

The Honor of the Big Snows

By James Oliver Curwood

PROLOGUE.

Up in the "Big Snows," near the dome of the earth, lies the scene of this story of real men and real women, who have all of the virtues of their hardening environment and few of the failings of their more civilized relatives. This is a tale for reading when one is tired of the artificialities of civilization—or at any other time when a good story is appreciated. You will find in it romance and adventure and mystery mixed in such skillful manner and in such proportion that no ingredient interferes with another. Yet all go to make fine reading for women who like to hear of brave deeds and sacrifice for love's sake and for men with even a drop of the spirit of adventure in their veins. And one thing more—the author has lived among the people whose lives he describes, and he knows how to tell a story.



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CHAPTER II.

Little Melisse.

THEY carried Cummins' wife to where a clearing had been cut in the edge of the forest, and at the foot of a giant spruce, towering sentinel-like to the sky, they lowered her into the frozen earth. Gaspingly Williams, the old factor, stumbled over the words on a ragged page that had been torn from a Bible. The rough men who stood about him bowed their wild heads upon their breasts, and sobs broke from them.

At last Williams stopped his reading, stretched his long arms above his head and cried chokingly:

"The great God keep Mees Cummins!"

As the earth fell there came from the edge of the forest the low, sweet music of Jan Thoreau's violin. No man in all the world could have told what he played, for it was the music of Jan's soul, wild and whispering of the winds, sweetened by some strange inheritance that had come to him with the picture which he carried in his throbbing heart.

He played until only the tall spruce and John Cummins stood over the lone grave. When he stopped the man turned to him, and they went together to the little cabin where the woman had lived.

There was something new in the cabin now—a tiny white, breathing thing over which an Indian woman watched. The boy stood beside John Cummins looking down upon it and trembling.

"Ah," he whispered, his great eyes glowing, "it ees the leetle white angel!"

"It is the little Melisse," replied the man.

He dropped upon his knees with his sad face close to the new life that was to take the place of the one that had just gone out. Jan felt something tugging in a strange way at his heart, and he, too, fell upon his knees beside John Cummins in this first worship of the child.

From this hour of their first kneeling before the little life in the cabin something sprang up between Jan Thoreau and John Cummins which it would have been hard for man to break.

That night when Jan picked up his violin to go back to Mukee's cabin Cummins put his two hands on the boy's shoulders and said:

"Jan, who are you and where did you come from?"

Jan stretched his arm vaguely to the north.

"Jan Thoreau," he replied simply. "Thees is my violin. We come alone through the beeg snow. We starve seven day in the beeg snow. My violin keep the wolf off at night."

"Look again, Jan. Didn't you come from there or there or there?"

Cummins turned slowly, facing first to the east and Hudson's bay, then to the south, and lastly to the west. There was something more than curiosity in the tense face that came back in staring inquiry to Jan Thoreau.

The boy hunched his shoulders, and his eyes flashed.

"It ees not lie that Jan Thoreau and hees violin come through the beeg snow," he replied softly. "It ees not lie."

"There is plenty of room here now," said Cummins huskily. "Will you stay with the little Melisse and me?"

"With the leetle Melisse!" gasped the boy. "I—I—stay with the leetle white angel for ever and ever!"

No man learned more of Jan than had Cummins. Even to Mukee his history was equally simple and short. Always he said that he came from out of the north, which meant the Barren lands, and the Barren lands meant death. No man had ever come across them as Jan had come, and at another time and under other circumstances Cummins and his people would have believed him mad.

But they knew that Jan Thoreau had come like a messenger from the angels, that the woman's soul had gone out to meet him, and that she had died sweet-

Author of "The Danger Trail"

her work, as she firmly believed, in a most faithful and thorough manner. With a shriek, Jan threw off his pack and darted toward her like a wild thing.

"Sacre bleu—you keel-keel ze leetle Melisse!" he cried shrilly, snatching up the half frozen child. "Mou Dieu, she ees not papoose; she ees ceevilize—ceevilize!" and he ran swiftly with her into the cabin, flinging back a torrent of Cree anathemas at the dumbly bewildered Maballa.

At last Maballa went into an ecstasy of understanding. Melisse was not to be taken out and rolled in the snow; so she brought in the snow and rolled it over Melisse.

