

## Appearance of Tea No Guide

The only way to test tea is to taste it. Many people have the idea that a finely rolled and tippy tea is superior in flavour to a large rough leaf. In reality this is not of necessity the case. The altitude at which the tea plant grows determines the amount of essential oil and alkaloid theine in the leaf. The essential oil gives tea its flavour; the theine contributes the stimulating value. The only way to insure always receiving a uniform quality is to insist upon a skillfully blended and scientifically sealed tea like "SALADA" whose reliability, goodness and delicious flavour have become a household word.

# "SALADA"

**BARRE, SON OF KAZAN**  
James Oliver Curwood  
A LOVE EPIC OF THE FAR NORTH

### SYNOPSIS.

McTaggart, the post trader, finding Barre, the wolf-dog, trapped in one of his game snares, struck him a blow with a club. Then he bundled him into a sack and carried him to the cabin of Pierrot, the trapper, where he went to demand the hand of Nepeese, the trapper's daughter. The girl recognized Barre and when she saw he had been injured she turned in anger at McTaggart. Barre, facing himself, fastened his teeth in the factor's leg. McTaggart drew his revolver, but Nepeese raised the dog in her arms.

### CHAPTER XIII. (Cont'd.)

"Let us leave them to fight it out between themselves, m'sieu," he said. "They are two little firebrands, and we are not safe. If she is bitten—"

He shrugged his shoulders. A great load had been lifted off them suddenly. His voice was soft and persuasive. And now the anger had gone out of the Willow's face. A coquettish uplift of her eyes caught McTaggart, and she looked straight at him half smiling, as she spoke to her father.

"I will join you soon, mon pere—you and M'sieu the Factor from Lac Bain!"

There were undeniable little devils in her eyes. McTaggart thought—little devils laughing full at him as she spoke, setting his brain afire and his blood to running wildly. Those eyes—full of dancing wickets! How he would tame them and play with them—very soon now. He followed Pierrot outside. In his agitation he no longer felt the smart of Barre's teeth.

Half an hour later Nepeese came out of the cabin. She could see that Pierrot and the Factor had been talking about something that had not been pleasant to her father. His face was strained. She caught in his eyes the smoulder of fire which he was trying to smother, as one might smother flames under a blanket. McTaggart's jaws were set, but his eyes flared up with pleasure when he saw her. She knew what it was about. The Factor from Lac Bain had been demanding his answer of Pierrot, and Pierrot had been telling him what she had insisted upon—that he must come to her. And he was coming! She turned with a quick beating of the heart and hurried down a little path. She heard McTaggart's footsteps behind her, and threw the flash of a smile over her shoulder. But her teeth were set tight. The nails of her fingers were cutting into the palms of her hands.

Pierrot stood without moving. He watched them as they disappeared into the forest. Nepeese still a few steps ahead of McTaggart. Out of his breast rose a sharp breath.

"Par les mille cornes du diable!" he swore softly. "Is it possible—that she smiles from her heart at that beast? Non! It is impossible. And yet—if it is so—"

One of his brown hands tightened convulsively about the handle of the

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knife in his belt, and slowly he began to follow them.

McTaggart did not hurry to overtake Nepeese. She was following the narrow path deeper into the forest, and he was glad of that. They would be alone—away from Pierrot. He was ten steps behind her, and again the Willow smiled at him over her shoulder. Her body moved sinuously and swiftly. She was keeping accurate measurement of the distance between them—but McTaggart did not guess that this was why she looked back every now and then. He was satisfied to let her go on. When she turned from the narrow trail into a side path that scarcely bore the mark of a path, his heart gave an exultant jump. If she kept on, he would soon have her alone—a good distance from the cabin. The blood ran hot in his face. He did not speak to her, through fear that she would stop. Ahead of them he heard the rumble of water. It was the creek running through the chasm.

Nepeese was making straight for that sound. With a little laugh she started to run, and when she stood at the edge of the chasm, McTaggart was fully fifty yards behind her. Twenty feet sheer down there was a deep pool between the rock walls, a pool so deep that it was like blue ink. She turned to look at the Factor from Lac Bain. He had never looked more like a red beast to her. Until this moment she had been unafraid. But now—in an instant—he terrified her. Before she could speak what she had planned to say, he was at her side, and had taken her face between his two great hands, his coarse fingers twining in the silken strands of her thick braids where they fell over her shoulders at the neck.

"Ka sakahet!" he cried passionately. "Pierrot said you would have an answer for me. But I need no answer now. You are mine! Mine!"

She gave a cry. It was a gasping, broken cry. His arms were about her like bands of iron, crushing her slender body, shutting off her breath, turning the world almost black before her. She could neither struggle nor cry out. She felt the hot passion of his lips on her face, heard his voice—and then came a moment's freedom, and air for her strangled lungs. Pierrot was calling! He had come to the fork in the trail, and he was calling the Willow's name!

McTaggart's hot hand came over her mouth.

"Don't answer," she heard him say. "Strength—anger—hatred flared up in her, and fiercely she struck the hand down. Something in her wonderful eyes held McTaggart. They blazed into his very soul.

