

THE GLORIOUS RASCAL

ROMANTIC TALE OF FRANCOIS VILLON, POET, LOVER AND ADVENTURER.

By JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY

CHAPTER I. Cats.

THE earliest recollection Francois could conjure up was of great stretches of white with little black spots upon them in the far distance. Long after he compared this to a picture of a crime on a great man's hood. Actually the great white spaces were so much snow, and he took the little black spots to be cats, but they were not cats. Little Francois had crawled from the room and the fire, and crept out into the black passage and down the staircase, whose timbers squeaked and wined in their craziness even under the imposition of so light a weight as the pressure of a child's footsteps. The street door was left ajar.

To the child this seemed a great piece of good fortune. There was the door, just so open as to show a thin, white slit like the edge of a sword—even at that age little Francois knew what a sword was like—and the small boy pushed his small fingers into the aperture and widened it slowly till it yawned big enough for him to slip his diminutive body across the threshold where the fine, dry powder was more than ankle deep. Just where the child stood and stared the street ran straight enough, with but a few houses to finish it off suddenly before it lost itself in the fields. On the surface of those fields Francois saw the moving black spots and took them to be cats.

The hand of his mother, who had suddenly missed him from the little room above, had pelted down the stairs, now grabbed him firmly. In all his life Francois never remembered rough deed or rough word from that dearest of illiterate gentlemen. For a gentleman he later always swore her to be, albeit she was of humble birth and could not read the prayers she prayed so studiously. Now she clipped him fast and asked him, not unkindly but decidedly, what he would be at to give her such a fright. For answer little Francois pointed to the white counterpane before him, and the distant fields that were pitted with these fascinating, pathetic black spots.

"See, mother," he cried, "the poor cats wonder! Shall we go and play with them?" Mother Villon gave one quick glance toward those distant fields and then clutched her boy to her bosom. "Cats!" she cried. "My God, those are not cats!" And as she spoke she dragged the reluctant, struggling Francois within the shelter of the house.

"Mamma, the cats!" he whimpered. "Cats!" she screamed. "Cats! Those are no cats. And, besides, you know as she spoke she gave a dry sob and hugged the boy to her bosom. After they had cuddled each other a little and the woman had gasped thanks to Heaven, they slipped their flight to their room. It was not so high a flight as it might have been, for they were not so poor as they were to prove when the steps, so narrow and black and twisting, seemed nothing to her. Mother Villon, as she climbed, recoiled to have her child by the hand, out of danger of those slinking fornic beyond, when the child's innocence had baptized each a winter drove ferocious creatures well within the walls of France to pick what wretched pillage they might glean from the tail ends of straggling Parisian streets. But they could not make their way through barred and bolted doors. So she mounted the high stairs with a light heart, and forgot all about the Burgundian ruffian that had his lodging over her head.

Indeed, she thought of the Burgundian ruffian as little as she could help. For he had disavowed her with a glance of his eye, and she had seen at that time still a comely woman—a widow that had no mind to marry again. Therefore, as she went her way up the stairs, signing to herself and turning her little eyes to the door, she was blissfully ignorant that in shutting the door she had shut out the Burgundian ruffian to the snow—and the cats.

Now this was the dreary time in Paris, for those that held by King Charles, and damned King Henry, when the English ruled in the good city and no citizen might set his soul his own who was not on good terms with the "Goddamns," as John the Maid had nicknamed them.

CHAPTER II.

The Burthen of the Burgundian.

THE Burgundian soldier came along in good time and soon realized a part of his misadventure. He followed the street none too steadily, scowling the burden of a ballad which every now and then weakened off into a wail like a Misere. While his right arm hugged lively gracefulness in a jug, his left arm nursed a lump of living flesh that was made up tightly in a bundle of old rags, out of which a small face showed all blue with the cold and as still as if sodden with sleep. There had been no thought of a child in the Burgundian's mind when he had gone out to gather a fresh load of wine at the "Frocon," and when the child was as it were thrust upon him, he was neither glad nor sorry, but nudged into a mixture of wonder and dullness that troubled his wits.

His immediate desire was to get indoors out of the cold and drink himself into appreciation of the new thing that had come into his life. So it was somewhat of a cross to him when he saw that the door which he had left agape no longer stood open. At first he thought that it had been blown to by some draught; but when, after placing his flagon very carefully upon the threshold, he pressed against it and pulled at the latch, he found to his chagrin that it was, indeed, firmly bolted from within. He cursed gibbly as he ranted; then he began to bang lustily at the door with his clenched fist, and finding this unavailing, to kick furiously at the panels with alternate feet. As it chanced, the house was almost empty. Mother Villon and the Burgundian, though each was unaware of the fact, had the house all to themselves.

The man hammered angrily for some seconds before he succeeded in arousing the attention of Mother Villon. Certain black spots on the distant snow had grown bigger, had come nearer, and presently some eight or ten hairy creatures brought their gallop over the snow to a pause, and huddled together at the mouth of the street, watching the soldier with red eyes. The soldier, drawing back from the door to look up and see if any one in the house was coming to his aid, saw, and, seeing, felt a chill at his heart and a sudden sobriety. As the creatures looked at the staring creature, they shook themselves from their quiet and came trotting slowly down the street, sniffing and snarling. The soldier, drawing back from the door to look up and see if any one in the house was coming to his aid, saw, and, seeing, felt a chill at his heart and a sudden sobriety. As the creatures looked at the staring creature, they shook themselves from their quiet and came trotting slowly down the street, sniffing and snarling. The soldier, drawing back from the door to look up and see if any one in the house was coming to his aid, saw, and, seeing, felt a chill at his heart and a sudden sobriety. As the creatures looked at the staring creature, they shook themselves from their quiet and came trotting slowly down the street, sniffing and snarling.

When Mother Villon looked out of the window she saw the Burgundian crouched below her, with his back to

ward, and she saw that the child was

gone. She called to the Burgundian

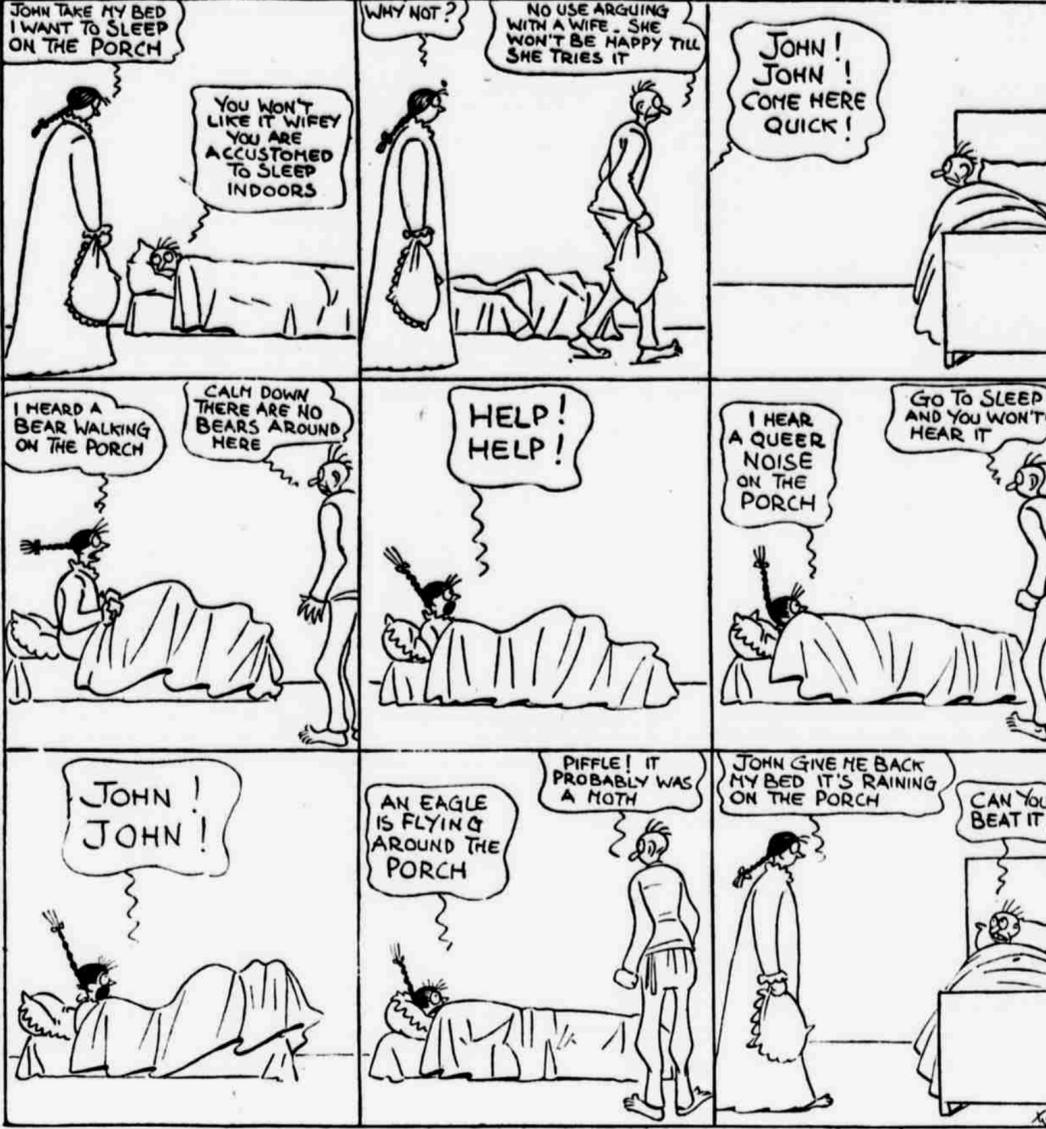
and told him what she had seen.

He said that he had seen nothing

The Day of Rest

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By Maurice Kettner



JOHN TAKE MY BED I WANT TO SLEEP ON THE PORCH

WHY NOT? NO USE ARGUING WITH A WIFE - SHE WON'T BE HAPPY TILL SHE TRIES IT

YOU WON'T LIKE IT WIFEY YOU ARE ACCUSTOMED TO SLEEP INDOORS

I HEARD A BEAR WALKING ON THE PORCH

CALM DOWN THERE ARE NO BEARS AROUND HERE

HELP! HELP!

I HEAR A QUEER NOISE ON THE PORCH

GO TO SLEEP AND YOU WON'T HEAR IT

JOHN! JOHN!

PIFFLE! IT PROBABLY WAS A MOTH

JOHN GIVE ME BACK MY BED IT'S RAINING ON THE PORCH

AN EAGLE IS FLYING AROUND THE PORCH

JOHN! JOHN!

PIFFLE! IT PROBABLY WAS A MOTH

JOHN GIVE ME BACK MY BED IT'S RAINING ON THE PORCH

CAN YOU BEAT IT!

PIFFLE! IT PROBABLY WAS A MOTH

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Modern Fiction does not contain a more wonderful TALE OF MYSTERY and ADVENTURE than

SHE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD

NEXT WEEK'S COMPLETE NOVEL IN THE EVENING WORLD

Who was the strange, beautiful creature of marvellous power and almost endless years that dwelt in the Caves of Kor?

"SHE" FASCINATES THE MIND

Red Gates, hard by the Tower of St. Jacques, in the city of Paris, was the home of the Canon and the boy who entered the room, and that he had influential friends, Francois lost no time in making a cry. Then, darting forward, he seized Francois by the shoulder, and thrusting him into the room, she ranged herself of the precise whereabouts of the Canon's residence. It impressed his youthful intelligence favorably.

"What is your business with me, Your Reverence?" she inquired frostily, dropping a curtsey, which she made plain was to the Canon's cost, and not to himself.

"My dear sister-in-law," the Canon began in an articulate voice, with a portly ecclesiastic had passed into the Canon's dwelling, and even as Villon ran across the street, the door was shut in his face. He crept, the hand was almost raised to strike upon the panel, when the sound of footsteps inside the house started him, and he slipped nimbly across the street, Villon nimbly crossed the road again, and pressing against the door, pushed it open. He saw a small hall and a flight of stairs leading up from the parlor beyond the parlor, Master Francois slipped into the hall; then holding his breath and tingling with excitement, he began very gingerly to ascend the stairs, pausing in an ecstasy of fancy, and wondering if any of them happened to creak beneath his feet, and the thing happened often.

When he came to the first landing he found a passage with several doors opening from it. He looked into one of these and saw it to be the Canon's bedroom. He tried another, opening it softly, and found himself in a room comfortably furnished room, with a number of books against the wall and a table in the middle, at which a portly old gentleman sat, and wrote. In the portly old gentleman, Villon recognized the ecclesiastic whom he had seen enter the house.

Little Francois had slipped in so gently that he had not attracted the attention of the writer, and he stood for an appreciable space of seconds staring and beating his boyish brain for some telling form of address. Presently the old gentleman, already in search of a word, lifted his eyes from his paper and turned a mild moon face in the direction of the intruder. He halted, puzzled by the word his mother had used, and his mother answered him: "The Villons were well to do, my child, and resented his marriage with a tavern maid. I was very proud of my Richard; he could read and write as easy as kiss-my-hand, and he was proud of me, for all my humble station; but his family's disdain hurt him, and he died, poor lamb! His family came to his funeral, but they never spoke a word to me, even to God's Acre, nor I to them."

"He saw his dejection and strove to console it away. "Bless you, my babe, I had cunning fingers and could make lace and did make lace, and you and I have lived on it, and none too badly neither."

"Mother," said the boy, after a thoughtful pause, "what became of all daddy's proud kinfolk?"

"I think they came to little good for the most part," the woman said bitterly, "and I think they deserve to come to none. But there was one of them that poor Richard liked well enough, and that was his brother Guillaume, and he, as I hear, has done well enough, entering the Church and being now a fat canon, no less, in one of our Paris churches."

"Mother," he would say, "if I have a rich kinsman, why does he never pay a visit?"

"Because he does not know of our existence," Mother Villon would answer, fiercely. "I have taken care of that. I thought they might want to take you away from me, my sweet-lamb, because you are a Villon by the man's side, and I have ever had a thought of entering the Church and being now a fat canon, no less, in one of our Paris churches."

"But, mother," the boy would plead, "may I be that my uncle is a kind man, and one that would wish to play fair with his kindred?"

"He may wish to play fair, he may wish to play foul," said the woman, "I care not. I seek no kinship with the man that abandoned his brother because his brother would not abandon me."

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CHAPTER VII. "Train Up a Child" HE Canon was better than his word. He invited his sister-in-law and her son to dwell with him therefor- ward at the Red Gate. Part of this favor the woman was stubborn to refuse. For her son's sake she would so far swallow her pride as to close with the Canon's offer to find little Francois in roof and food and raiment. But for herself she cherished her independence and her right to resentment against her husband's family. The Canon was radiant happy. He had taken a great fancy to Francois. It was settled that on certain days Francois should visit his mother, the Canon assuring her that she would find a welcome at the Red Gate whenever she pleased. But she never did please. Thus early and auspiciously was Francois Villon set upon the path that was to lead to fame, fortune, felicity. I know not how far from the to-morrow he was tempted to wander from the path. To Francois, from the time when he was able to read, the life of the world was the book he liked best to read. The streets were his scriptures, the squares his classics; the folk he jostled or dodged on causeway or street were his teachers; the tales of the ancients of Greece or the valiant of Rome, when he came to Guillaume Villon, he was a lover of the city; he knew little else, he knew his loved Paris by heart and by heart. Francois was housed, fed, taught, a cautious uncle smoothing the way to the university and the tragedies of the Trivium and Quadrivium. The lad was quick to learn where he liked his lessons, less quick where he did not like them. He was a good Latinist, made the language a colloquial pastime for him, but logic and theology found him less pliant, though he was not being taught them. He was enough to seem to know more than he knew. (To Be Continued.)