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The door opened, and Jacqueline stood outlined against the summer day, with the gray old trader behind her. From his cot in the coolness of the shadow, Pierre looked upon the woman he loved



# J A C Q U E L I N E

*A Story of the Great Woods and a Great Love*

By James Oliver Curwood

*Author of "Kazan," "God's Country—and the Women," etc.*

Illustrated by  
Gayle Porter Hoskins

**A**S a matter of fact, Pierre Thiebout was too much a child of nature to be afraid of death. To him death was in reality a curious phase of life. It had always interested him. And now that he was face to face with it and hemmed in by it, he saw in the approach of his own end a grandeur that thrilled him even more than its terrifying aspect appalled him.

He had reached the crest of a ridge on which the green timber grew thinly, scarcely screening his vision of what lay under him. It was like looking down into a vast cauldron twisting with flame and smoke. It was his world—afire; until only a short time ago his paradise, a world of wonderful forest and streams, and of the

wild things. And now, as he looked at it with eyes that stared a bit wildly out of a face that was blackened by smoke and flame, it came to him that this was a fitting end of it all, and of him. It was a world blasted, as his own happiness had been blasted, and it seemed to him that there was something of comradeship and of sympathy in the moaning roar of it that came to his ears. And there seemed also to come with it the sobbing whisper of a name—"Jacqueline—Jacqueline!"

He covered his eyes for a bit that he might see better. He had made a tremendous fight to escape and had failed. To the waist he was naked. His flesh was seared and scarred. His hair was singed. His boots were burned from his feet. But he had saved the sight of his eyes, and he uncovered them again to lose nothing of the spectacle. He could make out little that was definite now. Southward, hidden under a dense pall of resinous smoke, the fire was sweeping like a race-horse through the dense spruce forest. The sound of it was like the steady and cavernous roar of a cataract, and the heat of it was like the heat that comes through the open door of a furnace and increasing steadily. There was no hope in that direction. There was

## Jacqueline

hope to the west and the north. And eastward he had fought his losing fight against a wall of flame. So he stood, the center of the conflagration about him, prepared to die. And with this preparedness there rose in him a sort of exultation. Down there, scarcely a quarter of a mile distant, was O'Connor's cabin, and in that cabin lay O'Connor himself, helpless in the face of death. O'Connor would die with him. And O'Connor was the one man in the world he had ever learned to hate.

It was, after all, clearly a matter of natural ethics in Pierre Thiebout's understanding of things. Since an hour ago, when he had lost his fight against it, the fire had ceased to be his enemy. This was because of Pierre's superstitions and beliefs. For him the forests and lakes and streams that had been his home for twenty years were possessed of animate souls. They had lived with him and for him, and were of the fiber of his being. They had given him happiness and had exulted with him in that happiness. And they had seen that happiness torn from him. Now they had risen in the wrath of a mighty God to avenge him. For O'Connor, the government map-maker, would die.

"I wish there was no smoke down there," mumbled Pierre a little thickly. "*Par tes mille cornes du diable*, but it would be fine to see the walls fall in, and the flames lick him up!"

HE was not a man of hatred, this Pierre Thiebout. But the worm of it was in his brain now, working with the vicious exultation of an adder. Possibly it was because of the smoke in his lungs, or the hurt on his forehead, or both. His mind, like the fire, had begun to twist in a curious torment, and all the time there ran through it that whispering, insistent call of "Jacqueline—Jacqueline—" He dropped behind a big rock which shielded him from the death-waves of heat that came from the south. Again he covered his eyes, and for a few moments his life seemed departing from him on a sea of engulfing dizziness. It was not an unpleasant change. It took him back a matter of twenty years. Winter! He saw it vividly again, that winter day of almost twenty years ago, when, whipped by storm and starved until he was about to die, he stumbled upon Gaston Rouget's cabin. It was then that he first heard that wonderful name, called by the man who had half carried him in, from the edge of the timber. The door opened, and she stood there, with the sun that had followed the storm shining upon her. He was only nine then. He believed in the *chasse-galère* that rode through the skies, and in the *feu-follet* and the *loup-garou*, and also in the little fairies that lived in the forests to bring good luck to the people of St. Jean Baptiste—and it was small wonder he thought she was an angel. He had never seen anything, even in his dreams, like this Jacqueline! Gaston Rouget's cry had brought her to the door with a brush in her hand and her wonderful hair streaming about her. There in the sunlight it was a dazzling glory. He had looked up at her out of eyes dulled by the nearness of death and had whispered in his adoration, "*L'ange!*"

