

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

HALF supporting her, one arm about his neck, her hands clinging to his as if she was afraid some unseen power would take him from her, the two regained the camp, the blaze of freshly heaped-up logs having lighted the way.

“Give Dinsmore something hot to drink at once,” were Thayer’s first words on reaching the group. “He ’s been in water up to his neck. Had it not been for him we should have had to lie out all night; he sees in the dark like an owl. We ’ve had a hard tramp.” He stood steaming before the fire as he spoke — drenched to the skin, the others crowding round him, too happy for the moment to ply him with questions. He himself was quivering with an inward joy. Alice’s kisses were still on his lips.

The trapper edged nearer. “And what did them fellers say, Mr. Thayer, when ye found