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CHAPTER I.

GOOD-BYE Terry, and for the sake of the Goddess Love don't you travel too far into the backwoods. Write me from all points, for I am feeling— Well, Terry, old boy, would it not be safer for you to marry?"

The deep, rollicking voice ceased because it had to. The two friends clasped hands but neither spoke. This was their first parting. Terry Denver and Jack Boyd had been at school together, fought for the same girl, pitted tops, swapped alleys, done everything, in fact, but part. After they had grown up they went to Montreal to live. Slowly at first, more rapidly in after years, they climbed the social slope. One more step then the erstwhile country boys would have reached the summit and gained wealth. They were lawyers. To such wealth comes readily. Not so, though, with Terry and Jack. They had toiled honestly for all they had gathered. Now, at the least wished time, a legacy had been left Terry by a relative in Peterboro. But—all legacies seem to have that mischief making "but." Terry smiled when the one who read the will paused after the word "but."

"You need not read further if there is a but, a beauty or an old maid. I will not marry any of them, not for a million." "Wait. The clause reads thus: 'To Terry Denver, my cousin's son, I leave \$500,000, but he will have to walk, ride or paddle, or combine the three, two hundred miles north, beginning at Peterboro, quite alone. That is alone, but for the casual traveler, whom he may meet. One day to be given him to consider whether he will accept or refuse. He is to be given two thousand dollars over and above the legacy for traveling expenses.'"

"I will tell you in one hour." Terry leisurely sought his friend Jack. No one but Jack could have told anything unusual had happened. All that betrayed him was a semi-attempt to put the right hand into the trousers pocket. Not much, eh! Jack knew nothing but strong emotion of some kind caused that little trick to show.

"Well, Terry boy, what's in your pocket now? A big client?" "Five hundred thousand dollars, Jack, if I can leave you for six months."

"Say, Terry, you have been working too hard and it is after your brain. Did you ever hear of insanity being in your evolutionary process—anywhere, away back?" "Never until to-day. Nutsford, of Peterboro, has just conveyed to me the information that I had a cousin crazy as they make them. She left me \$500,000 clear—but—"

"Spend it all in locating her after-existence?" "No, but—"

"Marry the poodle?" "No, but—"

"Now, I have it." "Jack, will you cease your bubbling for the space of five minutes, and I will tell you the 'but'—\$500,000, but I will have to travel by my own exertion two hundred miles north, beginning at Peterboro."

"Sure, then, it is to be hoped your exertion is in proportion with your physical structure, or you will never need your \$500,000. Was it in the asylum she thought that will out?" "No."

"Was she mild or ferocious? Great heaven, Terry, I do hope the freak is not in you or you will take the trip sure. Come, old boy, quiet yourself, do."

"I surely will accept but for one thing. How can I leave you?" "Faith, you will have to leave me anyway if the disease continues developing. You had better go. The denizens of three miles, let alone two hundred miles back of Peterboro, would not know a lunatic if they saw him; they are so used to ravaging wolves and other wild animals. The place can't get populated, bless you, for the wilderness of the woods. Go, by all means; it may cure you of your lunacy and legacy, too."

"All right, Jack, you will see me off. I start this evening." "Yes, and I will see you every blessed minute between times. The office of Denver & Boyd is off for a holiday."

Jolly Jack Boyd crowded his soft hat on his blonde curls, and followed his friend to the street. Arm in arm they walked to the hotel. Three minutes before the expiration of the hour, Terry paused at the door of the room where waited Nutsford, of Peterboro.

"I will accept." "Let me congratulate you, Mr. Denver. You will receive, in addition to the \$500,000 cash, that amount of property in Germany without condition of any kind."

Jack started to his feet, twirled his hat in the air, sidled it into the corner, then grasped Terry's hand.

"A millionaire, old boy, all in a day. Oh, say! can't you enthuse just this once; you miss so much. Kick up your heels, do, by way of experiment. Say, you take it as cool as when your mother gave you a copper to buy a candy, Terry, to relieve me, say gosh."

Terry smiled slowly. "You do it for us both, my Jack. Then I am sorry to leave you."

"Mr. Denver, you are fortunate, not only in your large inheritance, but for your exuberant supply of sense."

"He got it for us both. He is my ballast. I will turn into an inflated gas-bag, or, worse still, fall in love, if he goes, and just so sure as I fall in love, I will get married. Then, what will the ballast be?"

