

meaning of the Act, its blade being more than six inches in length, firmly affixed to the handle aforesaid. The magistrate fined him five dollars, and administered a solemn warning from the bench.

"Cot pless her," exclaimed an indignant Northerner when the verdict was made known, "if she waants ta lah, let her have *aw/ ta lah!*"

In other words, if the law against absentees was to be enforced, let us also set the law regarding jack-knives in motion.

But it was the Fenian scare that brought out the superb Napoleonic qualities of Captain McKerricher, as great crises always develop the latent genius of notable men. "To arms!" was the cry, and everything that would shoot, except the blacksmith's anvil with which we used to celebrate the Queen's birthday, was brought into requisition. Shot guns, muskets and rifles were brought down from their wooden pegs along the hewn walls of the log houses. We youngsters were set at moulding bullets, and it was great fun. Every house possessed bullet moulds, iron arrangements like a pair of pinchers with metal cups at the business end, where a small hole at the junction of the closed cups enabled you to pour in the melted lead. There was also a couple of sharp blades forming part of the handles, which, working on the principle of nut-crackers, enabled you to clip off the lead protuberance and leave a perfectly moulded bullet which would kill a man as effectively as if it had been cast by the



BALDY McVANNEL.

Government. Mounted men had rushed galloping up the main roads from the lake and along the concession lines, shouting as they passed, "The Fenians are coming!" pausing for no comment, but hurrying forward with the news. It needed no other warning to cause every man who could shoulder a gun to make his way as quickly as possible, with whatever weapon he had, to the village which he knew would be the rendezvous. It seems funny to look back on this commotion, for there was no more chance of the Fenians coming to our part of the country than there was of the Russians, nevertheless we did not stop to think about that until later; and if invaders had come, I am willing to risk an even dollar that they would have wished themselves safe once more in Buffalo saloons, in spite of the justly celebrated reputation of our own brands of liquor, for they would have come into a peaceful community that would rather fight than eat. Few of us knew anything about the merits of the Irish question at that day; our attention being absorbed in politics that pertained to the talismanic names of "John A." or "George Brown." Still if invasion came, we were all willing to fight first and enquire into the case afterwards.

The northern shore of Lake Erie, at least that part with which I am acquainted, is a coast perfect as a defence. High perpendicular clay walls,



FINLEY MCGILLIS AT THE PIER.

quite unscalable, form a barrier which no enemy of sense would care to encounter. It must not be supposed that I am accusing the Fenians of having been men of sense, for I have no such intention, but even they would hesitate to attempt the clay walls of Western Canada. However, the eagle eye of the commander at once viewed the weak point in our defence with an unerring instinct worthy of Von Moltke. This was the pier. A creek flowed into the lake, and a road to the shore ran along the banks of this creek. At the terminus of the road had been built a pier jutting out into the lake some hundreds of feet in length. Here, in peaceful times, schooners from Cleveland, Erie or Buffalo, had loaded themselves with oaken staves or prime wheat. Captain McKerricher saw that once the pier was captured, the Empire fell. He therefore massed his force on either bank of the ravine, so that a withering cross fire would discommode the enemy as he came up the valley; not at all a bad formation either. Thus the embattled farmers stood prepared to fire a shot which, if not heard round the world, would at least echo to the village two miles away. As evening drew on, preparations were made for camping out all night on these heights and guards were set on the pier, Finley McGillis at the post of danger, the end nearest to the Fenians, while McCallum and McVannel held down the shore end, all three prepared to wade in blood should any miscreant attempt to kidnap the pier, except the limited liability company which rightfully owned it. Sentries were placed round the camp inland, and outposts further off. Never was there more firm discipline exacted from any body of soldiers. The rigour of the British army was as nothing compared with the martinet character of the regulations of this camp. Captain McKerricher in person visited every sentinel and informed him that this was no 24th of May parade, but real war, and that any sentinel caught asleep would be forthwith shot instead of being fined a dollar, and that if a man lit his pipe he would spend the rest of his life in Kingston Penitentiary.

But the invincibility of a camp is unknown until it is tested. The Captain resolved to put the firmness of his sentinels to the proof. He took no one into his confidence, and here again his likeness to Napoleon is evidenced; he never let any of his subordinate officers know what the next move on the board was to be. There was a small skiff in the creek, and, the evening darkening early because of a coming storm, the Captain pushed out the boat unobserved and rowed some

distance to the west, then turned south and out into the lake, finally coming north again toward the end of the pier. The night was black, relieved by an occasional glimmer of lightning on the surface of the lake, and the wind was rising. McKerricher's quest was getting to be an unpleasant one, for he was essentially a landsman, and the increasing motion of the boat was disagreeable, but what will a man not do and dare for his country's sake? It is probable that he descried the form of Finley McGillis against the dark sky before the sentinel caught any indication of the boat on the murky water. Finley said afterwards that he was just wondering whether he dare risk a smoke in his isolated position and trust to putting his pipe out if he heard a step coming up the pier, when he was startled by a voice from the lake—

"Surrender! Drop your gun and save your life. Surrender in the name of the Fenian Brotherhood!"

McGillis made no reply, and the Captain began to think he had caught his chief sentry asleep, but as the wabbling boat became dimly visible to the man on the end of the pier, Finley said slowly, "I can see ye now. If you move hand or fut I'll blow ye out of the watter."

"That's all right," said the Captain hastily; "I'm glad to note that you are on the alert. I'm Captain McKerricher."



DUGALD McMILLAN.

"A likely story," replied McGillis contemptuously. "The Keptin's no a mahn to risk himself in a bit shallop like that, an' a storm comin up. Yer ma preesoner, an' ye'll be a deed mahn in another meenit if ye pit hand to oar."

"You fool," cried the angered voyager, "how could I know about McKerricher if I were a Fenian?"