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THE PEACE-KILLER; OR, THE MASSACRE OF LACHINE.

BY S. J. WATSON.

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CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

"Stop!" cried out de Belmont, in a voice of passion; "Charge me with whatever other imaginary crimes you please, but when you accuse me of disloyalty to Julie de Châtelet, or deception towards Isanta, you charge me with offences which never had existence save in your own corrupt and malignant imagination. It is because Julie de Châtelet rejected your attentions with disdain, that you now seek to give her pain by discharging at me the envenomed arrows of your slander."

"I think Lieut. Vruze had better refrain from introducing extraneous matters into the accusation," said the Marquis de Denonville.

"If he drags in the name of my ward with the view of fastening upon her the faintest speck of obloquy, I will call Lieut. Vruze to a stern account of long standing," said M. de Callières fiercely.

Lieut. Vruze turned pale, and faltered out—"I have not the slightest intention of offending M. de Callières. But he will remember I stated that this part of the case was a matter of morals rather than discipline."

"You had better leave the moral considerations alone," said the Chevalier de Vandreuil, "and confine yourself to questions of discipline."

Lieut. Vruze here left the court-room, and returned, accompanied by the Serpent and two other of the Chiefs of the Abenakis.

The Serpent stated boldly that he had seen de Belmont, with his own hands, setting fire to the wigwams.

The other two chiefs avowed that they had seen de Belmont come from underneath the palisade, and emerge into the forest; and that the Iroquois prisoner had followed after him. They also averred that they had seen de Belmont and the Iroquois, each on one side of Isanta, forcing her against her will to the water's edge, where there were assembled a host of Iroquois warriors, and a large fleet of canoes.

Lieut. de Belmont addressed the court martial briefly and fearlessly. He asserted his entire ignorance of every circumstance that preceded the escape of the prisoner. He met, with an indignant denial, the calumnious charge of having entered into a conspiracy with the captive for the purpose of obtaining possession of the girl, Isanta. De Belmont next narrated the events connected with his discovery of the Huron's escape, his pursuit of the fugitive, and his own seizure and forced embarkation. He then told the story of his voyage up the lake. On the first night, the Huron and his party disembarked and encamped on the shore. While they were asleep, de Belmont rose, and stealthily took possession of a canoe, intending to reach the fort. As he was about to start, Isanta made her appearance, and prayed him with tears in her eyes to take her along with him, as the fort was her home, and as she found she could not exist outside the society of Julie de Châtelet. He consented, although fully aware that his conduct would be liable to be misconstrued. The whole night long he rowed, but found, when daylight came, he was still some thirty miles absent from the fort. The sight of some Iroquois canoes on the lake induced him to abandon his own, and take to the woods on the south shore. He and his companion made for the Rivière des Sables, the base of the operations against the enemy, and at which place he thought he was sure of falling in with his comrades. The enemy were prowling through the woods in every direction, and it was many days before he and his companion could reach Rivière des Sables. It was while making their way to the camp that the Serpent and a party of the Abenakis came upon them. The Serpent advanced to seize hold of Isanta, asserting that she was his wife, according to promise, and threatening to carry her to his wigwam. De Belmont, as soon as the Chief of the Abenakis laid hands upon the girl, hurled him to the ground; when the Serpent, rising to his feet, snatched a gun from the hand of one of his followers, and levelled it at his assailant, but, suddenly changing his mind, turned round and discharged the weapon at Isanta, a portion of the contents lodging in the upper part of her chest. De Belmont solemnly warned the Marquis de Denonville, and the Council of War, from believing the assertion that the escaped prisoner was an Iroquois. He was a Huron, the leader of eight hundred warriors, the brother of Isanta, the enemy of the Serpent, whom he had come to Fort Catarqui to slay—and was known amongst the Indian tribes as Kondiarak, and amongst the colonists by the appellation of "The Rat."

The Marquis de Denonville was surprised, and the members of the Council looked at one another in astonishment; while a glance of

suspicion and apprehension was exchanged between Lieut. Vruze and the Serpent.

"Lieut. de Belmont," said the Marquis, "I desire to know if you have sufficient grounds for the assertion that the man in whose escape you are charged with having been concerned is not an Iroquois, but the Huron Chief, Kondiarak."

