

## CHAPTER FIVE.

### *The Punishment.*

WITH bound hands Austin was shoved along the trail that ran back to higher ground above the waterfall. He felt himself approaching ever nearer the brink of the swiftly flowing river. He was fainting with fear and weakness, but his set lips uttered no cry. They could call him thief and cheat with some truth, but they would never call him coward. There was no mercy in the terrible savage faces of his guards; therefore he begged for none.

Above the falls the river ran swiftly in a narrow channel, here and there breaking into whitecaps. An old canoe lay rotting under some trees on the shore. Austin felt himself pushed into it, and he felt the untying of the rope that fastened it to the tree. The savages jeered and hooted as they pushed him into the current.

For what seemed eternities, Austin felt the swaying, jarring motion of the boat, then a sudden jar. For a time he lost consciousness. At last he opened his eyes to find the boat stationary. He could see directly over him a great cliff. Dimly he could make out the dark shape of an overhanging tree against which his boat had lodged. Somewhere, just below, was the roar of the cataract. Then the peril of his position rushed back upon him. His boat was stuck on a snag above the falls.

How long would he rock there above the waterfall? Of course it was not a great cataract, but quite sufficient to hurl the frail canoe to destruction. What if the old rotten tree suddenly let go! And then he could think of nothing but the pain in his head.

Suddenly right above him on the bank the bushes parted,