



TERRY DENVER.

A NEW CANADIAN STORY. By Nancy Nugent.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER III.

RS. JONES will you see that a couple of days' provisions is put in the boat, lighting appliances and all things needful. I will try my boat."

"Are you not tired, sir? you had a long ride."

"Yes, a little, but that will rest me. I will not work. Just get in and drift to the land of enchantment you told me of, down in Deer Bay."

"Would you like me to send one of the boys with you. We will never see you again if you go alone."

"No! will you make haste; I wish to begin drifting immediately."

In half an hour everything was ready. The elegant craft was pushed from the shore, bearing Terry to scenes revealed to few.

The afternoon sun beat down with unusual warmth, and after a mile or two of slow, slumberous floating he began to feel quiet; but was Terry not always quiet? Elms grew on either side tall and swaying. A little opening on the shore and he saw half a dozen deer drinking at the water's edge.

A squirrel frisked and chattered above them, and high over all an oriole swayed with the branches, singing gaily. The deer lifted their heads and in mild-eyed wonder watched the boat float by. The squirrel sat motionless with erected tail and saucy eyes still for once. And Terry floated on out of sight to the lilt of music of the oriole's song. He had stretched himself at full length in the canoe, pitched his head on the stern so that with little exertion he could see right and left. The boat would turn and then Terry was going head first, turn again and feet would go first, swing half way around and then he went sideways; but all ways were alike to him as he lay half asleep in the yellow canoe. His eyes closed, and sleep kept them so. Mrs. Jones would have ejaculated, "Enchanted." Terry, why do you sleep? See, a current has set in shoreward, will your bonnie boat stand a bump? Terry did not stir until—thump—his boat had struck the shore with such force that a sense of something was forced into the brain of the sleeper, but it was not a sense of danger. The current swept the boat around, and before Terry could realize what was the matter he had

passed under a mass of vines that hung as if backed by rocks. He had entered a cave of considerable size. He sat up and without a moment's hesitation down went the hands to the bottom of his pockets. Terry was at last conscious of interest in something. He was a boy again—a boy in a cave, perhaps a robber's. There was nothing fancy like in this cavern. Solid rock and screened by vines. At the back the roof lowered to the height of six feet, and the sides narrowed to about four feet. The cave continued back Terry knew not how far. Seizing his paddle he guided his boat to the dark opening at the back and peered in. Nothing could be seen. He lit his lantern, placed it on the box containing his food, and began paddling cautiously. He looked at his watch—it was six o'clock.

"Good, I will have two hours to explore. The current seems less. I will have to make better time or spend the night in this stillness and blackness. I can actually hear my blood run it is so intensely quiet. Mythic Lothes mystic windings were not more silent, and the straight and marrow way to heaven a labyrinth colossal compared with this. I never understood the word alone before. This is being alone in earnest, and I like it.

"I would like something to eat, too. With his left hand he drew toward him a basket of cut food, that was what Mrs. Jones called the sandwiches, with his right he kept the boat from striking the rocks. He ate enough to quiet nature, then resumed his paddling. The current ceased altogether. The water lay stagnant, not the least sign of life, whether fish, snake, lizard, or bat, even. On! on! and yet on. Again he looked at his watch: it was nine now.

"Shall I go back and come to-morrow? No, it will be just as dark on Deer Bay as here, and I will not turn back."

He counted the paddle strokes, pleaded on his last case, and quoted Goethe: was he not alone? On he went, straight on. Not the slightest turn. What stillness! What thick, black darkness!

"I must not sleep here," he said aloud. Again he looked at the time; it was now twelve o'clock.

"Well, if I never waken I must sleep." Making himself comfortable he lay staring into darkness, wondering where he was going to, then he slept. When he wakened the boat was going faster than he would have liked it to, without a guide. He wound his watch, ate again, and then wondered where the devil he was going to.

