Sieur D'Artigny. 'Tis little he knows about it, in my judgment. He would have it thirty leagues yet, but I make it we are ten leagues to the south of where he puts us. What are you going already? Faith, I had hoped you might tarry here a while yet, and hold converse with me."

I paused, in no way tempted, yet uncertain.

"You had some word you wished to say, monsieur?"

"There are words enough if you would listen."

"'Tis no fault of yours if I do not. But not now, monsieur. It is late and cold. We take the boats early and I would rest while I can."

He was on his feet, the map gripped in his hand, but made no effort to stop me, as I dropped him a curtsy, and retreated. But he was there still when I glanced back from out the safety of the tent, his forehead creased by a frown. When he finally turned away the map was crushed shapeless in his fingers.

The morning dawned somewhat warmer, but with every promise of a storm, threatening clouds hanging above the water, sullen and menacing, their edges tipped with lightning. The roar of distant thunder came to our ears, yet there was no wind, and Cassion decided that the clouds would drift southward, and leave us safe passage along the shore. His canoe had been wrenched in making landing the evening before, and had taken in considerable water during the night. This was bailed out, but the interior was so wet and uncomfortable that I begged to be given place in another boat, and Cassion consented, after I had exhibited some temper, ordering a soldier in the sergeant's canoe to exchange places with me.

We may have proceeded for half a league, when a fog swept in toward the land enveloping us in its folds, although we were close enough to the shore so as to keep safely together, the word being passed back down the line, and as we drew nearer I became aware that D'Artigny's boat had turned about, and he was endeavoring to induce Cassion to go ashore and make camp before the storm broke. The latter, however, was obstinate, claiming we were close enough for safety, and finally, in angry voice, insisted upon proceeding on our course.

D'Artigny, evidently feeling argument useless, made no reply, but I noticed he held back his paddles and permitted Cassion's canoe to forge ahead. He must have discovered that I was not with monsieur, for I saw him stare intently at each of the other canoes, as though to make sure of my presence, shading his eyes with one hand, as he peered through the thickening mist. This action evidenced the first intimation I had for days of his continued interest in my welfare, and my heart throbbed with sudden pleasure. Whether or not he felt some premonition of danger, he certainly spoke words of instruction to his Indian paddlers, and so manipulated his craft as to keep not far distant, although slightly farther from shore, than the canoe in which I sat.

Cassion had already vanished in the fog, which swept thicker and thicker along the surface of the water, the nearer boats becoming mere indistinct shadows. Even within my own canoe the faces of those about me appeared

gray and blurred, as the damp vapor swept over us in dense clouds. It was a ghastly scene, rendered more awesome by the glare of lightning which seemed to split the vapor, and the sound of thunder reverberating from the surface of the lake.

The water, a ghastly, greenish gray, heaved beneath, giving us little difficulty, yet terrifying in its suggestion of sullen strength, and the shore line was barely discernible to the left as we struggled forward. What obstinacy compelled Cassion to keep us at the task I know not—perchance a dislike to yield to D'Artigny's advice—but the sergeant swore to himself, and turned the prow of our canoe inward, hugging the shore as closely as he dared, his anxious eyes searching every rift in the mist.

Yet, dark and drear as the day was, we had no true warning of the approaching storm, for the vapor clinging to the water concealed from our sight the clouds above. When it came it burst upon us with mad ferocity, the wind whirling to the north and striking us with all the force of three hundred miles of open sea. The mist was swept away with that first fierce gust, and we were struggling for life in a wild turmoil of waters. I had but a glimpse of it—a glimpse of wild, raging sea; of black, scurrying clouds, so close above I could almost reach out and touch them; of dimly revealed canoes flung about like chips, driving before the blast.

Our own was hurled forward like an arrow, the Indian paddlers working like mad to keep stern to the wind, their long hair whipping about. The soldiers crouched in the bottom, clinging grimly to any support, their white faces exhibiting the abasement of fear. The sergeant alone spoke, yelling his orders, as he wielded steering paddle, his hat blown from his head, his face ghastly with sudden terror. It was but the glimpse of an instant; then a paddle broke, the canoe swung sideways, balanced on the crest of a wave and went over.

I was conscious of cries, shrill, instantly smothered, and then I sank, struggling hard to keep above water, yet borne down by the weight of the canoe. I came up again, choking and half strangled, and sought to grip the boat as it whirled past. My fingers found nothing to cling to, slipping along the wet keel, until I went down again, but this time holding my breath. My water-soaked garments and heavy shoes made swimming almost impossible, yet I struggled to keep face above water. Two men had reached the canoe, and had somehow found hold. One of these was an Indian, but they were already too far away to aid me, and in another moment had vanished in the white crested waves. Not another of our boat's crew was visible, nor could I be sure of where the shore lay.

Twice I went down, waves breaking over me, and flinging me about like a cork. Yet I was conscious, though strangely dazed and hopeless. I struggled, but more as if in a dream than in reality. Something black, shapeless, seemed to sweep past me

through the water; it was borne high on a wave, and I flung up my hands in protection; I felt myself gripped, lifted partially, then the grasp failed, and I dropped back into the churning water. The canoe, or whatever else it was, was gone, swept remorselessly past by the raging wind, but as I came up again to the surface a hand clasped me, drew me close until I had grip on a broad shoulder.

Beyond this I knew nothing; with the coming of help, the sense that I was no longer struggling unaided for life in those treacherous waters, all strength and consciousness left me. When I again awoke, dazed, trembling, a strange blur before my eyes, I was lying upon a sandy beach, with a cliff towering above me, its crest tree-lined, and I could hear the dash of waves breaking not far distant. I endeavored to raise myself to look about, but sank back helpless, fairly struggling for breath. An arm lifted my head from the sand, and I stared into a face bending above me, at first without recollection.

Do you think now that bad luck has left Adele, that her husband is gone forever and that her future is to be a matter of her own choosing?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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