

The Crippled Lady Of Peribonka

By James Oliver Curwood

W.N.U. Service

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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Introducing some of the people of the little Peribonka village of the Canadian north, particularly the crippled lady, who is the simple inhabitant, and her heroic son, who is destined to live long in the village annals.

CHAPTER II.—How the romance of Molly Brant, sister of the great Indian chief, Joseph Brant, and Sir William Johnson, in pre-Revolutionary days, comes down to today with the birth of a son, Paul, to Molly Kiske, wife of a powerful New York financier, and her death when Paul is thirteen years old. Molly Kiske was a descendant of Molly Brant, and her boy has many of the Indian characteristics. At thirty-two Paul married Claire Durand, daughter of his father's business partner. Paul is in charge of an immense engineering work on the Mistassini river, near Peribonka, which his millionaire father has undertaken. But his Indian blood betrays the destruction of the wilderness, and his thoughts are more of the old Peribonka than the Crippled Lady—than of his work.

CHAPTER III.—Paul's wife is in Europe, she having an inclination to live in "those horrible woods." He comes to see in Claire, daughter of a central European immigrant, with her devotion to her invalid mother and her work of educating the village children, his ideal of womanhood.

CHAPTER IV.—Paul writes to his wife, urging her to live in the woods. Claire is the inspiration of the letter. Later that evening, passing the Indian home, he hears Claire crying. He enters the cottage. Mrs. Haldan, long a hopeless invalid, is dead. Paul's efforts to comfort Claire, he feels, bring them closer together.

CHAPTER V.—Claire announces her intention of joining Paul on the Mistassini in a short time. She writes to Paul, of whom she has heard from Paul's letter of kindly sympathy, on the death of her mother.

CHAPTER VI.—Paul goes to Quebec to meet Claire, and brings her to his temporary home. Though she is apparently glad to be with him, she evinces warm friendship for Claire and Paul's other friends, he feels she is only there because she feels it duty. She is not really happy. He becomes aware of a rift between him and his wife.

CHAPTER VII.—Paul, Claire, and two friends make a luncheon party to visit the "Big Gorge" of the Mistassini, an appalling swift current which disappears in a mountain side. Current belief is that anything dropped into it is never seen again. In sport they cast into the stream pieces of wood, and other objects, watching them disappear. Finally they throw a large log to the edge of the rushing water. As they toss it over, it strikes Paul and throws him into the stream. The two women with whom Paul's life is entwined go to what they are sure is certain death. One asks the other if she is going with him. "Then I am," she announces. "Then I am," she announces. "Then I am," she announces.

CHAPTER VIII.—Paul sees the action, and believes the women are clinging to a rock, which temporarily checks his rush to death. He recognizes Claire as the woman who has escaped. He clutches her, but the two are carried onward. Then, a miracle! Paul's feet touch solid earth. He draws himself with the girl, into a subterranean cave.

CHAPTER IX.—Fully satisfied there is no chance of escape, and that for their few remaining hours they are in a world of their own, Paul and Claire reach a perfect understanding as to their mutual love.

CHAPTER X.—A frantic search for the bodies of the two begins, no one believing they could have escaped death. Paul, with matches he has in a waterproof box, builds a fire of driftwood beside which he sits. Claire, drawing a torch to light his way, he begins what he feels is a hopeless exploration of the cave.

CHAPTER XI

Paul knew he must keep moving, or rouse Claire from her sleep. The nakedness and desolation of aloneness were turning him into a coward. Not a coward who was afraid of death, but one who felt increasing horror in passively waiting for it. He went to the debris of rock again. He had no reason for this, no thought, except that it offered him the one chance to do something physical besides fumbling his way over unstable and shifty sand. The desire for a work to do was an ache in his body as well as his brain, and he began to climb the broken mass, as he had done once before. He had gone about thirty or forty feet above the floor of the darkness then, but this time he found footholds which carried him a little farther, until, from the point he reached, he could look over the bulge in the rock which had previously concealed their fire, and could clearly see Claire in the glow of it.

