

CHAPTER II.

"I'm Jack Lester!"

"My name is Angus Macdonald!"

Two young men clasped right hands and regarded each other silently and with a blending of astonishment, pleasure and curiosity expressed on their faces. The situation becoming irksome to Jack, he said:

"Come into my smudge and have a pipe with me," and he turned in the direction of a rising piece of ground on which was planted a square-walled, heavy-duck tent. It stood in the centre of a circle of smouldering fire which formed a thin curtain of smoke—made more dense at evening and morning, when the mosquitoes were inclined to be doubly pugnacious.

Macdonald followed Jack into the circle, and evinced further astonishment at seeing two fine-looking bloodhounds stretched upon the skins of two large grizzlies spread out before the tent.

The dogs eyed the stranger suspiciously, but became friendly when their master smiled reassuringly. They lazily moved into the tent and settled themselves upon a pile of pelts which had every appearance of being occupied as a bed by someone who was not without a taste for luxury.

The two men sat down upon the skins, exchanged tobacco pouches, and in three minutes were puffing contentedly at their pipes and ready for conversation.

"I threw these skins down here to keep me from