"It is Pierre Thiebout's boy," he heard Gaston say. "He has come down a good seventy miles through the storm. Some-

Yes, to be sure, something had happened—and he tried to tell them about it, that his father and mother had died of the plague, and that for ten days he had been fighting for his life in the forests. But when the woman bent over him, and he saw the shine in her eyes and felt the touch of her hands and the soft smother of her hair he had murmured again, "*L'ange!*"

It was curious how vividly it came back to him there beside the rock, with the forests roaring about him, and the dark pit of smoke hiding Bucky O'Connor's cabin. Jacqueline the wife and mother, and in the cradle the little Jacqueline! Nineteen years ago, to be exact—nineteen years lacking a month. *Mon Dieu*, but it seemed only yesterday or the day before! No, it was impossible that the years had passed. He was back there again, listening to those first crooning gurgles of comradeship from that wonderful little pink-and-white creature in the cradle. And then he was playing with her in the forest, and toting her on his shoulders, and twining her soft hair with the red *bakneesh* berries and blueflowers, and worshiping her each hour, and day, and year as she grew taller, and slimmer, and more beautiful. "*Oo-ee, Jacqueline—Jacqueline—*"

The name smote his brain. It roused him, and he opened his eyes again and looked down into the valley where the smoke hung in a wall between him and O'Connor's cabin. He gripped hard at himself once more and rose on his feet beside the rock. Still he was dizzy. And then a stupendous thing happened. Above the rolling thunder of the fire that was sweeping in the deeper forests there came faintly to his ears a sound. It was far away at first, the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle of a bell! As he stood there, swaying, it came nearer and nearer, and yet it grew no louder; and at last it passed straight over his head, as though carried by wings, and then died away slowly. A cry rose to his cracked lips. His heart leaped into his throat, and he stretched up his naked, bleeding arms and tried to pray before the sound of the bell was quite gone. In him the *habitant's* blood ran red and strong, its superstitions, its beliefs, its simple faith in the good and the beautiful. Perhaps he heard the bell because ever since he had failed in his fight against the wall of fire he had been listening for it and expecting it. He knew that it would come before death, unless his soul was condemned, and now, with his arms reaching up, he cried out,

"*C'est le bon Dieu qui passe*—it is God Himself who is passing!"

THE thought gave him strength. In him hatred died out. He drew in a great gasp of air in the shelter of the rock and made his way slowly and painfully down into the valley. Over him he felt the spirit of a benediction. He found his way to O'Connor's cabin, and entering it, he said to the stricken man there: "I have heard the bell in the skies, *m'sieu*. We are very soon going to die."

O'Connor was not the man he had known two years ago. He was not the O'Connor he had so nearly whipped to death that last afternoon over at Norway Mission, where the two Jacquelines and Gaston Rouget still lived. He was almost dead now. The fire would not have much to do with when it reached the cabin. His

