

PHILIP STEELE

of the ROYAL NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE

by JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

Author of The Danger Trail, The Honor of the Big Snows, etc.

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SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—Philip Steele, son of a Chicago millionaire, lover of adventure and outdoor life, was sent to the northern frontier of the Northwest Mounted Police. In his cabin station far up on the northern coast, he orders to take to the kitchen his companion, a fellow prisoner.

CHAPTER II.—Steele arrives at Lac Baïn, the country's major town. He meets the Hudson's Bay agent, Mr. Brock, who sends him to go on to Fort Churchill, on the Hudson's Bay. Brock, a high official in the company's service, who on his way back to the north had been on a tour of inspection. He finds the Hudson's Bay agent, Mr. Brock, a high official in the company's service, who on his way back to the north had been on a tour of inspection. He finds the Hudson's Bay agent, Mr. Brock, a high official in the company's service, who on his way back to the north had been on a tour of inspection.

CHAPTER III.—Philip Steele, a young man of fortune, is seen in the presence of the chief of construction. "Put it down over there in the corner," says the chief of construction, cracking his finger bones fiercely. "See here, Mister Jodges, I ain't a coward, but I believe in being respectful to the dead, 'n' to a box that's held open. It says that in the card, 'Head—This end up,' 'n' s'elp me, it's going to be up, unless you put it down. I ain't goin' to be hauled by no ghosts! Ho, ho, ho!" He says no more, but he looks at Steele with a certain expression of his astonishment at what happened an instant later. The card was torn off, and a ray of light shot into his eyes. Through a narrow slit in the door, a man came out, carrying a side and six inches long, he found himself staring out into the room. The huge gray-bearded man who had set upon him from the ambush was at the door about to leave. Flingy was close behind him. And in the rear of these two, as if eager for their departure, was Hodges, chief of construction.

No sooner had the men gone than the door closed. Steele had been in the center of the office. It was not difficult for Philip to see that the man's face was flushed and that he was laboring under some excitement. "What do you mean, Thorpe?" Steele asked, reproachfully to his feet, looked at his watch, and began pacing back and forth across the room.

"So she's coming," he chuckled gleefully. "She's coming at last!" He looked at his watch, and straightened his cravat before a mirror, and rubbed his hands with a low laugh. "The little beauty has surrendered," he went on, his face turning for a moment toward the coffin box. And it's time—past time.

A light knock sounded at the door, and the chief sprang to open it. A figure darted past him, and for but a breath a white woman passed, looking toward Philip and his prison—the face of the young woman whom he had seen but two hours before in Lac Baïn, the face that had looked at him with a certain expression, smiled upon him from the photograph, and that seemed to be masked now in a cold marble-like horror, as through his glorious eyes, like pools of glowing fire, seemed to glare out through that narrow slit in the coffin box.

Hodges had advanced with arms reaching out, and the woman turned with a low, sobbing breath breaking from her lips. "Another step and Hodges would have taken her in his arms, but she evaded him with a quick movement, and pointed to a chair at one side of the table.

"Sit down," she cried softly. "Sit down, and listen!" "Was it fancy, or did her eyes turn with almost a prayer in them to the box against the wall?" Philip's heart was beating like a drum. That one word—"listen!" he knew was intended for him.

"Sit down," she repeated, as Hodges hesitated. "Sit down—there—and I will sit here. Before—before you touch me I want an understanding. You will let me talk, and listen—listen!"

That he was in the presence of the chief of construction. "Put it down over there in the corner," says the chief of construction, cracking his finger bones fiercely. "See here, Mister Jodges, I ain't a coward, but I believe in being respectful to the dead, 'n' to a box that's held open. It says that in the card, 'Head—This end up,' 'n' s'elp me, it's going to be up, unless you put it down. I ain't goin' to be hauled by no ghosts! Ho, ho, ho!" He says no more, but he looks at Steele with a certain expression of his astonishment at what happened an instant later. The card was torn off, and a ray of light shot into his eyes. Through a narrow slit in the door, a man came out, carrying a side and six inches long, he found himself staring out into the room. The huge gray-bearded man who had set upon him from the ambush was at the door about to leave. Flingy was close behind him. And in the rear of these two, as if eager for their departure, was Hodges, chief of construction.

