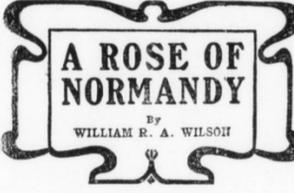




PERSUADED.

I am persuaded from mine unbelief, And to the keeping of my faith am won. Because a little shining of God's sun Clears me a pathway through a world of grief...



CHAPTER XXVI.—CONTINUED.

Reinforced by others from the interior of the woods, they prepared for another advance. This time, instead of rushing directly in one solid line, they separated, running a few steps and then suddenly crouching down close to the ground...

and Renee were anxiously awaiting the outcome of the fight. The nuns were praying, while Renee, with rosary in hand, sat beside the burning pine knot, listening for every sound...

The nuns on seeing this terrible apparition ran to the farthest corner. Miron approached Renee before she could overcome her terror sufficiently to move, snatched up the light, applied it to the bark wall of the lodge which quickly ignited, seized Renee in his arms and was gone.

The young man saluted and then in a hesitating tone, said: "M. le Capitaine will not be offended if a subordinate were to make a suggestion? It is only our great extremity that leads me to speak."

"Non, certainement," replied Tonti. "Speak up and let us know what you have in mind."

"You will remember some time ago you placed in my care the work of excavating a new magazine in which to store our powder?"

"Yes."

"Well, as M. le Capitaine left the entire task to me, the choice of situation as well as the oversight of the excavation—"

"Go on," cried Tonti impatiently, as the yells of the savages rose louder than before, indicating that an advance had been made.

"I thought it might be a good plan sometime to have a mine laid ready to be exploded—"

"So you—"

"I made the excavation so that it would lie just beneath the outside path some score of feet from the top."

"Sanguo di Dio!" cried Tonti joyously, as the idea of the young man flashed into his mind. "We are saved. You mean to fire the magazine beneath their very feet, and make an opening in the path they can never cross?"

"That was my thought," replied the young man modestly, flushing with pleasure as he saw his leader approved it. "The powder has not been stored there yet, but can be in a very few moments."

"Take three men with you," ordered Tonti, "and place half of all our stock of powder in the new magazine, and arrange so that it can be exploded on a given signal."

"In 20 minutes it shall be ready," replied the youth, and hastened away to carry out the command.

"Hold out for a half-hour longer and we shall blow these devils to perdition," shouted Pompon in the ears of the line of men defending the pass. A cheer was the response. Soon the young Sieur de Boisrondet returned. "It is accomplished," he reported with a smile.

Just then a strange lull in the confused sounds of the combat occurred. It lasted but a few seconds; but during that silence there came to the ears of the men the sound of a woman's scream from the interior of the fort yard. Both Tonti and Pompon recognized the voice and turned together. The light of the burning building was seen, and they started at a rapid pace, Tonti shouting to the Sieur de Boisrondet to take command until his return. More agile than his friend, nerved to action by the fear in his heart for Renee's safety, he gained the other side of the fort first. By the light of the blazing lodge he beheld his enemy ascending the platform bearing in his arms the form of his beloved.

With a cry he sprang after him. Miron heard his voice, and, having gained the top, turned to meet his foe. Tonti felt for his pistol that he had placed in his belt but found that it had dropped out in his hasty progress. Nothing daunted, without a weapon, he rushed up the little ladder and grappled with his enemy. Miron dropped Renee to the platform and received Tonti with a smile of savage joy, brandishing his knife. Tonti struck the arm holding the weapon a furious blow with his iron hand, to force him to drop it, and seized his throat with the other.

Miron still retained his knife and Tonti by the fast increasing light saw the blade descend, and felt as it were a red-hot iron plunged into his shoulder. Again it fell, this time into his back. A blackness fell suddenly before his eyes. His hold upon the throat of his adversary loosened, a roaring filled his ears, followed by a great explosion which seemed to shake the platform on which they stood, and he fell back and knew no more.

Miron did not stop, but throwing his knife aside, stooped down and gathered Renee, who called loudly for help, within his arms again. He approached the palisade and had already made preparations for his descent when he saw Pompon appear upon the rampart. With an oath he drew back, and putting Renee down once more, made ready to receive this new attack. Neither of the men had a weapon, but each sprang at the other's throat like some ferocious animal; they clinched and struggled to and fro; neither was able to throttle the other, so evenly were their strength matched. Renee, with streaming hair and terror-stricken eyes, dragged herself towards the motionless form of Tonti out of the way of the combatants, who swayed

from side to side in their desperate efforts. Now Miron has the advantage as he strives to trip his adversary; but Pompon, quick and agile, recovers his footing, and the struggle is renewed on equal terms. Backward they rush, and Miron barely saves himself from falling from the platform into the yard of the fort by a desperate wrench. They turn and twist and turn again. The rough planks beneath their feet creak under their tread: the whole structure vibrates with the violence of the fight.