When Jan discovered this his tongue twisted itself into sounds so terrible, and his face writhed so fiercely that Maballa began to comprehend that thereafter no snow at all, either out doors or in, was to be used in the physical development of the little Melisse.

This was the beginning of the problem, and it grew and burst forth in all its significance on the day before Cummins came in from the wilderness.

For a week Maballa had been dropping sly hints of a wonderful thing which she and the factor's half breed wife were making for the baby. On the day before Cummins' arrival Jan came in from chopping wood. Melisse was smiling and making queer, friendly little signals to him from the table. She was standing upright, wedged in a coffin shaped thing from which only her tiny white face peered out at him, and Jan knew that this was Maballa's surprise. Melisse was in a papoose sling!

"Melisse, I say you shall be no papoose!" he cried, running to the table. "You ees ceevilize! You shall be no papoose, not if twen' rous'nd devil come tak Jan Thoreau!"

And he snatched her from her prison, flung Maballa's handwork out into the snow and waited impatiently for the return of John Cummins.

Cummins returned the next day, not that his work among the wild trappers to the south was finished, but because he had suffered a hurt in falling from a slippery ledge. When Jan, from his wood chopping in the edge of the forest, saw the team race up to the little cabin and a strange Cree half carry the wounded man through the door, he sped swiftly across the open with visions of new misfortune before him.

But the injury was not serious and Jan lost no time in revealing his fears after Maballa had been sent to the factor's wife. With graphic gesture he told of what had happened. Cummins hobbled to the door to look upon the wallow in the snow and hobbled back to the table when Jan ran there in excited imitation of the way in which he had found the little Melisse in Maballa's sling.

"She ees ceevilize!" finished Jan hotly. "She ees not papoose! She must be tak—her!" His great eyes shone, and Cummins felt a thickening in his throat as he looked into them and saw what the boy meant. "Maballa muk papoose out of Melisse. She grow—know not'ing tak papoose, talk lak papoose!"

"Yes, she must be like her, Jan—just as good and just as sweet and just as beautiful," interrupted Cummins gently.

There was a quick intaking of his breath as he hobbled back to his own cot, leaving Jan at play with the baby.

That night, in the dim, spattering glow of an oil lamp John Cummins and Jan Thoreau solemnly set to work to thrash out the great problem that had suddenly entered into their existence. To these two there was no element of humor in what they were doing, for into their keeping had been given a thing for which God had not schemed them.

So far as Cummins knew, there was not a white woman nearer than Fort Churchill, 200 miles away. In all that region he knew of only two full white men, and they were Williams and himself. The baby Melisse was hopelessly lost in a world of savagery—honest, loyal, big souled savagery—but savagery for all that, and the thought of it brought the shadows of fear and foreboding to the two into whose lives the problem had just come.

Long into the night they talked seriously of the matter, while Melisse slept; and the longer they talked the greater loomed the problem before them. Cummins fancied that he already began to see signs of the transformation in Melisse. She was passionately fond of the gaudy things Maballa gave her, which was a sign of savagery. She was charmed by confinement in the papoose sling, which was another sign of it, and she had not died in the snow wallows, which was still another.

So far back as he could remember, Cummins had never come into finger touch of a white baby. Jan was as blissfully ignorant. So they determined upon immediate and strenuous action. Maballa would be ceaselessly watched and checked at every turn. The Indian children would not be allowed to come near Melisse. They two—John Cummins and Jan Thoreau—would make her like the woman who slept under the sentinel spruce.

"She ees ceevilize," said Jan with finality, "an' we mus' keep her ceevilize!"

Cummins counted back gravely upon his fingers. The little Melisse was four months and eighteen days old.

"Tomorrow we will make her one of those things with wheels, like the baby wagons they have in the south," he said. "She must not go in the papoose slings."

"An' I will teach her ze museek," whispered Jan, his eyes glowing. "That ees ceevilize."

Suddenly an eager light came into Cummins' face, and he went to a call-covered box standing upon end in a corner of the room.

