

to wait. The night was so dark that they could not see the outline of the stockade. Presently a little spark shot through the air, followed by a score of others. Mr. Welch had taken his post on the tower, and he saw the arrows whizzing through the air, many of them falling on the roof. The dry grass dipped in the resin, which was tied round their heads, was instantly extinguished as the arrows fell upon the wet corn, and a yell arose from the Indians.

The farmer descended and told the others of the failure of the Indians' first attempt.

"That 'ere dodge is a first-rate un," Pearson said; "we are safe from fire, and that's the only thing we have got to be afeard on; you will see them up here in a few minutes."

Everything was perfectly quiet; once or twice the watchers thought that they could hear faint sounds, but could not distinguish their direction. After half an hour's anxious waiting a terrific yell was heard from below, and at the doors and windows of the lower rooms came the crashing blows of tomahawks.

The boards had already been removed from the flooring above, and the defenders opened a steady fire into the dark mass, that they could faintly make out clustered round the windows and doors. At Pearson's suggestion the bullets had been removed from the guns, and heavy charges of buck-shot had been substituted for them, and yells of pain and surprise rose as they fired. A few shots were fired up from below, but a second discharge from the spare guns completed the effect from the first volley. The dark mass broke up, and in a few seconds all was as quiet as before.