He had the desire to call to her, to feel her glorious life a part of their existence again. Sleeping, she seemed gone from him. He swung his torch, making a writing of fire in the blackness, and his lips almost cried her name. Then he recognized the weakness of his act and began to pull himself a little more up the broken wall. If Claire had awakened and turned her eyes toward him, she would have seen a strange and weird thing. The burning piece of pitchwood lay where the light had been. Then the torch reappeared as suddenly as sable wings had engulfed it, and in another moment it was plunging down through space. In a few minutes Paul came where it had fallen, uttering in the sand, and picked it up again. More than ever his face was like that of a ghost. His cheek was marked by a bleeding wound. His shirt was in

change in him, and slowly, believing joyously, a miracle wrought itself in her face, and all that Paul had been broken down built itself up again. Softness came into her mouth, and she smiled at him. "Shall we go, Paul?" He bowed his head, then picked up the coat which had been her pillow and shook the sand from it. "Yes. The cleft in the rock faces west, and I think the sun was setting when I found it. If we can get out before dark and make a racket, some one may be near enough to hear us." He lighted a torch, and they walked across the sand together. At the pile of rocks he took her hand, helping and guiding her, until they came to the beginning of the ledge from where



He Lighted a Torch, and They Walked Across the Sand Together.

he had looked down on her sleeping form beside the fire. He told her about it as they paused for a moment's rest.

Claire looked at the fire in the pit of gloom below them. It was dying out. The yellow pool of light was narrowing and growing dimmer. A sob came in her throat. "We won't need—ever—to forget," she said.

"No, never." "Especially—the little fire," he said. "And you—sleeping beside it," added Paul.

They continued upward. The fire was shut out. The ledge widened and turned, so they were going through a tunnel in the rock, where water had once made its way to underground depths. They had gone only a short distance when Paul stopped and smothered his torch in the sand until its flame was extinguished. After that they saw a pale reflection of light ahead of them. When they reached it they could look up through a long, narrow fissure that sloped steeply, with day at the top of it. It was two or three hundred yard climb, half with broken rock, half with a mass close to them had freshly fallen.

"I spoiled my shirt on that," said Paul. "I loosened the stuff and came down with it. I hope there isn't another place like it farther up."

Paul was breathing deeply from his exertions, and Claire was fighting for breath. He could see where the sharp edges of the stones had bruised the hands which she was holding at her breast. Her skirt was torn, and through a rent in her sleeve the whiteness of her arm revealed itself. Her face was streaked with rock dust, and her hollow cheeks had not noticed clearly before when she looked under her eyes. Over them was a broader light of day. He could have flung a stone up to the level of the earth, and beyond that was a sky of vivid blue, still touched by the glow of a declining sun. It was this light, descending in a pool upon them, which made him see another Claire, the melting illumination of the pitch pine, the velvety softening of shadows, the pale unreality of first daylight had concealed things from him. Now they were revealed, betraying a change which could no longer keep itself behind the mask of her courage. Something in her had died since they left the pitchwood fire. The ash of it was in her face, the ghost of it in her eyes, and she knew that he saw it and tried to smile at him bravely. He wanted to take her in his arms, and his lips almost cried out the desire. Claire saw that, too, and when the thing of iron in him triumphed over both voice and act, gratitude eased the anguish in her face.

"I'm glad you understand," she said, as if he had spoken, and knew what was in her mind. "I might run away. That would be easier for me. I could hide myself somewhere, and always love you. Nothing can kill those things—memory—and love. I would be satisfied to do that. I would be—almost—happy. But I must do the other thing. I must go to Claire. It will be hard to do that."

Her admission of her love for him was made in a quiet and introspective way, as if his physical self had ceased to be a living part of it. It was this, and her reference to Claire, which strengthened his determination not to weaken her faith in him again.