"A wife," said Terry, and his brown eyes were a trifle moist as he lay his large, shapely hand over Jack's mouth.

"Hush, Mr. Nutsford leaves to-day, and he would talk business."

"Yes, here is the \$2,000. If you need more I will send it to whatever address you send me. Good-bye, Mr. Denver, you are a noble fellow."

"Noble. I say, Nutsford, if you knew him as I did when we were poor! Let me tell you an incident: I was one night when we first landed in Montreal he had just ten cents, and I had five. We were hungry as a hyena, and could not get a bun without cash—"

"Jack?" "Terry, my boy, what is it?" "Stop your chatter."

The hand was extended to stop the flow of praise, but Jack eluded it and continued.

"We were hungry; it was night, but we, or Terry, decided to save the money for a breakfast. We would walk all night to keep warm. Up and down we

went. My hands were deep in the pockets of my coat. Terry never would put his hands in his pockets. Well, all at once a small hand was thrust out from the doorway of an empty store, and a shivering voice said:

"Only a copper, sir. I am so hungry."

"So am I," said I.

"Jack, Mr. Nutsford will miss his train."

"Most happy to do so. Proceed with your story, Mr. Boyd."

"There now, Terry, the law is on my side. Well Nutsford, Terry took the little hand and drew from the darkness a little child. No wraps of any kind, and it winter. Slowly, Terry does all things slowly, he took out his pocket-book in which reposed his one ten-cent piece. He smiled like a cherub, then lay his all in the trembling hand of a hungry child at the same time apologizing that it was not more. I stood watching, holding my five cents with that despicable grip of a selfish school-boy. Never did I think to add it to the ten, until the child had kissed Terry's hand, and disappeared down the snowy street. Then I fell to and called myself a lot of pretty names, and wound up by asking Terry into a cake-shop to have a mutton pie. The girl who sold me the pie, two for five, asked if we would eat them in the back room. Of course we would. We were soon seated, and the warmth and stuffiness of that room surrounds me yet—in dreams. The pies were served hot. I passed the plate to Terry, but would you believe it, he said: 'Not at all hungry, Jack, thank you, with the air of one who had just dined at a No. 1 club, instead of on the caky smell of a second-rate bake shop. I knew he had not tasted a morsel that day. Mutton-head that I was, I devoured the pie unaided. When finished I looked at Terry and met a smile divinely omnipotently pleased and satisfied, as if he, too, had eaten a pair of pies. Terry Denver, what a sump you must think me, and for the first time since childhood I lay my head on the table and cried. A hand rested on my head and Terry's soothing influence was more satisfying than a dozen pies."

"Don't, Jack," he said, "we are both twenty-three now. Would you have me break down? That is the way my mother sobbed when I said good-bye to her in our little kitchen years ago. That is what makes me feel sorry. Don't, Jack,

"Terry, are you ever going to fall in love?" "I have, Jack, with you."

"Tut, Terry, I mean with a woman." "I do not know, I am sure. I sincerely hope so. You know I lack concentration. I like all women too devoutly to center all in one. The effort would be too great. By the way, Jack, it might make that heart of mine beat that you say never beats. I will first have to learn concentration, will I not?"

"If it ever does come to you, Terry, it will be hard on you. Do you think you could tell a woman you loved her, or would you slowly pick her up in your arms and just appropriate her?"

"Dear old Jack."

"You are through, are you, Jack?" "Terry Denver, your lack of enthusiasm is most aggravating. Say, did you ever feel your heart beat? I wish it would go quick to give you a surprise. Yes, I am through for now; but, Nutsford, that is one of a thousand such acts."

The three lunched. Nutsford left and Terry and Jack returned to their rooms. Jack ran lightly up the stairs, opened the door and laughingly bowed the millionaire in. After they were seated the irrepressible Jack began:

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"Dear old Jack."

"Terry, we have only two hours before you start for Peterboro. Will I ever see you again. I have what women call a presentiment that I will never see the old Terry again. You will be no less my friend, though."

The two talked on until the time for parting came. Jack stood holding Terry's hand while he spoke the farewell story opens with. The train rolled in with a hissing puff. Shortly a whistle sounded that to poor Jack seemed like the triumphant scream of a victorious demon, and the train moved off, taking his only friend.

The trip to Peterboro was uneventful. It was late when the train pulled up at the station. Calling a cabman, Terry asked to be taken to the quietest hotel that he might begin his trip on the morrow, unquestioned. He selected a room and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER II.