Terry, Terry, you first become interested, then you swear; you are on enchanted ground at last, else why all this. He counted the minutes for one hour. It was now half-past ten. He thought he had come to the Lotus-eaters' land, as he floated down the river to the music of the oriole's whistle. Now he thought it just possible that the perpetual afternoon had waned to a perpetual midnight. A light at last. He put out his light and away in the distance a faint glimmer of light shone steadily. He dipped his paddle now with strokes strong and regular. In ten minutes he floated out in the blazing light of day to meet welcome of a most peculiar sort. Almost instantaneously with his appearance a full voice said:

"By Father Ambrose, if here is not another victim for Ishmael."

CHAPTER IV.

ERRY looked around. On a broad sweep of rock stood a small structure of logs neatly hewn, and wrought with glittering quartz, causing the building to look as if inlaid with diamonds.

A few feet from the door sat he who had welcomed Terry as a victim for Ishmael. A sinuous man, strongly marked by Indian blood, yet not repulsively so. At the door on a block cut from the end of a log stood a girl. She held in her right hand a knife of highly polished steel; in her left a large piece of the quartz the house was incrustated with. She poised herself on her toes and was reaching above the door whittling a cavity to embed the glittering stone in. So ingrossed was she in her work she did not hear the wondrous welcome. She was slightly tall, delicately molded and wore a dress, or rather a drapery, of silk, soft and white. It was gathered at the neck and fell straight to her feet ungriddled. Her feet were bare, but for shoes made in the old Italian style, that revealed the toes. Her hair was of that peculiar color seen only in the copper snake, and hung in ripp ing masses below her knees; it, too, was ungriddled.

"Zell, another victim for Ishmael."

She turned to the man, he pointed silently to Terry, who had landed and was coming to the house. Zell stepped off the block and turned to Terry. Her eyes were the same hue as her hair, mild and limpid as the water yonder, and in whose depths was that subtle something seen only in great depths, whether of water, valley or eyes—that something which beckons one to the very verge. At the verge you pause, tremulous with hunger, to follow, or fear to probe further that deep unknown. Terry drew a long breath as he gazed into those wondrously beautiful eyes.

"What do you want?" asked Zell.

"I want to know where I am?"

A smile flitted over Zell's face, dappling the roseate loveliness of her face.

"You are here."

"Yes, but where is here or what is here?"

"I am here, Shem is here, you are here, and here is here. I have always been here and I know of nothing but here."

"What do you call the place?"

"There are two places here, Ishmael's cave and our Tarn."

"Who is Ishmael and where is his cave?"

"I do not know who Ishmael is. I never thought to ask. He was here before me and I took him as part of everything. Who is he, Shem?"

"Ishmael is Ishmael."

"Is he the only one other than yourselves?"

"No. There is Ishmael, Zaneia, four victims and myself. Now you are here."

"Where does Ishmael live and who is Zaneia?"

"I cannot say who we are. None of us know. Ishmael lives up there, see, away to the end, at the top of the mountain."

Terry had not looked away from Zell all this time; now he turned and saw the place was a huge basin two miles broad and nearly four in length. A slip of rock ran around the water's edge like a shelf. On this gigantic shelf had accumulated matter enough to grow low shrubbery. Back of this a pile of nature's masonry reared itself perpendicularly hundreds of feet high. From

workmanship. The repast was dainty in the extreme, consisting of cold wild fowl of some kind, bread, wild fruit and tea. After Terry's hunger had subsided Shem removed the tray and table; then the three set out toward the mountain road. When they gained the foot Zell asked Terry if he would return to them that night. He promised he would, and at the same time encountered a smile from Shem of sympathetic pity. The mountain's shadow followed Terry up the steep road. When he gained the platform he turned and in the west he saw the sun setting in all the beauty of a June sunset.

"Ah! Zell, you cannot see the beauty of the sinking sun as it settles itself in gorgeous splendor behind that rugged crest of rock that piles itself higher again than what you see. Poor Zell, what a narrow world yours is."

Far down on the flat he saw Zell and Shem going home, and Terry paused to watch the lovely child. Rousing himself, as if from a dream, he walked straight to the drape of vines that partly hid the entrance to the cave of Ishmael.