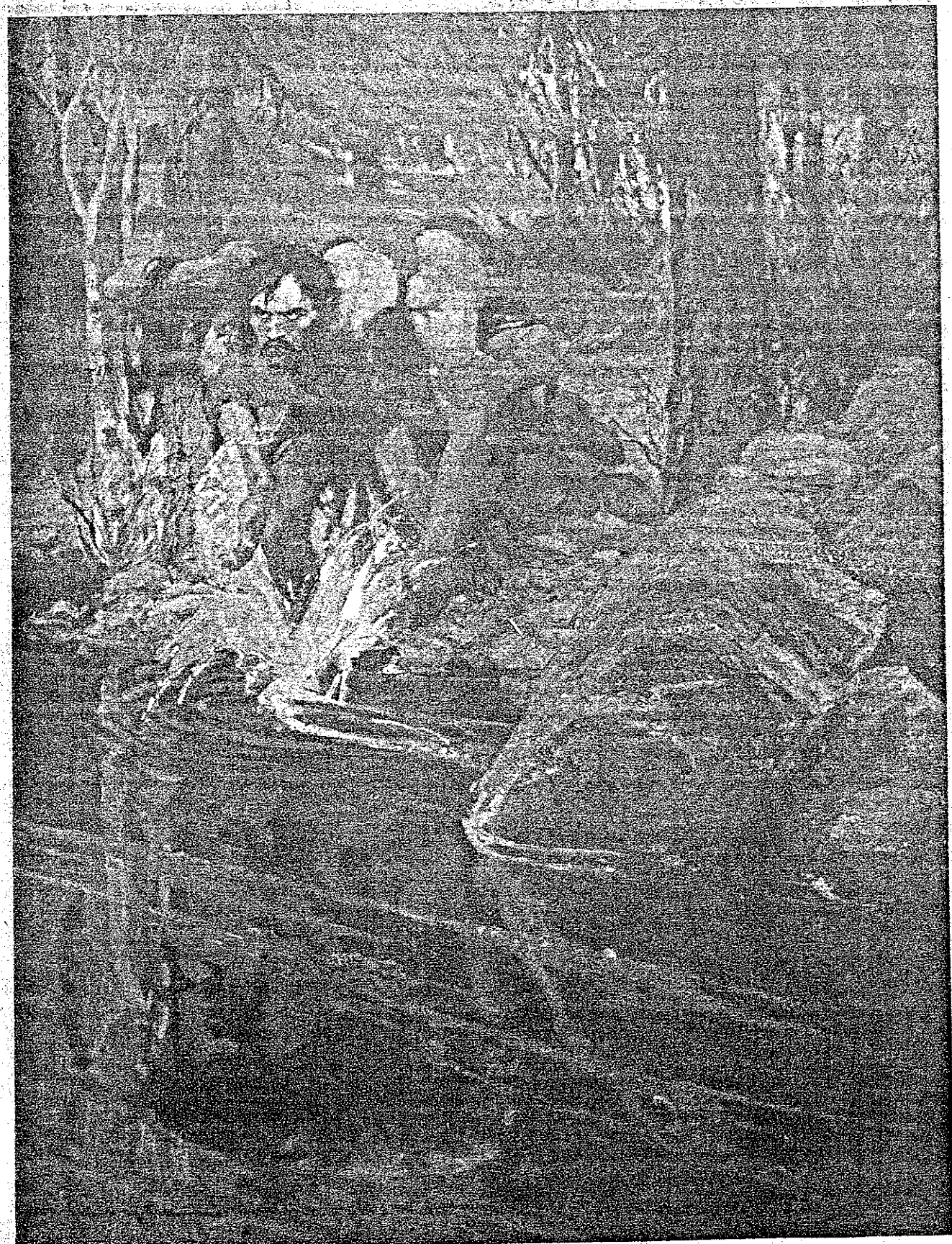
eyes were sunken by the fever in which Pierre had found him yesterday. His face was covered with a scraggy beard. He had probably been sick a week when Pierre came, and he was rolling and twisting in delirium. The delirium had passed early in the morning of this day, and it was now mid-afternoon. In that interval he had recognized Pierre Thiebout, and his eyes had glared like the reddish eyes of a husky in that recognition and in the deathless hatred that had come with it. Pierre could have killed him easily then, but he had kept his hands off. It had been a struggle. O'Connor was staring at him with those same red eyes now, but Pierre believed that his mind had crumbled again since morning and that perhaps he did not recognize him, blackened and torn as he was. The man had cringed back in his bunk with his shoulders to the wall, like a jackal preparing to ward off an attack.

"We are going to die, *m'sieu*," Pierre repeated gently through his cracked lips. "Listen!"

He had left the door of the cabin open and could hear distinctly that distant, cataract-like roar of the fire. In half an hour at the most it would sweep over them. O'Connor's hand was fumbling stealthily under the blankets of his bunk. Pierre did not see. He had dropped into a chair beside the table, and for a few moments his head sagged into the crook of his naked arms. His eyes closed, but his brain held vividly the vision of Bucky O'Connor as he cringed there against the cabin wall like a jackal at bay.

