

handsome and excellent young man, but lacked the correct bearing and dignified courtesy of his friend, and, he should judge, was much his inferior in point of education. When the tide of battle rolled away to the right, altogether out of sight and almost out of hearing, the double sentries were still at their posts, no doubt conversing with all propriety, but of what, they only individually knew. Even Miss Halbert did not confide to others the substance of a favourable criticism on Mr. Perrowne to which she treated her worthy father.

It was between one and two in the morning when the victorious army returned, and was received with open arms, literally in the case of the Squire and the veteran, and of Mr. Hill and Rufus in the kitchen, metaphorically in that of the remaining combatants. Mr. Carruthers released the doctor, and took him to visit the wounded at the post office. The minister and the dominie were also relieved, and Mr. Hill and the Ssayer, at their own request, put in their vacant places; while Maguffin dismounted, and, being armed with a gun and set in the doctor's post, constituted a guardian trio with his late captors. Of course, the warriors and past sentries had to eat and drink in guard-room and kitchen, the latter apartment being more hilarious than it would have been had the seniors on duty formed part of its company. There was no old Bourbon for the colonel, but he managed to find a fair substitute for it, and informed Coristine, in answer to that gentleman's enquiry, how he happened to arrive so speedily at Bridesdale.

"It was Saturday, suh, when my sehvant and I ahhived in Tohonto, and I met my deah sisteh-in-law. At once, I sent Maguffin back by rail with the hohses to Collingwood, giving them Sunday to recoveh from the effects of the jouhney, tyavel by rail being vely hahd on hohses. This mohning, or, rather I should say yestehday mohning, Madame Du Plessis and I went to Collingwood by rail, where my sehvant had secuhed her two places in the mail caht, and I had the honouh of eschohting her to this pleasant place, and of beholding my chahming niece for the first time. I was indeed vely fohrtunate in ahhiving when I did, to be able to contribute a little to the sechurity of Bridesdale."

"You are doubtless aware, Colonel, that our enemies of to-night are in unlawful possession of Miss Du Plessis' property?"

"Suh, you astonish me. As her natuhal guahdian, I cannot, though in a foheign land, allow that foh a day, suh."

"We think, at least Squire Carruthers thinks, of attacking them in force, after the double inquest to-morrow."

"Then, Mr. Coristine, I shall claim the privilege of joining yoh fohce as a volutech. I wish the ground were fit foh cavally manoeuvres, suh."

"We may need a few mounted men, as we hope to discover a masked road."

"That is vely intehesting, suh. Will you kindly explain to me the chahacteh of the ground?"

The lawyer told all that he knew of the region, from hearsay and from personal experience. The supposed masked road, the actual rocky ascent covered with felled timber, an abatis, as the colonel called it, the access by water, and the portcullis at the narrows, were objects of great interest to the old soldier. He enquired as to the extent of the means of transportation, the probable numbers of the available force, and other particulars; and, when the weary Squire returned and bade all good people go to rest, if they could not sleep, in view of past wakefulness and the morrow's work, he begged, as a perfectly fresh man, to be excused and left in command of the guard, adding: "I shall study out a thyeefold convohging attack on the enemy's position, by watch and by land, with cavally, infantry and mahines." The guard-room company joined in a laugh at the military joke, after which they dispersed, with the exception of the Captain, whom it was a pity to disturb, and Carruthers, who lay down upon a sofa, while the colonel went out to inspect his posts.

The pedestrians occupied a large, double-bedded room at the right corner of the house, above the verandah. The dominie was sleeping peacefully, but the lawyer had not even removed his clothes, with the exception of his boots, if they may be so called, as he lay down upon his bed to rest, with a window half open in front of him. Precisely at the moment when, the night before, he had discovered the incipient conflagration, there came to his nostrils the smell of unctuous fire. Pocketing his loaded revolver, he stepped out of the window on to the sloping verandah roof, off which, in spite of his efforts, he slid heavily to the ground. At once he was seized with no gentle hands by at least three persons, who turned out to be Mr. Hill, the colonel, and Maguffin. "Catch that boy," he cried, as soon as they perceived their mistake, referring to a juvenile figure that he had seen slipping back towards the meadow. Sentry Hislop would probably have caught him, but there was no necessity. The idiot boy was in the arms of his wakeful mother, who, thinking he was going to Rawdon's quarters, as he probably was, intercepted him, saying: "Not back there, Monty, no, no, never again!" So deeply had his unnatural father, with brutal threats, impressed the lesson of incendiarism upon the lad that, all mechanically, he had repeated the attempt of the previous night. Fortunately for Coristine's hands, there was a garden rake at hand to draw out from under the verandah two kitchen towels, well steeped in coal oil, the fierce flame from which had already charred three or four planks

