

I have sometimes seen it rise more than a foot after spring rains in twenty-four hours—and Marston lost no time in starting as he had to be back when the men had got the timber out of the creek and on the main stream. The two men took a small canoe, which they could easily handle, and soon got down to the Ottawa without any difficulty. The weather was warm and springlike; the nights were chilly, but Marston and Simond found shelter, the first night, at the cabin of a settler, close by the banks of the river. Marston did not feel particularly well, his eyes were inflamed a little, and he was therefore anxious to reach his destination where a change of air and food would soon bring him round. Simond said very little on the trip, but Marston cared little as long as he had his pleasant thoughts to occupy his mind; for he told his companion that he hoped to be married as soon as all the timber was out and he could get a few days' leave. Simond muttered something in an undertone which Marston did not hear, and his eyes shone with a passionate glare as his companion went on speaking of Mary Mortimer. No doubt Simond was tortured by the most intense jealousy, and a fierce contest was raging in his breast—the affection for his foster-brother was not entirely dead but it was rapidly dying away under the strong passions which had only gathered strength during the long winter, when he had nursed his wrath in the solitude of those grand woods which ought to have calmed and soothed him, for I know that I have often found rest and peace in the forest when wearied with many cares. Perhaps if Marston had said less about his approaching marriage with Mary, it would have been more prudent, for every time he referred to the girl he was adding fuel to the demoniac spirit which was struggling for the mastery in his comrade's bosom.

It was not far from dusk when the two men reached the vicinity of "The Snows." The day had been fine when they started, but it had clouded over towards the afternoon; the wind came round to the south-east and it seemed cold enough for a fall of snow, which is not uncommon in the uncertain spring-time of this northern country. Marston, however, persisted in pushing forward and running the rapids before dark, as he was very anxious to reach Mary's home that night. Both the men had often run the Snows when they were more swollen than they appeared to be at that time, but it had been invariably on fine, clear weather. However, his anxiety to see his betrothed that evening overcame any hesitation he might have had in consigning himself to the snow-white flood which danced and whirled amid the green isles of the river. Simond said nothing about the peril they might run, but apparently nerved himself for the encounter with the mad waters. As the canoe neared the rapids, the expected snow came down in heavy, blinding gusts, and it suddenly became so dark that it was difficult to see many yards ahead. As they darted by, they recognized the danger of proceeding further and Marston seized hold of a small tree and brought the canoe alongside a rock which was partly under water at that season when the water was rising rapidly, he held on whilst Simond steadied the canoe with his paddle, for perhaps twenty minutes or half an hour, when a heavier squall than ever came rushing down the river and the canoe was