Jack would have said Terry's vision at least had learned concentration. He stood motionless, looking into the cave. He saw a large natural excavation giving a space of fifty feet or more. On every side from roof to floor the walls were lined with books; what a magnificent library. The ceiling was draped from the center outward with velvet soft and rich, and was of a pure gold color. From the centre hung a chandelier of burnished gold, bearing tiny lamps almost innumerable. These small lamps were quite antique. The floor was covered with the same material the top was draped with. Statues of fine marble lightened the remotest corners with their involuntary chasteness, gleaming white and cold looking. Ottomans without number, broad and easy, were scattered around. These, too, were covered with the rich golden velvet. Just under the lights were ranged four couches, over which were drapings heavily fringed with silk. On each of these sumptuous beds lay, still and white, a man. Near them was an ottoman, the covering of which was richer than the rest, the drape being wrought and fringed with the same rich metal the chandelier was made of. Here sat what Terry had gazed at so fixedly—a girl, the same, the very same, as Zell. Could it be Zell, or was this Zaneia. The same clinging silken gown, shoes of the same old make, the hair falling in the same rich profusion.

one, only one little difference. Zaneia wore a girdle. A chain of gold bound the silk in folds at her waist, showing the perfect curves that were concealed by the flowing garb of Zell. The chain reached to the hem of the dress in gleaming links. She sat with one knee caught up between her clasped hands watching those deathly still men. She turned, and seeing Terry she arose and came to meet him with extended hand.

CHAPTER V.

OU are in good time. Zell did not keep you long, but then you promised her you would return to-night. You think Zell beautiful. You think the same of me."

She looked into Terry's eyes earnestly. Oh, so earnestly, then dropped her pretty head a moment.

"Come in and rest, and tell me what you think of the cave of Ishmael you climbed so high to see."

To her own ottoman she drew another, and bade him sit by her.

"You fear the men are dead. They only sleep, their souls are freed from bondage for a space of time. Their bodies rest. Why do you not speak?"

"These men depress me. Tell me what this means. Why do you live here alone, you and little Zell, Ishmael and Shem?"

A smile, so like Zell's, covered those pretty lips.

"Little Zell, we are alike in size. Our bodies are just the same, why do you say little Zell?"

"Have you seen Zell? She says she has never seen Zaneia."

"Not as you see her, but I know her eyes, her hair, her face, and dress are like mine. Zell differs only in her unbound robe."

Terry was a man thoroughly under his own control truly, so calmly he listened. The curtain at the end of the cave was swept aside, and forth came a man of stalwart build, dressed in blackest velvet. His hair hung white as shredded silver down to his knees behind, and his beard covered his front with the same frosty luxuriance. His gown was tied loosely with a cord of white, and his shoes, too, were of ancient make. He came to Terry and stood before him, looking with penetrating fixedness into Terry's eyes.

"Ishmael, this is Terry Denver, of Montreal. He is journeying northward by request of a dead relative."

"How do you know all this, and who are you?"

"I am Zaneia."

"Zaneia, wilt thou cease?"

"Yes, Ishmael, because I wish to."

"Food will be served almost immediately, Zaneia."

Zaneia arose and departed by the same doorway Ishmael had entered at. Ishmael went to the couches and looked at the men, Terry thought, with satisfaction, followed by a baffled look as if sorely defeated. How still and white they were, too still for sleep.

"Are those men living?"

Ishmael turned and looked unwaveringly into Terry's eyes, advanced and lay one hand on Terry's broad shoulder. Tall as was Ishmael, Terry was equal in height. What a picture they made, they were perfect specimens of youth and old age. Terry did not shrink from that steady scrutiny. He stood looking unflinchingly into Ishmael's face, waiting for an answer.

"Ha, ha, Ishmael, you cannot do it this time. If you could I would forbid it. Terry Denver, thou hast great strength of will and mind. Thou hast resisted the strongest mesmeric power the world has ever produced."

"No, Zaneia, I cannot bring this one under my power, and I am glad. Terry Denver, thou art a man; what more could be said of anyone?"