At length Pompon's strength began to fail, and he felt the grip on his throat tighten, while his own slowly relaxed. They were alone; the din of battle, the shouts of the French, and the war-cries of the Indians, reached his ears from the other side of the fort. There was no aid near. He could not maintain the struggle longer. He glanced at Renee, crouching helpless and terrified beside his wounded friend, and a look of high resolve came into his eye that made his ugly scarred countenance glow with the beauty of a noble purpose, a look his antagonist saw and dreaded. Renee met his gaze and understood. With the cry, "Adieu, mon Capitaine!" he forced his foe back by one supreme effort. Another step toward the outer edge is made, and a grim smile of satisfaction appears upon his face. One more—Miron's foot slipped in a pool of Tonti's blood; he strove desperately to regain his balance and failed; and the two men locked fast in a savage embrace swayed to and fro an instant, then plunged headlong over the edge of the palisade, and fell, down, down, through the blackness of the night, and disappeared beneath the dark surface of the swiftly moving stream at the foot of the cliff.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE END IS REACHED, AND TONTI COMES INTO HIS OWN. Week after week of suffering followed for Tonti. The desperate nature of his wounds sent the fever mounting to his brain, and he tossed wearily about, fighting against numberless foes, living over again many of the events through which he had passed during the last two years. In all his battles did the lowering sinister face of Miron appear; through all the scenes did the form of Renee flit, ever with her eyes fixed upon him, at times glad and laughing, now sad and reproachful, and again with the love-light born of a deep and noble passion shining through them. At times the figure of La Salle approached and looked reprovingly at him. Then did Tonti break forth in his own defense. "Ah! mon ami," he would murmur, "did you but know the task your friendship imposed; did you but realize the heavy load your confession of your love for Renee, my Renee, laid upon me, you would not hold me worthy of reproach. Could you but have seen my struggle, daily, hourly, to trample down the love that had sprung into existence at the same time as your own, to maintain the honor of my word, to uphold that faithfulness to you that I knew was the only thing I had to offer to her memory, you would have pitied me."

Again his other friend stood beside him and he appealed to him: "Mon cher Pompon," he cried, "you know the temptation I was subject to. You must know, for you were with us; you heard with me the music in her voice, more delightful than the harmonies of many birds. You heard her step, lighter than the soft summer

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He was awake. He flushed lightly and withdrew his hand, and Renee realized that her patient had regained consciousness.

He soon slept, this time not to dream, but to gather strength. Thus did he sleep and awaken day by day. Each awakening, thanks to the effect of the ointment Renee had found in Pompon's bag, brought a feeling of renewed vigor and a sharper bound to his pulse that sent the life stream quickening to every part. Whenever he roused himself he saw the same patient figure of her whom he loved, watching, praying beside him. She would not let him talk, but ere long admitted the chevalier and Boisrondet. Their hearty clasp of the hand and cheering words urged on his convalescence. They told him little by little of the events of that awful night. How, after his leaving the gate, the Indians had advanced along the path with a rush, and Boisrondet had, on his own responsibility, fired the mine, which sound had been the last his ears had heard when he sank beneath the murderous hand of Miron. How the chasm formed by this explosion had prevented any further attack upon the fort. How Baugis had finally rallied his forces, and, approaching the Iroquois from the rear, had made a strong onslaught, just as they recoiled from the exploded mine, and slaughtered many, driving some into the river and putting the rest to flight, pursuing them for eight days, until the hosts that had assailed so boldly were reduced to a few struggling bands that slunk despairingly homeward. In answer to an inquiring look they told him that Miron was dead and that Pompon had gone on a journey.