WITH clenched hands he was fighting the old fight over again. Two years ago—*Mon Dieu*, how tall and slim and beautiful Jacqueline had grown in those seventeen years since he had stared up into the face of the older *ange* in the doorway of Gaston Rouget's cabin! And all those years she had belonged to him, and he had dreamed of the day when they would go hand in hand to the Mission, and she would give herself to him forever, just as the older *ange* had given herself to Gaston Rouget. He could see her as vividly now as though he had left her only yesterday—and two years had been an eternity for him! *Oui*, it had been a paradise until O'Connor came. Under his burned hands he could feel again the thrill of the great soft braids he had loved to fondle; her dark eyes glowed at him, her lips were held up to him, red as crushed *bakneesh* berries—and out of his soul rose a sobbing, stifling cry. O'Connor heard that cry, just as his fumbling fingers clutched at something cold and hard under his blanket. His eyes glared redder as he stared at the bowed head of Pierre Thiebout.

*Oui*, it had been a paradise—And then O'Connor! He would have killed a man if he had told him that such a thing could have happened with his Jacqueline. Had he not been the only man in the world except her father to kiss her lips, and stroke her hair, and hold her shining head on his breast? Had not God given her to him? And the forests, and all the spirits that were in the forests? Yes, he would have killed a man had he dared to suggest that such a monstrous thing could have happened! And yet, happen it did. O'Connor, sleek, clever of tongue, fresh from the government offices at Ottawa—



It did not occur to Pierre, in this last mighty effort against death, that he might let O'Connor slip from his back and win out alone. O'Connor had become a part of him. His limp head bobbed on Pierre Thiebout's chest. His long arms hung down, and his feet were free of the fire in which Pierre's were laying themselves open to the raw flesh. But at last Pierre came to the river with O'Connor still on his back



## Jacqueline

The flirtation—Jacqueline's laughing eyes that last afternoon when she saw that his soul had gone dead within him—and then O'Connor's taunt in the edge of the forest, and the fight—

*Ventre saint gris*, but it had been a tremendous fight! *Oui*, O'Connor had surely been a man if he was a scoundrel, and he had fought like a tiger. But he had gone down at last. He, Pierre Thiebout, might have killed him easily after that. But he had let him live. That night he went to the Post, an hour before Jacqueline learned of the fight. The next day O'Connor followed him there and showed him what Jacqueline had written on a white sheet of paper. The note was for O'Connor himself, and in it his Jacqueline, *l'ange* of all his hopes and all his prayers, had said that she hated Pierre Thiebout and that she never wanted to see him again. The words rang through his head now:

"Why did you fight him? Couldn't you see? Couldn't you understand? I hate him. I never want to see him again. *Ka sakehet*, it is you I love. Without you I should want to die."

Yes, those were her words, signed by her name, and written to O'Connor in the queer little scrawling hand she had learned at the mission school over at Norway House. There was only one thing for him to do after that. He went away. Even to the factor at Lac Bain he said nothing of where he was going. Two years—Montreal—old Quebec—and then—

A roar filled the cabin, and out of his half stupor Pierre Thiebout sprang to his feet and faced O'Connor. The revolver in O'Connor's hand was still smoking, and before he could move, the sick man fired again, and Pierre heard the hissing spit of the bullet close to his ear. O'Connor's teeth were snarling through his shag of beard. Again he was that venomous beast of two years ago in the edge of the forest. In an instant Pierre was at him, one of his hands clutching at his throat and the other fighting to break the wrist that held the revolver. The weapon fell to the floor, and Pierre flung the fever-stricken man back against the wall.

"You would kill, *m'sieu*—even now!" he panted. His hands were clenched, and his body trembled with the desire to take O'Connor's life. "It is I—I who should kill," he cried chokingly. "*Oui*, I should kill because you have sent me through two years of hell. Now that I have come back, just to hide for a little while in the old forests, it is you I come upon first. I should have killed you yesterday, when the fever blinded you and you did not know it was Pierre Thiebout who put water to your lips. By the great God, I should kill you now! But I have heard the bells—we are going to die together."