"I am certain of it," replied de Belmont. "And I request of the court, not so much as a matter of favour as a matter of justice, that before the court pronounce an opinion on my case, this Huron Chief may be summoned hither, to prove my innocence, and refute the lying testimony of the Serpent and the other two Abenakis chiefs. The Huron is the firm ally of the French, and will obey the request of our Governor."

"The Marquis, after a brief consultation with the other members of the court, addressed de Belmont—

"In consideration of your previous services and character, the court has assented to your request to summon Kondiarak. But it is to be understood, however, that if the Huron chief fail to make his appearance on this day three weeks, the court will be compelled to form its judgment on the case as a whole, and on the evidence already submitted. In the meantime, Lieut. de Belmont, you will remain under arrest, pending the arrival of the witness you have selected."

The young man returned his thanks, and the court rose.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOLDING OF THE LILY.

On a couch, in the chamber of Julie de Châtelet, the Huron maiden, Isanta, lay dying. Beside her sat her white sister, pale and careworn, her eyes swollen with weeping. Now and then she would rise from her seat to moisten the parched lips of the dying girl, or to bathe her feverish temples, anticipating, with the quick and tender prescience of affection, the wants which the weak lips were powerless to utter. For a whole night and day, Julie de Châtelet had kept tearful vigil by the side of the dying maiden; she refused to take repose; she would not be one moment absent; and there she sat in that darkened chamber of suffering, the embodiment of the unselfish constancy of holy sorrow.

The evening was beginning to deepen; and the shadows to lengthen themselves more and more as they stole eastward, like trembling and timorous heralds of the twilight. Julie de Châtelet had been sitting for some minutes with her eyes fixed on a bright waif of sunlight, which, formed by the rays of the sun as they stole in through an aperture in the curtain of the chamber window, flickered on the wall above the bed of the dying girl. The watcher's gaze followed, as if by fascination, the shiftings of the luminous visitant; she called to mind the pictures she had seen of saints, with halos floating above their heads; a feeling, half of awe and half of reverence, took possession of her soul; and she began to think that what she witnessed was in some way an omen of the setting of the brief life-sun of one who had been the light of the days of childhood, and the loving companion of her youth. By degrees, Julie saw the bright waif move farther and farther away as the sun grew lower in the heavens; and, as it finally disappeared, she uttered an involuntary exclamation of sorrow. The sound startled the Huron maiden out of one of her brief snatches of feverish and unrefreshing slumber.

"Julie," she murmured in a low and anxious voice, "tell me, is this morning?"

"No, my darling, it is evening—the sun is near its setting."

"Then go to rest, my sister. You must sleep—you must watch no more."

"I will not go to rest, Isanta; I feel no need of sleep, and I shall watch by you till the morning."

"Till the morning, my sister, till the morning? No, no, go to rest now. In the morning I shall be with my kindred—with those who love me."

"And do not I love you, dear Isanta?"

"Of all your race, my sister, you alone love me. I thought another loved me, but that was a dream. I am glad it is a dream."

"Hush, hush, Isanta," said Julie, soothingly, knowing the grief which was gnawing at the heart and memory of the Huron maiden, and wishing her to forget it. "Try to sleep, Isanta, and when you awake you will be stronger, and I shall sing to you the song you love so well, 'The King's Daughter.'"

"The chamber is growing dark, my Julie. Let in some light. Then I shall look out upon the western sky once more, and feel on my face the wind from the lake."

The window was opened, and the dying girl, raising herself painfully and slowly, with the assistance of her friend, looked long and earnestly toward the west, and then said in a low, faint voice:

"Julie, my sister, I must sing."

The girl looked up in astonishment, not unmixed with fear, and replied:

"My darling Isanta, you are too weak to sing. Let me place your head again on the pillow."

"No, no, my sister, not yet. My mother used to sing me to sleep with a song I could

never remember until now. I have tried, when I was well, to think of the song that I might sing it for you, but it would never come for my wishing. Is it not strange, my Julie, that I should remember it now when I am dying?"

