

opposite shore. Presently a canoe shot out from the shelter of a reed bank. It was at first a mere speck upon the water. Nearer and nearer it approached, till its graceful form was plainly outlined against the smooth water, and every stroke of the paddle, flashing in the red rays of the declining sun, deepened the colour in her cheek. A few minutes more and the prow grounded on the sandy beach, and the stalwart form of Claude Wilmot bent before her, as he politely doffed his cap, and presented her with an offering of water-lilies he had gathered on the way.

"You see, I am true to my promise, Nora; I only this morning returned from Quebec."

"This morning! And where has your lordship been all day, that you never gave Rose Cottage a thought till this late hour?"

"Where have I been? Well I was closeted with the Commandant at Tete de Pont for two hours; then I hurried home to see the old folks and brush off the dust of travel; now without a moment's delay I am at my lady's bower."

"Oh! you're getting to be such an important man, going on diplomatic missions, that it is no wonder you forget your old friends."

"Forget! You were never out of my mind, Nora."

"Not when you were with the beautiful French ladies in Quebec?"

"Never."

"Truly?"

"Truly. Not for one moment. And did you think of me sometimes, Nora?"

With lower voice, her long lashes sweeping her lovely cheek. "Sometimes."

"When?"

"Oh, I thought of those awful rapids, and a dozen times I imagined your boat crushed and you hurled about and buffeted in the waves—had you no mishap?"

"Yes, we upset once coming up, but it was near shore and we had only a short swim for it."

"And what news have you?"

"Startling news! President Madison has persuaded Congress to declare war. It seems Sir James Craig had employed a man named Henry, in a secret mission, to stir up disaffection to the American Confederation, through the New England States. Lord Liverpool refused to pay Henry for his services and he revealed the whole plot to Madison for \$300,000. This was just what the war party at Washington desired. It gave them the ascendancy, and now we are in for a cruel war. We of course must bear the brunt of it."

"War is, indeed, a terrible thing, and no one should wish for it; but, Claude, we'll show those Yankees that we have the blood of our fathers in our veins. They won't find us such an easy prey as they think."

"No, indeed! They'll find every true Canadian ready to shed his last drop of blood for king and country."

"How my blood stirs at the thought of their daring to invade our country! We loyalists suffered enough at their hands during the Revolutionary War. They might leave us alone now. Oh! that I were a man, to shoulder my musket and fight, and, if need be, die!"

"You inspire us, and we'll do the fighting, Nora."

"Oh! you conceited men. We can fight, too, when it is necessary. Remember Madeline Verchères."

At this juncture there were hasty steps on the gravel walk, the cedar boughs were thrust aside, and a boisterous voice exclaimed "Hello! you two. You're very pugnacious this afternoon. What's up now?"

It was Nora's brother Conway, followed by a tall and handsome young fellow with blonde whiskers and moustache, who appeared so unceremoniously on the scene. "Con," as he was called, gave Claude a hearty welcome, while his companion shook hands with Nora and bowed rather stiffly to her lover.

"We were just talking of the war," said Nora. "Mr. Wilmot brought the news from Quebec."

"Has it been declared at last?" queried Con. "I thought the old lion and her ungrateful whelp would soon be at it again."

"Ungrateful!" exclaimed Frank Hill, just then Con's bosom friend; "you surely can't blame the Americans for the revolution—they had provocation enough."

"Rebellion, you mean," suggested Claude.

"No, I don't. It was a great revolution, as history will one day show. It seems to me the loyalists made a mistake in not joining them."

"For shame, Mr. Hill," exclaimed Nora, "how can you talk such treason. It is evident you are not a loyalist."

"No, I'm not. My father came directly from England, after it was all over, to retrieve our fortunes in this wilderness. He settled under the old flag, but I suppose this will be the end of it."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"I mean that the fate of Canada is sealed. What can three hundred thousand people do against eight millions? They'll overrun the country in the first campaign. I say we're fools to resist. Better accept the inevitable. One nation on this continent is enough."

"Well, I don't want to quarrel with you, Hill," rejoined Claude, rather excitedly; "but if those are your sentiments you had better keep them to yourself."

"Come, gentlemen," interposed Nora, "no quarrelling, I beseech you. We'll adjourn this meeting to Rose Cottage—I hear the summons to tea, and invite both of you to join us."

Cartwright hospitality was proverbial, and the young men, both aspirants for Nora's favour, were only too glad to accept so welcome an invitation.

