

THE HUNTERS OF THE HILLS

"You have spoken well, O Dagaëoga, and you have shown the proof of your words. Never will the great nations of the Hodenosaunee be the friends of the French. There is too much blood between us."

Then, turning to Chevalier de St. Luc and Father Drouillard, he said:

"Go you back to Quebec and tell Onontio that he cannot come to us with promises in one hand and murder in the other. Our young men will guard you and see that you are safe, until you pass out of our lands. Go! Through me the fifty sachems speak for the great League of the Hodenosaunee."

The chevalier and the priest, disappointed but dignified, left the vale of Onondaga that night, and St. Luc said to Robert that he bore him no ill will because of his defeat.

Several weeks later, as Robert, Willet, and Tayoga were on their way to Albany, they heard from an Oneida runner that the English colonials from Virginia, under young Washington, and the French had been in battle far to the west.

"The war has begun," said Willet solemnly, "a war that will shake both continents."

"And the Hodenosaunee will not help Onontio," said Tayoga.

"And the French may lose Quebec," said Robert, looking northward to the city of his dreams.