

slender figure that she's thinking of—but Margaret, has your boy gone?"

"As far as Winnipeg—to-night," Margaret replied briefly, ignoring the compliment. "He sails on Friday."

She sat down beside the Indian woman who appeared now to be sleeping, and was soon busy with her own thoughts. She went back over the years since Wilfred and she had known each other. She thought of her probation in Winnipeg when, as a giddy girl, she had first, in a mad moment, tried to attract him, and then had flouted the love he offered her. Afterwards when he in turn had seemed to become indifferent, she had realized how passionately she desired him—and finally, by a sort of miracle they had been reunited and had come to a complete understanding.

That was only two short months ago, and now the suffering she must have caused in those days of girlish folly to the man she loved, Margaret understood only too well. Two big tears coursed unchecked down her cheeks, and just at that moment the Indian woman slowly opened her eyes.

"The prairie lily is sad. She is sick?"

"A little sad," admitted Margaret.

"Does the prairie lily mourn her warrior chief? He go across great water to fight?" asked the squaw.

Margaret started. What did this poor Indian know of the war? She asked her one or two questions, but received no satisfactory replies. Then she explained in language which she hoped the woman might understand, the cause and progress of the war. She told how from all parts of the empire the white father's children were flocking to his assistance—to drive back the barbarous emperor chief.

The woman listened stolidly enough, but when Margaret had finished, she said proudly.

"Our chiefs go also!"

"Ah! So they do," agreed Margaret, who had heard that the Indians wished to mobilize.

"They will fight beside their brothers, the pale-faces," the woman continued, "and the emperor chief will flee. He will flee as the frost flees before the chinook when the moons of the many snows give place to the moon of flowers."

This was a long speech for Roaming Water, who seldom spoke at all.

"Now, Good-night," said Margaret. But her patient was refractory.

"The prairie lily must not weep," she reiterated slowly. "Her warrior will return; the emperor chief will flee."

Wilfred Hurman had just received his mail, and he eagerly scanned Margaret's letter before he opened the parcel which came with it.

"Moccasins! By all that's wonderful!" he exclaimed, as its contents were disclosed. "The real thing! But what on earth does the dear girl think I can do with them here, and whatever induced her?"

He turned again to the letter, and read the postscript which he had previously overlooked and which was carried over the page.

"You may be surprised," it read, "when you open the parcel. An Indian woman whom I nursed back to life walked a long distance to bring these to me for you. She made me promise that my 'warrior chief,' as she calls you, should have them. She assured me solemnly that with them you would 'fly swiftly' to overtake the enemy. I somehow dare not break my promise, and I had a presentiment that you might really need them."

Wilfred laughed heartily as he read these closing words. He stuffed the moccasins inside his tunic.

"Anyhow, I can't throw them away, since they came from her," he said to himself; "and they'll keep me warm."

He had been so absorbed in his mail that he found he had taken a wrong turning, and his companions were nowhere to be seen. He retraced his steps to the road leading from the little village where the dispatches had been received, but there was no sign of the other men. He walked on quickly in the fast gathering dusk, still uncertain as to his direction, and presently he found himself in the neighborhood of a thick wood which he did not remember to have passed in coming. He was not greatly enjoying himself now, for this was a sort of no-man's land where, in any corner, the enemy might be lurking.

Wilfred Hurman was anything but a coward, but like many brave men he hated uncertainty and obscurity. He walked quietly on scarcely daring to breathe. He thought of Margaret and of their parting.

If the enemy lurked among the shadows of this wood, and they should hear him, she would never know how he had died. He would fall by the wayside there alone and his body would, perhaps, be left to rot in a ditch.

Wilfred pulled himself up for a soft-hearted coward. He had already been through "a hell of a time" without turning a hair, and now he was quaking at nothing like a frightened school girl.

All at once he drew up sharply. He was sure that there was a movement among the trees. The dead leaves crackled under foot and then someone struck a match. Presently several lights were gleaming in the dark wood and Wilfred could dimly discern shadowy figures moving around.

Were these friends or enemies? He could not tell. It was not his own detachment. They were on patrol duty that night on the outskirts of a hamlet close to which his regiment was stationed. He ought to have been with them now.

It was a calm evening, but it was cloudy, and there was no moon. For this he was thankful. He walked on keeping in the shadow and still dubious as to his direction. He had certainly taken a wrong turning somewhere, and

for all he knew he might be walking right into the arms of the enemy.

Presently he stumbled over some withered branches which, unnoticed in the gloom, lay across his path. It caused a confused noise, and Wilfred felt that his hour had come. Next moment he was pretty sure of this, but the shots which rang out missed him, and he stood stock still close against the trunk of a tree.

More shots followed. Again he heard steps and saw the glimmer of lanterns. The stealthy movements continued, and Wilfred dare not move. He must have remained in the same position a couple of hours before he was assured that all efforts to discover him had ceased. Lights were then extinguished, and he fancied he could detect heavy breathing as of men asleep.

Cautiously he moved out of his concealed position, feeling his way gingerly till he found himself in a wide clearing.

He felt somehow that he was on familiar ground. A few stars were shining now, and he could just distinguish objects which he seemed to recognize.

He was used to groping his way across the prairie at night, and he fancied that he could discern figures which he thought might be his comrades on patrol duty.

But he did not know, and caution was necessary. Now, as he strained his eyes he was sure figures were advancing in his direction. He crouched behind some bushes, and then as the men drew near he heard one say to the other in an

undertone: "Funny thing where old Bill got to."

Wilfred experienced a great sense of relief, but he realized that he had better remain where he was until daylight. A sudden declaration of himself—even a movement among the bushes, might bring upon him the rifle shot of his own comrades. He knew these, too, to be reckless, desperate men from a mining camp who were always eager to dispatch an enemy.

Then he reflected. Daylight would be too late, perhaps. The enemy—if it was the enemy—might have flown. But his comrades were out of sight now, and Wilfred knew it would be folly to attempt to find them.

The words of Margaret recurred to him: "You will bring glory to the Empire." He made a sudden resolve. He would undertake the task alone. As soon as there was sufficient light he would return and discover if it was the enemy. He would "bring glory to the Empire," if he had the chance, or lose his life in the attempt.

He dared not sleep, and presently he became conscious that the darkness was lifting. "For the glory of the Empire," he reminded himself, and with the thought of Margaret he remembered the moccasins.

"The very thing—the very thing!" He almost cried aloud in his glee. He had thought of taking off his boots, but had remembered that his socks were badly torn. If he hurt his feet his usefulness would be at an end.



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