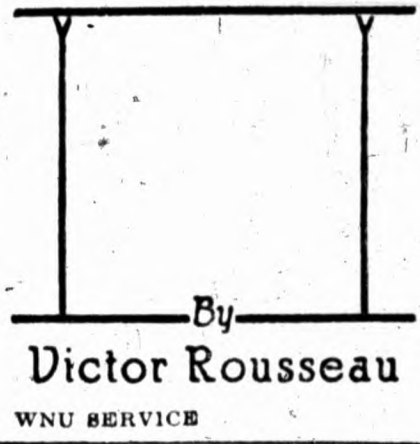


First Lady Laying Cornerstone



Mrs. Calvin Coolidge laying the cornerstone of the Theodore Stone Memorial hospital in Washington, an addition to the Florence Crittenden home. The hospital is a memorial to the daughter of Chester Snow, and will be completed in the autumn.

The Free Traders



By Victor Rousseau
WNU SERVICE

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CHAPTER XVIII

Lee Is Given a Powerful Tool

It was dawn in the gorge when Lee opened his eyes. At first his memories were confused so that he could carry them no further forward than the moment when he turned away from the log house, leaving Joyce with Rathway.

He had meant to kill him then—and here he must have fallen asleep in the forest, for it was daylight. And Joyce had been all night in Rathway's power!

Murder filled his heart; and again everything else was blotted out of his mind but the insensate desire to slay, a primal instinct that swamped every other part of the man's being.

He started up. But—this was not the forest! He was amazed to see the walls of the gorge on either side of him, dwindling away in the distance into open country, with a vista of trees beyond, and splashes of sunshine, interspersed with long waves of shadow, showing that the sun had already risen.

Almost immediately beneath the ledge on which he lay was a cataract, but not deep—a roaring stream of water rushing among the rocks.

And not far away was old Leboeuf, placidly frying bacon in a skillet over a wood fire.

Then all the events of the night flashed into Lee's mind. He uttered a cry, got on his legs.

"Leboeuf!"

At Lee's cry the old Indian turned and came toward him, the skillet in his hand.

"Monsieur?"

"We must go back, Joyce— And he began to tell the old man of the events of the night, that Joyce and he were married—legit it was all incoherent, and he was not sure that he succeeded in making Leboeuf understand.

But if Leboeuf did not quite understand what Lee was trying to tell him, he understood enough to send him into a flaming fury. He shook his fists. He danced. His face grew red with blood. He seemed transformed once again into that monstrous, ape-like creature with whom Lee had engaged in that desperate duel in the chasm.

"We must save her, Leboeuf," Lee exclaimed. "We must go at once."

"We must go at once, Monsieur. But one cannot return that way. There is only one way into the mine beneath the stone. No one can breast this river. I shall show you. But wait!"

He disappeared within a small cavern in the mountain, and reappeared in a moment or two carrying a rifle.

"Now, Monsieur, there is no time to lose. I shall pick them off one by one as they come out of the house. Eh, my little Joyce in the hands of that devil! But my master has shown me in a dream that she shall not be harmed. Still, it was the last words my master spoke to me while he was alive, that I should protect her from him, and he has warned me many times in dreams also. Eh, this way, Monsieur!"

Lee, feeling recuperated, despite the throbbing of his bruised scalp, followed the old man along the narrow coping of rock beside the cataract. In

a little while the path grew wider, the rocky walls fell back, becoming outlying spurs of the mountains. The roar of the cataract grew faint behind them. They continued down a gentle gradient into a level plain. The forest closed about them.

Then, when they had been proceeding for about half an hour, the forest suddenly came to an end, and to Lee's amazement, he found himself standing near the bank of the main river which flowed through Siston lake. He could not have been more than half a mile from the log house.

But they heard the sudden throbbing of the motor boat. Lee ground his teeth. In an instant old Leboeuf had pulled him down behind the shelter of a rock.

Then they heard Joyce scream. Again and again her agonized cries rang out.

Lee tried to leap to his feet; he would have flung himself into the river, but the Indian's iron arms encircled him. And, as he tried to cry out in answer, a hand closed over his mouth.

Next minute the motor boat shot into mid stream. It contained Rathway and his three aides; there was something huddled in the bottom of the boat, undoubtedly Joyce; and there was no doubt that they were making for Siston lake.

And all the while Joyce screamed, and Lee struggled in the Indian's grasp, and tried to cry out, but he could not move or utter a sound.

"Monsieur! Think of her!" Leboeuf was hissing in his ear. "It is useless to betray yourself. We do what we can. You understand? You promise?"

And suddenly reason came back to Lee. He nodded and Leboeuf released him.

But the next instant it was Lee who knocked up Leboeuf's hand as the old man was drawing a bead upon the boat, now some hundred yards away from them in the middle of the stream.

Leboeuf looked at him reproachfully. "Monsieur, I could have killed him. I do not err at the mark, Monsieur."

Again he was about to take aim, but Lee caught the rifle in his hand.

"No, no, Leboeuf. She must not be left to the mercy of those three men. So long as Rathway lives there is a shade of hope for her. Don't you understand?"