"Bete noir!" she panted at him, freeing herself from the last touch of his hands. "Beast—black beast!" Her voice trembled, and her face flamed. "See—I came to show you my pool—and tell you what you wanted to hear—and you—you have crushed me like a beast—like a great rock—See! down there—it is my pool!"

She had not planned it like this. She had intended to be smiling, even laughing, at this moment. But McTaggart had spoiled them—her carefully made plans! And yet, as she pointed, the Factor from Lac Bain had looked for an instant over the edge of the chasm. And then she laughed—laughed as she gave him a sudden shove from behind.

"And that is my answer, M'sieu le Facteur from Lac Bain!" she cried tauntingly as she plunged headlong into the deep pool between the rock walls.

### CHAPTER XIV.

From the edge of the open Pierrot saw what had happened, and he gave a great gasp. He drew back among the balsams. This was not a moment for him to show himself. While his heart drummed like a hammer his face was filled with joy.

On her hands and knees the Willow was peering over the edge. Bush McTaggart had disappeared. He had gone down like the great cliff he was; the water of her pool had closed over him with a dull splash that was like a clasp of triumph. He appeared now, bustling about with his arms and legs to keep himself afloat, while the Willow's voice came to him in taunting cries.

"Bete noir! Bete noir! Beast! Beast!"

She flung small sticks and tufts of earth down at him fiercely; and McTaggart, looking up as he gained his equilibrium, saw her leaning so far over that she seemed about to fall. Her long braids hung down into the chasm, gleaming in the sun; her eyes were laughing while her lips taunted him; he could see the flash of her white teeth.

"Beast! Beast!"

He began swimming, still looking up at her. It was a hundred yards down the slow-going current to the beach of shale where he could climb out, and a half of that distance she followed him, laughing and taunting him, and flinging down sticks and pebbles. He noted that none of the sticks or stones were large enough to hurt him. When at last his feet touched bottom, she was gone.

Swiftly Nepeese ran back over the trail, and almost to Pierrot's arms. She was panting and laughing when for a moment she stopped.

"I have given him the answer, No-tawel! He is in the pool."

Nepeese was out of breath when she reached the cabin. Barre, fastened to a table-leg by a babiche thong, heard her pause for a moment at the door. Then she entered and came straight to him. During the half-hour of her absence Barre had scarcely moved.

Her touch thrilled him. It sent little throbs through his body, a tremulous quivering which she could feel and which deepened the glow in her eyes. Gently her hand stroked his head and his back. It seemed to Nepeese that he did not breathe. Under the caress of her hand his eyes closed. In another moment she was talking to him, and at the sound of her voice his eyes shot open.

"He will come here—that beast—and he will kill me," she was saying. "He will kill you because you bit him, Barre. Ugh, I wish you were bigger and stronger so that you could take his head off for me!"

She was untying the babiche from about the table-leg, and under her breath she laughed. She was not frightened. It was a tremendous exultation—at the thought of having killed the man who had been so kind to her. She could see him in her own way, struggling and beating about like a great fish. He was just about crawling out of the chasm now—and she laughed again as she caught Barre up under her arm.

"Oh—oopi-nao—but you are heavy!" she gasped. "And yet I must carry you—because I am going to run!"

She hurried outside. Pierrot had not come, and she darted swiftly into the balsam back of the cabin with Barre hung in the crook of her arm, like a sack filled at both ends and tied in the middle. He felt like that, too. But he still had no inclination to wriggle himself free. Nepeese ran with him until her arm ached. Then she stopped and put him down on his feet, holding to the end of the caribou skin thong that was tied about his neck. She was prepared for any turn he might make to escape. She expected that he would make an attempt, and for a few moments she watched him closely, while Barre, with his feet on earth once more, looked about him. And then the Willow spoke to him softly.

"You are not going to run away, Barre. Non, you are going to stay with me, and we will kill that man-beast if he dares do to me again what he did back there." She flung back the loose hair from her flushed face, and for a moment she forgot Barre as she thought of that half-minute at the edge of the chasm. He was looking straight up at her when her glance fell on him again. "Non, you are not going to run away—you are going to follow me," she whispered. "Come."

They came at last into an open. It was a tiny meadow in the heart of the forest, not more than three or four times as big as the cabin; underfoot the grass was soft and green, and the heart of the forest was bright through a streamlet across which the Willow jumped with Barre under her arm, and on the edge of the will was small balsam-boughs. Into her diminutive meadow the Willow thrust her head to see that things were as she had left them yesterday. Then, with a long breath of relief, she put down her four-legged burden and fastened the end of the babiche to one of the cut spruce limbs.