"It is strange, dear Isanta, but do not sing it now. Wait till after you have slept."

"My sister Julie, something tells me to sing. Listen, for it is the song of my mother. But tell me, is it not the wind which is going westward that is blowing?"

"It is the wind you say, dear Isanta; and it is chilly."

"But I do not feel it chilly; and so, tonight, it shall be my companion. Listen!"

The Huron maiden, in a low, sweet voice, rising and falling with a weird cadence, and the light of another land beaming from her large, dark eyes, sang as follows:

The leaves were green when the south wind came,
When he came again the leaves were red:
The autumn had kissed them with lips of flame,
And drunk their life-blood, and left them dead.
Then the south wind said, "Are ye tired so soon?
Of the kisses which I on your ripe cheeks prest?
But the grass, at least, has prized the boon."
He looked, but the grass bent toward the west.

Then I said "O south wind, I love thee well;"
"Too late, too late!" he said back to me;
"For no longer here in the woods I dwell,
And westward now must my journey be.
But if thou wilt come with me," he said,
"I'll lend thee my wings, and we both shall sweep
To the land of the sunset, where comes no shade,
Except where the beams of the full moon sleep."

"And what shall I see there, sweet south wind?"
"It is the Great Spirit alone who knows
All thou shalt see; but, within thy mind,
No thought in the golden dream-hour rears
But thou shalt see real in the Sunset Land."
Where the Red Man and Pale Face one kindred
[He,
For all are the same," so, I gave him my hand,
Saying, "Sweet South Wind I'll go west with
[thee."

As the strains of the singer melted away, she fell back in the arms of Julie, and tried to utter a last word. But the white lips could no longer give articulate form to the loving promptings of her heart. For death had breathed upon her, and silence came after, like a seal. And thus, at the drooping of the day, "The Lily of the Forest" was folded by a Hand of Shadow, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SITUATION.

No sooner had the Marquis of Denonville retreated than the Iroquois, issuing from their hiding-places and forest fastnesses, desolated the whole frontier with fire and sword, and brought terror to every home and hearth throughout the colony. The tribes of the lake countries began to grow lukewarm in the cause of the French. The Hurons of Michilimackinac, instigated by their chief, Kondiarak, opened secret negotiations with the Iroquois, and took every occasion to manifest their indifference to French interests. This condition of affairs, conjoined with the fact that his army, after its return to Fort Catarqui, had been visited by a terrible epidemic, induced the Marquis de Denonville to abandon a second campaign which he had meditated against the Iroquois. These people, ever on the watch for an opportunity to strike, no sooner ascertained the state of affairs at headquarters, than they made a dash at the Fort of Frontenac, where they were beaten off with difficulty. Foiled in this attempt, they reappeared at the Fort of Chambly, and would have stormed it, had not the hardy colonists of the district hastened to the rescue with extraordinary speed and gallantry. The Iroquois, baffled in both these enterprises, made a descent on the island of Montreal, where they assaulted a block-house and strove to raise its palisades. They were defeated only after a long and doubtful struggle.

Harassed almost beyond endurance by the frequency of the attacks of the Iroquois, and unable, with the petty resources at his disposal, to protect a domain of such extent as New France, the Marquis de Denonville was glad enough to listen to overtures made by the Five Nations for the establishment of a truce. The Iroquois confederation sent a deputation to Canada, which was escorted part of the way by no fewer than twelve hundred warriors. The envoys informed the Marquis that the Five Nations were well aware of the almost defenceless condition of the Province; and that they were able, at any time, to burn the houses of the inhabitants, pillage the stores, destroy the crops and raze the forts. At the same time, however, the envoys stated that their countrymen were generous enemies, and would not press for all the advantages they had the right and power to demand.

The Marquis de Denonville replied that Colonel Dongan, the English Governor of New York, claimed the Iroquois as British subjects; and that as there was peace between England and France the Five Nations would be kept from carrying on hostilities.

The envoys responded that their confederation formed an independent power; that it had always resisted French as well as English supremacy; that the united Iroquois would act towards both just as they pleased, either as neutrals, as friends or as enemies. The envoys finished by the high-spirited declaration—"We have never been conquered either by the

French or the English. We hold our country from God, and we acknowledge no other master."

