

THE HUNTERS OF THE HILLS

would cut down the council grove and burn the Long House, then their armies would go forth to destroy the Senecas, the Keepers of the Western Gate.

The thousands, swayed by uncontrollable emotion, sprang to their feet and a tremendous shout burst from them all. St. Luc, seeing the Hodenosaunee slipping from his hands and from those of France, leaped up, unable to contain himself, and cried:

"Do not listen to him! Do not listen to him! What he says cannot come to pass!"

The people were in a turmoil, and the council strove in vain for order, but the young speaker raised his hand and silence came again.

"The Chevalier de St. Luc and Father Drouillard, who have spoken to you in behalf of France, are brave and good men," he said, "but they cannot control the acts of their country. They tell you what I say cannot come to pass, but I tell you that it can come to pass, and what is more it has come to pass. Behold!"

He took from beneath his deerskin tunic a tomahawk, large and keen, and held it up. Its shining blade was stained red with the blood of a human being. The silence was now so intense that it became heavy and oppressive. Everyone in the crowd expected something startling to follow, and they were right.

He swung the tomahawk about in a circle that all might see it, and the blood upon its blade. His feeling for the dramatic was strong upon him, and he knew that the right moment had come.

"Do you know whose tomahawk this is?" he cried. The crowd was silent and waiting.