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Again that one word—"listen!"—Philip knew was intended for him. Then, with a gasp, he dropped his chair, and his visitor seated herself opposite him, with her face toward Philip. She dug back the fur from about her shoulders, and took off her fur turban, so that the light of the big hanging lamp fell full upon the glory of her hair, and set off more vividly the ivory pallor of her cheeks, in which a short time before Philip had seen the grim smile glow of hers.

"We must come to an understanding," she repeated, fixing her eyes steadily upon the man before her. "I would sacrifice my life for him, for I am sure that you are not a man who would let me die. I want you to understand that I do more than that. I must be sure of the reward!"

ing the money and the check on the table. The woman staggered toward him, the man following in a dazed, stunned sort of way. He saw the woman's arms reaching out to him again, and he would never forget that she would never forget.

CHAPTER VIII. Another Letter For Philip. FROM beside his prisoner in the deep gloom Philip saw the head of the cabin a minute later and bury away through the night. Then he dragged the guard into the prison, unlocked the door, let the key in the lock, and returned to Hodges' office to replace the old clothes for his uniform.

Not until he stood looking down upon the dead body again did the enormity of his own offense begin to dawn upon him. But he was not frightened nor did he regret what he had done. He turned out the light, sat down, coiled fully his pipe, and began turning the affair over, detailing it to himself. He had, at the end, followed Inspector MacGregor's injunction—he had followed his conscience. Hodges had got what he deserved, and he had saved a man and a woman.

But in spite of his first argument he knew that MacGregor had not foreseen a tragedy of this sort, and that, in the eyes of the law, he was guilty of assisting in the flight of two people, who could not possibly escape the penalty of justice—caught. But he would not be caught. He assured himself of that by slipping into the darkness. No one at Wekusko could explain what had happened. He was positive that the guard had not recognized him and that he would think one of Thorpe's friends had effected the rescue. And MacGregor—

Philip chuckled as he thought of the condemning evidence in his possession, the strange orders which would mean dismissal for the inspector and perhaps a greater punishment, if he divulged them. He would be safe in telling MacGregor something of what had occurred in this little cabin. And then, as he sat in his room, and atmosphere of death, thought came to him of M'sieur Jeanette's skull, of Bucky Nome, and of the beautiful young wife at Lac Baïn. Mrs. Becker could know of this too of Bucky Nome, buried some where deep in the northern wilderness, could see Hodges as he lay there, dead on the cabin floor!

The idea it would be a still greater punishment to the other a warning against it, even as he thought of M'sieur Jeanette's skull, of Bucky Nome, and of the beautiful young wife at Lac Baïn. Mrs. Becker could know of this too of Bucky Nome, buried some where deep in the northern wilderness, could see Hodges as he lay there, dead on the cabin floor!

For several hours Philip remained in the shelter of Hodges' office. With early dawn he stole out into the forest and a little later, under the appearance in camp, saying that he had spent the night at Lac Baïn. Not until an hour later was it discovered the prisoner had been killed, the guard a prisoner, and that Thorpe and his wife were gone. Philip's one took charge of affairs and put strain on his professional knowledge by declaring that Thorpe had undoubtedly fled into the North. Early in the afternoon he started in pursuit.

A dozen miles north of the Wekusko camp he swung at right angles to the west, traveling fifteen miles, then cut a straight course south. It was three days later before he showed up at Lac Baïn, and learned that no one had seen or heard of Thorpe and his wife. Two days later he walked in MacGregor's office. The inspector fairly leaped from his chair to greet him.

"You got them, Steele!" he cried with a gasp after the murmur—the killing of Hodges." Philip handed him a crumpled bit of paper. "These were your latest instructions," he replied, quietly "I followed them to the letter." MacGregor read, and his face turned as white as the paper he held. "Good God!" he gasped.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

TREASURE-ISLAND.

Trinidad the Piz's Where Pirates Secreted Their Plunder. Eight hundred miles from the mainland, far out in the Atlantic, lies the rocky, uninhabited island of Trinidad, which is reputed to be full of treasure left by pirates and sea-rovers. These valuable entries made by the island a rendezvous from which they preyed upon sailing ships blown out of their course to the Horn and became lost in these inhospitable seas. In some of the recesses of the island, according to all accounts, a rich store of golden treasure lies hidden, and an expedition to search for it has recently been projected.

It is easier to take things as they come than to give them up as they go.