

The Plains of Abraham

By James Oliver Curwood

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THE STORY

With his English wife, Catherine, and son, Jeems, Henry Bulain, French settler in Canada in 1749, cultivates a farm adjacent to the Tonteur seigneurie. As the story opens the Bulgains are returning from a visit to the Tonteurs. Catherine's wandering brother, Hepsibah, meets them with presents for the family. To Jeems he gives a pistol, bidding him perfect himself in marksmanship. Hepsibah fears for the safety of the Bulgains in their isolated position. Jeems fights with Paul Tache, cousin of Toinette Tonteur, whom they both adore. Next day Jeems calls at the Tonteur home and apologizes for brawling in front of Toinette. The Tonteurs go to Quebec. Four years pass. War between Britain and France flares. Jeems returns from a hunt to find his home burned and his father and mother slain.

CHAPTER V—Continued

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As softly as the light, without a sob or cry, Jeems knelt beside him. He spoke his father's name, yet knew that no answer would rise from the lifeless lips. He repeated it in an unexcitable way as his hands clutched at the silent form. The starlight left nothing unrevealed; his father dead, his white lips twisted, his hands clenched at his side, the top of his head naked and bleeding from the scalping knife. Jeems slumped down. He may have spoken again. He may have sobbed. But the thing like death that was creeping over him, its darkness and vastness, hid him from himself. He remained beside his father, as motionless and as still. Odd crouched near. After a little, an inch at a time, he crept to the dead man. He muzzled the hands that were growing cold. He licked Jeems' face where it had fallen against his father's shoulder. Then he was motionless again, his eyes seeking about him like balls of living flame. Death was in the air. He was breathing it. He was hearing it. At last, irresistibly impelled to answer the spirit of death, he sat back on his haunches and howled. It was not Odd's howl any more than it had been Jeems' voice speaking to his father a few moments before. It was a ghostly sound that seemed to quiet even the whispering of the leaves, an unearthly and shivering cry that sent echoes over the clearing, with grief for company.

It was this which brought Jeems out of the depths into which he had fallen. He raised his head and saw his father again, and swayed to his feet. He began seeking. Close by, near the pile of apples which she had helped him gather from under their trees on the slope, he found his mother. She, too, lay with her face to the sky. The little that was left of her unbound hair lay scattered on the earth. Her glorious beauty was gone. Starlight, caressing her gently, revealed to her boy the hideousness of her end. There, over her body, Jeems' heart broke. Odd guarded faithfully, listening to a grief that twisted at his brute soul. Then fell a greater silence. Through long hours the burning logs settled down into flattened masses of dying embers. The darkness came which precedes the day, and after that, dawn.

Jeems rose to face his blasted world. He was no longer a youth but a living thing aged by an eternity that had passed. It was Odd who led him in the quest for Hepsibah Adams. He sought like one half blind and yet sensed everything. He saw the trampled grass, the moccasin-beaten earth at the spring, a hatchet lost in the night, and on the hatchet an English name. But he did not find his uncle.

In the same gray dawn, stirring with the wings of birds and the play of squirrels among the trees, he set out for Tonteur manor.

He carried the hatchet, clutching it as if the wood his fingers gripped held life which might escape him. Because of this hatchet there grew in him a slow and terrible thought that had the strength of a chain. The weapon, with its short hickory handle, its worn iron blade, its battered head, might have been flesh and blood capable of receiving pain or of giving up a secret, so tenacious was the hold of his hand about it. But he did not see the iron or wood. He saw only the name which told him that the English had come with their Indians, or had sent them, as his uncle had so often said they would. The English. Not the French. The English.

And he held the hatchet as if it were an English throat. But he was not thinking that. The part of him conscious of the act was working unknown to the faculties which made him move and see. His thoughts were imprisoned within stone walls, and around these walls they beat and trampled themselves, always alike, telling him the same

things, until their repetition became a drowning in his brain. His mother was dead—back there. His father was dead. Indians with English hatchets had killed them, and he must carry the word to Tonteur.

