

**A ROMANY
OF THE SNOWS**

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A Romany of the Snows by Gilbert Parker

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GILBERT PARKER

**A ROMANY
OF THE SNOWS**

A Romany of the Snows

SECOND SERIES OF
AN ADVENTURER OF THE NORTH BEING
A CONTINUATION OF PIERRE AND HIS
PEOPLE AND THE LATEST EXISTING
RECORDS OF PRETTY PIERRE

BY

GILBERT PARKER.



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Three Commandments in the Vulgar Tongue

I

"Read on, Pierre," the sick man said, doubling the corner of the wolf-skin pillow so that it shaded his face from the cradle.

Pierre smiled to himself, thinking of the unusual nature of his occupation, raised an eyebrow as if to some one sitting at the other side of the fire,—though the room was empty save for the two,—and went on reading :

"Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the sea; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

"The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

"And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us."

I

The sick man put up his hand, motioning for silence, and Pierre, leaving the Bible open, laid it at his side. Then he fell to studying the figure on the couch. The body, though reduced by a sudden illness, had an appearance of late youth, a firmness of mature manhood; but the hair was grey, the beard was grizzled; and the face was furrowed and seamed as though the man had lived a long, hard life. The body seemed thirty years old, the head sixty; the man's exact age was forty-five. His most singular characteristic was a fine, almost spiritual intelligence, which showed in the dewy brightness of the eye, in the lighted face, in the cadenced definiteness of his speech. One would have said, knowing nothing of him, that he was a hermit, but again, noting the firm, graceful outlines of his body, that he was a soldier. Within the past twenty-four hours he had had a fight for life with one of the terrible "colds" which, like an unstayed plague, close up the course of the body, and carry a man out of the hurly-burly, without pause to say how much or how little he cares to go.

Pierre, whose rude skill in medicine was got of hard experiences here and there, had helped him back into the world again, and was himself now a little astonished at acting as Scripture

reader to a Protestant invalid. Still, the Bible was like his childhood itself always with him in memory, and Old Testament history was as wine to his blood. The lofty tales sang in his veins: of primitive man, adventure, mysterious and exalted romance. For nearly an hour, with absorbing interest, he had read aloud from these ancient chronicles to Fawdor, who held this post of the Hudson's Bay Company in the outer wilderness.

Pierre had arrived at the Post three days before, to find a half-breed trapper and an Indian helpless before the sickness which was hurrying to close on John Fawdor's heart and clamp it in the vice of death. He had come just in time. He was now ready to learn, by what ways the future should show, why this man, of such unusual force and power, should have lived at a desolate post in Labrador for twenty-five years.

"This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us—" Fawdor repeated the words slowly, and then said: "It is good to be out of the restless world. Do you know the secret of life, Pierre?"

Pierre's fingers unconsciously dropped on the Bible at his side, drumming the leaves. His eyes wandered over Fawdor's face, and presently