## II. TO ARMS!

No sooner was the declaration of war known in Canada than the country resounded with the call to arms. Each Province vied with the other in the display of loyalty. Lower Canada, which, during the administration of Sir James Craig, showed signs of discontent, bordering on treason, had been conciliated by the wise rule of Sir George Prevost. Civil and ecclesiastical leaders now came zealously forward in the defence of their country. They were determined to clear their characters. The legislature ordered the enrollment of two thousand men, and authorized the Governor to call out and arm the militia as soon as such a step should seem necessary. Nor were they backward in voting the sinews of war. With much enthusiasm a Bill was passed providing £12,000 to arm those who had already been called out, £20,000 to maintain the security of the Province, and £30,000 for general purposes. Upper Canada, with a very much smaller population, displayed even greater zeal. From the backwoods shanty to the most pretentious mansion of York or Kingston there was only one sentiment, an indignant determination to repel the threatened invasion. Old muskets were polished up. The Colonial rifle, which had served the Americans so well in their struggle for independence, was made ready to defend the Canadian frontier. Squads of men were to be found drilling in every settlement. The red men of the west, under their wily and intrepid leader, Tecumseh, were anxious to be on the warpath.

Although it was well known that the United States had called out 175,000 men, a force greater than all the population of Canada able to bear arms, no one was dismayed. Though there were only 4,500 regular troops in the country, and England was practically very much further off than in these days of ocean racers, no one talked about the absurdity of defending the frontier. The old U. E. Loyalist spirit was strong in the land. It was the spirit which quailed at nothing. It was brave to dare and suffer in a great cause. It counted not the overwhelming odds, for it knew nothing of the impossible.

Kingston, as the centre of a great Loyalist settlement, was even more than other parts of the country animated by preparations for war. The men were organizing and drilling. Their mothers and daughters, sisters and sweethearts, were daily engaged in plucking lint, and making other supplies for the field and the hospital.

A party of young ladies met regularly for this purpose at Rose Cottage, under the presidency of Nora Cartwright, who gave all the energy and time she could spare from her lover to this work.

Claude had been full of enthusiasm from the first. He was afraid "Con" might be corrupted by his friend Frank Hill, but found the boy's heart sound, and had no difficulty in inducing him to cut himself off from his dangerous companion. Frank Hill fell justly under suspicion, and having failed in an interview with Nora, to engage her affections, disappeared suddenly from the scene. Rumour said that he had crossed to Cape Vincent, on the American frontier. Claude and Con had both secured commissions in a regiment of local militia. The former, on account of his reputed pluck and ability, had been given a captaincy, and the latter an ensigncy in the same company.

Such was the state of affairs in Kingston, when, in August, news arrived of General Brock's victory at Detroit. Some days later the excited citizens were summoned to the wharf to see General Hull and his capitulated army on their way, as prisoners of war, to Montreal. Claude and Nora stood together in the crowd as the schooners weighed anchor in the harbour, and though their hearts throbbed with pride at the evidence of Canadian patriotism, they could not but feel sorry for the dejected General and his staff.

The lower classes, in the swarm of citizens and soldiers, had less sympathy. They could not be restrained from venting their exultant feelings in hoots and jeers. *Vae Victis!* Such is the hard fortune of war.

In these days of busy preparation for the great events looming in the future and even then near at hand there was time for love making. Love and war have always gone hand in hand; and there was never a crisis, no matter how fraught with danger, when lovers could not plight their vows. Sometimes Claude was off duty for an afternoon. On such occasions they sometimes made the trip up the Catarqui to Kingston Mills. The distance was only four or five miles; Claude's canoe was light, and his stroke as quick and strong as an Indian's or that of a *coureur de bois*. He was a skilled fisherman and an expert shot with a gun, and they often returned laden with spoils for the hospitable table of Rose Cottage.

In the warm evenings they floated about the harbour, listening to the music of the regiment in quarters at Tete de Pont, or even extended their trip round the point and below Cedar Island, in the St. Lawrence. Nora was no mere sentimentalist—she was a noble girl, and inspired her stalwart admirer with Spartan heroism. She was the stuff that the mothers of nations are made of, loving and tender, but above all brave and pure, capable of any act of enterprise or sacrifice.

One evening Claude came up to Rose Cottage in great glee. He had received, through the influence of a relative in Toronto, an appointment in General Brock's staff, and had been ordered to report at headquarters as soon as possible. He was to start early the following morning.

