

The fight was raging now around the house; from loopholes and turret the white puffs of smoke darted angrily out. The fire had not been ineffectual, for several dark forms could be seen lying round the stockade; and the bulk of the Indians, foiled in their attempt to carry the place at a rush, had taken shelter in the corn, and kept up a scattering fire round the house, broken only on the side facing the lake, where there was no growing crop to afford them shelter.

"They are all right now," Harold said cheerfully. "Do not be anxious, Nelly; they will beat them off. Pearson is a host in himself. I expect he must have been lying down when the attack was made. I know he was scouting round the house all night. If he had been on the watch, those fellows would never have succeeded in creeping up so close unobserved."

"I wish we were inside," Nelly said, speaking for the first time. "If I were only with them I should not mind."

"I am sure I wish we were," Harold agreed. "It is too hard being useless out here when such a splendid fight is going on. Ah! they have their eyes on us now," he exclaimed as a puff of smoke burst out from some bushes near the shore, and a ball came skipping along on the surface of the water, sinking, however, before it reached it.

"Those Indian muskets are no good," Harold said contemptuously, "and the trade powder the Indians get is very poor stuff; but I think that they are well within range of my rifle."

The weapon which Harold carried was an English rifle of very perfect make and finish which his father had given him on parting.

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