of the floor. Two pails of water relieved all apprehensions; but the Squire awoke Sylvanus and ordered him to take Monty into his room, and, with his companions, be responsible for his safe keeping. Then, turning to the lawyer, and laying a friendly hand on his shoulder, he said: "If ye canna sieep, ye had better come in and tak' the Captain's chair; he's awa til 's bed, puir man." So Coristine entered the porch, and, as he did so, heard a voice above say: "No, Cecile, it is not your hero; it is mine again." "What are thae lassies gabbin' aboot at this time o' nicht?" said the Squire, harder of hearing. "Gang awa to the land o' Nod, and dinna spoil your beauty sleep, young leddies." The apostrophized damsels laughed lightly, whispered a few more confidences, and then relapsed into silence. John Carruthers had a high opinion of his niece, and said some very nice things about her, but, so far short did they fall of the lawyer's standard of appreciation, that he regarded them almost as desecrations. Still, it was very pleasant to be on such friendly terms with the Squire of the neighbourhood, the master of hospitable Bridesdale, and Miss Carmichael's uncle. "A splendid honest fellow," he said to himself, "as good every bit as Wilks' foreign aristocracy!" From time to time the colonel looked in upon the pair, and remarked that the contents of the Squire's decanter pleased him as well as Bourbon or Monongahela.

When daylight came, the weary sentries were dismissed to the kitchen, where, under Tryphena's direction the insane woman took much pleasure in providing for their creature comforts. The restraints upon Mr. Maguffin's eloquence being removed, it flowed in a grandiloquent stream. "Lave the cratur to me, Annerew," whispered Mr. Hill; "lave the nagur to me, and if I don't flummix and flabbergast his consayted vocabuclary, I was never a taylor." Then, turning to the coloured gentleman, he remarked in an incidental sort of way: "Were you ever in the company of deipnosophists before, Mr. Magollin, deipnosophists mind! enjoyin' a gastronical repast?"

Mr. Maguffin's eyes expanded, and his jaw dropped. "Yoh's got the devantidge ob yoh 'umble sarvant, Mistah Hill."

"It's not possible that a gentleman of your larnin' is ignorant of such simple, aisy polysyllables as them?"

"I se afeard yoh's got me this time, sah."

"It stands to reason that there's limits to everybody's vocabuclary, unless it's a great scholar like Mr. Wilkinson; but I thought, perhaps, it was for a school taylor you would be settin' up!"

"Oh my! no, Mistah Hill, my edurecation was pas-simously insufficient. Most all my bettah class language I se acquied fom elugymen ob de Baktis pussuasion."

"And they never taylored ye deipnosophist nor gastronical?"

"No, sah, they didn't, I se humblerated ter confess."

The old schoolmaster looked at Mr. Hislop with a serious expression of mingled incredulity and commiseration, saying: "Such ignorance, Annerew, such ignorance!" and somehow Mr. Maguffin did not see his way to gathering up the broken threads of conversation.

Timotheus was despatched by the Squire to summon a brother J. P., and the township constable, in order that immediate action against known criminal parties might be taken, as well as to notify the farmers adjacent that they were expected to sit in a coroner's jury. Having made all necessary legal arrangements, the Squire returned to the colonel, who, from a memorandum before him, sketched the plan of campaign. He proposed to put the five Richards as marines under the command of the Captain to break down the grating between the third and fourth lakes, and push on to attack the enemy from that side. He wanted four mounted men armed with revolvers, and with stout sticks in lieu of swords, fearless horsemen whom he could lead through swamp or over obstacles to hold the masked road. The remaining body under the Squire, he thought, might follow the track of the fugitives of the night, and constitute the main besieging force. As to those who should perform the respective duties, apart from the persons named, the Squire suggested waiting till the inquests—which would bring some additions to the local population—were over. He hoped much from his fellow justice of the peace, Mr. Walker. Tom Rigby, an old pensioner, and the township constable, would probably have his hands full looking after the prisoners. Fortunately, the post office store of ammunition was not yet exhausted, to say nothing of that contained in various flasks and shot belts, and in the shape of cartridges. The colonel, apropos of warlike weapons, bemoaned the absence of bayonets, and warmly advocated a proposition of the lawyer's, that each combatant should carry, slung over the shoulder or in such way as not to interfere with the handling of his gun, a strong stick like those proposed by the commander-in-chief for his cavalry. Toner and Rufus were immediately roused from their slumbers, and sent to cut the requisite bludgeons, and drill them with holes to pass a cord through. Shortly after they had departed on their errand, the household awoke to life and activity, and, through casually opened doors, there came the gratifying odours of breakfast in preparation.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Bangs Accredits Himself—Silences Squire Walker—Constable Rigby in the Kitchen—The Inquests—Arrests, and Mr. Newberry—The Beaver River Contingent—Mr. Bangs and the Squire Consult—The Army Prepares—Wilkinson's Heroics—Mr. Biggerthorpe on Fishing.

