

It was on a beautiful evening in the month of June, a little before sunset; the shadows were deepening on the surface of the water, and the surrounding hills, fields and orchards, which Nature has grouped in such richness and variety in the vicinity of Quebec, were clad with verdure, and dotted with flocks, and the magnificent vessels from every portion of the globe reflected in the river—enhanced, if possible, the natural beauty of the scene. It was the fiery-like hour of enchantment, when the coming night lends her beauty and repose to the surrounding brilliancy, and day once more resumes its twilight of early purity. Deep in the crystal waters were the banks, the woods and the vessel masts reflected, and soft echoes of song from on board ship were wafted across them, and at intervals could be heard the distinct booming din of the neighbouring city.

But the breeze was stiffening; clearer and clearer sounded the rolling waves against the timbers of the fleet, and the moon, named by the ancients the chaste Lucinda—probably because she contemplates in silence the impurity and horror hidden from the day—rose gently through wind-driven clouds over the distant horizon.

Already the little yacht had cleared the almost inextricable labyrinth of vessels lying at anchor before the city, and now she was speeding across the basin between Quebec and the Island of Orleans, the lowering clouds were gathering in density, and the person on the wharf could see nothing but the sails; they appeared like a little white cloud skimming the roughening surface.

"You're very moody, this evening," said one of the sailors to his companion; "a good breeze this—a good breeze. I don't exactly know where you're taking me to; but this wind will carry us any distance. Tell me where is this timber you speak of? Is there much of it?"

"You'll know when we get there," replied the other savagely.

"Hallo!" muttered the first, "he's not in a good humour, it seems. I say, comrade, does what I said at Mrs. A.'s stick in your heart still? Listen now. I told nothing of consequence. I only said I knew those connected with the Montgomery affair—that's all. I mentioned no names; and as I was tipsy at the time, nothing can come of it."

"For goodness sake, don't speak of it," said the other passionately, repressing an angry movement, grinding his teeth, and trembling in every limb. "Now's the time I think, I'm far enough—yes, this is the place."

"What?" interrupted the first loquaciously, "is this your grapple—this big stone, with a couple of fathoms of cable; only one, that won't go very far, I think."

"Further than you are aware of, perhaps, but—but—look here. Devil take it, listen—quick—hurry yourself, or the sail will tear itself in two."

"And why did you let go? You had it in hand. Never mind—all for luck, I suppose. We're between the churches now. Are we going down the river?"

So saying, he threw himself into the fore-part of the boat; and, mounting one of the seats, he bent over the side to catch the sail, which was flapping furiously in the wind, and which escaped as soon as caught. While occupied in this manner, his companion leaving the tiller, stole quietly to his side, and, seizing the rope attached to the grapple, which a moment before had excited so much derision, he threw the noose over the head of the unfortunate man, and before he had time to utter a single exclamation, with a sudden jerk he hurled him overboard into the seething billows. The wretch, who committed this, then seated himself quietly on the bulwarks, and watched with savage joy the bubbles rising from the water that had just closed over his victim. When, lo! at a short distance, and in the full light of the moon, he beheld the face of his adversary glaring at him above the waters; he had rid himself of the weight, and the waves were fast driving him to the boat. With heart furious with rage and despair, he seemed to rise through the waves

like a monster of the sea. The other leaned over to grasp his victim once more, and accomplish the work he had begun. At last they met; the drowning man struggled convulsively for a grasp—his hands closed upon the neck of his murderer—closed with the iron hold of death—his eyes rolled in agony, his body writhed madly in the yielding element, and his tongue poured forth the imprecations of the damned.

"Coward! traitor! I have you now. Do your worst. I shall not drown alone; no, I shall not drown alone! you cannot make me quit my hold—death alone has strength for that."

The murderer's voice was choked in a violent effort to give utterance to his feelings, his parched mouth moistened with blood, which a moment afterwards gushed forth in a torrent on the figure beneath him. Dreadful, indeed, became the struggle; he felt himself drawn gradually out of the boat, till his feet alone seemed inside. The other, curbed in his desperation by the approach of death, felt as if hanging by a thread over an unfathomable abyss—felt his life giving way—his hand slipping from its hold.

This scene of horror would probably have lasted some time, had not the wind now risen to a gale, driving the waves with such impetuosity against the boat as to positively raise the combatants and tear them asunder. The drowning man, thrown back once more, swam round and round, watching eagerly for an opportunity of renewing the contest; but it never came. All his efforts to regain his hold upon the boat were vain; his adversary, armed with an iron-shod gaff, struck him violently several times as he approached, till, completely exhausted, the unfortunate man rolled over into the surging billows, and disappeared from view.

