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TECUMSEH, The Shawnee Brave.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE TREE OF PEACE IS PLANTED.

Every thing in this world has an end, and now the termination of the contest so long and so bloody was drawing nigh. General Wayne had collected together an army sufficiently large in his estimation to enable him to strike a decisive blow, and to retain possession of the territory he might conquer. On the eighth of August, 1794, he arrived where the waters of the Au Glaize and the Miami flow together; here he was thirty miles from the rapids where Governor Simcoe had erected the fortress and where the Indian forces were collected to the number of nearly two thousand warriors. Wayne's strength was 3,000. He hoped to surprise the Indians and fall upon them unawares; but their scouts brought in daily information of his doings, and Mishikinawka was prepared to meet the army of the Republic.

September had now worn away to its nineteenth night. The Chiefs of the Indians were all assembled in council, and it was proposed, some say by Tecumseh, to make a night attack upon the American encampment. Well would it have been for them had the suggestion been carried out, as then they would have suffered little from the mounted riflemen who made such dreadful havoc in their ranks the next day; but the proposal was overruled and a general engagement on the following morning was determined on. Mishikinawka, the conqueror of St. Clair and the leader of the combined forces, alone was in favour of peace; but Blue Jacket, alias Weyapiersuwaw, and the other Shawnees overruled his measures.

Straightway the tribes began to take their position. Seven nations prepared themselves for the morrow's battle, the Miamis, Wyandots, Pottawattamies, Ottawas, Chippewas, Delaware, Shawnees and a few Senecas, all under their respective Chiefs. They posted themselves in the rear of a thick wood, rendered almost inaccessible by a luxuriant growth of underbrush entwined with the roots and branches of lofty trees laid low by the fierce winds of a tornado. The steep rocky banks and deep waters of the river protected their left flank. It seemed as if in the arrangement of the place nature had done all in her power to assist her poor children who were destined to waste away before the white man "aye, like April snow in the warm noon to shrink away."

The bright August sun had scarcely risen from its eastern couch when the Americans advanced to the conflict. As soon as the vanguard came within range of the Indians they received such a well directed fire from the warriors who were hid behind the forest trees and in the tall grass that they were compelled to fall back: loud and oft cracked the rifles of the tribes, and as often was a gap made in the ranks of the approaching army who appeared to be marching right into the jaws of death. The Indians were drawn up in a triple line: at length Wayne ordered the main body of his troops to charge with the point of the bayonet. So impetuous was the onslaught that the Indians were unable to stand, and despite the frantic efforts of the Chiefs who exposed themselves as fearlessly as if clad in magic armour, gave way on every side, and in less than an hour were driven in confusion and dismay from off the battlefield, numbers of them being hewn down by the sharp sabres of the American cavalry. Tecumseh, Mishikinawka and Weyapiersuwaw fought as only brave men fight when they know that upon the fate of the day hangs life or death to their nation. Again and again did they strive to rally their countrymen, but all their exertions were in vain, (battles in this age are not won by the prowess of a few mighty heroes,) and they were borne onwards out of the fight by their retreating comrades.

This battle broke the strength of the confederacy, they could not again be persuaded to cope with Wayne's victorious troops, and began to grow weary of the contest and to think that they could never successfully contend against the Americans. Notwithstanding all the efforts of Tecumseh and those Chiefs who like him had sworn eternal enmity against the Long Knives and were eager to fight to the very last, the tribes who lived beyond the Mississippi left to return to their own distant prairies. And now the Indians could no longer hope for aid from Great Britain, for the difficulties between that State and the Americans had been smoothed over and the threatening war postponed for a time. So the Chiefs met the Commissioners at Fort Greenville in the following summer, and as the price of the peace which they now sought gave up a large tract of territory south of the Lakes and west of the Ohio.

Thus ended a contest, which, to adopt the words of a wise Seneca Chief, "threw the inhabitants of the land into a great tumult and commotion like a raging whirlwind which tears up the trees and tosses to and fro the leaves. But now the Great Spirit spoke to the whirlwind and it was still; a clear and uninterrupted sky appeared, and the path of peace was opened."

CHAPTER X.

A LONG WEARY JOURNEY.

But what of Percy Seaforth? Sadly and with a heavy load weighing down his soul did he accompany Tecumseh forth from the Shawnee village on the evening of the day when, unknown to himself, he had stood by the side of her whom he was seeking so earnestly and longingly throughout the Red man's land. All nature smiled: joy was on every side, the birds of the air carolled sweetly, the insect hosts had not a trouble, the gentle zephyrs wooed the spirits of the trees and flowers, the butterfly fluttered gayly to and fro; but Percy walked by the side of his friend in silence and in gloom. When at the council at Niagara he had first beheld Tecumseh his eye fell instantly upon the brooch that clasped that chieftain's robe, and at once he recognized it as his parting gift to Miriam, but not a word could he draw forth from the reticent Indian as to how or where he had obtained it; hoping to find some trace of his long lost love he had come to the banks of the Miami, and now he was leaving them as ignorant of her fate as ever.

