

CHAPTER II

THE INN IN THE FOREST

WHEN the surprise, occasioned by the Indian's sudden disappearance had passed, the young soldier's mind reverted to the latter's personality, which was so utterly different from what he had been led to expect. His experience of the natives had been one only of casual observance, as they but rarely visited the Capital, when they moved with silent mien, alien from the place and its inhabitants.

He was surprised to see that this Indian was dressed rather as a trapper or guide might have been, very simply; and that the only weapon he carried was a light gun, with a narrow barrel. This last, the soldier in him perceived, while he realized that the aborigine seemed more a mere denizen of the wood than the romantic befeathered and bewampummed savage which he had expected.

It was while he was pondering on this and the savage's appearance and disappearance in so dramatic and shadowy a manner, that he emerged from the pine forest, under which he had been threading his way, and suddenly saw before him a wide far-stretching arm of the lake, smiling and pulsating, blue and illusive in the