They passed out under the curtain nature had supplied them. The sun had disappeared, but not long enough to draw its train of vivid colors after it. High up, the clouds looked like billows of gold, while just beneath the rocky mountain the light was a gorgeous red. The three watched the scene for a little. "Zell's home looks like a huge diamond. What work she has put on it. Year after year she has put bit by bit of that pretty stone into those logs. It is her only occupation. Poor Zell."

"Why do you say, poor Zell?"

"Because her world is so narrow, so very narrow. She knows nothing of what is away beyond this, either in this life or the after one. For twenty years she has lived here; it is the whole world to her. She does not know that there is life, death, sorrow, joy, love, hatred and strife continually at war away out there over the hills. It is better to know about all those passions, and better yet to feel them, even if the suffering they bring makes us writhe in mental agony. She is without knowledge of any kind. Shem and Father Ambrose have taught her to speak well, but that is all. She cannot read, she never saw a book, she knows not she has a mind of infinite richness and scope in which has never been thrust a seed, whether of wheat or tare. Ere to-morrow at eventide Terry Denver will have sowed the first seed. That seed will be love. The growth in such soil will be rapid. Then Zell will know there is life, death, sorrow, joy, love, hatred and strife. Love brings all this to its every victim."

Ishmael had stood with his head thrown back, his long hair fluttered by the breeze, looking away into and past the glory of the sunset. When Zaneia ceased speaking he spoke as if an echo had caught Zaneia's words and tossed them back in doleful recognition of the truth they expressed.

"Life, death, sorrow, joy, love, hatred and strife. Love brings all this to its every victim—yes, and oft times more."

"No, Ishmael. Those seven words combined mean love, or another word for love, life. Love and life are one. Come, our repast has been served."

Terry, on turning, saw a table and service the same as Shem's in workmanship, but where Shem's was silver Ishmael's was gold. Beside the table was a figure clad in linen of finest texture.

sheer jutted out over the lower one, but fully seven hundred feet above it. Above this again rose the rocks in sublime grandeur. From one end of this shelf a narrow road, partly low steps and partly slope, led down to the water and lower shelf. Here and there a rude railing had been constructed, but the precipice was principally unguarded. An occasional birch had drawn from the poor soil enough nourishment to keep life in their tenuous trunks and force a few trembling leaves to the branches. These trees were like ghostly sentinels guarding the cave of this secluded Ishmael.

The upper platform of rock was the whole width of the Tarn and projected a little less than a quarter of a mile. A most glorious doorstep for a most mysterious cave. The entrance to the cave was festooned by those ever-swaying vines.

"I have never seen Zaneia or Ishmael. Nature has placed Zaneia's home above mine. Why should I climb but to return? Why should Zaneia descend but to go up again? See, our flat is just the same as theirs. The vines toss for me the same as for Zaneia. The leaves put forth the same tints, and the waters ripple alike for both. The sun and moon I see as does distant Zaneia. At times I see her white robe flutter as she sees mine, what more? Ah, yes, I have Shem, he is so kind to me, will pick and hew the rock to get me quartz to deck our home, while poor Zaneia's home is in the rock."

"Zell hist your chatter. What would Father Ambrose say? He would call thee a chattering squirrel, as merry and asred. What is in the boat—what are we to call you?"

"Terry Denver."

"What is in the boat, Terry Denver?"

"A little food."

"Are you hungry, and whither are you going?"

"I am thirsty more than hungry. I was traveling north when I chanced upon that pass through the rock. I will return at daybreak; unlike—what am I to call you—"

"She is Zell. There is only Zell, Zaneia, Ishmael, and Shem in our world."

"Well, unlike Zell, I will climb the toilsome road just to see the cave of Ishmael and Zaneia."

"I will bring you food and drink, then go with you to the foot of the incline."

He arose, and with the dignity and grace of an animal, entered the house Reappearing in a short while he brought with him a table of ebony, inlaid with pearls. Placing it beside Terry he returned to the house. Again he came out, carrying a tray, the equipments of which were silver, and almost priceless for its great antiquity. The tray, too, was of silver, and was wrought in finest

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"How do you know all this, and who are you?"

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"Are those men living?"

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