The Plains of Abraham

By James Oliver Curwood

It was the testimony of the late James Oliver Curwood that there was more fact than fiction in this novel; that the heroine, Marie Antoinette Tonteur, and her fierce old father lived and loved as described in the story; that Catherine Bulain and her valiant son were flesh and blood of their day; that Tiaoga, Shindas, Silver Heels and several other of the more important characters were not creatures of fancy; that "The Plains of Abraham," like his other tale, "The Black Hunter," to which it is closely related, is largely a romance of life as it was lived and not as it might have been lived.

The author also asserted that the gathering of the material had been the most thrilling adventure of his life; the traveling foot by foot over the hallowed ground, the reading of letters written by hands dead a hundred and fifty years or more, the dreaming over yellow manuscripts written by priests and martyrs and, lastly, the unveiling of loves and hates and tragedies and happiness of the almost forgotten period embracing the very birth of both the American and Canadian peoples, and weighted with happenings that shook the foremost nations of the earth and largely made them what they are today.

The story passes through romances, adventures and other stirring phases of life in the Champlain and Richelieu regions and reaches its finale on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec, in that historic struggle which curbed the ambitions of the French, established the ascendency of the English and drew the first crude boundaries of the future United States and Canada.

CHAPTER I

—1—

On a sunny afternoon in May, 1749, a dog, a boy, a man, and a woman had crossed the oak opens of Tonteur's hill and were trailing toward the deeper wilderness of the French frontier westward of the Richelieu and Lake Champlain—the dog first, the boy following, the man next, and the woman last.

It was a reversal of proper form. Tonteur had growled as he watched them go. A fool's way of facing a savage-infested country that had no end. The man should have marched at the head of his precious column with his long gun ready and his questing eyes alert; the woman next, to watch and guard with him; then the boy and the dog, if such nuisances were to be tolerated in travel of this kind, with evening coming on.

Tonteur was the one-legged warrior seigneur from whose gristmill down in the valley the four were going home.

His eyes had followed the woman with a subdued and appraising hunger in them. Henri Bulain was a strange man, he had thought. He might be a little crazy, might even be a fool. But he was also a very lucky husband to possess a woman with the sweet face and form and the divinely chaste heart of Catherine, his wife.

Jeems was a fortunate boy to have her for a mother.

Even the dog was a scoundrel for luck. An Indian dog at that. A sneaking, good-for-nothing dog. A wreck of a dog without a soul, to be fed by her, petted by her, smiled at by her—as he had seen her smile.

Tonteur was first of the long string of heroic fighting barons settled by France along the Richelieu to hold the English and their red barbarians back. He was Doorkeeper to the waterway that led straight to the heart of New France. If the English came with their scalping fiends, the Mohawks and the Senecas, they would have to pass over him first of all. No general could be given greater distinction than that. Honor. Wealth. A wide domain over which he was king.

And yet—

He envied Henri Bulain.

* * * * * * *

It was midafternoon. Maytime shadows were growing longer toward the east. It was the hour when birds were singing softly. Morning had heard their defiance, a glorious and fearless challenge of feathered minstrelsy to all the spirits of darkness; but with late afternoon, sunset, evening, these same slim-throated songsters found a note of gratitude and of prayer in their chastened voices. Flowers crushed underfoot. In the open spaces they carpeted the earth with white and pink and blue. Flowers and birds and peace—a world filled with a declining sun—a smiling heaven of blue over the treetops—and with them a dog, a boy, a man, and a woman advancing westward.

Three of these, even the dog, Tonteur envied.

This dog had a name which fitted him, Tonteur had thought. For he was a wreck of a dog—even more a wreck than the splendid seigneur himself, with his stub of a shot-off leg and a breast that bore sword marks which would have killed an ordinary man. The dog, first of all, was a homely dog, so hopelessly homely that one could not help loving him at sight. His hair was bristly and unkempt. His paws huge. His tail was half gone, which left him only a stub to wag. He walked with a limp, a heavy, never-failing limp that seemed to shake his long body from end to end, for his left fore paw—like Tonteur's foot—was missing. A crooked, cheery, inartistic, lovable dog to whom the woman—in a moment's visioning of the fitness of things—had given the name of Odds-and-Ends.

