

# The Honor

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.

## CHAPTER XIV. Temptation.

THE dogs were sitting upon their haunches waiting when Jan and Kazan went back to them. Over a fire Jan hung his coffee-pail and a big chunk of frozen caribou meat and tossed frozen fish to the hungry dogs.

With his sickness, his deathly feeling of loneliness and heartache, there had entered into Jan now a strange sensation that was almost excitement—an eagerness to fasten the dogs in their traces, to hurry on in spite of his exhaustion to that place which Thornton had told him of—Prince Albert—and to free himself there for all time of the thing which had oppressed him since that night many years ago when he had staggered into Lac Bain to play his violin as Cummins' wife died. He reached inside his skin coat, and there he felt papers which he had taken from the hole in the log stick tree. They were safe. For twenty years he had guarded them. Tomorrow he would take them to the great company at Prince Albert. And after that—after he had done this thing, what would there remain in life for Jan Thoreau? Perhaps the company might take him, and he would remain in civilization. That would be best—for him. He would fight against the call of his forests as years and years ago he had fought against that call of the other world that had filled him with unrest for a time. He had killed that. If he did return to his forest he would go far to the west or far to the east. No one that had ever known him would hear again of Jan Thoreau.

Kazan had crept to his blanket, daring to encroach upon it inch by inch until his great wolf head lay upon Jan's arm. It was ten years ago that Jan had taken Kazan, a little half blind puppy that he and Melisse had chosen from a litter of half a dozen stronger brothers and sisters. Kazan was all that was left to him now. He loved the other dogs, but they were not like Kazan. He tightened his arm about the dog's head. Exhaustion and the warmth of the fire made him drowsy, and after a time he slept, with his head thrown back against the tree.

Something awoke him hours afterward. He opened his eyes and found that the fire was still burning brightly. On the far side of it beyond the dog sat Thornton. A look at the sky, where the stars were dying, and Jan knew that it was just before the gray break of dawn. He sat upright. Thornton laughed softly at him and puffed out clouds of smoke from his pipe.

"You were freezing," he said as Jan stared, "and sleeping like a dead man. I waited for you back there and then hunted you up. You know, I thought!" He hesitated and knocked the ash from his pipe bowl. Then he looked frankly and squarely at Jan. "See here, old man, if you're hard up—had trouble of any sort—bad luck—got no money—won't you let me help you out?"

"Thank you, m'sieur, I have money," said Jan. "I prefer to sleep outside with the dogs. I guess I would have been stiff with the frost if you had not come. You have been here all night?"

Thornton nodded.

"And it is morning!" exclaimed Jan, rising and looking above the spruce tops. "You are kind, m'sieur. I wish I might do as much for you."

"You can," said Thornton quietly. "Where are you going from here?"

"To the company's offices at Prince Albert. We will start within an hour."

"Will you take me with you?" Thornton asked.

"With pleasure!" cried Jan. "But it will be a hard journey, m'sieur. I must hurry, and you may not be accustomed to running behind the dogs."



Copyright, 1911, by the Bobbs-Merrill Co.

He stopped, and something in his low voice made Jan look straight into his eyes. Then he turned to his pack upon the sledge.

"I've got meat and coffee and hard biscuits," he said. "Will you have breakfast with me?"

It was early afternoon of the fourth day later when Jan and Thornton reached Prince Albert.

"We will go to the offices of the great company," said Jan. "We will lose no time."

It was Thornton now who guided him to the century old building at the west edge of the town. It was Thornton who led him into an office filled mostly with young women, who were laboring at clicking machines, and it was Thornton who presented a square bit of white card to a gray haired man at a desk, who, after reading it, rose from his chair, bowed and shook hands with him. And a few moments later a door opened, and Jan Thoreau alone passed through it, his heart quivering, his breath choking him, his hand clutching at the papers in his breast pocket.