He picked up the revolver and stared at O'Connor. If there had been a moment's recognition in the sick man's face, it was gone now. Yes, he was positive. O'Connor did not know that he was Pierre Thiebout. The madness of the fever was in his red eyes. His hands were twisting,

and suddenly he fell back on his blankets with a stifled groan.

"*Keskewao*," said Pierre to himself, breathing the word with awe, and staring still harder. "Yes, it is the madness. He does not know that I am Pierre Thiebout. *Mon Dieu*, it is strange! Why is he here alone? Why is he sick—alone? Why is it that Jacqueline—"

He choked himself off short. All the way from Quebec he had come with a set heart, to look upon the old streams and forests he had loved, to be with them for a little while alone, to grieve in his homesickness and his heart-break without a soul knowing that he was there, and to still his ears if he could against the sound of Jacqueline's name. And now he was asking himself over and over again why it was O'Connor that he should meet first, and why it was that the fire should trap them together, so that they might die looking into each other's faces? It was strange.

He went to the door and gazed out into the pit of fir-gloom. A cooler draft of air

was lifting a bit. The air was still cooler. It filled his parched lungs, and his blood was fired by a new strength. Off there, in the face of that pocket of wind, there was hope. If he could fight his way a mile to the northward before the wind changed again, it meant life for him! Over the charred country, perhaps through flames, he must fight his way to the Rife River. There was a chance now—a big chance.

As the thought filled him, there came a moaning cry from O'Connor. He turned about suddenly. O'Connor had crawled from his bunk and had reached the table. The light from the door fell in his face as he leaned across it. If there had been a doubt in Pierre's mind, it was gone now. It was written there as clearly as though the Host had spoken it in Pierre Thiebout's ears—madness. There swept over him all at once the new and overwhelming significance of the bells he had heard passing in the sky. They had meant—not death, but life. They had come, not as a message, but as a command. O'Connor, sane and in his strength, he might have killed. But O'Connor with his mind stricken he must save. It was a part of his faith. To let him die in that sickness without an effort to save him would mean the eternal sacrifice of his own soul. It was, after all, the simple code of the forest children of St. Jean Baptiste.

He approached O'Connor slowly. "There is a chance, *m'sieu*," he said, forcing himself to speak as though the other were in his right mind and could understand. "There has come a break in the fire. If we are lucky, we may force our way through it to the Rife River."

He drew nearer, and a look of deadly malevolence came into O'Connor's face. His lips drew back in a snarl, and his hands clenched the edge of the table. In that moment O'Connor, with his brain unbalanced, must have recognized Pierre Thiebout. Yet even then Pierre was uncertain, and there was not time to lose. He sprang to O'Connor's side and caught him by the arm, and the next instant O'Connor was fighting him like a cornered beast. After a few moments of struggle with the sick man, Pierre knew there was but one way. He watched for the right opportunity and struck just once. The blow caught O'Connor on the jaw, and his body sagged. It was scarcely over before Pierre Thiebout was staggering out through the cabin door, his shoulders bent under the inanimate weight of the man who had destroyed his world for him.

He struck straight out for the rift in the pall of smoke that hung to the northward. Half an hour before, it had been a wall of fire. With O'Connor hung over his shoulder like a huge sack of grain, he made his way around the foot of the ridge that had until now saved the "cup," in which the cabin was situated, from utter devastation. His half-naked feet struck the smoldering ash. Hot air entered his nostrils again, and for a moment or two he dropped back and rested against a huge rock to relieve himself partially of O'Connor's weight. He could no longer feel the cool air that had (Continued on page 126)

### A S O N G

By Claudia Cranston

I must make my mourning  
Over into song;  
To the one who left me  
Mourning would be wrong,  
Mourning would be wrong.

Work must be my grieving,  
Smiles the only sign;  
Weeping were unworthy  
Such a loss as mine,  
Such a loss as mine.

Work must be my worship,  
Cheerfulness my prayers;  
Less would be unfaithful  
To the one who dares,  
To the one who dares.

Spirit his to chide me  
Were my laughter fled,  
Though I found his body  
Lying with the dead,  
Lying with the dead.