A gleam of savage joy shot through the murderer's heart, throbbing wildly with the excitement and the triumph of the hour. Again he set the sails, and this time he was alone; again the boat darted like a bird over the bosom of the deep—again was the tide rising, and the moon, as though to congratulate him upon the victory, burst at that moment through the heavy clouds, and continued her silent course in the heavens. But scarcely had he run thirty fathoms when he perceived what appeared to be the head of a man caught in the stem of the boat; it seemed to look at him steadfastly for a moment, and then vanish as mysteriously as it had come. Unnerved by terror, the murderer shrank involuntarily from the sight. Again he turned towards it, and still the horrid phantom head appeared and disappeared as before.

In a paroxysm of rage at being thus haunted, he seized the gaff once more, and, approaching the object, he discovered it to be the dead body of his victim, which, by some unaccountable action of the water, had become fastened to the stem of the boat, and was thus tugging ashore. Raising his arm, the iron hook of the gaff descended upon the skull, dashing out its brains with almost superhuman force; and as the detached body swept past, he yelled out:

"Go—go to the dead now, and tell them what you know. See if they'll listen to you."

In a few minutes he had reached the city, and stepping upon the wharf he had left the night before, he was met by the person who had seen them off.

"Well, what have you done?" asked he.

"What had to be. I had some trouble, though; but his affairs are settled—we are quit of him—his threats will no longer alarm us, for dead men tell no tales."

"Bravo! that's the way to serve traitors; but come along, and have something to eat, for, by my faith, you deserve it. Let's hear the story now, it will whet our appetites."

So saying they stepped into a tavern.

The man whose cruel death we have just recounted was James Stewart, whom we have already mentioned in connection with the Montgomery robbery. He paid dearly for a word dropped in a drunken spree, his murderers were—, but we shall withhold their names for the present.

(To be continued.)

THE LION IN THE PATH

(From the Publisher's advance sheets.)

Continued from page 65.

Let us leave the husband and wife to their bridal, which thus strangely came at last, with no bridal feast, no sunning of smiling kindred from far and wide, no ringing of joy bells—but, on the contrary, one held only in the extreme danger; where between every two words of murmured, broken happiness, came one from *Hermia* of alarm, of danger, soon to be stifled by his assurances and caresses.

Not till the first dawning of the light of day did they think to part, nor until *Hermia* had again turned pale with affright, as she thought of the possibility of his being recognised while leaving her, and carried off a prisoner.

"Stephen," she said to him, "do not, my own darling husband, come here again. No, no, do not thus venture your dear, sweet, precious life! Think of me, and be pitiful. Save yourself for my sake, Will you not?"

"I shall come again, and risk all!" he said in answer, smiling.

"No, no! I entreat you not to do so!"

"Think, *Hermia*, of what you ask. They have too long robbed us of our natural happiness in each other's society. But it is not that alone—there is another matter. They must know now, and the sooner the better, that I have claimed you by a right impossible for them to violate—you are now my own true wife. I am your husband, and no legal juggleries of divorce—no tampering with our child-marriage will avail. Let them, therefore, find out the truth. I care not how soon. Nor do I see that they could better discover the truth than here."

"In that at least," said a sharp stinging kind of voice, the sound of which drove every drop of blood from *Lady Hermia's* cheek, "we can agree."

"Your brother, *Hermia*?" guessed *Lord Langton*.

"This lady's brother, certainly I am. But I think, sir—"

He was interrupted by the words, which were, however, uttered very quietly—

"You address *Lord Langton*!"

"I know no *Lord Langton*. I did know a rebel of that name, who disgraced his family, his friends, and his country by—"

"Beware," said *Lord Langton*, sternly. "You cannot intend to forget this lady's presence. Permit me, then, to remind you she is present, and therefore insults to me cannot be answered now."

"This lady! If this lady had not forgotten herself, and descended to harbour a traitor—"

Lord Langton sprang forward, but *Lady Hermia* was too quick for him; she interposed between the two men, clasped her brother in her arms, with a force so great and so clinging that he could not throw her off, and thus holding him, she said—

"Brother, this is my husband—a husband I pray only that I may ever be worthy of—a husband to whom I was given by your father—a husband to whom I have now solemnly devoted myself—a husband I warn you not to touch or meddle with. For even if you overpower him, imprison him, try him, condemn him, and execute him—even then then I shall live just long enough to make you known to the whole world as the vilest, most detestable of brothers—who murders his sister merely to gratify his own rancorous hatred!

"Ay, you may struggle with me, but this is the truth, *Cecil*, and I will not let you go till you own it, and confess how you have wronged me!"

The face of *Lord Cecil* was almost purple with the inward passions that consumed him, and the outward struggle with his sister's strong grasp.

Unable to throw her off without at least a violence so brutal that it was even beyond what he was prepared for—conscious at the same time that if he did so his sister's husband would instantly challenge him to a death duel, out of