Outside Thornton waited. An hour passed and still the door did not open. The man at the desk glanced curiously at Thornton. Two girls at typewriters exchanged whispered opinions as to who might be this wild looking creature from the north who was taking up an hour of the sub-commissioner's time. Nearly two hours passed before Jan appeared. Thornton, still patient, rose as the door opened. His eyes first encountered the staring face of the sub-commissioner. Then Jan came out. He had aged five years in two hours. There was a tired stoop to his shoulders, a strange pallor in his cheeks. To Thornton his thin face seemed to have grown thinner. With bowed head, looking nowhere but ahead of him, Jan passed on, and as the last door opened to let them out into the pale winter sun Thornton heard the muffled sobbing of his breath. His fingers gripped Jan's arm. His eyes were blazing.

"If you're getting the wrong end of anything up there," he cried fiercely: "if you're in trouble, and they're taking the blood out of you, tell me, and I'll put the clamps on 'em! They'll buck the devil when they buck Jack Thornton, and if it needs money to show 'em so I've got half a million to teach 'em the game!"

"Thanks, m'sieur," struggled Jan, striving to keep a lump out of his throat. "It's nothing like that. I don't need money. Half a million would just about buy what I've given away up there."

He clutched his hand for an instant to the empty pocket where the papers had been.

That night, leaving Thornton still at supper in the little old Windsor hotel, Jan slipped away and, with Kazan at his heels, crossed the frozen Saskatchewan to the spruce forest on the north shore. He wanted to be alone to think, to fight with himself against a desire which was almost overpowering him. Once, long ago, he had laid his soul bare to Jean de Gravois, and Jean had given him comfort. Tonight he longed to go to Thornton as he had gone to Jean and to tell him the same story and what had passed that day in the office of the sub-commissioner. In his heart there had grown something for Thornton that was stronger than friendship—something that would have made him fight for him and die for him as he would have fought and died for Jean de Gravois. It was a feeling cemented by a belief that something was troubling Thornton; that he, too, was filled with a loneliness and a grief which he was trying to conceal. And yet he fought to restrain himself from confiding in his new friend. It would do no good, he knew, except by relieving him of a part of his mental burden. A week—it might be ten days, the sub-commissioner had told him—and it would be over. Lights were out, and people were in bed when he and Kazan returned to the hotel, but Thornton was up, sitting by himself in the gloom, as Jan had first seen him at Lac Pas. Jan

# of the Big Snows

Author of "The  
Danger Trail"

sat down beside him. There was an uneasy tremor in Thornton's voice when he said:

"Jan, did you ever love a woman—love her until you were ready and willing to die for her?"

The suddenness of the question wrung the truth from Jan's lips in a low, choking voice. For an instant he thought that Thornton must have guessed his secret.

"Yes, m'sieur."

Thornton leaned toward him, gripping his knees, and the misery in his face was deeper than Jan had ever seen it before.

"I love a woman—like that," he went on tensely. "A girl—not a woman, and she is one of your people, Jan—of the north, as innocent as a flower, more beautiful to me than—than all the women I have ever seen before. She is at Oxford House. I am going home to—save myself."

"Save yourself!" cried Jan. "Does she not love you?"

"She would follow me to the end of the earth!"

"Then—"

Thornton straightened himself and wiped his pale face. Suddenly he rose to his feet and motioned for Jan to follow him. He walked swiftly out into the night and still faster after that until they passed beyond the town. From where he stepped they could look over the forests far into the pale light of the south.

"That's hell for me!" said Thornton, pointing. "It's what we call civilization—but it's mostly hell! I wish to God I could stay here—always!"

"You love her," breathed Jan. "You can stay."

"I can't," groaned Thornton. "I can't—unless—"

"What, m'sieur?"

"Unless I lose everything—but her."

Jan's fingers trembled as they sought Thornton's hand.

"And everything is—is—nothing when you give it for love and happiness," he urged. "The great God, I know!"

"Everything," cried Thornton. "Don't you understand? I said everything!"

He turned almost fiercely upon his companion. "I'd give up my name—for her. I'd bury myself back there in the forests and never go out of them—for her. I'd give up fortune, friends, lose myself forever—for her. But I can't. Good God, don't you understand?"

Jan stared. His eyes grew large and dark.

"I've spent ten years of worse than hell down there with a woman," went on Thornton. "It happens among us frequently, this sort of hell. I came up here to get out of it for a time. You know now. There is a woman down there—who is my wife. She would be glad if I never returned. She is happy now when I am away, and I have been happy for a time. I know what love is. I have felt it. I have lived it. God forgive me, but I am almost tempted to go back to her!"

