

Gradually the fire of the Indians ceased, and the defenders were able to leave the loopholes. Two of the men went down and fastened up the cattle, which were still standing loose in the yard inside the stockade; the other set to to prepare a meal, for Mrs. Welch could not take her eyes off the canoe.

The afternoon seemed of interminable length. Not a shot was fired; the men, after taking their dinner, were occupied in bringing some great tubs on to the upper storey, and filling them to the brim with water from the well.

This storey projected two feet beyond the one below it, having been so built in order that, in case of attack, the defenders might be able to fire down upon any foe who might cross the stockade and attack the house itself; the floor boards over the projecting portion were all removable. The men also brought a quantity of the newly-cut corn to the top of the house, first drenching it with water.

The sun sank, and as dusk was coming on the anxious watchers saw the canoe paddle out far into the lake.

"An old frontiersman could not do better," Pearson exclaimed; "he has kept them out of the canoe as long as daylight lasted; now he has determined to paddle away, and is making down the lake," he went on presently; "it is a pity he turned so soon, as they can see the course he is taking."

They watched until it was completely dark, but before the light quite faded they saw another canoe put out from shore and start in the direction taken by the fugitives.

"Will they catch them, do you think?" Mrs. Welch asked.