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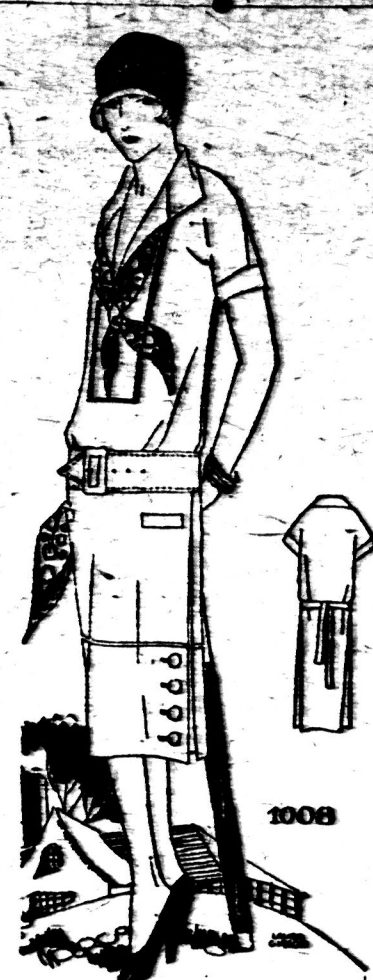
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Barre burrowed himself back into the wall of the wigwam, and with head alert—and eyes wide open—watched attentively what happened after this. Not a movement of the Willow escaped him. She was radiant and happy. Her laugh, sweet and wild as a bird's trill, set Barre's heart throbbing with a desire to jump about with her among the flowers.

For a time Nepeese seemed to forget Barre. Her wild blood raced with the joy of her triumph over the Factor from Lac Bain. She saw him again, floundering about in the pool and angry, demanding of her, soaked where she had gone. And mon pere, with a shrug of his shoulders, was telling him that he didn't know—that probably she had run off into the forest. It did not enter her head that in tricking Bush McTaggart in that way she had played with dynamite. She did not foresee the peril that in an instant would have stamped the wild flush from her face and curdled the blood in her veins—did not guess that McTaggart had become for her a deadlier menace than ever.

There came an interruption. It was the snapping of a dry stick. Through the forest Pierrot had come with the stealth of a cat, and when they looked up, he stood at the edge of the open. Barre knew that it was not Bush McTaggart. But it was a man-beast! In times his body stiffened under the Willow's hand. He drew back slowly and cautiously from her lap and as Pierrot advanced, Barre snarled. The next instant Nepeese had risen and had run to Pierrot. The look in her father's face alarmed her.

"What has happened, mon pere?" she cried.

Pierrot shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing, ma Nepeese—except that you have roused a thousand devils in the heart of the Factor from Lac Bain, and that—"

He stopped as he saw Barre, and pointed at him.

"Last night when M'sieu the Factor caught him in a snare, he bit M'sieu's hand. M'sieu's hand is swollen twice its size, and I can see his blood turning black. It is pechipo." "Pechipo!" gasped Nepeese. She looked into Pierrot's eyes. They were dark, and filled with a sinister gleam—a flash of exultation, she thought.

"Yes, it is the blood-poison," said Pierrot. A gleam of cunning shot into his eyes as he looked over his shoulder and nodded. "I have hidden the medicine—and told him there is no time to lose in getting back to Lac Bain. And he is afraid—that devil! He is waiting. With that blackening hand, he is afraid to start back alone—and so I go with him. And listen, ma Nepeese. We will be away by sundown, and there is something you must know before I go."

Barre saw them there, close together in the shadows thrown by the tall spruce trees. He heard the low murmur of their voices—chiefly of Pierrot's, and at last he saw Nepeese put her two arms up around the man-beast's neck, and then Pierrot went away again into the forest.

### CHAPTER XV.

For a long time after Pierrot left them the Willow did not move from where she had seated herself beside Barre. It was at last the deepening shadows and a near rumble in the sky that roused her from the fear of the things Pierrot had told her. When she looked up, black clouds were massing slowly over the open space above the spruce-tops. Darkness was falling. In the whisper of the wind and the



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dead stillness of the thickening gloom there was the sudden proving of storm. Nepeese shivered and rose to her feet. For the first time Barre got up, and he stood close to her side. Above them a lightning-flash cut the clouds like a knife of fire, followed in an instant by a terrific crash of thunder. Barre shrank back as if struck a blow. He would have slunk into the shelter of the brush wall of the wigwam, but there was something about the Willow as he looked at her which gave him confidence. The thunder crashed again. But he retreated no farther. His eyes were fixed on Nepeese.

On that night, it may be, the Spirit of Storm was born in Nepeese. She loved to face it, as she was facing it now. It made her forget all things but the splendid might of nature; her heart was thrilled to the crash and fire of it; often she had reached up her bare arms and laughed with joy as the deluge burst about her. Even now she might have stood there in the little open until the rain fell, if a whine from Barre had not turned her. As the first big drops struck with the dull thud of leaden bullets about them, she went with him into the balsam shelter.

Once before Barre had passed through a night of terrible storm—the night he had hidden himself under a root and saw the tree riven by lightning; but now he had company, and the warmth and soft pressure of the Willow's hand on his head and neck filled him with a strange courage. He growled softly at the crashing thunder. He wanted to snap at the lightning flashes. Under her hand Nepeese

felt the stiffening of his body, and in a moment of uncanny stillness she heard the sharp uneasy click of his teeth. Then the rain fell.

(To be continued.)

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