He stopped at the change which had come in Jan, who stood as straight and as still as the blank spruce behind him, with only his eyes showing that there was life in him. Those eyes held Thornton's. They burned upon him through the gray gloom as he had never seen human eyes burn before. He waited, half startled, and Jan spoke. In his voice there was nothing of that which Thornton saw in his eyes.

It was low and soft, and, though it had that which rang like steel, Thornton could not have understood or feared it more.

"M'sieur, how far have you gone—with her?"

Thornton understood and advanced with his hands reaching out to Jan.

"Only as far as one might go with the purest thing on earth," he said. "I have sinned in loving her and in letting her love me, but that is all, Jan Thoreau. I swear that is all!"

"And you are going back into the south?"

"Yes, I am going back into the south."

The next day Thornton did not go. He made no sign of going on the second day. So it was with the third, the fourth and the fifth. On each of these days Jan went once, in the afternoon, to the office of the sub-commissioner, and Thornton always accompanied him. At times when Jan was not looking there was a hungry light in his eyes as he followed the other's movements, and once or twice Jan caught what was left of this look when he turned unexpectedly. He knew what was in Thornton's mind, and he pitied him, grieved with him in his own heart until his own secret almost wrung itself from his lips.

The ninth day was the last day for Jan Thoreau. In a dazed sort of way he listened as the sub-commissioner told him that the work was ended. They shook hands. It was dark when Jan came out from the company's offices, dark with a pale gloom through which the stars were beginning to glow—with a ghostly gloom, lightened still more in the north with the rising fires of the northern lights. Alone Jan stood for a few moments close down to the river. Across from him was the forest, silent, black, reaching to the end of the earth, and over it, like a signal light, beckoning him back to his world, the ARCTIC sent out its shafts of red

and gold. And as he listened there came to him faintly a distant wailing sound that he knew was the voice from that world, and at the sound the hair rose along Kazan's spine, and he whined deep down in his throat. Jan's breath grew quicker, his blood warmer. Over there—across the river—his world was calling to him, and he, Jan Thoreau, was now free to go. This very night he would bury himself in the forest again and when he lay down to sleep it would be with his beloved stars above him, and the winds whispering sympathy and brotherhood to him in the spruce tops. He would go—now. He would say good-by to Thornton and go.

He found himself running, and Kazan ran beside him. He was breathless when he came to the one lighted street of the town. He hurried to the hotel and found Thornton sitting where he had left him.

"It is ended, m'sieur," he cried in a low voice. "It is over and I am going. I am going tonight."

Thornton rose. "Tonight," he repeated.

"Yes, tonight—now. I am going to pick up my things. Will you come?"

He went ahead of Thornton to the bare little room in which he had slept while at the hotel. He did not notice the change in Thornton until he had lighted a lamp. Thornton was looking at him doggedly. There was an unpleasant look in his face.

"And I—I, too, am going tonight," he said.

"Into the south, m'sieur?"

"No; into the north." There was a fierceness in Thornton's emphasis. He stood opposite Jan, leaning over the table on which the light was placed.

"I've broken loose," he went on. "I'm not going south, back to that hell of mine. I'm never going south again. I'm dead down there—dead for all time. They'll never hear of me again. They can have my fortune, everything. I'm going north. I'm going to live with you people and God and her!"

Jan sank into a chair; Thornton sat down in one across from him.

"I am going back to her," he repeated. "No one will ever know."

He could not account for the look in Jan's eyes nor for the nervous twitching of the little brown hands that reached half across the table. Thornton would never know that Jan's fingers twitched for an instant in their old mad desire to leap at a human throat.

"You will not do that," he said quietly.

"Yes, I will," replied Thornton. "I have made up my mind. Nothing can stop me but death."

"I will stop you," said Jan, rising also. "and I am not death."

He went to Thornton and placed his two hands upon his shoulders, and in his eyes there glowed now that gentle light which had made Thornton love him as he had loved no other man on earth.

