

to leave these captives while they went off in the direction of Oswego.

Bent managed to get into conversation with the women, and soon found out where they were from and all the particulars of the outrage, so far as they had seen.

The elder woman was the wife of a farmer called Gordon, and the children were hers; the younger woman was her husband's sister, on a visit at their house when the attack occurred. The house was plundered and then, with the other buildings, set on fire but the Indians durst not stay for further depredations for two of their neighbours, who could see the house, caught the alarm and soon the settlers were on the move. Horns were blowing, dogs barking, and answering shouts were resounding through the clearing, as the men hurried home for their rifles, and other weapons to chastise the invaders. The Indians rapidly loaded the booty, mounted the women and children on horses and started through the woods.

"So," said Bent, "you think that a party have come in pursuit."

"I am sure of it," said Mrs. Gordon.

"Very Good," said Bent, "we must see what can be done, but don't say a word to any one else, as there is but one man in the fort, beside me, you can trust, and he is not here just now."

Bent left the fort and sauntered down in the direction White had taken and soon after joining him he informed him of what had occurred and what he proposed to do, and to do at once.

"Now," he said, "is the time for action. Yon vermin may be back in a day or two, and if we must do anything it must be before anyone else can interfere and forestall us."

"Well," said White, "you know more about such matters than I do, and whatever you think best to be done, I'll assist in as far, and as well, as I can."

"Good," said Bent, "put away your tackle then and let us start; I don't think we shall have far to go, but we had better be on the move."

As he spoke, he raised up a great mass of wild vine, which stretched its luxuriant growth down to, and into, the water, the fishing implements were placed underneath and the two started. Bent led the way with rapid, and unhesitating stride, glancing, occasionally, at the way-marks, to him intelligible, as they moved rapidly forward.

The phrase, "pathless forest" is only correct when applied in a certain sense, for to the experienced hunter there are paths and trails which he can follow, assisted by other signs, such as the streams, the tree moss, and bark, and similar aids which convey, to the unexperienced, no information, and lend no aid.

At the period of which we write there were, many Indian trails between the "Lake-gate of the country," and the head waters of of the Hudson and the Mohawk Valley. It was one of these trails, more recently made; that Bent was following.

As they were ascending a gully leading up to the summit of a small range of hills, Bent suddenly paused, motioned to White and glided behind a projecting mass of earth formed by the up-