A truce, favourable both to the French and their native allies, was eventually arranged by the Marquis, as a first step towards the conclusion of a lasting treaty of peace; and the Iroquois envoys took their way home to procure the accomplishment of this latter object.

But the hopes entertained of a treaty of peace between the French and the Iroquois, were doomed to disappointment. Kondiarak, the Rat, appeared on the scene, and his machinations defeated every prospect of a permanent amicable settlement; and eventually plunged the colony in blood and mourning. How his schemes were laid, and how they succeeded, will be made apparent, as our story proceeds towards its conclusion.

The Rat, after his escape from Catarqui, and his arrival at Michilimackinac, the home of his tribe, began to lay his plans against the Marquis de Denonville and the colony in general. The chieftain was especially incensed against the governor, upon whom he cast the blame of all his misadventures. Our old acquaintance, Tambour, who had been taken into the friendship and confidence of the Rat, endeavoured with all the skill and plausibility of which he was master, to show the Huron chieftain that his sufferings had been due altogether to his own obstinacy in refusing to disclose his rank and nation to the Marquis de Denonville. But the Rat was proof against all this reasoning. He argued that the Governor was unfit for his post, if he could not recognize at a glance, a Huron from an Iroquois; and maintained that the Marquis had been guilty, not only of gross injustice, but of an unpardonable insult towards the whole Huron nation, in refusing to believe their chief's solemn assertion as against the lying statement of the Chief of the Abenakis. The disgrace of having been put in bonds, and the keen ignominy of being compelled to run the gauntlet, were to be attributed to the Governor's shameful partiality for the Serpent, and to some undeserved personal hatred he had entertained for the Rat. This hatred, the Rat argued, had doubtless been instilled, beforehand, into the mind of the Marquis by the chief of the Abenakis. The Huron chieftain, moreover, had firmly persuaded himself that the Marquis knew all along who he was; and that the ignorance of his identity was merely feigned in order to gratify the hatred of the Serpent, and to secure the services of the Abenakis during the war with the Iroquois. A combination of circumstances conspired to fan into a flame the resentment of the Huron leader. First, there was the failure of his attempt to capture or slay the chief of the Abenakis; then there was the burning humiliation of being handed over to his mortal enemy; and again, he was galled at the departure of Isanta and de Belmont, the latter of whom he wished to hold as a hostage, for the satisfying of certain onerous claims for compensation which he intended to make on the Governor.

To be continued.

CAST ADRIFT.

I had risen early and lain down late in the vain effort to better myself in the old country; the very struggle for life was a hard one; so at length I resolved to follow the universal law, which, like the instinct of the bees, bids the young go forth to seek new settlements, and going round half the globe, endeavour either among the gold regions of Australia, or its luxuriant corn-fields, to win competence and a home, not only for myself, but for my mother and her orphan niece, whom I hoped some day to make my wife.

The parting with those dear ones over, I embarked in a small trader, investing my surplus funds in the purchase of such goods as were likely to realise double their value at my destination. The first half of our voyage progressed favourably, but off Cape L'Agulhas we encountered a severe gale, and lost our fore-yard, which necessitated our putting into Algoa Bay to replace it. It was night when we arrived, and we were all anxiety for morning, that we might see the southern land of whose beauty we had heard so much. At sunrise the announcement that a shoal of whales was in the bay, still further hastened our movements, for neither my fellow-passenger nor I had ever seen one. In a few minutes more we were on deck, looking eagerly at the shoal of huge, black creatures, which, like a group of moving rocks, were tossing and gambling uncouthly as they took their leisurely yet rapid way along the bay.

From a fishery near the entrance, a whole flotilla of light, graceful whale-boats were already skimming along like sea-birds in pursuit of them; and the progress of both fish and boats was such as to make it evident that our view of the chase would be but a telescopic one. This was a great disappointment, and one that we in vain endeavoured to remedy by climbing the rigging. At this juncture my fellow-passenger remembered that one of the ship's boats was built for whaling; so we borrowed it from the captain, every sailor on board volunteering to accompany us, though we could only take four—one