Comprehension came to the old Indian. He lowered the rifle.

Joyce had ceased to cry out, and in dumb helplessness the two men watched the motor boat shoot past them and disappear around the curve of the shore. They looked at each other.

"If any harm has come to her," said Lee, "I swear that I'll kill Rathway like the hound that he is."

"Good," Leboeuf nodded vigorously. "Some men are like the greynoddy, Monsieur. Yes, he must die. He has done harm enough for one man, and I think he has done more than his share. He has grown weary of him. But what will you do now, Monsieur?"

"Go to Siston lake. Take her away or die there."

"Very good, Monsieur. That was my own plan also. But it is a journey of a night and a day, Monsieur, and it is necessary to eat, also to take food with us."

Lee was for starting immediately, but Leboeuf persuaded him. They were to return to the log house, to see if any provisions had been left behind. If not, they were to go through the mine and to Leboeuf's den in the rocks, which could be reached by fording the edge of the subterranean stream. It gave access in one way, but not in the other. And Leboeuf's decision proved a fortunate one, for at the door of the log house they met Father McGrath, his rifle across his back.

"Thank God I've found ye, Anderson!" he cried. "I couldna sleep all the night for troublin' about ye and that pur lassie. So before the dawn

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I started off to make sure that no evil thing had happened beyond what couldna be avoided. But what has happened, and whaur is she, and that band o' skunks?"

Lee told him as concisely as possible while old Leboeuf, bustling inside the house, brought out some flour and bacon that the gang had left behind, and proceeded to prepare a meal.

Father McGrath listened, uttering sharp expletives which sounded remarkably like clipped oaths, deprived of their harmful characteristics by the alteration of an occasional consonant.

"Aye, and I'm no surprised," he said. "'Tis but what I'd have expected. But still, what can ye do, Anderson? The law's the law, whether of God or man, an' that compact ye made w' Rathway has na bindin' power."

"I can arrest him for attempted murder."

The priest laid a hand on his shoulder. "Ye canna do that, lad," he answered. "There's na court in the land would convict him. In the first place, though ye meant only to save the lassie frum him, there's na jury would believe it. They'd say that compact by which ye were to get his wife for the mine stinks in the sight o' heaven. Aye, and they'd say ye arrested him to get the wumman. Aye, and, furthermair, ye canna shame her by bringin' her into court as a witness. Na, lad, ye'll e'en ha' to let it go."

"Ye fought a guld fight for her, lad, but there's naething more to do. Nor can ye arrest him for hooch-sellin', for that wud be meexin' up public duty w' private vengeance. (Ye'll see it, lad, when ye grow cool."

The shrewd, hard, common sense seemed to turn Lee's heart to stone. He knew Father McGrath was right. There was nothing he could do.

He could not even attempt the arrest of Pierre and Shorty for the dynamiting without bringing the whole story into publicity. And he knew well enough that, prima facie, it looked simply like an attempt on his part to possess himself of the wife of another man.

Then there was the discredit that such a case would bring on the police. But as he stood there, feeling his last hopes gone, Leboeuf laid down his skillet and came toward them. The old man had overheard all that had passed.

"Listen, Messieurs," Leboeuf said. "now I can tell you what I know. I have known Jim Rathway under many other names. Since, when he was a young man, he first came into this district to sell drink to my people."

"Messieurs, many years have gone by—twenty years—since he came to Lake Misquash, where my people had their tepees. He was a friend to us. He trapped, and, if he sold a little whiskey, that was between ourselves, you understand, Monsieur. And he was my friend."

"One day we both start to take the furs from our trap lines. His line runs east and mine runs west. I leave my woman in my tepee. A young wife, Messieurs, much younger than myself. In one week I return. My tepee is empty. My woman is gone. So, too, my furs."

"Later I learn. She has gone with Rathway. He keep her six weeks. Then he drive her away into the forest. She dare not return to her own people. So she go south to the cities of the white people. Long I search for her, but I never find her. You know what happens to our women in the cities of the white men, Messieurs."

"Then my heart becomes hard, like a stone. As for her, she is nothing to me no longer. But some day I find Rathway again, and then I kill him."

"Well, Messieurs, many years ago I come here. I work for my master, Mr. Pelly. He trusts me. He tells me the secret that he has come here to hide. He shows me the mine that he has found. And for years we work it together, taking out the gold. He want me to take a share, but gold is nothing to me, now that I have the revenge in my heart. It shall be all for him, and Mamzelle Joyce some day."

"Then Rathway comes. My people have caught him doing another such a wrong, but my master tells them to forgive, and because they love my master, they do not injure him. So the peace is laid upon me also."

"But I tell my master what Rathway did to my woman, and he turns back in time to save Mamzelle Joyce from him. He shoots him through the arm. And Rathway smiles and tells him he has learned the secret that can bring my master to die."

"After that my master is as his servant. And again I say, let me kill him and again my master says no. And he obeys Rathway in fear, only he would never show him the mine, which is for Mamzelle Joyce."