So Tonteur was half right in thinking of him as a wreck of a dog, but in one other thing he was wrong. The dog did have a soul—a soul that belonged to the boy, his master. That soul had a great scar seared upon it by hunger and abuse in an Indian camp where Henri Bulain had found him four years before, and from which, out of pity for a dying creature, he had taken him home to Jeems. It was a scar cut deep by clubs and kicks, a wound that had never healed and that made the dog what he was—a tireless and suspicious hunter of scents and sounds in the woods.

Of the four who were filing westward, he seemed to be the only one who watched and listened for danger to come out of the beauty and stillness of the world about them. Now and then he glanced up at his master. Trouble lay in the boy's face and eyes, and the dog sensed it after a little and whined in a questioning way in his throat.

Daniel James Bulain was the boy's name, but from babyhood his mother had called him Jeems. He was twelve and weighed twenty pounds more than his dog. Odds-and-Ends, called Odd for short, weighed sixty, if the scales in Tonteur's gristmill were right. One would have known the dog and the boy belonged together even had they been in a crowd, for if Odd was a battered old warrior, the boy, on the other hand, gave every evidence of an ambition to achieve a similar physical condition.

"Why, he's dressed up like a bold, bad pirate come to abduct my little girl and hold her for ransom," Tonteur had roared, down in the valley, and Jeems' father had joined the baron in his laughter; then, to make the thing worse, Tonteur had turned him round and round, slowly and ap-

The Man Should Have Marched at the Head of His Precious Column.

praisingly, with lovely little Marie Antoinette looking on, her dainty nose upturned in patrician disdain—and with Paul Tache, her detestable cousin from the great city of Quebec, openly leering and grimacing at him from behind her back. And this after he had prepared himself with painstaking care for Marie Antoinette's eyes should she happen to see him! That was the tragedy of it. He had put on his new doeskin suit. He carried a gun which was two inches longer than himself. A big powderhorn swung at his waist, in his belt was a knife, and over his shoulder hung the most treasured of his possessions, a slim ash bow and a quiver filled with arrows. He had worn his coonskin cap of fur in spite of the warmth of the day, because it looked better than the lighter one, which was stripped, and in this cap was a long turkey feather. Odd, the dog, was proud of his martial-looking master, but he could not understand the change that had come over the boy or why he was going home with such a strangely set and solemn face.

From her position behind the dog, the boy, and the man, Catherine Bulain looked upon her world with a joyous and unafraid pride. No boy, in her opinion, could equal Jeems, and no man her husband. One could see and feel her happiness, and as Tonteur secretly built up the fire of his yearning when he was alone, so she loved to exult in her own possessions when her men folk were ahead and could not see all that came and went in her face. This desire to hold within herself some small and sacred part of her rejoicing was because she was English and not French. That was why Daniel James had an English name, inherited from her father, who had been a New England schoolmaster and afterward an agent of the Penns down in Pennsylvania. It was on the frontier of that far province that Henri had found and married her.

Tonteur was aware, possibly even more than Henri Bulain, that Catherine's adoration of her men folk and of everything that went with them, even to the primitive discomforts of the wilderness life which had claimed her, was built up against a background of something more than merely being the mate of a man and the mother of a son. Culture and learning and broadness of vision and thought, nurtured in her first by a gentle mother, and, after her death, developed and strengthened by a schoolmaster father, had given to her a medium of priceless value by which to measure happiness.

Because of her adroitness in fashioning beauty and perfection out of simple and inexpensive things, and also because she was of the spawn of the despicable English, Madame Henriette Tonteur had come to regard her with much the same aversion and dislike with which she would have looked upon a cup of poison.

Tonteur knew this and cursed in his honest heart at the woman who was his wife, with her coldly patrician face, her powdered hair, her jewels and gowns and her platonic ignorance of love—and then thanked his God that little Marie Antoinette was growing less like her with each day that passed over her pretty head. For Marie Antoinette was tempestuous, like himself, a patrician without doubt, but with a warm and ready passion to offset that curse, and for this, too, he blessed the fortune which in one way had been so kind to him.

Behind her husband and boy Catherine had been thinking of Tonteur and of his wife, the aristocratic Henriette. For a long time she had known of Madame Tonteur's hatred, but it was not until this afternoon that the other discovery had come to her, for in spite of his most heroic efforts, Tonteur had betrayed himself when suddenly she had caught him looking at her. Catherine had seen the shadow of his secret—like a ghost swiftly disappearing. Up over the hill she had added many twos and twos together, until, in the sure way of a woman, she knew what Tonteur was thinking and did not fear or distrust him for it.