Work must be my grieving,  
Love must hide my loss,  
Still my lips be smiling  
When they kiss the Cross,  
When—they kiss—the Cross.

than he had felt in hours struck him in the face. It was a moment or two before the significance of it sank into his being. The wind had changed! Even as he had staggered down from the crest of the summit to O'Connor's cabin his unseen gods of the forests had been performing this miracle for him. The wind was coming now straight out of the north and east. His swollen lips failed to articulate the cry that rose out of his chest. He listened, and the surging roar of the fire to the south was less distinct. Northward the smoke

# Jacqueline

(Continued from page 42)

come with the sudden change of the wind, and as he leaned against the rock it seemed to him that the roaring behind him was more distinct.

With a deep breath he charged forth into the seared lane of the fire. He could see very little. Under his feet the ash and litter of the flames lay thick, while ahead of him the grayish-black smoke shut out his vision like a curtain. Twice since morning he had made this same fight, and twice he had been driven back. He knew that this was the last chance, and he knew that he would not come back again. He would win or die. He mumbled that fact to himself as he staggered on. His half-naked feet fell again and again into pits of ash-covered fire, and at last only one long, moaning sound came from between his lips. The air he gasped into his lungs grew hotter. His brain reeled. Twice in a hundred yards he almost fell face downward with O'Connor. The second time he saved himself by putting out his hand to a burning stub. It did not occur to him, in this last mighty effort against death, that he might let O'Connor slip from his back and win out alone. O'Connor had become a part of him. His limp head bobbed on Pierre Thiebout's chest. His long arms hung down, and his feet were free of the fire in which Pierre's were laying themselves open to the raw flesh.

IT was destined never to be told by Pierre how at last he came to the river with O'Connor still on his back. When he came back to a dim sort of realization of what had happened, he was lying with only his head out of water, and a dozen feet from him O'Connor was squatted Indian fashion on a white sand-bar, mad with his fever, but quiet. When Pierre opened his eyes, it was as if a knife had slit them open, and he saw O'Connor's terrible face grinning at him and then laughing outright. He raised himself and looked about. The bar was in the middle of the river. The air was thick with smoke, and on both sides of them there was a deep and steady roar of flames. Almost within reach of Pierre's hand was a porcupine rolled up into a round, frightened ball. A little beyond that was another and still another. The bar was literally peppered with porcupines rolled into round balls and with red, staring eyes. All at once it struck Pierre as being tremendously funny—the fire, mad O'Connor sitting there humped up so like an Indian, and all those porcupines! And he laughed. The nearest porcupine drew back a little at the sound of his voice. Pierre dragged himself out of the water, nearer to O'Connor, and pulled himself into the same sort of sitting posture. He was terribly burned, but his brain was dulled to the sense of pain. Vaguely he gripped at the significance of things. He had achieved a great triumph in reaching the river, for there sat O'Connor, safe and sound, humped up over his knees and staring at him with the hideous intentness of a leering stone gargyle. Even Pierre, with his brain rocking in his head, knew that only a madman could look like that.

He got up on his feet, keeping the slits of his eyes on O'Connor. A steady breath of fresh air was coming up the river, and he found his lungs filling and his vision clearing. Mechanically he took a step, and then another. The porcupines waddled out of his way with little protesting grunts. Pierre made his way to the farthest edge of the bar. There was a narrow stretch of water between him and the shore, along which was a thin fringe of green timber the fire had not touched. Under this timber there were cool shadows. And in the shadows Pierre saw something that drew a cry from between his cracked and blackened lips. It was O'Connor's canoe. He went to it, waist-deep in the water, and brought it back and shoved its nose up on the bar. Then he returned to the man whom *le bon Dieu* had chosen him to save.

O'Connor, fever-mad, was waiting. He stood on his feet now, his hands clenched and his red eyes glaring. Pierre's eyes were hurting him terribly again, and he could scarcely see. They were closed as he spoke to O'Connor, telling him about the canoe. He raised a seared and bleeding hand as if to wipe away the pain from them. It was in that moment that O'Connor sprang upon him. His hands closed about Pierre's throat. They went down together, and the porcupines scurried away and huddled in a circle, chuckling in their inane way as they watched the weird performance in the center of the bar.