He moved to the edge of piled debris and began to investigate it, cautioning her to stand back a little. The rubble loosened under his feet and slid down. There was quite a little rock slip before he had gone far, sending up a cloud of dust between them. Through this, when it had settled, Claire followed him. She heard him calling to her to go back but a moment was standing at his side. Almost above them, so steep was the ascent, the fissure narrowed to half a dozen feet in width and was choked with loose rock and sand. Paul looked at it with somberly appraising eyes and instinctively put himself between it and Claire. Another explosion of dynamite sent a scarcely perceptible tremor through the earth. Slight as it was, a tiny stream of sand and pebbles came trickling down from the suspended

avalanche. He caught her hand and took her swiftly back to safety. "A nearer shot would send that thing down on us," he said. "Wait here until I find out more about it." "What are you going to do?" she asked. "First, climb the edge of the wall and see what is beyond." He did this and returned to her in a few minutes. "Funny how little things put themselves in our way!" He tried to speak lightly. "The fissure is clear as a floor beyond that slug of debris, which is ready to topple. We could be out in five minutes if it were not for that. As it is, I've got to take a chance." "And—the chance?" "We must get over the loose stuff. Either that or go back—to the little fire."

"We must go on," she said. "Yes, we've got to go on. We passed a stick back there five or six feet long. By hugging close to the wall I think I can reach one of the keystones in the slide and loosen it. It won't be difficult, and the whole thing will come down like a house with the foundation pulled out from under it. I'm going to take you back a distance."

"And when the slide comes, where will you be?" "Against the rock wall, as small as I can make myself."

"You mean," said Claire, with quick understanding in her eyes, "that you are going to take the stick and pry one of the rocks loose, but not from the edge of the wall, for no foothold is there. Your intention is to stand in front, and make an effort to get out of the way when the avalanche starts."

"I am sure I can do it." "If it comes slowly, yes. But what if it should come the other way? Let us go together, Paul. It may be that we can get over it safely."

"Wait here until I get the stick." "If we try to climb over it together we will not need the stick."

"But we cannot climb it. I know. I have seen a hundred of those things in the pit. They are like hair-trigger guns, even when they look solid. It is necessary to loosen a rock and then make a run for it. The stick will give me a few feet start."

"But it may be more firmly fixed than you think."

"My stick will prove it. Until then you must remain here."

She accompanied him to the down-wind end of the small, room-like prison they had entered, and listened to his footsteps until the sound of them grew faint. Then she ascended to the crest of the rock slip again. A score of feet beyond lay the danger point. Between it and where she stood was the rough depression, out of which Paul would be compelled to race for his life should he loosen the avalanche. There was an overhang of rock, high up, and she did not see how he could escape it. She turned to look back in the direction he had gone. It was like Paul to take the situation in this way, as if it were an unimportant incident rather than a tragic thing.

Light was fading swiftly, and evening shadows were falling between the deep close walls of the crevasse. A rancid was in Claire's face, as if a voiceless spirit within her were sending a message to some one in the world above. She could hear Paul's footsteps returning, the iron nails in his boots striking on rock, and her lips moved, yearning to call his name. Then she ran down into the hollow and up its farther edge. After all, it might not be such a sword of Damocles over them. If it were not, then Paul could only scold. If it were—

She began to climb.

(Continued Next Week.)

Seized Slot Machines

Turned Into Birdhouses
Merrill, Wis.—With a hammer and a jackknife John Aho whittled away his time in the county jail here making birdhouses out of confiscated slot machines. After breaking them to pieces the sheriff turns the slot machines over to the ambitious prisoner, who already had made several birdhouses which have been lodged in trees in the jail yard.

It is forbidden by law in California to make a waitress carry more than 100 pounds. Perhaps, then, we had better not order another round of ham hocks.

Something we wonder about, in connection with suntan powder, is whether being caught in a shower would give one a bird's-eye maple complexion.