Thought which had been wrecked and beaten until now possessed him with a flame behind it that began to burn fiercely but which seemed to give no heat or excitement to his flesh. Only his eyes changed, until they were those of a savage, flinty in their hardness and without depth in which one might read his emotions. His face was white and passionless, with lines caught and etched upon it as if in bloodless stone. He looked at the hatchet again, and Odd heard the gasp which came from his lips. The hatchet was a voice telling him things and gloating in the story it had to tell. It made him think more clearly and pressed on him an urge for caution. As he drew nearer to Tonteur manor, the instincts of self-preservation awoke in him. They did not make him leave the open trail or travel less swiftly, but his senses became keener, and unconsciously he began to prepare himself for the physical act of vengeance.

To reach Tonteur was the first obligation in the performance of this act. Tonteur still had a few men who had not gone with Dieskau, and as Jeems recalled the firing of guns, a picture painted itself before his eyes. The murderers of his father and mother had swung eastward from Forbidden valley, and the seigneur, warned by Hepsibah's fire, had met them with loaded muskets.

He had faith in Ton-



It Made Him Think More Clearly and Pressed on Him an Urge for Caution.

teur and did not question what had happened in the bottom lands. Before this no doubt had crossed his mind as to Hepsibah's fate. The English hatchets had caught him, somewhere, or he would have come during the long night when he and Odd had watched alone with death. But now a forlorn and scarcely living hope began to rise in his breast as he came to Tonteur's hill—an unreasoning thought that something might have driven his Uncle Hepsibah to the Richelieu, a hope that, after lighting his signal fire, he had hurried to the manor with the expectation of finding his people there. His father must have seen Hepsibah's warning across Forbidden valley, and had waited, disbelieving, while death traveled with the shades of night through the lowlands.

He might see Hepsibah, in a moment, coming over the hill. . . . Hepsibah, and the baron, and men with guns. . . .

Even Odd seemed to be expecting this as they sped through the last oak open and climbed the chestnut ridge. Beyond were the thick edging of crimson sumac, a path breaking through it, and the knob of the hill where they had always paused to gaze over the wonderland which had been given by the king of France to the stalwart vassal Tonteur.

Jeems emerged at this point, and the spark which had grown in his breast was engulfed by sudden blackness.

There was no longer a Tonteur manor. There were no buildings but one. The great manor house was gone. The loopholed church was gone. The farmers' cottages beyond the meadows and fields were gone. All that remained was the stone gristmill, with the big wind wheel turning slowly at the top of it and making a whining sound that came to him faintly through the distance.

Jeems, looking down, saw in the drifting veil of smoke a shroud that covered death. For the first time he forgot his father and mother. He thought of some one he had known and loved a long time ago. Toinette.

As he had stood at the edge of the

Big forest seeking for a figure that might have been his mother's, he now quested for one that might be Toinette's. But the same hope was not in his breast, nor the same fear. Certainty had taken their place. Toinette was dead, despoiled of her beauty and her life as his mother had been. A fury triumphed over him that was as possessive in its effect as the color which blazed about him in the crimson bush. It had been growing in him since the moment he knelt at his father's side; it had strained at the bounds of his grief when he found his mother; it had filled him with madness, still unformed in his brain, when he covered their faces in the early dawn. Now he knew why he gripped the English hatchet so tightly. He wanted to kill. His eyes turned from the smoke-filled valley of the Richelieu to the south where Champlain lay gleaming in the sun miles away, and the hand which held the hatchet trembled in its new-born yearning for the life blood of a people whom he hated from this day and hour.