To the two men, weakened by fire and fever until they possessed little more than the strength of children, it was a mighty struggle. They rolled and twisted, struck and strangled, and O'Connor's hands held to their first grip until Pierre felt that his last breath had come. Then he broke loose, and the fingers of one of his groping hands clutched at a stone. With this he struck blindly and still with more of a sense of duty than of self-preservation, and with a huge sigh O'Connor sagged back limply on the sand and gravel. It was another problem for Pierre to get him to the canoe, but this he accomplished after a time, and rolled him in, face downward in the bow. After that the journey down the river began.

To Pierre life had now ceased to exist in its more definite detail. At times he forgot O'Connor, and at times he forgot that he was running away from a burning death. He paddled steadily, like a machine, but weakly. It was the swift current that gave the canoe speed. Three times it passed through walls of smoke and heat. Then came cooler air, a long time after the canoe had left the sand-bar. It was growing dusk then, the beginning of night, but Pierre's eyes did not note the change. The river grew wider and the current less swift. There was no longer the char of burned timber along the shores. The wind had cleared the skies in places. There was an occasional star. In the east the moon was rising, like a great ship afore riding up slowly through a veil of smoke. And Pierre, the last of his reason gone from him, began to sing. It was the old song—their song. In his madness he fancied that Jacqueline was sitting where O'Connor lay, and that she was singing with him:

"Oh! ze fur fleets sing on Temishaming  
As ze ashen paddles bend,  
An' ze crews carouse at Rupert's House,  
At ze sullen winter's end.  
But my days are done where ze lean wolves  
run,  
An' I ripple no more ze path  
Where ze gray geese race 'cross ze red moon's  
face  
From ze white wind's arctic wrath."

Hours later old Antoine Durant heard that mad song drifting down out of the night upon Fournet's Landing.

NEWS travels slowly in the wilderness. It was four days before the strange story came to Norway Mission and into the home of Gaston Rouget—how old Antoine had brought ashore the two men so nearly burned alive, and how through their ravings he had learned what had happened. Of course there were people at Fournet's Landing who knew them both, and on the second day Antoine took the matter so far in hand as to send word direct, but with proper discretion, to Jacqueline Rouget. Antoine gave his message to a half-breed when he thought that Pierre was still under the opiate they had given him to make him sleep. Pierre heard him, and after that, helpless in his cot, he prayed the good God to let him die before Jacqueline came. For O'Connor's cot was on the other side of the great room that was used in winter as a



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gathering place of traders, and he knew what he would see when Jacqueline came.

On the fifth day O'Connor was still delirious, but on the morning of the sixth he was quieter. It was this day that Pierre Thiebout knew Jacqueline would come, and the agony in his soul was almost too terrible for him to bear. Why had he lived through the fire? Why had the bells in the sky commanded him to save O'Connor and himself? Surely there had been a great mistake. He fought to strengthen himself for the ordeal. He would turn his face to the wall. He would bury his head under the blanket. It would kill him to look upon her again and see her go to O'Connor.

And then came the hour—the minute—when he knew that Jacqueline was outside the door. Nothing told him. He simply knew. He heard old Antoine's voice, the door opened gently, and Jacqueline stood there outlined against the summer day, with the gray old trader behind her. And Pierre did not turn his face to the wall. From where his cot lay in the coolness of shadow he looked upon the woman he loved. Two years! And Jacqueline had changed. She was still as beautiful as his dreams of her. In that she would never change. But the ripe fulness had gone from her cheeks. In her great dark eyes there was a wild torture of doubt and of yearning as she stared from the brightness of day into the shadowed stillness of the room. She saw the two cots. And then—

Pierre Thiebout's eyes still followed her as she ran with a sudden gasping cry to O'Connor's side. After all, was he not a man? He saw her bend over the darkened cot. He saw her kneel. He heard her sobbing out a name—and then—yes, then he would have turned his face to the wall. But it was in that moment that the miracle happened. Jacqueline had risen like a startled thing from her knees. She turned toward him. And now he heard the name that was on her lips, and it was his name! She ran to him and flung herself down at his side, and Antoine Durant, seeing what was happening, went softly out of the room and closed the door behind him.