Fight at First Sight

The "chicks" of the fresh water carp family are said to be among the most ferocious of fish. They are quite difficult to mate and have to be kept separate, for they fight and kill each other with little delay. When they are once mated, however, they take great care of their progeny. A flower pot of hollow stone is found, which they clean spotlessly and in which they raise their family. They guard their eggs in alternate shifts, fanning them with their fins. Just before hatching, the female digs a pit in the sand or shingle and transfers the young fish to it. They are then a wriggling mass of black jelly after two or three hours she digs another pit, and this process goes on till the youngsters can swim about.

Followed Flag's Example

"You says you was de only man ob de battle alibe? How com dat to hap pen, Mistah Johnson?"

"Well, suh, Ah heerd dem bullets comin' right smart aroun' me, but Ah kep' cool, an' when de cannon balls landed alongside of me Ah was still cool, you unstan'. When Ah foun' dey was a sending de gas ober, Ah wasn't sure about de virtue of mah rabbit's foot again dat newfangled stuff, and Ah kindab looks aroun' Dere Ah sees de gran' ole flag a flyin', an'—well, suh, Ah just nacherly flew, too!"—Vancouver Province.

OREGON NEWS ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Brief Resume of Happenings of the Week Collected for Our Readers.

Albany's hopes for an adequate municipal supply of well water received scant encouragement from the report of A. M. Piper of the United States geological survey, who investigated that district at the request of the city authorities.

The city council of Bandon ordered a sign for the direction of aviators, and in co-operation with the George W. Moore Lumber company will use the roof of the mill's sorting shed for the simple word "Bandon" in letters of 20 feet in height.

Automobile registration fees for the first 10 months of 1929 up to November 1, totaling \$7,535,932.69, show an increase of more than \$600,000 over the receipts of the department for the entire 12 months of 1928, according to Secretary of State Hoss. A statement prepared by Hoss shows that a total of 244,337 passenger cars and 24,134 trucks were registered up to November 14th last year.

As a necessary piece of apparatus for the fire department the St. Helens city council has purchased a lung-motor and the three paid members of the department have been instructed in using it.

Nearly 100 grangers representing Boulevard, Big Bend, Oregon Slope, Harper-Westfall and Vale farming sections, were in Vale recently for the "turkey" meeting of Malheur County Pomona grange.

Twelve carloads of turkeys were shipped out of the Umpqua valley last week by the Douglas Co-operative Turkey Growers, leaving being done at Eugene, Cottage Grove, Yoncalla, Oakland, Roseburg and Myrtle Creek.

Five carloads of mules have been shipped out of Umatilla county for consignment to the Grand Island Horse & Mule company of Grand Island, Neb. A buyer for the Nebraska firm sent four cars from Athena and one from Pendleton.

D. B. Fales, Linn county 4-H club leader, left Albany December 13, and his office was closed as the result of failure of the Linn county budget board to provide funds with which to create and maintain the office of county agricultural agent.

Consolidation of 10 school districts in the Calapooya valley has been approved by the school boundary board, which met in Roseburg recently, and the plan is to build a union high school at Sutherlin. The project will be voted upon shortly after January 1.

The street committee of the Rainier city council has been ordered to make a complete survey of all city streets and to order whatever improvements and repairs are needed. The road fund shows a balance of \$2061.93, which is believed sufficient for all present needs.

Depositors in the defunct Tillamook County bank, which closed its doors by order of the state banking department February 18, 1927, received another dividend aggregating \$31,151. Approximately 40 per cent has been paid to commercial depositors and 90 per cent to savings depositors.

Two crops of pears from one ancient pear tree in his orchard has just been reported by L. B. Mautsch of Sheridan. Mr. Mautsch has just harvested a number of fine pears from this tree, and the largest, weighing about 16 ounces, is on display in W. H. Dinsmore's jewelry store window.

And All but One Laughed
Speaking of the law reminds me of a story about a lawyer who was cross-examining a witness:

"You say the fence was about 14 feet high, and you were standing on the ground—not mounted on a ladder or anything."

"I do," responded the witness.

