

arm, but it was plain that he was not here for the purpose of hunting, as he paid no heed to the excellent marks afforded by the flocks of geese, returning from their feeding grounds, which flew close over his head and alighted noisily in the water, there to spend the night.

"Voilà!" muttered he, impatiently. "Dumontes surely ought to arrive soon. I told him to be here before sunset, and now it is long after. Can anything have happened? I don't think so. I told him to have his recruits ready at noon, and to travel fast, by the most unfrequented roads he could find; and he knows the country well. Dumontes is a trusty officer, a little fond of his glass—Sacrel it may be that! If it is—" and his brow darkened threateningly. "The time is drawing near," he continued, "when Riel shall want every man he can get, and he would be furious if he knew we were wasting time plundering on the road. But the first blow has already been struck, so it can do no harm. Besides, this farmer Shaw has the finest herd of thoroughbreds in the West, and we need horses! If it is true that he also, as Dumontes says, really sold the best of his cattle a short time ago, he must have a big

bundle of money, and, by gar! we want money, too! If this job succeeds, I will at once set off to join our forces."

As he uttered these words, he again mounted to his place of observation and was gratified to see, rapidly descending the hills to the southward, a band of mounted men. As he looked, they entered the ravine and advanced quickly along the road at its bottom.

It was now rapidly getting dark, and he strained his eyes to discover, in the man who rode at the head of the cavalcade, his lieutenant Dumontes. The former was of the same build, but did not otherwise resemble his friend. Then suddenly he made the discovery that the band of men, who were now coming along the lake road at a distance of less than a hundred yards away, was not the one he was looking for, but was probably one of the local volunteer corps, travelling about to investigate some matter!

The revelation was a startling one. He knew his dress and trappings would immediately betray him as a Frenchman, or at least as a rebel. His lurking there would be taken as a suspicious fact. At all costs he must prevent a meeting with them. There

was no time to lose. Glancing hurriedly about, he saw something he had not noticed before. Half hidden by bushes was a deep ditch, dug through the bank, probably to drain the meadow-land above. Hastily untying the rope by which his horse was secured, he stepped into the opening. The ditch was some four feet wide and three deep. The bushes which grew over it made it somewhat deeper, and he had not much fear that either he or his horse would be seen, as it was now quite dark. After he had gone a short distance, he made the animal lie down. Then he quickly hobbled it, and muzzled it by tying his scarf over its mouth. He patted it and spoke quietly to it, and it lay quite still. He now stole back to the opening of the ditch, re-arranged the thick screen of bushes so as to almost entirely conceal it, and crouched down to listen.

No sooner had he done so than the cavalcade rose up and, to his surprise, halted. There was an instant's silence, and then a voice said in a low tone: "Is not this the place, boys?"

Several voices responded in the affirmative, and the first speaker proceeded:

"Green certainly declared positively that Gervoise was in this neighbor-

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hood, and that he would meet his lieutenant with recruits here to-night. When the Frenchman went through here a month ago, I suspected that he was going to recruit a company over the line. Since the outbreak in the Territories, it is our duty to suppress every suspicious movement we see, and in this case, when Gervoise is so obviously collecting a force for Riel, we must act. We shall wait here for a time, and if they do not arrive we must go elsewhere."

The listener did not wait to hear more, but stole quietly away toward his horse. He was Gervoise, and he had been betrayed. Green, at whose house he had spent the previous night, was a Catholic, and he had thought he could trust him. So he had told him about the arrival of his force.

"Fortunately I did not mention my plan of attacking Shaw's ranch," he thought. "As it is, I have a little score to settle with Green at some future time. How lucky these fellows did not know the road my force was to come! Why, Dumontes must have been close at their heels, and he cannot be far away now. I will find him, and then we will to work. Shaw's farm is a couple of miles away, so these fellows will know nothing of it. In the morning, they will find what has been done under their noses, and they will feel in good humor!"

With these reflections, he unbound his horse and led him softly away. When he reached the end of the ditch, he could no longer hear the voices behind him. He mounted and rode off, soon increasing his pace to a fast gallop. He had reached the base of the hills, when he heard above him the unmistakable sounds of an approaching band of horsemen, and drew his horse into the shadow of some trees till he should see who they were. This time he was not mistaken. He heard Dumontes' voice singing and laughing in a very light-hearted fashion. As they came nearer, he saw by the light of a lantern which one of the men held, that their horses were heavily laden with plunder. He spurred forward.

"Halt, rascal!" cried Dumontes. "How dare you, sir, approach me like that? Don't you know that I am—"

"Shut up, you drunken fool!" ordered Gervoise, reining up beside him. He paused and looked sternly at his subordinate. Dumontes' glance quail-

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