

As Middlemore thus expressed himself, both he and Grantham saw, or fancied they saw, the blankets slightly agitated.

"Good place for a *hide* that," said the former, addressing his pun to the Yankee, on whom however it was totally lost, "show us those said skins, my good fellow, and if we find they are not filled with any thing it would be treason in a professed British subject to export thus clandestinely, we promise that you shall depart without further hindrance."

"Indeed, officer," muttered the settler, sullenly and doggedly, "I shan't do no sich thing. You don't belong to the custom-house I reckon, and so I wish you a good day, for I have a considerable long course to run, and must be movin'." Then, seizing the paddles that were lying on the sand, he prepared to shove the canoe from the beach.

"Not at least before I have sent a bullet, to ascertain the true quality of your skins," said Grantham, levelling his pistol.

"Surely," said Desborough, as he turned and drew himself to the full height of his bony and muscular figure, while his eye measured the officer from head to foot, with a look of concentrated but suppressed fury, "you wouldn't *dare* to do this—you wouldn't dare to fire into my canoe—besides, consider," he said, in a more supplicating tone, "your bullet may go through her, and you would hardly do a fellow the injury to make him lose the chance of a good cargo."

"Then why provoke such a disaster, by refusing to show us what is beneath those blankets?"

"Because it's my pleasure to do so," fiercely retorted the other," and I won't show them to no man."

"Then is it my pleasure to fire," said Grantham. "The injury be on your own head, Desborough—one—two—."

At that moment the sail was violently agitated—something struggling for freedom, cast the blankets on one side, and presently the figure of a man stood upright in the bows of the canoe, and gazed around him with an air of stupid astonishment.

"What?" exclaimed Middlemore, retreating back a pace or two in unfeigned surprise; "has that pistol started up, like the ghost in Hamlet, Ensign Paul Emilius Theophilus Arnoldi, of the United States Michigan Militia? a prisoner on his parole of honor! and yet attempting a clandestine departure from the country—how is this?"

"Not this merely," exclaimed Grantham, "but a traitor to his country, and a deserter from our service. This fellow," he pursued, in answer to an inquiring look of his companion, "is a scoundrel, who deserted three years since from the regiment you relieved—I recognized him yesterday on his landing. Let us secure both, Middlemore, for, thank Heaven, we have been enabled to detect the

traitor at last, in that which will cause his final expulsion from the soil, even if no worse befall him. I have only tampered with him thus long to render his conviction more complete."

"Secure me! secure Jeremiah Desborough?" exclaimed the settler, with rage manifested in the clenching of his teeth and the tension of every muscle of his iron frame, "and that for jist tryin' to save a countryman—well, we'll see who'll have the best of it."

Before Grantham could anticipate the movement, the active and powerful Desborough had closed with him in a manner to prevent his making use of his pistol, had he even so desired. In the next instant it was wrested from him, and thrown far from the spot on which he struggled with his adversary, but at fearful odds, against himself. Harry Grantham, although well and actively made, was of slight proportion, and yet in boyhood. Desborough, on the contrary, was in the full force of a vigorous manhood. A struggle, hand to hand, between two combatants so disproportioned, could not, consequently, be long doubtful as to its issue. No sooner had the formidable Yankee closed with his enemy, than, pressing the knuckles of his iron hand which met round the body of the officer, with violence against his spine, he threw him backwards with force upon the sands. Grasping his victim with one hand as he lay upon him, he seemed, as Grantham afterwards declared, to be groping for his knife with the other. The settler was evidently anxious to despatch one enemy, in order that he might fly to the assistance of his son, for it was he whom Middlemore, with a powerful arm, had dragged from the canoe to the beach. While his right hand was still groping for the knife, an object which the powerful resistance of the yet unsubdued, though prostrate, officer rendered somewhat difficult of attainment, the report of a pistol was heard, fired evidently by one of the other combatants. Immediately the settler looked up to see who was the triumphant party. Neither had fallen, and Middlemore, if anything, had the advantage of his enemy; but, to his infinite dismay, he beheld a horseman, evidently attracted by the report of the pistol, urging his noble steed, with the rapidity of lightning, along the firm sands, and advancing with wild cries and vehement gesticulations to the rescue.

Springing with the quickness of thought from his victim, the settler was in the next moment at the side of Middlemore. Seizing him from behind by the arm within his nervous grasp, he pressed the latter with such prodigious force as to cause him to relinquish, by a convulsive movement, the firm hold he had hitherto kept of his adversary.

"On, boy, to the canoe, for your life," he exclaimed hurriedly, as, following up his advantage, he spun the officer round, and sent him tottering to the spot where Grantham lay, still stupefied and half