"In that case," said counsel, "perhaps you will be good enough to explain to the court how it was that you, a man of five feet four, could see what happened on the other side of a fence 14 feet high?"

"Certainly," chirped the witness, suavely. "There was a knot hole in the fence."—Kansas City Star.

After Sedan

In his book, "Napoleon the Third," Mr. D'Auvergne gives an interesting picture of the meeting between the vanquished emperor and Wilhelm I of Prussia after Sedan. "The old klg took the Frenchman's hand and said something about the fortunes of war having decided between them. With a friendly, encouraging gesture, Wilhelm of Hohenzollern gripped the broken monarch by the arm and led him into an inner room. They discussed the battle and the origins of the war. 'Really, I think I cheered him up,' wrote the chivalrous old king to his wife."—Illustrated London News.

Odd Topic of Discussion

There is a story of the late Earl Rosebery which gains peculiar significance through his death. One night at dinner he was observed in deep conversation with his partner, paying no attention to any other member of the company. In the smoking room his host called him upon his undivided attention to the lady in question, suggesting that they must have found a topic of absorbing interest. "We did indeed," replied Lord Rosebery, "we were considering what it must feel like to be dead."

Roger Bacon First to Talk of Metal Airship

In the all-metal airship we see realized an eight-century-old Baconian project. In the Thirteenth century, says Domestic Air News, United States Department of Commerce, Roger Bacon, English philosopher and Franciscan friar, seems to have been the first to realize the principles of aeronautics, if we discard Kircher and the legends.

Bacon wrote in glowing language on the possibility of constructing engines of immense size and power that could traverse the land and the water with great speed and carry with them persons and merchandise.

He proposed the construction of an aerial machine which "must be a large hollow globe of copper or other suitable material . . . filled with 'etheral air or liquid fire' (some have claimed Bacon referred to rarefied air and hydrogen gas) and then launched from some elevated point into the atmosphere, where it will float like a vessel on the water."

There may be made, Bacon said, "flying machines so that a man sits in the midst of the machine revolving some engine by which artificial wings are made to beat the air like a flying bird."

The idea of the rigid airship may be traced from Bacon through Albertus de Saxonia (1350), Mendoza (1508-75), Lana (1670), Gourdin (1783), Delcourt (1824), Monge (1843), Giffard (1855), Spleiss (1873), Bausset (1888), Schwartz (1897) to Zeppelin (1900), all of whom proposed metal for the hull.

Old Customs Dear to Hearts of Britishers

The archbishop who lives at Lambeth palace is a very kind archbishop, the poor of the district will tell you. Every Thursday at the main gateway 30 half-crowns are distributed to 30 poor people of the parish. The custom is a very old one. Years ago it took another form. On Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 15 quarter loaves of bread, 9 stone of beef (made into broth and served in pitchers) and 5 shillings' worth of halfpennies were the gifts. One is reminded of this and other quaint customs, surviving or revived, by the fact that the lord mayor of London revived the Boy Players a few weeks ago. They gave a performance at Salter's hall, the first since 1928, when they were the favorite players of Queen Elizabeth. The Salter's company is named after John Salter, who died in 1905. Formerly a service to his memory, held each year, took the form of a procession to his tomb, upon which each person knocked with a stick, and called three times in a loud voice: "How do you do, Master Salter? I hope you are well."—London Mail.

Daylight Saving Time

Summer time, says a correspondent in the Edinburgh Dispatch, is not an institution of yesterday nor of man. For verification of this refer to the Bible—Isaiah, chapter 38, verse 8. The verse is as follows: "Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down."

Diplomatic Composer

Doni Luiz, king of Portugal, fancied himself a singer; and when Rossini was his guest he asked if he might sing for the great composer.

Rossini agreed, of course, but he found the royal voice very poor.

When asked by a courtier for his opinion of the king's singing, Rossini deftly replied: "Never have I heard a king sing better."—Scrap Book.

Every politician thinks he is a statesman just after being reelected.

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