"M'sieur, I will stop you," he said again, speaking as though to a brother. "Sit down. I am going to tell you something, and when I have told you this you will take my hand, and you will say, 'Jan Thoreau, I thank the great God that something like this has happened before and that it has come to my ears in time to save the one I love.' Sit down, m'sieur."

(Continued.)

You will find that druggists everywhere speak well of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. They know from long experience in the sale of it that in cases of coughs and colds it can always be depended upon, and that it is pleasant and safe to take. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

## Local News

From Wednesday's Daily.

Will Rummel was in the city yesterday afternoon attending to some trading with the merchants.

Clarence and Albert Cotner were passengers this afternoon for Omaha where they visited for a few hours.

W. A. Laughlin of Greenwood was in the city yesterday looking after some business matters at the court house.

J. W. Holmes and family motored to this city this afternoon from their home at Murray to attend to business matters.

Charles Miller, the sturdy German farmer from south of the city returned this afternoon from Omaha, where he has been for a few days attending to some business matters.

J. F. Weherbein and wife departed this afternoon for Newman Grove, Neb., to attend the funeral of rs. Weherbein's sister, Mrs. Rose Jensen, which will be held there tomorrow.

Dr. G. H. Gilmore of Murray was a passenger this afternoon for Omaha where he was called on business matters. Mrs. Gilmore and Mrs. J. A. Walker accompanied the doctor to the city. Mrs. Walker departs tomorrow for entucky and Tennessee for a pleasure trip.

From Friday's Daily.

Charles Ulrich and wife were among the Omaha visitors today, going to that city on No. 15 this morning.

James Holmes and wife of Murray were in the city today attending to some business matters for a short time.

W. G. Boedeker came up from Murray last evening in his fine automobile to look after some matters of business.

Mrs. Luke Wiles and Miss Ursula Haimer were Omaha visitors today, where they attended to some business matters.

L. D. Hiatt, the Murray merchant, was a passenger on No. 23 this afternoon for Omaha to attend to business matters.

Ben Beckman of near Murray was in the city this afternoon attending to some matters of business with the merchants.

John Rotter and wife departed this afternoon for Omaha in response to a message announcing the illness of their grandson.

Charles Valley and sister, Mrs. Tom Tison, of near Murray, were passengers this morning on No. 15 for Omaha to look after business matters.

J. L. Smith and daughter-in-law, Mrs. Herman Smith, drove up from their farm near Nehawka this morning and were passengers for Omaha.

Mrs. Bertha Douthett and daughter, Edith, of Osceola, Iowa, who have been here visiting the Morgans for a short time, departed this morning for their home.

P. H. Meisinger, one of the reliable farmers of the county, drove in this morning from his farm in Eight Mile Grove to attend to some business matters.

M. Joannett, one of the prosperous young farmers of near Nehawka, was in the city yesterday doing some trading with the local merchants. We are glad to see the farmers of that section come to Plattsmouth to trade, as they will find the merchants here sell goods cheaper than elsewhere.

When you have a bilious attack give Chamberlain's Tablets a trial. They are excellent. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

## SEAL ON EACH SOUL



"Am I using Red Cross Christmas Seals?" reiterated a good-natured old cobbler as he looked up from the shoe he was repairing to the person who stood blocking the doorway of the little shop, and who had asked the question originally. "I don't know of them. What are they for?" he asked.

When told that the little stickers were being sold all over the United States to raise money to prevent tuberculosis, the cobbler became very much interested.

"Now, I call that a good cause," he drawled. "I can't afford many because I don't get very much work away out here in this end of town, but you can leave me ten of them."

"No, I don't write any letters and I don't send any Christmas packages. There's just me and the old woman left. I can't use my seals that way, but I'll tell you how I can use them. I will stick a seal on the sole of every shoe I tap!"

## COAL and FEED

We are now handling a complete line of coal. Call and let us quote you prices for your fall and winter coal. We handle wheat, oats, corn and chop of all kinds.

Ind. Telephone 297

Nelson Jean & Co.



She would like a nice

# RUG

for Christmas

We have them all Sizes, all Prices and all Kinds—from

\$1.25 Up to \$26.00

E.G. Dovey & Son