Among the chiefs and sachems assembled at the Rapids Seaforth wandered day after day seeking news of Miriam: at length he heard from the deputies of the Messasagues that in their far distant wigwams beyond the western borders of the great Gitchegami (Lake Superior), there dwelt a pale faced maiden, who had been taken prisoner by their tribe. No further particulars could Percy glean concerning this captive, so he resolved to return with the deputies and see for himself.

As soon as the council was over the Messasagues departed in their canoes to summon their warriors to join the army of the confederates, and Percy, with a young Mohawk as his interpreter and companion, went with them. Swiftly propelled by the strong arms of the Indians, the light craft glided down the rapid stream of the Miami into the muddy waters of Lake Erie; then crossing this up the river to the settlement of Detroit; here they stopped a day or two to purchase guns and powder and lay in a supply of the bane of their race, fire-water. A few miles further on they emerged into Lake St. Clair, which to the eye of the Englishman seemed like a broad basin of water filled to overflowing. But the voyagers stayed not again until having forced their canoes up the swift current of the St. Clair River, Lake Huron opened up before them, stretching its waters of clear-st crystal far beyond where the eye could reach away to the north, like some mighty inland ocean. Here for a few days the party encamped to make some necessary repairs to their fragile barks and to obtain fish and game for their voyage to the Sault Ste. Marie.

While here Percy chanced to startle a large rattlesnake from its lair, and, prompted by that strange impulse which animates the souls of all who deem themselves of Adam's seed, he sought to kill it; but the Indians interfered, formed a circle round the snake, all addressing it by turns and calling it by the endearing name of "Grandfather," and filling their pipes each blew the smoke towards the serpent which seemed highly pleased with the attention shewn him, and coiling himself up, remained quite tranquil for some time; and when at length it did glide off the savages besought him most earnestly to give them a safe and prosperous journey, expressing the hope that he would not be angry with them because of the Englishman's insulting conduct.

Again all were embarked, skimming lightly over the deep blue waters of the lake; so clear, indeed, were they, that Percy as he looked over the side of his light bark, could see the huge fish sporting themselves in the depths below, and even count the pebbles as they lay among the shells on the bright sand. All went well as day after day they skirted along the western shore of the lake where the still shaggy firs and giant pines rose like a lofty wall straight up from the water's edge, but as they were crossing the arm of the lake, now known as Saginaw Bay, a change came over the hitherto fair and smiling face of nature. Clouds dark and heavy drifted athwart the sky, lightning flashes came fast and bright, thunders clashing and crashing were heard, strong gusts of wind came blowing fiercely from the north, the waves lashed into fury rolled high and boisterous, and everything threatened destruction to the frail and heavily laden boats. Many an Indian voice was raised in supplication to the Great Spirit, and much was the rattlesnake god besought to aid them, but when the wind increased still more and more a dog was cast into the lake as a propitiatory offering to the angry snake, which was earnestly desired to appease its hunger with the carcase of the brute and spare them, its faithful worshippers. The sacrifice proved ac-

ceptable, and in safety the entire party reached the camping ground where they were to pass the night.

After three weeks' journeying from Detroit the voyagers beheld one evening, as the sun sank down to rest, the beautiful island of Mackinaw rising from the broad expanse of waters, with its white limestone cliffs adorned and half covered with dark green foliage. This has ever been a favourite resort of the tribes, and many are the legends and superstitions attached to the bridges, caverns and towers cut by the cunning hand of Nature from the living rock. Here oftentimes were the fairies seen bathing in the clear cool waters, basking in the summer moonlight, or dancing in mystic mazes on the high white cliffs. Here the party rested some days and then passed on to the Sault Ste. Marie; there they disembarked, and after carrying their canoes over the weary portage once more launched them on Lake Superior; across the pellucid depths of this great ocean they sped, passing immense cliffs which rise full three hundred feet from the water's level, so fantastic in their shapes and so gorgeously adorned with lichens and mosses of every hue as to well deserve the name of Pictured Rocks; then they sighted La Cascade de la Portaille, where a stream bounds from a rock seventy feet in height, and with a single leap precipitates itself into the lake below. In time the Doric Arch was passed, an isolated mass of sandstone surmounted by pillars supporting an entablature of stone on which have sprung up a grove of lofty pine trees. On and on they went through this region of wonders to the River St. Louis, and up its rapid stream until its swift and broken current compelled them to leave their boats.

CHAPTER XI.

NOT BEAUTY BUT THE BEAST.