He was vaguely conscious of the whine of the mill wheel as he went down into the valley. He did not feel fear or the necessity for concealing his movement, for death would not trouble itself to return to a desolation so complete. But the wheel, as he drew nearer, touched the stillness with a note which seemed to ride with strange insistence over the solitude, as if calling to some one. It became less a thing of iron and wood that was crying in its hunger for oil, and more a voice which demanded his attention. It seemed to him that suddenly he caught what it was saying: "The English beast—the little English beast"—repeating those words until they became a rhythm without a break in their monotony except when a capful of wind set the wheel going faster. It was as if a thought in his brain had been stolen from him. And what it expressed was true. He was the English beast, coming as Madame Tonteur had predicted. Toinette had been right. Fiends with white skins, who were of his blood, had sent their hatchet killers to prove it. And like a lone ghost he was left to see it all. The mill wheel knew and, even in moments of quiet, seemed to possess the power to tell him so.

With stubborn fortitude he faced the gehenna through which he knew he must pass before he could turn south to find his vengeance with Dieskau. Toinette belonged to him now as much as his mother, and it was for her he began to search.

In a ditch which had run almost under the eaves of the loopholed church, he stumbled on a body. It had fallen among tall grass and weeds and had remained hidden there. It wore a Mohawk war tuft, and in one of its stiffened hands was another English hatchet like the one Jeems had. A scalp was at the warrior's belt, and for a moment Jeems turned sick. It was a young girl's scalp, days old.

As he advanced, he could see there had been an alarm and a little fighting. There was old Jean de Lauzon, the cure, doubled up like a jackknife, half dressed and with a battered old flintlock under him. He had fired the gun and was running for the foretrenched church when a bullet had caught him between his thin shoulder blades. Jeems stood over him long enough to make notes of these things. He saw several more dark blotches on the ground quite near to where the thick oak door to the church had been. There were Juchereau and Louis Hebert, both well along in years, and not far from them were their wives. Raudot was a fifth. He had been a slow-witted lad, and now he looked like a clown who had died with a grin on his face. These people had lived nearest to the church. The others had been too far away to answer the alarm quickly, but the result had been the same. Some had come to meet their death. Others had waited for it.

Between this group and the smoldering pile that had been the manor, a lone figure lay on the ground. Jeems went to it slowly. The sprawled-out form was Tonteur. Unlike the others, the baron was fully dressed. He undoubtedly had been armed when he rushed forth from the house, but nothing was left in his hands but the clods of earth which he had seized in a final agony. A cry broke from Jeems. He had loved Tonteur. The seigneur had been the one connecting link between his older years and the dreams of his childhood, and it was because of him that he had never quite seemed to lose Toinette. He crossed the dead man's hands upon his breast and loosened the earth from his fingers. He could feel Toinette at his side, and for a brief interval the sickness in his head and body overcame him so that he could not see Tonteur at all. But he could hear Toinette sobbing.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Many Theories About National Flag Design

There are various theories regarding the origin of the design of our national flag, and most historians do not consider the Betsy Ross legend as trustworthy. It is true that Washington's family coat-of-arms contained both stars and stripes, but these had been used in other flags before 1776. The Grand Union flag, the first to float over the navy, consisted of 13 stripes, alternately red and white, with a union bearing the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew, signifying the mother country. Some historians believe that the stripes were taken from the flag and the stars from the colonial banner of Rhode Island. Others maintain that the idea of the flag came from

the Netherlands, as Franklin and Adams, who were sent to that country to borrow money for aid, told the Dutch that America had borrowed much from them, including the ideas represented in the flag. Another claim is that the stars were taken from the 13-starred constellation Lyra and signified "harmony."

Wise Father
A prosperous farmer, replying to a comment on the amount of money he was spending to put his son through college, said: "Yes, it does take a lot of money; but I'd rather leave my money in my boy than to him!"—Exchange.

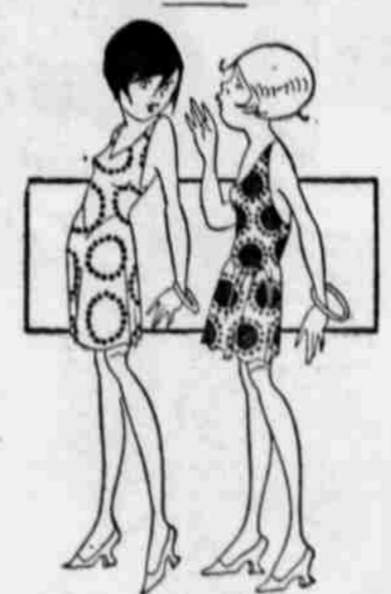


BOYS WILL BE BOYS

His chin was badly bruised and there were black and blue marks on the side of his face. "What happened to you?" a friend demanded.