Nora was delighted with her lover's good fortune. She had no wish to restrain his military ardour. For a lagard in war she could have entertained neither respect nor affection. There was of course the great sorrow of

parting, the uncertainty of the future, the possibility that she might never see Claude alive again. But these thoughts were not allowed to hold sway. Youth is always hopeful, and she bid him good-bye that evening, with a smile in her hazel eyes, as she tied a blue ribbon as a talisman in his button hole, and sent him forth to meet the foe.

## III. QUEENSTON HEIGHTS.

At daybreak on the 13th of October the garrison at Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara River, was aroused by the booming of distant guns. Claude Wilmot, who had returned to quarters a few hours before from a party in Norfolk, as the town of Niagara was then called, slept heavily, dreaming sweet dreams of Nora Cartwright and a moonlit ramble along the shores of the beautiful Catarqui. He was quite oblivious of the repeated reports of the cannonade, or the scurrying of feet in the corridor outside his room, and might have slumbered on till mid-day, had he not been awakened by his servant, and informed that the General was astir and would probably require his services.

"What is up, Miles?" he demanded.

"Sure, Sorr, we don't rightly know, but faith we think the Yankees must be crossing the river, for they're firing away at the front like blazes."

"Very well, have the horse ready, and I'll soon be dressed."

His toilet was soon finished, and, fresh as a daisy, notwithstanding his dissipation of the night before, he hurried to the Mess-room. Here he found an animated scene. Officers in various uniforms were scattered along the table making a hasty breakfast by candle light. The Mess man had managed to get up some hot coffee, the cold meat with bread and butter furnished the rest of the meal.

"Well Wilmot, we're in for it now," said a beardless youth in the uniform of the York Militia, beside whom he seated himself. The General was wrong this time. He thought the attack would be here. But this may be only a feint."

"No chance of that—firing is too heavy. Besides there's no sign of crossing from Fort Niagara. It is not often the old boy makes a mistake. We were with him at Detroit, you know, and he circumvented Hull beautifully. If it hadn't been for that beastly armistice, we'd have wiped out the whole Niagara frontier."

Just then an orderly entered the room, and making his way to Claude saluted, and informed him that the general was starting for the front and desired his presence. Claude accordingly swallowed a mouthful of bread and meat, gulped down his coffee, and left the table.

"Good bye, Wilmot," shouted a dozen voices. "Keep a whole skin and give a good account of yourself. Perhaps we'll see you later on."

In the barrack yard Claude found Gen. Brock just mounting his horse, while three other horses, his own among them, held by the faithful Miles, stood ready for their masters. Two officers of the Imperial Army with the general and himself completed the party. Spurs were driven into the spirited steeds, and they started on the gallop for the scene of action.

As they drew near Queenston the booming of cannon and the rattle of musketry convinced them that a spirited contest was in progress, and on arrival they found two companies of the 49th Regiment, with an equal force of York Militia, vainly endeavouring to dislodge the Americans from their strong position on the heights.

The troops were much disorganized by their repulse, but were reanimated by the presence of their brave general. One of the companies of militia had lost its commanding officer. To this Claude was assigned as captain. The officers dismounted, and sent their horses to the rear. The general placed himself at the head of the troops and ordered a charge to recover the heights. With a British cheer they responded to his summons. On they swept with steady pace and unbroken front. Their well directed fire was visibly weakening the enemy, protected though they were by a fringe of trees in front of their position. Claude, leading his company, was only a few paces from his chief. He saw him stagger, and leaping forward caught him in his arms. A bullet had lodged in his breast. It was his death blow. "Push on the York Volunteers" were the last words which passed those brave and heroic lips.

The charge was checked. With heavy hearts the troops retired, bearing away the beloved form of their general.

They fell back on the village and waited the arrival of reinforcements. They had not long to wait. General Sheaffe soon came up with some more companies of regulars and militia. He determined at all costs to drive the Yankees from their position, and the troops, burning with the determination to avenge the death of Brock, were ready for any enterprise. He made a rapid detour, gained possession of the neighbouring heights and caught the enemy in the flank. Then came for the Americans an ignominious rout. In the midst of it Claude Wilmot, leading his company through a maple grove, found himself unexpectedly opposed. A force at least equal to his own had rallied behind some logs and brushwood and offered most obstinate resistance.

He ordered a charge, and, as they scaled the obstacle, found himself face to face with Frank Hill in the uniform of an American officer.

"You—Hill!" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes. We can settle old scores, if you've no objection."