

find the spot prepared, and I had intended placing it there myself, but the extra haste hindered me and I must leave it to you. No one knows of the box or its hiding-place but ourselves and the *Sieur d'Amours*. Drive the cattle out of the enclosure, so that they may stray to the marsh and perhaps be spared. On the *escritoire* is a paper, which you are to fasten on the great outer gate. Put it in plain view. In it I have demanded that Church leave our place untouched. He cannot but respect it if it meets his eye, for I have told him of my husband's repeated kindness to the English. Until you join us I will not know if this is safely posted, or if the box be hidden. I would trust you, myself, Gyles, even if the *Sieur d'Amours* had not bidden me."

"I will do my best, Madame," he replied, with grave salute, passing in the paddles, and steadying the canoe for her step.

A moment and the light sentient bark shot out and up the stream, and the English lad stood alone at the foot of the old French stronghold, free from the people whose bond-servant he was, and in easy reach of his countrymen twenty miles below.

Swift through his mind passed the nine years of his captivity, that terrible night of the massacre at Pemaquid, his father and brothers killed before his eyes, his own forced march with the savages, its sufferings and his captor's cruelty, the agony of those long, dreadful years at Meductic, with their hunger, and fear, and torture, then that long tramp to the big fortress, where he was offered for sale, and purchased by the *Sieur d'Amours*, and brought to this little, old stronghold. But here the torture had ceased. Good food, a quiet bed, and easy work, the love of the children, the trust of his master, and the kind care of the *Lady d'Amours*—all this had been his lot. Yet even this was not liberty.

He could see his mother's face, could hear again her parting words as they carried him from her on that dreadful night. Her sweet, white face—how often the memory of it had lulled him asleep in these bitter years, those early, young years with his dusky captors, when the tortures broke both flesh and heart! To think of seeing her again! How blessed it would be! He could hide the strong box, post the proclamation, and then make his way down to the invaders. He might, by pleading, even save their attack upon the place, and thus render his master a service above what his mere servitude demanded.

The thought made his step buoyant and quick as he sped up the pathway to the house. The strong box lay outside Madame d'Amours' own apartment. It was bulky but not heavy to carry, for the treasures in this new land were few. An hour had passed before he had it in safe keeping in the little vault outside the courtyard square. Now and then as he worked he paused to listen, alert for the slightest sound that might come upon the still, night air, but no noise broke the utter silence, and he completed his task, smiling to think how easily he could have faken the chest and its contents as bounty for his safe passage with the invaders.

IT seemed as if he would never accomplish all the charges, and his fingers fumbled over bolts and bars; but at length the place was secured, the cattle and sheep driven away, and the notice placed on the heavy plank gate. Going up to his little chamber at the stair's head, he took from a chest some skins he had trapped, gathered together a few articles of clothing, and hurried again down the stairway, and out the great door. Hastening to the riverside, where his little pirogue lay, he threw in the pelts and was turning to take back the key to its hiding-place, when a short, thick-set man stepped out from the walnut clump, and a voice called in rough tones, "Are you in possession of the *Sieur d'Amours*' domains?"

Quick the youth turned to the water. Down shore a few yards was a long, black boat, manned by several men. Straight his eager thoughts told him that this was one of the invading craft, and that the man who addressed him was perhaps the Commander, Colonel Church.

A half smile flitted over the youth's anxious face. How good it was to hear his own tongue again, even though so roughly couched, and half in fear, yet feeling somehow strangely at home with this grizzly warrior of his own race, he came near, so that his face showed clear in the bright moonlight, but he did not speak.

The stranger frowned and laid a heavy hand on the boy's shoulder. "Give answer," he said. "Who are you, where is the *Sieur d'Amours*, and what are you doing here, in the enemy's country? Brown-faced though you are I know you for an Englishman!"

"I am servant to my master, Louis d'Amours," replied Gyles. "He bought me from the Indians

three years ago. They had killed my father and brothers, at Pemaquid, and taken me prisoner." He stripped up his sleeves from his scarred arms—"this is the life I led," he said, "till I came into d'Amours' hands."

"And since then, lad?—speak the truth, for I am Church, and I am sent out to avenge such deaths as your father's, and such living deaths as yours. The French are in league with the savages in all their depredations. Since coming here, lad, how have you fared?"

"I have fared well," said the lad, gravely, "so well that I am left in charge of the place to protect it against your attack."

The gallant soldier laughed. "The fortunes of war!" he exclaimed.

"Through one you are taken, through another freed! How much loot is there inside? Could you get enough for me to make it not worth my while to attack? I knew the *Sieur* himself was absent, but where are the household?"