And Madame Tonteur hated her. Disbelieving whatever good might have been said of Catherine, she hated her first as a deadly enemy of her race, and hated her then because she dared hold her head as proudly as a baron's lady, and hated her last of all because, nothing more than the wife of a worthless backwoodsman like Henri Bulain, she was impudent enough to be the prettiest woman anywhere near the Tonteur seigneurie.

And, so far as it was in her power, she had planted and nurtured this hatred to growth in the heart and mind of her proud daughter, Marie Antoinette, until Tonteur, blind to the feline subtlety of a woman in such matters, wondered why it was that his girl, whom he worshiped above all other things on earth, should so openly display unfriendliness and dislike whenever Jeems came to Tonteur manor.

Of this same thing Jeems had been thinking as he walked ahead of his father and mother. His mind, at present, was busy with the stress of fighting. Mentally, and physically in a way, he was experiencing the thrill of sanguinary battle. Half a dozen times since beginning the long climb over Tonteur's hill he had choked and beaten Paul Tache, and in every moment of these mental triumphs Marie Antoinette looked on with wonder and horror as he pitilessly assailed and vanquished her handsome young cousin from the big city of Quebec.

Even in the heat of these vivid imaginings, Jeems was sick at heart, and it was the shadow of this sickness which Odd caught when he looked up into his master's eyes.

From the day Jeems had first seen Marie Antoinette, when she was seven and he was nine, he had dreamed of her, and had anticipated through weeks and months the journeys which his father permitted him to make with him to Tonteur manor. On these rare occasions he had gazed with childish adoration at the little princess of the seigneurie and had made her presents of flowers and feathers and nuts and maple sugar and queer treasures which he brought from the forests. These tokens of his homage had never served to build a bridge across the abyss which lay between them.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Maya Indians Have Been "Pioneers" in Corn?

At Quirigua, in the republic of Guatemala, there exists a number of most interesting ruins, apparently the remains of temples and other public buildings. There are many individual monoliths, erected as monuments of different sorts, sculptured with human faces and figures and animal designs, as well as hieroglyphics, which archeologists have not as yet been able to decipher accurately. One such stone bears a date in Mayan chronology which has been computed to coincide with 535 A. D. of the Gregorian calendar. The carving of this monolith, which is the largest of the surviving remnants, is still clear and perfect, despite the long procession of centuries that has passed over it. Inscriptions and representations on this and other stones tend to the belief that Indian corn was first cultivated in Guatemala. The corncakes of the Mayan Indians were probably the first attempts to cook corn, or maize, and these cakes are still today the staple of the Guatemalan and Mexican diet.

Seedless Oranges

The original seedless oranges were produced in Brazil by means of budding and the orange trees of this type in the United States all descended from two imported Brazilian trees. Buds or budding sticks are taken from seedless orange trees in spring or fall and inserted in two-year-old seedling orange trees of ordinary type. When the buds send out shoots the seedlings are cut back so that only the budding portions develop.

PICTURE ON SHELL BRINGS BOY WEALTH

Chinese Youth Charging 10 Cents a Look.

Shanghai.—He was only a poor Chinese country boy, who managed to keep his rice and noodle bowl filled by catching crabs and selling them to the residents of Swatow, a South China seaport, at prices so low a New York restaurant could serve crab meat cocktails at a nickel each and make 100 per cent profit. That was less than six months ago.

Today this same boy has more money than he knows what to do with, and all because of a single crab.

His name is Wang Chi-tze, and he is a direct descendant of a long line of Kwangtungese farmers and fishermen, simple folk, who worked and believed in legends. It was a legend that helped make Wang rich.

Desired to Become a Fish.

One of the tales in which Wang's people took great stock concerned one of his great-great-great-grandmothers. The story goes that she was a beautiful woman, who believed in the transmigration of souls and cherished a desire to become a fish after her death. She was buried in the ocean several miles from shore.

Inspecting his basket of crabs one night sometime ago, Wang noticed one whose shell seemed to bear the outline of a human face. A close look revealed the face was that of a charming Chinese woman. Wang was convinced the old story about his ancestor was true.

He spent the next few days showing the find to his customers. News of the discovery spread, and soon the boy was spending all his time showing the crab to throngs of curious farmers and townspeople at 10 cents a peek.

Business at a Carnival.

Three months ago Wang came to Shanghai and a carnival man offered him a booth. Wang engaged an English-speaking Chinese to explain the attraction to the foreigners who might come to see it and opened up for business.