WHEN Timotheus returned, he was not alone; a

slightly built man of medium stature, and rather flashily attired, rode beside him. The Squire strode to the gate, to learn that the younger Pilgrim had accomplished his various missions successfully, and to be presented by him, in his usual clumsy way, to Mr. Bangs, a friend of Mr. Nash as was. "Yore men is right, Squire; my name is Bangs, Hickey Bangs, end pore Nesh sent for me to kem end help ferret out a geng of dem excise slopers, end here I find my pore friend merdered. I tell you, Squire, it's too dem bed, O, too dem bed!"

The Squire felt he must be cautious these times, but that did not hinder him being hospitable. "Come in, Mr. Bangs, and breakfast with us. My man will put your horse up. I have Nash's papers in my possession from his own hand, and, if I find they confirm your story, we will all be glad to take you into our confidence. You, of all men, understand the necessity for caution, and will, I hope, not take my precaution amiss."

"O Lud, no, Squire; yore pretty shore to find letters from me ameng pore Nesh's papers, or some memoranda about me. H. B., you know, Hickey Bangs."

Timotheus led the new detective's horse away, and the gentleman himself entered the house and office with the Squire. "Coristine," said the latter, familiarly addressing the lawyer, "would you mind looking up Errol quietly and sending him here?"

Of course he didn't mind, and soon returned with the minister. Both noticed that the Squire had two loaded pistols on the table before him, the stranger being on the other side. "You can remain, Coristine. I must introduce you, and the Reverend Mr. Errol, my fellow trustee in the matter of these papers, to Mr. Bangs. Mr. Coristine is in the law, Mr. Bangs."

The dapper gentleman with the red tie and large scarf pin bowed amiably to the two witnesses of the interview, and Mr. Carruthers, with the minister by his side, proceeded to examine the papers. "Here it is," he said, after a few minutes of painful silence, "but what in aa the world's the meanin' o't? B. R.—B. T.—R. C. P. The date is Saturday night."

"I think I know," interrupted the lawyer. "How will this do: Beaver River, Ben Toner, Roman Catholic Priest?"

"The very thing! Well, here's Sabbath. Prom. cum S. W. L. C. sup. eq."

Coristine had written the words down to study them. At last he said: "It's a mixture of French, Latin, and English abbreviations; Promenade or walk with Schoolmaster Wilkinson, Lawyer Coristine on the horse."

"Eh, man!" ejaculated the pleased Squire; "Ill hae to turn lawyer myself. Now, here's later doon, the same day—B. D.—S. C.—P. O. scripsi H. B. vent. inst. Come, my prophetic friend."

Triumphantly, the lawyer rolled out: "Bride's Dale, Squire Carruthers, Post Office. I have written H. B. to come instanter."

"Have you his letter, Mr. Bangs?" the Squire asked, and at once it was produced with the Flanders post mark on it, written on the Bridesdale paper, and in Nash's peculiar way. Still Mr. Carruthers doubted. How could he be sure that the letter had fallen into the right hands, or that this smooth-spoken swell was not a cunning agent of Rawdon's?

"John," said the minister, stooping, and lifting something off the carpet, "here's a bit of paper you've dropped out of the pocket-book, or perhaps out of that bookie you're reading from."

The Squire eyed the paper, and then, stretching his arm over the table, shook the detective warmly by the hand. "It was very foolish of me, Mr. Bangs, not to have seen that at first. It gives notice of your arrival, and describes you perfectly. There's a bit of Latin, Mr. Errol, you might ask our friend. It seems to be a sort of watchword with a countersign."

The minister took the paper and read, "quod quaeris?" whereupon the detective smiled, and answered promptly, "molares ebrii."

"What in aa the world's yon, Coristine?" enquired the Squire.

"Mr. Errol asked Mr. Bangs, 'What are you looking for?' and he answered, 'For full grindstones.'"

"When a man is ebrius, John," continued the minister, "he's no' just sober. Weel, weel, the catechis is over, and ye can tak' puir Nash's frien' into our plans. Thank Providence, there's the breakfast gong."

The ladies were astonished to see the new arrival enter the dining-room, the breakfast-room table being too small, with his three inquisitors. He was quite polite, however, though a little stiltedly so, as if not to the manner born. Mr. Terry insisted on vacating his seat in Mr. Bangs' favour. He said: "There's a foine Oirishman from the narth by the name av Hill Oi wud be plazed to have some conversation wid, so yeez 'll jist kindly ekshouse me all," and left for the kitchen. There were sixteen people at the table, so when Squire Walker turned up, Marjorie, who had been brought in to equalize the sides, had to yield her place to him, and follow the veteran to the lower sphere, in one apartment of which the children, under Tryphosa's rule, had a separate table. To this Mr. Terry invited his countryman, the old schoolmaster, who, in spite of his recent deipnosophistic repast with Mr. Maguffin, was ready for something warm. He confidentially whispered to Mr. Terry that no doubt nagurs had sows and were human, but he wasn't pudden' fond of their society. In the dining-room, Mr. Bangs and Squire Walker, in the centre of the table, were in exile, for Wilkinson and the