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THE SCOUT.

BY CHARLES E. HUSLEY,
(Editor of the Portland Transcript.)
[CONTINUED.]

The sun was getting low, and the forest was so dense, the fading light scarcely penetrated the thick foliage of the overhanging branches. So shrouded in gloom indeed had their way become, that it required the closest scrutiny of the quick-sighted Scout to detect the trail, which at first was broad and distinct, as if the savages had roved carelessly along, thinking pursuit out of question; but for some distance it appeared that they had grown more careful, for it was evident that pains had been taken, if not to conceal, at least to render their route as little marked as possible. "It is getting too dark to travel farther to-night," said the Scout in a low tone, as he leaned his rifle against the trunk of a fallen pine and wiped the drops from his brow. "Something has occurred to make them more careful, for I have observed the last hour or two the trail has been growing more faint as we proceeded. You see by the prints on the leaves all around us that they made a halt here, probably for consultation. And here you see by the bent twigs that they have struck in this direction. If they were alarmed they had got over it from the broad trail they made again, or this may be some trick of the deceitful beasts. As there should be a spring near from the tricking of yonder water," continued the Scout, "we had better make a stop here for the night," and he proceeded to disencumber himself of his accoutrements. "But here is still daylight enough to follow their track," said the young man, impatient of delay. "Every moment is important—we have a broad trail before us, why not follow it?" "Patience, patience, my boy!" said the old man, throwing down his hunting pouch. "This is a hard lesson, but you must learn it. Make haste make waste, are words full of sound wisdom simple as they read, my young friend. I am as anxious to overtake the varmints as you are, but there is more in the signs about us than meets the eye, and I want daylight to try into them. We have travelled a smart pace to-day, and a good night's rest will refresh us for an early start in the morning."

So saying the Scout set about those preparations for camping out, which a long acquaintance with a forest life had rendered familiar to him. In a short time his arrangements were completed—everything was disposed to guard against a sudden attack, and after partaking of a hearty meal of the humble fare they had brought with them, they sought their leafy couches—the evening breeze gently wafting the tree tops and producing a lulling murmur among the leaves, occasionally swaying the branches aside and letting in the rays of the rising moon on the silent and apparently deserted spot.

CHAPTER IV.

The sun was glistening on the tops of the tallest trees ere the young man awoke from a deep slumber, into which he had only fallen at a late hour. The mission he was on—the anxiety he felt in the fate of one so dear to his heart, had kept him restless and uneasy. He hardly thought of his own situation—of the dangers that surrounded him, although the occasional cry of some wild animal, or the sudden cracking of the dry limbs around him, would for a moment recall him to a sense of his own peril. It was sometimes past midnight, and his perturbed mind was sufficiently composed to induce sleep. Even when, from their weariness, his senses were locked in slumber, his dreaming brain was busy with images connected with the maiden's captivity, plainly manifested by his murmured exclamations, frequent shiftings of position and sudden starts.

When he awoke he sprang upon his feet and turned to arouse his companion, but he found he had got the start of him. Another glance discovered to him the Scout seated on the mossy roots of a tall oak, with the provisions for the morning meal in waiting before him.

"Young limbs require more rest than aged ones," said the old man with a smile, after saluting his companion. "While you have been dreaming there I have been taking a look about us. One cannot pass through the woods as he would on the beaten highway. I told you last night," he continued, as he applied himself to the coarse viands before him, "that we wanted daylight to read the signs of the forest, and the event has proved that I was right. If we had followed on the route proposed by you last night, James, we should have had a pesky tramp of it and that is all our pains. Cunning varmints are there red skins, but they are not foxes enough to cheat the old Scout yet."

"Surely, sir, that is their trail branching off to the right, over the hillock yonder!" asked the young man in a tone of surprise. "Sartain true, there's no mistake about that boy. One with half an eye could follow a path marked as that. But see here just beyond that clump of bushes, there by that cedar to the left, and bring me what you find."

The young man did as he was bid, and after a brief search he returned, with a strip of calico, a mere shred, which he found attached to a thorn bush.

"There," continued the Scout, "the threads you hold came from the poor girl's dress, either left by design or accident. If the former, it proves that she is not frightened out of her wits at any rate; if the latter, I hold it as a sign that Providence is with us and will guide us aright, if we will only do our part by using a proper discretion. I calculate now, that the savages began to suspect that they might be followed, and a part of them were sent off this way, leaving a broad trail for fools to follow if they will—but no one so well learned in their devilries as the old hunter," added the hunter with a low chuckle.