A little later Gaston Rouget followed him. "I am sorry that O'Connor will live," he said, finishing what old Antoine had long ago shrewdly guessed. "It is fitting that he should die. It was because Pierre Thiebout was slow in making our Jacqueline his wife that she flirted with the other. It was a woman's way, *m'sieu*. Dieu, she has been punished! But that other—*le bête noir*, O'Connor! It was to Pierre Thiebout himself she wrote the note, and O'Connor bought it from the boy she had trusted as her messenger, and cut Pierre's name from it, making it appear as though Jacqueline had written it to him. And Pierre ran away. *Tonnerre de Dieu*, what a fool a man can make of himself now and then, *m'sieu*! Is it not so?"

## Our Boys in France

(Continued from page 45)

like the first efforts of a boy on skates; he falls down, and he falls down hard. But that is not the significant thing. The significant thing is that he gets up again, and he learns to skate. The set of influences that now surround the men from the time they disembark to when they leave the port of entry show a successful plan of operation which restricts opportunity and inclination for evil and promotes inclination for right. On the medical side the campaign has been conducted with unparalleled brilliance. Those diseases which are popularly supposed to be connected with the army are less prevalent in the American Expeditionary Force than they are in America. Not just a little less, but very much less! Stations for the treatment of these diseases are to be found everywhere the soldiers go. Officers contracting these diseases are court-martialed. Commanding officers whose troops contract these diseases are regarded as having failed even more culpably than if they had unnecessarily lost the lives of many more in battle. Brigadier-General Bradley gave me the figures week by week from January tenth. At no time in any of those weeks did the number of men who were ineffective from these causes reach as high as one out of each three hundred soldiers. No such record has been found in any army in the world since these plagues first swept Europe with their devastations.

I looked at our men all the way from the ports of entry to the dugouts back of our front line five hundred miles away—straight-standing men; the kind who look you right back in the eye without a question, and I thought, can it be possible that these are the same men who only a few months before had joined the army; twenty-six percent of them afflicted with venereal disease? It did not seem possible. They were, and at the same time they were not the same men, for the wonderful things that Pershing had done, the new ideals that he has created, the medical and moral defenses against vice, the organized temptations for righteousness which have been set up with his cooperation by the Y. M. C. A. had made new men. This, the greatest organized piece of team-work for righteousness that the world has ever seen, has done for these men what the church, the homes, and the schools of America had not been

able to do. The greatest single cause of disease and suffering among innocent women and children has already been stamped out in the A. E. F. These men are not becoming diseased and debauched; exactly the opposite thing is happening. They are being trained up and are getting finer ideals than they ever had.

The big question in my mind is not what so many have feared, what damages will be wrought upon American society when the army returns. It is exactly the other way. What is America going to do to the cleanest army of men there ever was? In 1922 there will commence to come back probably 4,000,000 men—the victorious American army. They will be men who are accustomed to attending religious service on Sunday mornings, or at least to be in the presence of its influence. In the afternoon and evening they will have had some splendid social recreation or entertainment. What is America going to do with these men who are accustomed to having their Sunday afternoon and evening recreation and entertainments managed or at least participated in by the same men who led the religious services Sunday morning, with the same spirit running through it all? Today in America Sunday afternoon and evening are the greatest opportunity that is given to organized vice. Over there it is the greatest occasion that is given to organized virtue. Over there, there is good, clean recreation, together with the equipment for it, and splendid leadership enough for all the men. Over here almost the opposite might be said. Can America clean up and so prepare that the home-coming of these 4,000,000 men, the victorious army of the world, shall mean the setting up of collective Christianity upon a new and splendid level? It will mean that the principles and activities which at present belong to the favored few shall be maintained as the splendid right and attainment of the majority. No such opportunity has been presented to a Christian nation in the history of the world. No other nation in the world is in a position having the idealism, the wealth, and the executive power to do this thing. This question is going to be answered very largely by you women and by you girls who will be women when they get back, for you determine largely the spiritual quality of daily life.

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