

morning, she came to the wigwam with a prettily ornamented tobacco or shot pouch, made out of the softest caribou hide, and handed it to him with a sunny smile. But the sympathy of a single Indian maid could avail him nothing, and he pondered continually in his mind how much longer he was to remain in that state of fearful suspense.

Osborne had been nearly a week at the village, when an incident occurred which determined him to carry out a resolve which had been maturing for some days in his mind. One evening, shortly after dark, as he was seated on the boughs with which the earth in the wigwam was covered, he heard loud talking in the next camp, which was Chegouenne's, and from the excited manner of the speakers and some words which fell upon his ears, he drew the conclusion that he was the subject of debate. He also judged from the fact that Padenuque's name was used more than once, that the question was whether they should await his arrival much longer. The council was at last brought to a hasty conclusion by a few emphatic words—the meaning of which he could not, of course, fathom—from one of the party to whom all the Indians appeared—even Chegouenne—to defer, and who took the principal share of the discussion. Next morning, as Osborne stood at the entrance of the wigwam, he caught a glimpse of the strange-looking Indian, whose appearance had perplexed him so unaccountably on a previous occasion, and concluded that it was he who had spoken with so much effect and decision during the discussion of the night before.

This incident strengthened the resolve that he had been previously forming. Whilst on his way to the wigwams on the morning of the day of his arrival, he had seen, as he ascended the top of a high hill, what seemed to him a clearing, from the midst of which rose a thin column of smoke. It might be only the smoke of a hunter's fire; but somehow the impression upon his mind was that he was looking at the clearing of one of the Acadians, who had fled into the wilderness when they were ordered to leave the Province. Now, he reasoned, if he could but find his way to the same place, he might obtain the services of

a guide to convey him to one of the British forts in the Isthmus, which he surmised must be less than forty miles from the village. It was preferable to brave the perils of the forest than remain subject to the capricious humor of the Indians. He even began to imagine that there was a certain exultation in the faces of the savages, as they looked in the wigwam from time to time, and contemplated the English chief that was so soon to afford them rare sport.

The opportunity that he so anxiously desired came much sooner than he expected. Parties of the Indians went out constantly to the woods, for the moose was always ranging not many miles from the village. On most occasions they would carry the venison back with them; but sometimes it happened they were obliged to return for a good deal when their sport had been unusually successful. With the knowledge of this fact Osborne resolved to watch carefully for a day when the Indians went out on one of these hunting expeditions.

About the third day after the consultation among the Indians, respecting the disposal of their captive, Osborne noticed that there were unusual preparations in progress for some grand event. At first he believed that the savages were about to torture him with all their fiendish ingenuity, but he soon had the reassurance that they were preparing for a hunt on a larger scale than usual. Next morning, when he looked out he saw that the village was nearly deserted, that only three men with their guns lying on the side of the log on which they were seated, remained to guard the prisoner. Several of the younger women also appeared to have gone on some expedition into the forest, for he only noticed two or three moving about the settlement.

So favorable an opportunity might not occur again, and Osborne sat for some time deliberating how he could crawl away unobserved by his guards; but what perplexed him most was how to obtain possession of a firearm, without which it would be folly for him to attempt to make his way through the woods. Two days before, he had succeeded in hiding a small hunting knife which one of the children had left close to the entrance of the camp; but that weapon alone would be insufficient to sup-