"Here are the books—her books, Jan," he said softly, the trembling thrill of inspiration in his voice. He drew the books out, one by one, his



"She loved this, Jan," he said huskily.

fingers trembling and his breath coming quickly as he touched them, a dozen worn, dusty things. At the last one of all, which was more ragged and worn than the others, he gazed for a long time. It was a little Bible, his wife's Bible, dog-eared, patched, pathetic in its poverty. The man griped hard.

"She loved this, Jan," he said huskily. "She loved this worn, old book more than anything else, and little Melisse must love it also. Melisse must be a Christian!"

"Ah, yes, ze leetle Melisse mus' love ze great God," said Jan softly.

Cummins rose to his feet and stood for a moment looking at the sleeping baby.

"A missionary is coming over from Fort Churchill to talk to our trappers when they come in. She shall be baptized."

Like a cat Jan was on his feet, his eyes flashing, his long thin fingers clenched, his body quivering with a terrible excitement.

"No no! Not baptize by missioner!" he cried. "She shall be good an' love ze great God, but not baptize by mis-sioner. No no no!"

Cummins turned upon him in astonishment. Before him Jan Thoreau stood for a minute like one gone mad, his whole being consumed in a passion terrible to look upon. Lithe giant of muscle and fearlessness that he was, Cummins involuntarily drew back a step, and the mainspring of instinct within him prompted him to lift a hand as if to ward off a leaping thing from his breast.

Jan noted the backward step, the guarded uplift of hand, and with an agonized cry he buried his face in his hands. In another instant he had turned and, before Cummins' startled voice found words, had opened the door and run out into the night. The man saw him darting swiftly toward the forest and called to him, but there was no response.

Painting itself each instant more plainly through the tumult of his emotions was what Jan had come to know as the picture in his brain. Shadowy and indistinct at first, in pale, elusive lines of mental fabric, he saw the picture growing, and in its growth he saw first the soft, sweet outlines of a woman's face and then great luring eyes, dark like his own. And before these eyes, which gazed upon him with overwhelming love, all else faded away from before Jan Thoreau. The fire went out of his eyes, his fingers relaxed, and after a little while he got up out of the snow, shivering, and went back to the cabin.

Cummins asked no questions. He looked at Jan from his cot and watched the boy silently as he undressed and went to bed, and in the morning the whole incident passed from his mind.

(To Be Continued.)

New Blacksmith Shop.

Mike Rys and Frank Mauer will open a new blacksmith shop in this city on next Tuesday, November 5, in the building just west of the Warga & Cecil garage on Vine street. They expect to carry on a general blacksmith, wagon and repair work. Horse-shoeing a specialty. Remember, they will be ready for business on next Tuesday, November 5th.

Advertising brings forth desired results.

ELECTION DAY.

Well, as it is nearing election day, We should be careful what we say.

Of course it's fair for everyone To talk a little, just for fun.

But don't make remarks unless you've read, For you can't believe what others said.

Election, you know, is a game to win, And it still seems crooked, And it always has been.

Don't get angry, for it will do no good; But keep on reading and sawing wood.

And if you vote it wrong, don't later kick; If you favor Teddy, remember the big stick.

Remember there are others seeking office, too; So be very careful what you do.

Only once in four years we have the say To settle this question— That's election day.

If you make a mistake you can't call it back, But will be forced to follow the leader's track.

Bear it brave, if you win or lose; But now, my friends, is the time to choose.

Is there any of the men who are in the race You think could take a father's place,

And direct the boys, safe and true; If there is, I will ask you, who?

—M. G. Churchill.

Local News

Henry Horn of Cedar Creek was in the city today looking after business matters.

R. R. Nickles of near Murray was in the city today looking after some matters of business.

Miss Nioma Piestroup was a passenger this morning for Omaha, where she visited friends for the day.

W. G. Meisinger and family of near Cedar Creek were in the city today attending to some matters of business.

C. S. Aldrich, the Elmwood attorney, came in this morning to look after some matters at the court house.

Miss Kittie Smith was a passenger this afternoon for Omaha, where she will visit friends for a short time.

C. W. Haffke and wife departed this morning for Benson, where they will spend Sunday with friends.

Henry Hinz, sr., and family departed this afternoon for Nehawka, where they will visit over Sunday with friends.

Robert Rebal came down from Omaha this afternoon on No. 24 to spend Sunday with his parents, James Rebal and wife.

