

engaged inside the fort. A group of scouts were lounging about an open fire, story-telling, joking, laughing and smoking, as though their prospective dangers were mere bug-a-boos, and scouting the best sport in the world.

He listened intently to what they were saying and finally ventured nearer the group, that he might miss nothing of their talk.

"Found a man yet? I should say not!" exclaimed a young man who did not seem to have exactly a soldierly air. "An' I've got to get hold of some sort of fellow who knows enough about this valley to carry my dispatches without getting lost or captured. Every able-bodied man around here is either with the rebels or getting a scout's pay from the government. I spose I could pick up a fairly good man if the paper would allow me to spend that price; but it won't go over half that at the outside. If the fighting begins right away, I'll have to take up with half a man if I can't get a whole one. If I could pick up some fellow who has hunted and trapped along this river till he knows every crook and turn of it and every road and town in the valley, he'd be worth money to me, and I'd put in something out of my own pocket, for I've just got a commission for some special correspondence for the London papers, an' I'd have this fellow act as a private scout as well as to carry my dispatches to the wires."

Just then Captain French came up to Rodney, glanced sharply at the bottoms of the boots and with a "Well, my lad," handed out a quarter.