Twenty thousand persons, mostly Chinese, paid 10 cents each the first week to see the crab. Business increased the second week. It is estimated that fully 250,000 Chinese have viewed the creature. Many foreign residents of the city, too, visited the carnival for no other purpose than to see the wonder.

The majority of foreigners, however, are inclined to regard the lady of the shell as an extraordinary piece of carving.

Boy Engineer Succeeds Where Others Failed

Lebanon, Mo.—The dream of an unsuccessful engineer has been fulfilled, and soon lights will glow and industry will hum with electricity from the harnessed power of the Niangua river.

A twenty-five-year-old engineer, two years out of college, has accomplished what veteran constructors failed to do—building a $1,000,000 dam across the Niangua.

H. E. Murray is the young engineer. He graduated from the Minnesota School of Engineering two years ago. The Niangua dam was his first project.

It consisted of more than the mere construction of a dam, as J. B. Quigley and his engineering firm discovered many years ago. Quigley organized the Missouri Water Power company and began construction of a dam in 1920. The project was too big, and after spending $238,000 Quigley was forced to quit.

The Missouri Electric Power company, subsidiary of the Utilities Power and Light corporation, employed Murray to build the present dam.

The most outstanding engineering feat is an 850-foot tunnel, lined with concrete, cut through the base of a mountain. When in operation the dam diverts the water through the sloping tunnel, at the opposite end of which is the hydro-electric power plant.

College Prexy Says Man Is to Become Extinct

Utica, N. Y.—Man will follow the dinosaur in extinction because he is a "terminal twig" and cannot keep on developing, according to Dr. George B. Cutten, president of Colgate university.

Doctor Cutten, in a speech here, said that the species of man must pass out of existence in ages to come, in keeping with biological precedent. Then, too, man is overspecialized, Doctor Cutten asserted. One example of overspecialization lies in the fact that he walks upright. If he would avoid appendicitis he must revert to all fours.

Another fault of overspecialization is that, although he knows "alcohol is bad for him," he wants it to escape from life's realities.

Open Diplomats' School

Moscow.—Factory workers who are being prepared to assume diplomatic posts abroad will be given a special one-year training course. The foreign office has opened the course, which is expected to train good diplomats.

Letter Brings $23,000

New York.—A letter, written by Thomas Jefferson on July 1, 1776, in which he told of drafting the Declaration of Independence, was sold at auction recently for $23,000, a price said to be a record for Jeffersoniana.

Progress in Iraq

Cargo Boat on the Tigris River.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

THE treaty between Great Britain and her most important mandated territory, the Kingdom of Iraq, which has been before the representatives of the two countries for nearly three years, has recently been definitely ratified. It recognizes Iraqan independence to take effect when Iraq becomes a member of the League of Nations.

Iraq, present-day heir of ancient Babylon in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, has had an up-hill job since the World war, in its efforts to transform itself into a modern state. It has had constructive plans for physical development; but politics, religion, and the age-old social customs of some of its people have interposed stubborn obstacles in the paths of the contemplated progress.

The Iraqis have sought a status comparable to Turkey, Persia and the Hejas, all important and independent Mohammedan states, rather than that of a mandated area on somewhat the same footing as smaller and less populous Syria and Palestine-Trans-Jordan.

Ever since the treaty of Versailles, placing the country under mandate to Great Britain, became operative in 1920, Iraq has obtained a greater and greater degree of independence. It is the only one of the twelve mandated territories which has a king, parliament, and responsible government. As a result of Iraqi insistence, the relations between mandatory and mandated territory were defined in 1922 in a treaty between the governments of Iraq and Great Britain which looked to the termination of the mandate when Iraq could enter the League of Nations. This treaty was later revised twice with Great Britain undertaking more specifically to use her influence to obtain membership for Iraq in the League if Iraq continued to make progress. Still later Great Britain agreed to drop this proviso and to seek League membership for Iraq unconditionally in 1932. It is the treaty so altered that has now been ratified.

Great Britain now has both a civil and a military place in Iraqan affairs. A British high commissioner resides in Bagdad and advises the king on international and financial matters. A British air force is maintained in the country under the command of an air vice marshal. British military officers are training the Iraq army, and a number of British governmental experts are employed in the various civil offices of the Iraq government. These contacts will continue under the new treaty after Iraq is admitted to the League of Nations.

Restoring Its Irrigation.