"By observing the place," he continued, "where you found that piece of cloth, you will find, if you look sharp, Mabel's footprints—on one spot in particular, where she ground her heel into the turf, the brave girl! as if on purpose. Shoulder your pack, my good fellow, and let us be off. I reckon as how we shall be close on their heels by night fall."

It took but a short time to get ready, and they immediately started off on the new trail, the Scout leading the way with such a rapid walker, found it necessary to keep up with him.

The trail on which they now struck was that of three persons only, as near as they could make out, the great body of the party having probably gone off in another direction to draw off the pursuit, should one be made, or perhaps on some other predatory expedition. Ere long the Scout found it necessary to slacken his speed, and to examine more carefully to ascertain the route of those they were pursuing.

At times the trail would be lost altogether, but the quick eye of the old man, which seemed to take in every object, however minute, at a glance, would soon discover it again. Great precaution was observed as they proceeded, for they knew not how far distant they might be from the foe. At times the young man was directed to ascend some tall tree, which commanded a view of the surrounding country, in order to detect any sign of the fugitives;—at other times the Scout would come to a stand and place his ear to the ground for the same purpose. But except the trail they had as yet discovered nothing.

CHAPTER V.

It was now getting towards noon, and the two in pursuit were moving steadily though briskly forward, or of late the trail had grown at every step more and more fresh, giving assurance that the party they were seeking could not be a great distance in advance of them, when the Scout made a sudden halt.

"Hist!" said he in a low whisper to his companion, pointing at the same time to a clump of thick bushes that crowned a slight ascent a short distance in front of them. "Don't like the looks of things yonder. See to your arms, my lad, we may have a use for them presently."

The young man hastily reprimed his piece, and held it ready for immediate action. "Wait here," continued the Scout, "while I take a peep about us. There may be mischief in the neighbourhood." So saying he plunged into the underbush at his right and disappeared.

For some time the young man stood his ground, waiting in anxious expectation, with his eyes fixed steadfastly on the thicket. He could see nothing to cause the alarm exhibited by the Scout. Every thing at first appeared as usual, and he began to wonder at the movements of his companion. Presently, however, he discovered a slight movement among the branches in the centre of the clump, which under ordinary circumstances would not have attracted his notice. "In a short time the bushes became more agitated, accompanied by a snapping of the dry twigs. A moment more and the young man was started by the sight of a large catamount which emerged from the overtopping trunk of a mossy tree, which had fallen into it, and stood crouched on the projecting butt immediately before him, lashing his tail and eyeing him with an angry, flashing glance, in the very attitude of pouncing upon him.

As quick as thought the young man brought his rifle to his shoulder, and was just on the point of drawing the trigger, when a warning from the Scout restrained him. "Don't fire, youngster, don't fire. Get a tree between you if possible and leave him to me."

The sound of the Scout's voice seemed to divert the attention of the animal, for he turned his head in the direction whence it came, gnashing his fangs and impatiently clawing the decayed trunk with his catlike paws. The young man seized an opportunity and made a movement with the intention of securing the cover of a large tree a few feet from him; he had scarcely taken the first step, when with the quickness of lightning the formidable beast turned and gathered himself for a spring, uttering at the same time the peculiar cry which always precedes, or rather accompanies the fatal leap. The young man gave himself up for lost; but at this instant the sharp report of a rifle rang through the woods, and the panther, bounding high in the air, fell struggling

within a few feet of where he stood spell bound with fear.

"There's an end of that varmint!" exclaimed the Scout bursting from a thicket close near by. "But take care of yourself, my lad," he shouted, "for the critter is terrible in his agonies, and hardly safe when the life is gone."

"I have made worse shots in my life than that," continued he, as he pointed to a dark spot in the forehead of the writhing animal, whence the warm blood was fast oozing. "He's a wicked thing when his rage is up, and had as a red man every inch of him. But we have no time to waste over him. I was loath to fire, for the report may reach the ears of those who need but the falling of a leaf to rouse their suspicions." So saying the Scout carefully reloaded his piece and hastened a gain on the pursuit.

Casting a glance on the expiring panther, whose dying eye still gleamed ferocious upon him as he passed, young Mayberry followed his companion, grateful for his late escape, yet fearful that the report of the gun might betray their approach to the savages and thus jeopardise the life of the captive, or at any rate put them on their guard and so prevent a surprise.

The same CHAPTER VI. The same account of the report of the gun that troubled the Scout's mind seemed also to burden the thought of the Scout, for after travelling some time in silence, he remarked in a low tone—

"These woods are master places for carrying sound! I've heard 'fore now, when I've been out hunting, a report echoing through the forest, just as though each tree had a tongue of its own, and so caught up and repeated the sound to its neighbour, until it went clean thro' the whole tract. But I hope there are no such tall-tale trees in these parts, for if they should beat pecky shod to the red skins we are in search of, it would be an evil report for us, I constate, though we raised it ourself."