Lazily he watched his nurse as she moved about the room, half regretting his daily increasing strength that warned him of a coming time when he would no longer need her assistance and would lose the delight of having her near him. But he shrank from contemplating that event, knowing that the taking up of their separate duties once more would tax his powers to the full. Then came the days when, propped up in a chair, he sat in the doorway and enjoyed the bright October sunshine, while the Indian chiefs and soldiers came to pay their respects to the commander they loved. One afternoon after he had been able to stand and take a few steps he was told by Renee of Pompon's end. Of the sacrifice that he had made for her and him. How the bodies of the two men had been found floating a few miles below the fort still clasped in their fierce embrace. How the Indians had stolen the body of the comte and burned it amidst execrations and maledictions. How she had requested the chevalier to have a grave dug for Pompon out of the rock within the enclosure of the fort, close to the scene of his death struggle.

[To Be Continued.]

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Daniel in Wrong Place. A clergyman, recently engaged with another of a different belief in a controversy regarding some question of religion, sent to a newspaper office a long article supporting his side of the question. The manuscript had been "set up" in type for the next day's issue. About midnight the telephone bell rang furiously, the minister at the other end asking for the city editor. "I am sorry to trouble you at such a late hour," he said, "but I am in great trouble." "What can I do for you?" was asked. "In the article I sent you to-day I put Daniel in the fiery furnace. Please take him out and put him in the lions' den.—Argonaut.

Underground Work. William Radcliffe, physician to William III. and Queen Anne, was a parsimonious old fellow, but he respected a man of his own stamp. One time he had had some paving done on his property and the workman came to him to demand his pay. "What, you rascal, do you pretend to be paid for such a piece of work?" cried the miser. "Why, you have spoiled my pavement and then covered it over with earth to hide your bad work." "Doctor," replied the man, "mine is not the only work that the earth hides." "You do, you," laughed the man of physic, "are you a wit? You must be poor. Come in." And he paid him.

Could Hold a Tot. The story is told of a teetotaler who was trying to persuade a bibulous friend to quit drinking. "You can't drink all the whiskey in the world," he was saying, when suddenly they came to the town distillery. It boomed before them, every window brightly illuminated. "No," said the other, thickly, "but look there! I can make 'em work overtime."—Argonaut.

Unappreciated Eloquence. It is well for a speaker to know where his peroration is going to end when he begins. I heard a young lawyer make his maiden speech. It was in defense of a fellow who was half-witted, arrested on the charge of stealing a hog, the young attorney having been appointed by the court.

His defense was that his client was an idiot, and unable to distinguish between right and wrong. He closed a flowery speech with this peroration: "Gentlemen of the jury, look at my client. That low, receding forehead, those lusterless eyes, portend that he was deprived by nature of the power to distinguish right from wrong, ignorant of the distinction which exists between his own property and that of others. To him, as to the two-year-old child, whatever he wants and can reach belongs to him. He knows neither why it does nor why it does not. But, gentlemen of the jury, such are the institutions of this our free and glorious country, that my client, idiot though he is, stands for trial to-day by a jury of his peers."

The culprit got the full penalty of the law.

Convincing Evidence. Winthrop, Cal., Nov. 29th (Special).—A plain and straight forward story is always the most convincing. And that is what has impressed us most in reading the testimonials in regard to Dodd's Kidney Pills. The experience told by Davis Lewis, of this place, bears the ring and stamp of truth upon it. He says:—

"I was troubled for six months with dull, heavy pains in the small of my back, sometimes it passed into my stomach, at other times up between my shoulders. When it was in my stomach I do not know, and hardly knew what to do for the pain. I was advised to take all kinds of remedies, and did so, but without getting any relief. Then some one told me to try Dodd's Kidney Pills. I got a box and began taking them. The first few doses gave me relief; by the time I had finished them all the pain was gone and I have been well ever since."

Not So Badly Off. "I've had to work for everything I've got!" growled the pessimist. "Well, what of it?" observed his optimistic friend. "Some people work a whole lot and don't have anything to show for it!"—Detroit Free Press.

GRATEFUL TO CUTICURA. For Instant Relief and Speedy Cure of Raw and Scaly Humor, Itching Day and Night for Many Months.

"I do wish you would publish this letter so that others suffering as I have may see it and be helped. For many months awful sores covered my face and neck, scabs forming, which would swell and itch terribly day and night, and then break open, running blood and matter. I had tried many remedies, but was growing worse, when I started with Cuticura. The first application gave me instant relief, and when I had used two cakes of Cuticura Soap and three boxes of Cuticura Ointment, I was completely cured. (Signed) Miss Nellie Vander Wiele, Lakewood, N. Y."

Some people's idea of being sincere is to say disagreeable things to their friends' faces.—Weekly Globe.

Mrs. Austin's Pancakes, really superior to everything. Ask your grocer.

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