HE sun shone into Terry's window and awakened him early. For half an hour he lay soliloquizing:

Poor Jack, who will balance him, and—who will balance me. I need ballast too. What little active interest I take in life! This trip is what I have wished for all my days, yet I could not say so. I do not even feel glad. I wonder what it would be like to feel as Jack does, very glad, or very sorry. Well, I cannot know; let it pass. I am medium, and one thing is certain, if I am not capable of feeling joy keenly, neither do I feel sorrow keenly. Compensation there is in all things. My travels begin to-day. Let me see—Lakefield—that will be my resting place to-night. Nine miles—I will walk it, the road they say is good."

Rising, he took from his valise a suit of flannel of darkest hue. This he donned, then took the trouble to view himself in the glass.

"You have an ugly nose, Terry Denver," was his comment.

He took out another suit of the same material, but grey in color, and lay it in a knapsack along with numerous articles for the toilet. Terry was dainty as the ermine. After all arrangements were made he went down to breakfast. He ate heartily then sought the clerk.

"Which side of the river is Lakefield on?" he asked.

"On both sides, yer honor. Evenly so."

"On which side of the river is the best road, then?"

"That depends entirely on the kind of road you want. The railroad runs on one side and the wagon road is on the other."

"Well, I guess it is the wagon road I want."

"A good road it is, then. A foot-path runs alongside the entire way, and so does the Otonabee. A lovely river it is, too. You will not find another such in all Canada. The people of Peterboro are proud to live by its waters, and well they might be."

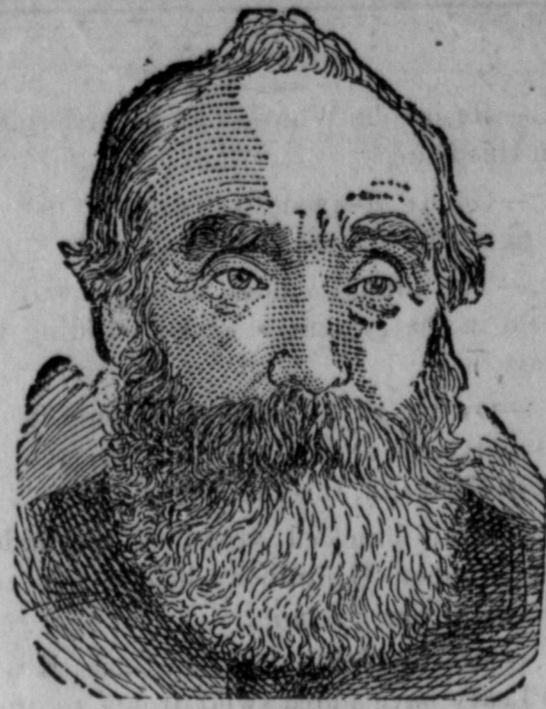
Terry sent for his knapsack, slung it over his shoulder, paid his expenses, then started north by way of George street. "Follow George street," had been the directions; "after the turn beyond there, it is the Smithtown road."

The turn was passed; Terry was on the country road. On he went. He strode with increasing buoyancy to the lapping music of the Otonabee. Now between him and the water rose tier after tier of sweet-smelling pine boards, to the left neat houses and carefully kept gardens, backed by the noted Smithtown hill with its crown of sombre pines. The piles of lumber now gave place to mills, beyond again spread the river, almost covered with logs. A small boy paused to look into Terry's kindly eyes; everyone liked to do that, and Terry asked the name of the mills.

"Why! don't you know?" with wide-eyed wonder. "Why! this is Blythe mills."

Terry thanked him, and dropped a quarter into the little hand. Twenty-five cents of the \$2,000 had been spent, and one mile of the two hundred traveled. The river ran close to the road. The board walk was narrower. Soon it dwindled into the width of two boards. For a short distance the two boards went, then one passed over a muddy place, after that the footpath.

What a charming companion the river made! Almost as versatile as Jack. It sobbed, it laughed, it gurgled, and patted the shore lovingly. Now a slight rapid, then another dam that irritated the water into anger, expressed by a sullen roar. Terry now found himself in the country. On past Nassau. Nothing of moment happened. He was walking faster than he thought, and earlier than he expected he saw nestling over in the valley, the little village of Lakefield. At the next concession he turned on to the road that led to the village, and was soon ushered into the best



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