"Tread softly, my boy," continued the old man, "and don't disturb the bushes more than you can help. We must be careful of our trail. For there's no telling how many of the varmints there may be prowling around us."

Every step was now taken with the greatest caution. Particularly care was observed to prevent the least noise—even the snapping of a twig—and our two friends pressed forward so softly and stealthily that they scarcely disturbed the dry leaves in their path. From the signs around them the hunter knew that the Indians could not be far off. At one spot which they reached about two hours after their affair with the panther, the marks were so fresh, the Scout assured his companion that they could not have left it but a short time before. The savages had evidently set about preparing a hasty meal, and it was possible the report of the gun here reached them, for there were obvious marks of a hurried departure.

As the new-comers cast searching glances around them, the Scout prying into the neighboring bushes as if fearful of an ambuscade, the quick eye of the young man caught sight of an object which sent the blood with a warmer flow through his veins. The place in which they found themselves was a small area, nearly surrounded with lofty trees, whose overhanging branches cast a deep shade over it. On one side a mossy tree lay stretched along the ground, its extremities concealed by the underbush into which it had fallen. In a slight crevice of this tree, which had doubtless been occupied as the maiden's seat, as if placed there to attract attention, the young man detected a head bracelet, which he at once recognized as a gift of his to Mabel. It was a token to him that she anticipated a pursuit, and his heart was thrilled with a secret pleasure, for it assured him his exertion to rescue her from captivity. It showed also that she was not disheartened, but still retained her spirits unbroken.

As he eagerly directed the attention of his companion to the discovery, the Scout's eye brightened and a complacent smile lighted up his features as he remarked in a barely audible whisper—

"Ay, the gal has a quick wit and a courageous heart, though she is a darter of mine.—She is worth fighting for, boy, and when the time comes I hope your heart won't fail you." "I hope you don't doubt me, sir!" said the youth, reddening slightly as he spoke. "Distrust you, youngster!" replied the Scout in a tone of honest sincerity—"I never you think of it. I only thought I would give you a hint of what is before us. There may be blood split before we see the end of this business. One or both of us may lay our bones in this forest—there's no saying, for these red skins have a sure eye and seldom burn powder for nothing. If either of us fall I pray I may be the one, lad, for in course of nature, I can't last long, and an old tree can be better spared than the young. However, as long as I can raise my rusty old friend here—ha!" said he with a sudden start—"what is that?"

A slight rustling of the dry leaves was heard

a little distance off, as if some one were making their way cautiously through the thick underbrush which sprung up in every direction.

"To cover, James!" whispered the Scout, "to cover and lie close!" and he crept softly behind the huge pine against which he had been leaning. The young man followed his example, darting behind a dense thicket, where he could observe the Scout's motions as well as reconnoitre the spot he had left.

He had barely secreted himself, when a tall savage was seen to advance with a snake-like motion into a little opening just beyond the small enclosure we have mentioned. He paused for a moment after emerging from the bushes, and then glancing furtively around he bent down and applied his ear to the ground. The slightest sound—even the mere movement of a foot, so keen is the sense of hearing in the Indian, might have betrayed them. Scarcely drawing a full breath the concealed party watched with no little anxiety the motions of the war savage.

[To be continued]

POETRY.

THE HARP AND THE POET.

BY THOMAS POWELL, ESQ.

The wind, before it woes the harp,
Is but the wild and common air;
Yet, as it passes o'er the chords,
Changes to music rare.

And even so the poet's soul
Converts the things that round him lie
Into a gentle voice of song—
Divinest harmony.

Sweet harp and poet, framed alike
By God, as his interpreters,
To breathe aloud the silent thought
Of everything that stirs.

The Gentleman.—True gentlemen are to be found in every grade of society. The ploughman, with his broad sunburnt hand, his homespun dress, and his open, honest, countenance, is often found to be possessed of the real attributes of a gentleman, than the emaciated man milliner, who is much more careful of his gloves than of his honor; whose shirt bosom must be pure as a virgin's faye; and who, if one curl of his glossy wool were displaced, would be thrown immediately into strong convulsions. It is a false, illiberal idea, that because a man cannot claim alliance with the proud and wealthy, his name should be stricken from the list of gentlemen. We are all created alike—our mothers suffer the same pangs; and shall the one who is ushered into life upon the silken couch, and whose limbs were first laid out in a truss of straw? Which class, from time immemorial, has shed honor and glory on the earth—the gentleman of fashion, or the gentleman of nature? Whose voices are most heard, and to most effect throughout the world? Why, those of men born in poverty, but clothed by truth with the jewelled robe of honor. Does the mere fact of a man's being able to make a bow with scrupulous exactness constitute him a gentleman? Shall the children of one mother be divided, because one portion are guided with gracefulness of action and comeliness of demeanor, while the others will not stop to cringe at flattery's fawn or waste the hours given to heaven to improve, in the useless study of the puerile forms of fashion? Oh, how glad makes one's heart to see the "painted lizzards" trade their foot for the gentleman of nature! To see them shrink away at the approach of honest men, fearing that they may be called upon to acknowledge their inferiority!

