

"Trivial! and my honor involved?" said De Montcalm, sternly. "Cease, Father! I know my duty to those above me and to myself as a soldier and a man, and may God protect or desert me, as I perform it or neglect it!"

The priest bowed, while the general, with compressed lips, strode up and down the room in deep thought. At last, turning to Ambrose, he said:

"We will accept their services upon these conditions alone: If Putnam shall be taken by them, we will exercise no control over him. If by us, we shall treat him as other prisoners of war. I will not sanction savage barbarity, whatever my predecessors may have done. Messieurs, do you deem me right?"

A responsive murmur ran around the group. The keen eyes of the half-breed had been intently fixed on De Montcalm, as the commander walked to and fro with a troubled face and uneven step; and when his decided tone of refusal, and the assent of the others of the council, sanctioning the words, fell on the ears of the half-breed, he turned to the Jesuit, and in the Iroquois—which the priest well understood—said, in a tone of anger,

"You make the treaty. He breaks the treaty. Who shall the chief believe—ugh?"

A long discussion between the half-breed and the priest followed. The words of the former were few, quickly delivered, and a wild energy prevailed his manner, while the silvery tones of the latter were measured and modulated to musical sweetness, as he met and over-ruled the vehement propositions of the savage. At last the Jesuit completely chained the attention of his listeners, who, from time to time, assented, with a shrug, to the Jesuit's reasoning. Finally the priest turned and said, to De Montcalm, in French:

"He assents, conditionally, to your proposition. You are to give him twenty-five pounds value in commodities in addition to the arrangement as made. Shall I signify your assent, general?"

"Yes," replied the general, "and let him be conducted to quarters. Messieurs, I declare the council dismissed. Colonel Rouelle, you may be required to depart before morning. You will attend me at my personal quarters at the expiration of a half hour," saying which, with a graceful wave of the hand, he passed from the apartment, and was followed by several members of his staff.

A flush mantled the face of the young man who was addressed by De Montcalm as Colonel Rouelle, while several of the officers gathered around him, some congratulating him on the probability of his having command of the force about to be dispatched, while others were desirous of acting as volunteers under his command.

In the meantime a group had formed around Brantor and his Braves, between whom was being carried on an animated conversation in their native tongue, which was interrupted by a young officer, who stepped forward and took hold of the beads of the chief.

"What is this called, and why do you wear it?" said the officer, who had selected from the other ornaments the masonic jewel we have before spoken of.

"Ah! Freemason—I am!" said the half-breed.

"You?" exclaimed two or three of the group, who had supposed that the jewel had been taken from the person of some prisoner, or found on the battle-field.