"I was on a little party," he explained, "and I bet a big husky fellow there that he couldn't lift me." "Well, did he?" asked the friend. "Yeah," he replied sadly, "but he dropped me!"

COMES NATURAL



"Jack is a great talker." "Oh, well, he can't help it, his father was a barber."

Too Bad

Mule in the barnyard, lazy and sick. Boy with a pin on the end of a stick; Kid jabbed the mule, the mule made a lurch; Services Monday in the M. E. church.

"I Will—Not"

A wedding was to take place and crowds gathered round the church door to watch the proceedings. A street singer took advantage of the circumstances, and walked up and down on the opposite side of the road singing. Just as the bridegroom arrived there was a roar of laughter, for the beggar was singing, in a rough bass voice, the well-known song, "Have Courage, My Boy, to Say 'No.'"

After Hours

The eagle eye of the floor-walker came to rest on a young man in earnest conversation with one of the girl clerks. After he had gone the floor-walker went over to the girl's counter. "I noticed he didn't buy anything," he said, "but he seemed very pleased. What did he want to see?" "Me, at eight o'clock," the girl replied.—Moustique, Charleroi.

Misplaced

Second—Cheer up, Ted, 'e ain't any good. All he knows about boxing 'e could get in 'is eye. Boxer—Yus, I know, but 'e keeps putting it in mine instead.

PUZZLING MATTER



"What's worrying you, Matilda?" "Why this letter I just received from Jack. I can't make out whether he sent me 1,000 kisses or 10,000."

Endurance

Some inconsistencies we see That often brings us smiles. She couldn't walk a block; but she Can dance for twenty miles.

The Record!

Come-to-Grief Airman—I was trying to make a record. Farmer—Well, you've made it. You be the first man in these parts who climbed down a tree without having to climb up it first.

Has Disadvantages

Jinx—Television will soon be here. Billix—Yes, just think what a nuisance it will be to have to shave before you answer the telephone.—Chicago Daily News.

Sue Him, by Gad

"Poor Lola! She got cruelly deceived when she married old Gold-rox." "Why, didn't he have any money?" "Oh, yes, plenty of money but he was ten years younger than he said he was."

Money's No Object

Doctor—Lady, your son has the measles in the worst form. Wealthy Mrs. Green—Why, doctor, we are rich enough to afford the best.

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Deal Promptly with Kidney Irregularities.

If bothered with bladder irritations, getting up at night and constant backache, don't take chances! Help your kidneys at the first sign of disorder. Use Doan's Pills.

Successful for more than 50 years. Endorsed the world over. Sold by dealers everywhere.

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Doan's Pills

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Samson went at a rapid pace after he got that gate on him.



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Your doctor will tell you Castoria deserves a place in the family medicine cabinet until your children are grown. He knows it is safe for the tiniest baby; effective for a child in his teens.

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True "Why do they call a letter a farver?" "Dunno." "It often isn't."

Real Cause for Regret "Why so sad, old chap; the best of friends must part." "I know—but this friend owes me \$50."



Don't neglect that SORE THROAT

Authorities are warning the public that sore throat is prevalent, and not to neglect the condition. At the first sign of any soreness, take immediate steps to ease the throat and to reduce the infection. Bayer Aspirin will do both! Use it as a gargle. Three tablets crushed in 1/2 tumblerful of water. Relief is immediate, but repeat until all trace of soreness and inflammation is gone. Take these tablets freely to ward off colds; and for prompt relief of headaches and body aches from colds, exposure, or other causes. Bayer Aspirin can't harm you, and it does prevent all sorts of needless suffering! Get the genuine tablets, stamped thus:

