

Foley was confused. This was not what he had expected. There was enough of a man in him to rebel at the charity proffered under these circumstances, but not enough to make him accept the job at a point where he really needed it. He was out of work and his two horses getting leg sore in their stalls, but it was not unpleasant living here in luxurious leisure at the home of Jules Bonhomme.

"I'll be damned if I will," he growled.

"Non?"  
Marcou had stepped nearer. Now with a quick run in he sent the pitchfork spinning across the barn with a swift side kick of his foot, and faced Foley.

"Mon dieu," he rasped, "but you will! You'll come into camp at five o'clock Monday morning and before spring I'll make a man of you. She thinks she married a man, and by the God she shall have a man. I don't know how you did it, Jim Foley—I don't know how you made her believe in you, but you did it. Maybe there's good in you that I don't see—maybe there is. I'd trust the girl to see straight in most things and I oughter trust her now. But right or wrong, she ain't goneter see no different if I can help it. You're going to be what she thinks you are. You're goneter act straight and talk straight and walk straight, Jim Foley. You're goneter be a man to her and show the rest of the crew she married a man!"

Foley rushed and Marcou swung straight out under the jaw. Foley fell back dazed, clinging to the upright. Marcou came closer, and raising his voice a little, continued:

"It's like that I'll do—like that until you get enough of her in your heart to stand up and fight me off. You've got the size and strength of a man, why don't you use it like a man? You'll need it, by the good God, you'll need it. Maybe then after a while it'll come."

Foley writhed beneath the sting of being thus man handled. He snatched a hungry look at the distant pitchfork.

"I'm mos' done now," concluded 'Gene Marcou more calmly, "but remember this; you will live on here with Jules—with my friend, Jules Bonhomme. Jules Bonhomme will tell me if the P'tite ever cried." He paused and the silence was terrible in its intensity.

"Then," said 'Gene Marcou, "if I hear that, so shall come the end. For," he added very simply, "then I shall kill you."

## CHAPTER II

A FEW minutes before five on Monday morning a pair of feeble horses, urged on by the whip of a man who muffled his oaths, stumbled up the wood road which cut a clean path through the sentinei pines to the clearing where the rough barn stood surrounded by shacks now looking warm from the yellow lamplight within. As the driver stood uncertain which way to turn, a shack door opened and shot an alley of yellow across the snow. 'Gene Marcou stepped out and, seeing Foley, came towards him.

"Good morning," said 'Gene Marcou. "Had your grub?"

Foley nodded. The dark shadowed the expression on the faces of both men, which was well.

"Eh bien," said Marcou. "You can go with Bartineau into the west cut. You'll find him in the barn."

Foley brought his whip down across the flank of the off horse. Marcou saw the animal start and falter on limping.

"Leave your horses in the barn," he shouted after Foley. "Don't take 'em out. You can help Bartineau load."

Now a driver does not like to fall back into the position of a lumper even though it be for the good of his soul. So he half turned on his heel—but he turned back again. 'Gene Marcou stood as though waiting. In the stable, Foley started to vent his wrath upon the horses, as a weak man will, when from out the shadows a demon pounced upon him, and winding knotted fingers in his throat, held on. It was Bartineau, who is very fond of horses. 'Gene Marcou freed him at the point where things swam black before his bulging eyes and he seemed about to die.

"Sacre!" cried Bartineau, straining again towards the frightened Foley. "If that dog of a man comes again into this barn—"

"I saw," interrupted 'Gene Marcou, "but you came

at him from the dark. This is the husband of Marjorie Bonhomme."

Bartineau, who was built like a giant dwarf, and who, since the smallpox epidemic on the Allagash, thought 'Gene Marcou the finest man in the world, stared through the lantern light with renewed interest at the fellow he had tried to throttle.

"You came at him from the dark," continued Marcou. "In fair fight I do not know. This—this is the husband of Marjorie Bonhomme."

"En?" snapped Bartineau. "I will fight him now—"

"Tonight," said Marcou. "I need you both today."

MARCOU kept the men in sight for fear of the axes, but they worked side by side without other eruption than the interchange of ugly glances. Foley could lift—could lift as much as two men. That was something. Marcou was glad that several of the men had a chance to see this. He would give all the men this chance before he was done. On the whole he was sorry that a crisis had come so soon, for he had hoped for time in which to train the man a little. His own unexpected attitude towards Foley had instantly given the newcomer prestige.

That night before dinner Marcou took Foley to one side.

"Do not eat too much," he warned. "Enough, but not too much."

"But why in hell should I fight the Cannuck? I ain't holdin' no grudge agin him."

"You," answered 'Gene Marcou. "You are the husband of Marjorie Bonhomme—that is why. The husband of Marjorie Bonhomme must fear no man. You have much fighting before you, until in the end you fight me. Now I will tell you; Bartineau has a trick of running in under the arms. Look out for that. He is slower on his feet than you; keep him moving. He is tough in the body. You will do more with one good blow under the chin than twenty anywhere else."

The instructions were given with such brutal calmness that Foley quailed. Marcou caught the shifty look in the eyes, which meant but one thing, a passion for escape. His heart grew bitter. He seized Foley's arm.

"Husband of Marjorie Bonhomme," he said, "if you do not beat him tonight, you must try again tomorrow. So until you beat him. If you run—if you run I will follow you to the ends of the earth."

That night, with all the camp looking on, Foley in fair fight beat Bartineau to the ground.

By Saturday, under the careful nursing of Marcou, Foley was presentable, and yet when Marcou asked him if he was going home for Sunday he answered no.

"But the P'tite will expect you?"  
"What of it? D'ye think I'm going to walk thirty miles through this snow?"

"But the P'tite will expect you!"  
'Gene Marcou himself had not missed a Sunday. Four times besides he had done it between the close of work at night and dawn the next day. And it seems that none had been waiting for him.

Foley turned aside, but Marcou's voice called him back.

"Husband of Marjorie Bonhomme, you must go."

## CHAPTER III

BEFORE Foley started that night, 'Gene Marcou handed him a small bag containing the choicest spruce gum to be found upon Eagle mountain.

"It is good to bring back some little thing to the women at home," he explained. "They are but children. Le voila some gum. The P'tite she said once she liked it. It is from you—from her husband, compren'?"

One after another Foley defeated in fair fight every man in camp who would meet him, save 'Gene Marcou. As a result he held his head a bit higher and walked with a certain swing to his shoulders. As a result also men forgot the old stories which had been told of him and no longer talked openly of the folly of Marjorie Bonhomme. If the camp had not yet come to like him, they at least showed him the respect that was his due. He still had his enemies—Bartineau, for instance, who clung stubbornly to his original conception of the man.

"He is strong—sacre yes. But listen to me well, mon enfant," this to Dick the stable boy. "If 'Gene Marcou would leave this camp for two days I would make that dog of a man to run like a dog that is kicked."

But on the whole the world went well with Foley. Two things he never missed; Sunday at home, no matter how foul the weather, and a present to the wife, if only a pretty strip of bark. There was the night of February third, for example, when a snow

laden gale swept over the mountain all day Saturday and at night with two feet of snow on the ground only raged the fiercer. When the weary crew dragged themselves back to the shacks at four, a chorus of snow wraiths skirled out of the dark of the pines at their heels and danced madly through the dusk of the open space before the stables. A man could not raise his eyes in the face of it, and breathing came hard. The trees were whipped until they soured like the after moan of a tear dry woman. There was no landscape—no horizon. The world was reduced to chaos again; to a swirling infinity of tiny ice particles. Man did not belong here, for it tested the strength of even the deep-rooted things.

But it was Saturday. 'Gene Marcou drew in his belt a couple of notches and sought Foley.

"Good Gawd," gasped the latter, "yer don't expect a man to go out a night like this?"

"The P'tite—"

Foley choked back the oath that was in his heart; he was not yet ready to fight 'Gene Marcou. The latter hesitated a second. Then he said:

"I will go with you."

Tonight was one of the nights when to 'Gene Marcou the need of being nearer to her swept all other needs before it. Sometimes he ridded himself of the mood by going down the road a way and sitting at the base of a large pine there thinking of her as he saw her before that last time. He always saw her in a scene that was virginal. Even as she had stood in her leafless rose garden that Sunday afternoon in December it had seemed to him like spring. With the ground about her a maiden white, the sunbeams dancing in the ice prisms at her feet, sparkling in the frost upon the panes back of her, glinting from the coated trees, flashing from the tips of the skeleton bushes—she standing red-cheeked in the pathway, that was spring. It was there that he had tried to tell her of his love, but had choked upon the words because it was too big a thing for him to utter. Then it had been too late.

Tonight sitting so would not do; he must stand if only for a moment in the little path before the house. So leading the way and marking the trail for Foley he stepped out joyfully. Each whipping cut of iced wind, each drifting mound of snow he trampled down, each heavy mile made him gladder as it brought him a few feet nearer her.

Behind him stumbled the husband of Marjorie Bonhomme, cursing the night, cursing the storm, cursing the man who had brutally forced him to go out into it.

'Gene Marcou did not enter at the end of the journey, but he heard the glad cry that greeted Foley as the door was opened to him by the little shivering figure of a wife.

## CHAPTER IV

SO it was that as day after day passed, Foley grew to the reputation of a brave and good man. Men

instead of jesting loosely with him, spoke him fairly and women who had once ignored him nodded pleasantly as they met him in the village during his brief visits home. Because all this was new to him and because, say what you will, men like to be well thought of, Foley enjoyed himself much better than he had anticipated. He swaggered a bit, at times talking somewhat over-boastfully, and was eager at a quarrel, but in most ways conducted himself well.

Men told 'Gene Marcou that Marjorie was growing even more beautiful and that she seemed very happy.

"Bien," said Marcou. "That is good."

Good for all the world save for him alone. It made it no easier for him sitting at night by the big pine down the road to think of her as more beautiful. He was glad that she was happier, but even that made it no easier for him. In fact he didn't see where this was all going to end, and in that not even Father Laramie could help him. The priest in the attempt to divert his mind from the present spoke of all the good things which lay in Eternity—of the peace and the love and the joy. But when he had done, he turned away his head and confessed to himself:

"Mais, c'est grand dommage!"

Even if we do not see how things will end, we may be sure that they will end somehow—some time. This business here ended in the spring after the snow got wet and clogged the sleds and rolled up in great gobs beneath the horses' shoes. There

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'Gene Marcou



Marjorie Bonhomme