Miss Madeline Minor and Miss Florence White were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they visited for the day.

Ben Windham of Havelock is in the city for a short visit with his father, R. B. Windham, and his brothers and sisters.

Mrs. J. W. Thomas and daughter, Miss Alberta, were passengers this afternoon for Omaha, where they will visit for the day.

Mrs. Frank Ohm returned yesterday afternoon from Omaha, where she had been visiting for several days with relatives.

L. A. Tyson and M. H. Tyson of Elmwood came in last evening and visited over night at the home of their sister, Mrs. Q. K. Parmele.

N. P. Schultz, wife and family were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they spent the day looking after business matters.

Miss Blanché Robertson came down last evening on No. 2 and will spend Sunday with her parents, James Robertson and wife.

Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Parker departed this morning for Omaha, where they will visit over Sunday with I. L. Longworth and family.

A. E. Boedeker, one of the prosperous farmers from near Nehawka, was in the city today looking after some business matters.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION.

Known All Men by These Presents, that we, Jno. A. Chopieska, Sam G. Smith, D. O. Dwyer, H. M. Soennichsen and John T. Lambert, so associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming and becoming a corporation in the State of Nebraska, for the transaction of the business hereinafter described.

1. The name of the corporation shall be the Chopie Gasoline Engine Company (Limited). The principal place of transacting its business shall be in the city of Plattsmouth, County of Cass, and State of Nebraska.

2. The nature of the business to be transacted by said corporation shall be the manufacture and sale of gasoline engines, other engines, and machinery and the erection and maintenance of such buildings and structures as may be deemed necessary, and to purchase real estate for a site therefore, and to procure any and all necessary property, both real and personal, incidental to or required in the manufacture of gasoline engines.

3. The authorized capital stock of said corporation shall be Two Hundred Thousand Dollars, divided into shares of ten dollars each, to be subscribed and paid for as required by the Board of Directors. One-half of said stock shall be preferred, and which preferred stock shall draw seven per cent, to be paid out of the net earnings of the company, per annum. The other half shall be common stock, on which dividends shall be paid as the Board of Directors might determine. Only the owners of the common stock shall be entitled to participate in the further profits, election of officers and management of the Company. All of said stock shall be non-assessable.

4. The existence of this corporation shall commence on the 5th day of October, 1912, and continue during the period of twenty-five years.

5. The business of said corporation shall be conducted by a Board of Directors not to exceed five in number, to be elected by the stockholders of the common stock. The first election of directors shall take place at Plattsmouth, Nebraska, on the day of October, 1912, and thereafter such election to take place at such time and be conducted in such manner as shall be prescribed by the by-laws of said corporation.

6. The officers of said corporation shall be president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and a general manager, who shall be chosen by the Board of Directors, and shall hold their office for the period of one year and until their successors shall be elected and qualified.

7. The highest amount of indebtedness to which said corporation shall at any time subject itself shall not be more than two-thirds of its issued and paid up capital stock.

8. The manner of holding the meeting of stockholders for the election of officers, and the method of conducting the business of the corporation, shall be as provided in the by-laws adopted by the Board of Directors. In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this 5th day of October, 1912.

Jno. A. Chopieska.

Sam G. Smith.

H. M. Soennichsen.

D. O. Dwyer.

John T. Lambert.

In presence of

Bessie Shea.

STATE OF NEBRASKA.

Cass County, ss.

On this 2nd day of October, 1912, before me, Bessie Shea, a notary public, in and for said county, personally appeared the above named Jno. A. Chopieska, Sam G. Smith, D. O. Dwyer, H. M. Soennichsen and John T. Lambert, who are personally known to me to be the identical persons whose names are affixed to the above articles as parties thereto, and they severally acknowledged their instrument to be their voluntary act and deed.

Witness my hand and notarial seal at Plattsmouth, Nebraska, this 5th day of October, 1912. (Seal) Bessie Shea, Notary Public.

My commission expires June 3rd, 1913.

State of Nebraska,

Secretary's Office.

Received and filed for record October 7, 1912, and recorded in Book 20, Miscellaneous Incorporations, at page 528.

Addison Waif, Secretary of State.

By Geo. W. Marsh, Deputy.

If you have a house for rent try a Journal Want Ad.