"Night after night Rathway follows us, but always he loses us at the rocking stone, for he cannot come near enough to discover the secret without being seen. Then Mamzelle Joyce goes away to school, and after that Rathway gives my master no peace. And at last he betrays him, thinking that when my master has been hung for the murder, the mine becomes Mamzelle Joyce's, and he will marry her and it will be his own."

"And so a policeman comes here—that was during the war. But my master could not be found, for he was dead already. You see, Messieurs, Rathway thought perhaps he would not be hung after all, since it was so long since my master killed his enemy, and so the mine would not be his; and so he murders him."

"What's that?" cried Lee, starting toward Leboeuf.

"He kills my master, Monsieur."

"You saw this?"

"Yes, Monsieur. It was near the rocking stone. Rathway had followed him and demanded knowledge of the

entrance. He threatened him with his revolver. My master drew his and Rathway fled. My master dropped dead. Rathway flung his body over the cliff into the mine not knowing that it would never be found."

Lee turned to Father McGrath. "I'm going to save her now," he cried exultantly. "I am authorized to take any necessary action in connection with Pelly's death, and I propose to put Rathway under arrest and bring him in to Manistree. Leboeuf, you will swear in court you saw this murder?"

"I saw it, Monsieur, from the tunnel, but I could not have stepped it, and so I hid, lest Rathway should find the entrance. Afterward I was afraid. I am old now, not like I was when Rathway stole my woman from me. I was afraid of him. And my master comes to me in dreams and says, 'Not yet, Leboeuf!'"

Lee gripped the old man by the arm. "Leboeuf, will you come to Siston lake with me and help me arrest Rathway? We'll both probably get killed, but I'm going if I have to go alone."

"I will go with you, Monsieur," answered Leboeuf quietly.

"Two of us against six. But—"

"Haud hard, mon!" cried Father McGrath. "Will I be too old, think ye, to help ye arrest that rascally, murderous hooch peddler and clean out that nest o' skunks wi' ye?"

"You, Father?"

"Aye, myself," answered the priest. "Twas surely a lucky impulse that made me bring this rifle wi' me. I doot na, Anderson, but the three o' us can render a guld account o' ourselves."

"And see, Monsieur," said old Leboeuf, stepping toward the house. "He stooped and picked up the rifle Father McGrath had given Lee. Lee



He Stooped and Picked Up the Rifle Father McGrath Had Given Lee.

had let it fall in the snow the night before when he was surprised by Estelle. The weapon, nearly hidden in the drift beneath the window, had escaped the notice of the gang. Lee opened the breech and found six rounds in the magazine.

"We'll ha' six round apiece, and if we're prudent, we won't need that many," said Father McGrath. "Ye ha' six in yours, Leboeuf?"

But the Indian had a single-loading rifle, an old Winchester. However, he pulled a handful of cartridges out of his pocket.

"That's good enough," said Lee. "After packing a little food to suffice them on the journey, they started along the trail. Some little distance from the house, however, Leboeuf showed to Father McGrath and Lee the prints of double horse-tracks, going and returning."

Leboeuf stooped and examined them. "It is the horse of Rathway's woman," he pronounced.

And with that Lee recalled his interrupted conversation with Estelle the night before. "You don't have to commit murder to get her," she had said. "But Joyce's appearance had broken off their conversation."

And he wondered what it was that Estelle could have told him, and what it was beyond jealousy of Joyce, that had brought her in Rathway's wake.

Father McGrath turned to him. "By the way, lad, there's more than six—there's nine or ten of that h—s crew," he said.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

Baldock Picnic June 24th.

Baldock, June 14.—The annual picnic here will be held on June 24 this year, with barbecue dinner, day and night dancing and all the regular features. C. L. Jordan, of Allendale, is again in charge. This is one of the features of the season and is a popular picnic in all the counties throughout this section. It is held annually at the Baldock pavilion.

Barnes-Loadholt.

Fairfax, June 14.—A marriage that will be of interest to many people throughout the state was solemnized at the Baptist parsonage, Fairfax, last Sunday evening at 6 o'clock, when Jay T. Loadholt of Fairfax and Miss Helen Barnes of Brunson, were married. The Rev. G. Wilson performed the ceremony in the presence of a few friends and relatives.

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Scholarship and Entrance Examinations.

The examination for the award of vacant scholarships in the University of South Carolina and for admission of new students will be held at the County Court House Friday, July 10, 1925, at 9 o'clock a. m. Applicants must not be less than 16 years of age.

Scholarships are vacant in the following 23 counties:

Allendale	Charleston	Dorchester	Jasper	Oconee	Union
Barnwell	Cherokee	Fairfield	Laurens	Richland	Williamsburg
Beaufort	Clarendon	Hampton	Lexington	Saluda	York
Berkeley	Dillon	Horry	Marion	Sumter	

Applicants for scholarships should write to President Melton for scholarship application blanks. These should be filed with the President by July 7th. Scholarships are worth \$100.00, plus free tuition and fees. The next session will open September 16th, 1925.

For further information write to: PRESIDENT W. D. MELTON, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C.