Moral Greatness.—There are two points which test the moral greatness of men. The one, is high elevation in prosperity; the other deep depression in adversity. He, who when every thing is flourishing, can remain the same unassuming, unpretending man, humbly but firmly discharging the duties of his station, devoid of haughtiness or pride; and he, who when every thing is prostrate, can retain his composure, firmness, and resolve, perseveringly discharging present duty, without servility or meanness, in the great man. Such are distinguished examples. The great Saladin and Napoleon are strikingly so.—The former had it proclaimed in his bearing every morning, that he was mortal and must soon die; while the latter, in the hopeless banishment of St. Helena, his empire and dominion of Europe forever blotted out, never disrespecting himself nor neglected present duty and privilege. Let every one admire and imitate. By setting before us such examples—and there are thousands on historic record—we elevate our standard of moral worth and intellectual glory.—Investigator.

Transience.—Upon consulting general experience, we shall learn that both the healthy and the sickly are to be found indifferently amongst the abstemious, the temperate, and the intemperate. But we must recollect, that men are so differently constituted, and their

constitutions so variously strengthened or weakened by education and circumstances, that some are far better able to resist the effects of bad habits than others, and that it yet remains to be ascertained whether those who have apparently continued to suffer the least from their excesses, might not have enjoyed more perfect health, both of mind and body, and had their life protracted many years if they would have subjected their several appetites and inclinations to the rules prescribed by temperance.

Affecting.—A gentleman passing by the jail of a country town, heard one of the prisoners through the gates of his cell, singing in the softest and most melodious tone, that favorite song—"Home, sweet home." His sympathies were very much excited in favour of the unfortunate tenant of the dungeon, and upon inquiring the cause of his incarceration, was informed that he was put in jail for beating his wife!

The Scotch mode of keeping a Carriage.—We have the particulars of a little potato war which "came off" last week between either the tiger or the cab driver of a Scotch editor and a respectable money changer of Wall street, which we shall cook with sauce piquante a day or two. The parties had to go before the Mayor, where the Scotchman's tiger came off second best. We should not be surprised, indeed; if in consequence of our developments the Scotch mode of keeping a carriage" was to become fashionable among all parvenu aristocrats both in Wall and Ann streets.

Anecdote of the Earl of Desmond.—In the reign of Elizabeth, Gerald Earl of Desmond, was defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner by his great rival, Butler, Earl of Ormond, with whom he was always at war. As the Ormondians were conveying him from the field, stretched upon a litter, his supporters, with a natural triumph, exclaimed "Where is now the Earl of Desmond?" "Where?" returned with energy the wounded chief—"Where, but in his proper place, on the necks of the Butlers."

Royal Punning.—The jibbiter is generally addicted to the jocular; and it is not wonderful that a multitude of jests are sported upon a late happy event. Among the best we have heard is the revival of the worthy old quere, why the hair-appeant was born Duke of Cornwall?—Because he was a minor, and an entirely new bit—(for I could not be old, the circumstances never having happened before!)—Why, when made, his patent passed, the Prince of Wales would be like a twin?—Because, on this occasion, he would be the second creation of his mother!—Literary Gazette.

Physical and moral qualities.—Three are forces in all bodies, some of which cause them to unite, and others to separate. We call these attraction, affinity, adhesion, repulsion, reaction, resistance, but when applied to sentient beings, we vary the names, and denote the same qualities by the words love, friendship, sympathy, hatred, animosity, and antipathy; and we say in common language that the former belong to physical, and the latter to moral beings.

A Russian's Estimate of Authorship.—A popular Russian fable, by Krutloff, represents an author and a thief in hell. They are in two separate kettles, and the devil has lighted a huge fire under that belonging to the man of letters, while the light fingered hero is only enjoying a gentle degree of warmth. The author reproaches Satan with his partiality, but the latter justifies himself thus:—"You are a much greater sinner than the thief; his sin had died with him, but your's will survive for centuries."

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