

CHAPTER III.

THE RED-SKIN ATTACK.

MR. WELCH was with the men two or three hundred yards away from the house when the Indians suddenly sprang out and opened fire. One of the men fell beside him; the farmer stooped to lift him, but saw that he was shot through the head. Then he ran with full speed towards the house, shouting to the hands to make straight for the gate, disregarding the cattle. Several of these, however, alarmed at the sudden outburst of fire and the yells of the Indians, made of their own accord for the stables, as their master rushed up at full speed. The Indians were but fifty or sixty yards behind when Mr. Welch reached his gate. They had all emptied their pieces, and after the first volley no shots had been fired save one by the watchman on the look-out. Then came the crack of Pearson's rifle, just as Mr. Welch shut the gate and laid the bar in its place. Several spare guns had been placed in the upper chambers, and three reports rang out together, for Mrs. Welch had run upstairs at the first alarm to take her part in the defence.

In another minute the whole party, now six in all, were gathered in the upper room.

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