"They are not here," said Gyles. "The place is vacant."

"Well, I've never yet burned women and children!" exclaimed the Colonel, "but there must be treasures here. Show me where the prizes are."

THE youth led on up the steep path through the wood to the heavy plank gate, and pointed to the placard.

"Madame d'Amours thought you would not destroy nor pillage, when you had read this," he said.

Church chuckled grimly as he stepped close up to the document, which by the moonlight that lay so bright over the land, could be plainly read. "So she claims protection for her possessions and her domain in earnest of her husband's repeated acts of kindness to English captives," said the soldier. "So much so good, but is it true? And why did you stay behind when the lady fled?"

"I had promised my master to see her safe away if danger threatened," explained the youth; "and there were things she asked me to do besides—to post this placard, and secure the place against your attack. That was why I remained, but I was not going to follow her. I planned to go down stream and find you when you were at anchor, and ask you to take me to my mother and my people at Pemaquid, and I thought if I told you of the kind treatment I had met at their hands that you would spare the place here and go on up river instead, to Nashwaak."

"I'll gladly set you free," said Church. "You'll be a star in my crown. But show me the booty. Quick, boy, the tide is dropping and I will be stuck here as we were on that blasted mud flat at Minas. Open the gate and let us get at the loot."

The boy flung him the great key. "Open if you will," he said. "I could not hold out against you and your men even if I resisted," and he retreated down the path to the river side.

Something in the tone moved the old soldier's heart, and he followed quickly and came up beside him, where he was bending over the pirogue, arranging the bundles inside its small space, and drawing it farther up shore.

"You can accompany me in my own boat," said the Commander, "unless you like your own craft better, and would rather follow in it. The force is at anchor in the large river, just below the *Jemseg* mouth. I came up to reconnoitre. Bright moonlight hinders my sleep, and I am restless while it lasts. I thought to have a quiet look around, un-

detected, before we attacked, but I soon discovered that the birds had flown. How soon will you be ready for the start?"

THE youth sprang to his feet. "I am not going with you," he said. "I am staying here." "Suppose I burn the houses, kill you, and go on up the Big Lake and discover your lady, what then?" asked Church.

But the youth did not answer.

"You would stay here a captive, a slave, with life and freedom in your grasp!" exclaimed the other. "You are indeed a fool."

"But I am not a craven," replied Gyles. "I gave my word to the *Sieur d'Amours* to guard his family

and his fortunes in his absence. I belong to him, and must keep my faith. I did intend to go with you, but when you told me to discover you the treasures, I knew that my duty was here, to obey my master's orders."

"And your mother, at Pemaquid, waiting these many years for your return—has she no claim upon you?"

The boy's voice broke in a half sob, and he dropped down on the stone flagging at the water's edge. "I think she would tell me to stay," he said, stolidly. "Mothers do not call you from your trust. Mine has waited long, she must wait longer yet, till I am free with honour."

The old Commander's eyes blinked, but there was no blinking in his voice when he spoke.

"Stay on," he said, "and I will write a document to your lady that will bind you yet closer. The place here I may spare, not because of you, but because I like the little lady's wit in supposing I would listen to her pleadings, and it humours me to save her and her household. This time I pass, but another voyage when the *Sieur d'Amours* himself is at hand and I can cross swords with a gentleman of honour, I'll have my revenge. I'd not stoop to take even the key from the hand of a fellow so bound in spirit as you are," and flinging it upon the ground he strode away.

But at the turn of the path he came back. "There is yet time," he said. "If you should change your mind, and choose to follow us, even

when I am at the river's mouth we will turn back to meet you. My men will keep the watch. But if you show no sign of relenting by then, get you gone, and quickly, from here, for I will be sending up a letter to the *Lady d'Amours* who so keeps you in bondage, and should my men find you on the spot I will give them orders to fire every building, so that there will no longer be shelter here for the lady or her slave!"

FOR the whole hour while the black boat rapidly sped down the little river, the youth sat on the stone flagging by the shore. The waters fell away from the sand at his feet, as the moments passed. The moon sank behind the black woods beyond the Grand Pond. Once, as the boat came near the point at the Channel's head, he seized his slender pirogue and started to draw it down the sand, but quickly dragged it back; and quietly sat there until the black boat became a speck, and was lost in the blur of the great waters beyond the river's mouth.

Then, wearily, he drew down his own craft, picked up the key and secured it in a wallet, pushed off from shore, and without a glance backward, pulled away up the little river to the Big Pond, and the *Lady Margaret* who had given herself and her

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