Embracing the potentially fertile valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates and large stretches of semi-arid and desert lands, Iraq has always been primarily an agricultural and pastoral country. In Babylonian and Grecian days the valleys were herring-boned with irrigation canals and these were kept up by the Arabs in the days of the Caliphate. The lands of Iraq were exceedingly productive and its people were highly prosperous until 1258 A. D. when the Mongol invasion destroyed the irrigation embankments and headworks. Afterwards under Turkish rule Iraq became less and less prosperous, much of its once fertile valleys turned into wilderness and malaria-breeding swamps.

The aim of the most thoughtful leaders in Iraq is to restore the irrigation works which the valleys possessed during their golden age. This, however, would be a tremendous task, requiring vast amounts of capital, which Iraq is at present unable to command. The government has organized a department of irrigation and under its supervision is slowly bettering existing irrigation works and undertaking new ones. One of the most important steps has been the construction of a permanent weir in the bed of the River Dijala to replace earthen dams which were constructed annually, only to be washed away each flood season. Several river regulators and escapes were constucted in 1928, and canals were extended to revive areas that were passing out of cultivation and to bring tens of thousands of acres of new land under irrigation.

Railway System Incomplete.

In transportation agencies, other than railways, Iraq has made a marked advance in recent years. The natural outlet for the country is southeastward along its rivers to the Persian gulf. But its customers and clients are chiefly to the northwestward and the northeastward across extensive deserts and mountain ranges. These barriers have not yet been bridged by steel rails. Gaps still exist in the famous proposed "Berlin-to-Bagdad" railway so that it is not even possible to move Iraqan products as far as the eastern Mediterranean ports by rail.

There are close to a thousand miles of railway track in Iraq, but it is entirely an internal system. At no point does a railway cross the Iraq border. The rail system, however, does perform two important functions in international trade. It carries exports and imports to and from the port of Basra, head of navigation on the Shatt-al-Arab for ocean-going ships; and it connects at Khanaqin near the Persian border with a motor road over which is carried on Iraq's sizable transit trade with Persia.

In the absence of railways to the north and west, all of the heavy freight leaving and entering Iraq must move by water through the Persian gulf. But within the last few years an efficient and rapid system has been set up for the transfer of passengers, mail and light express overland between Bagdad and Basra on the southeast, and Damascus, Beyrouth, Jerusalem and Cairo on the northwest. Good, hard-surfaced highways have been constructed through long sections of the river valleys.

Across the deserts that separate Iraq and Syria the ways are merely natural earth roads, but they are in fair condition, and over them powerful American-built busses carrying passengers, mail and express cover 600 miles in 24 hours. The quickest mails, however, travel by the weekly airplane service which extends from Basra to Cairo. Airplanes fly approximately over the highway route for a considerable part of the way between Bagdad and the west. At the half-way point, Ruthah Wells, the Iraq government has established a station which is used for refueling and rewatering by both planes and automobiles, and there a desert police force of considerable strength is maintained. At this station a restaurant is conducted, and even over-night accommodations are provided.

Of the two great rivers of Iraq, only the Tigris can be used by boats. An important freight service, moving hundreds of thousands of tons in large river steamers, is operated between Bagdad and Basra. Special shallow-draft stern-wheel river boats ply the Tigris up the river from Bagdad to Mosul; and above the latter city considerable quantities of supplies are brought downstream on rafts. Below the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates the combined tidal stream is known as the Shatt-al-Arab. The commerce on the Shatt-al-Arab has been greatly facilitated and increased since the World war by the deeper and deeper dredging by the Iraq government of the bar at the river's mouth. Ships of 20-foot draft can now cross the bar at low water and ships of 30-foot draft at high water.

Products and Industries.

Although some progress has been made in recent years toward the development of industry and the extraction of mineral wealth from the ground, Iraq is still predominantly an agricultural and pastoral country. This condition is reflected in the exports and imports. During the fiscal year 1927-28 the exports, including goods in transit, amounted to about $40,000,000, while the imports were valued at approximately $54,000,000. Dates, valued at close to $6,000,000, led the list of exports, followed by cereals and flour, $5,000,000, and wool, $2,500,000. Among the leading articles imported were textiles, valued at approximately $8,500,000; and sugar worth $3,000,000.

The few industries carried on in Iraq are on a small scale. The residents maintain factories for spinning, knitting, carpet making, and shoe manufacture, copper smelting and flour milling. It is only a matter of time, however, until the country will have an important place among the regions producing and refining petroleum. Two financially strong companies have concessions to explore and develop the Iraqan oil supplies, and both have brought in producing wells within the past two years.