At last one evening Percy Seaforth found himself at the tents of the Messasagues, his long wished-for goal; eagerly did he await the morrow when he might see the white captive girl and know whether or not his toilsome journey had been in vain. Meanwhile around the camp fire he hears that the fair one dwells by herself in a hut of buffalo skins; that she is revered as a great magician, and that her word is law to the simple-minded Indians. When wrapt in his blanket he lay down to rest for the night, scarce could he remain quiet, so anxious was he for the returning day that by its light he might solve the questions that filled his mind with doubt.

Not long had the sun been climbing the eastern sky when Percy comes forth from his tent and wends his way to the abode of the white girl. As he approaches he hears the dull murmuring of mysterious sounds issuing from within, his comrade tells him the maiden is communing with the great ruler of the universe. Percy, all expectation and excitement, pushes aside the bearskin door and beholds—not Miriam Howard the joy of his heart, blooming with youthful beauty and virgin purity, but a half-naked hag a veritable Witch of Endor, old, ugly, toothless, with hair white as snow, eyes fierce as a wild cat's, sitting upon her heels in the midst of filth and disorder, puffing tobacco smoke at a hideous image she held in her withered hands, muttering all the while in the Spanish tongue. White indeed she was, or rather once had been, but not the white girl Percy Seaforth had travelled thousands of miles to find. Disgusted, disappointed, broken-hearted, Percy hastened from the scene, more anxious to be gone than erewhile he had been to come. The next day he intended to set forth on his homeward journey; but when at early dawn he sprang from his couch nature had assumed its robe of white, snow covered the face of the earth, and flakes fell fast and thick through the chilly air; above, below, around, everywhere was the fleecy snow. Vain was it to think of starting, so another day did he spend near the Spanish girl. At length he bade farewell to his Messasague friends, and with his young Mohawk guide on his snow-shoes for a walk to the settlement of Detroit.

Day after day they plodded wearily on through a vast, wild, dreary, never-ending forest, white with snow; now climbing over hills, now tramping through the deep drifts in the valleys; at one time coasting along the shores of a dismal lake, at another crossing the ice of a frozen river; never meeting a human being, depending upon their guns for their daily food; at night lying under the shelter of some lofty rock or curled up beside their fire. But one day as they paused for their noontide meal on the margin of a lake, they saw in the distance a band of Indians moving quietly and fleetly over the frozen ground. The Mohawk at once recognized them as a party of Ottigamies, between whom and his tribe there existed a deadly feud. The two at once made for the woods, hoping that they might have escaped the observation of the savages; but the quick eyes of these keen scalp-hunters had discovered Seaforth and his companion, and with the speed of deer they rushed upon them. The Mohawk, accustomed from his earliest childhood to force his way through the tangled forests, could easily have outstripped the

whooping Ottigamies; but it was not so with Seaforth, who found, now that he was fleeing for his very life from those who were panting for his blood, the long, narrow snow-shoes continually caught in the stumps and underbrush over which he ran. He saw flight was useless, and the Mohawk would not leave him; so they halted suddenly, and faced round just as the foremost of their pursuers were at their heels; their arms were raised aloft, their tomahawks gleamed in the bright cold sunshine as they fell crashing through the unprotected skulls of two of the Ottigamies who sank groaning down and defied the pure white snow with their crimson gore. The others, astonished at the unlooked-for fate of their comrades, halted to consult together. As they stood a faint click was heard, a bright flash seen, a sharp crack awoke the slumbering echoes of the frozen forest, and a bullet from Percy's pistol sped to the heart of a foe. With the fierce howl of hungry wolves the Ottigamies threw themselves on the two who stood undaunted. Percy's pistol sent another to join his friends in the land of spirits before he and the Mohawk were borne to the ground overpowered by numbers. The Mohawk paid for the life of the brave he had slain with his own, and his reeking scalp soon hung from his murderer's waist, while his corpse was left to feed the ravening wolves.

Tightly did the captors bind Percy Seaforth with thongs of white buffalo hide and marched him off towards the village.

CHAPTER XII.

DESPAIR AND BELIEF.

But what of Miriam Howard all this while? Where was she when her lover was searching for her along the shores of the great lakes and the banks of the mighty river? What was she doing while he was a captive and a desolate wanderer? Long had she anxiously looked for the return of Tecumseh and Percy from the grand council at the Miami Rapids; at last the Chief appeared, but no white man was by his side to brighten her eye dimmed with tears. Too soon the careworn watcher learnt that her friend had gone to the far distant north to search for a pale-faced girl, and her sad heart told her she was the one sought for. Her cup of sorrow now seemed full to overflowing, weary of her life, in an agony of despair she rushed to the river's brink and from a lofty rock threw herself headlong into the rapid stream. But her hour was not yet come. George Waggoner saw her fall, and plunging into the swiftly flowing water brought her insensible body to the shore. Slowly did consciousness return; at length with a deeply drawn sigh she reopened her eyes; her faithful cousin was bending over her, he knew all her griefs and sorrows, and now fondly strove to soothe her, asserting that Percy would be sure to return and assuring her that all would yet be well.

When Miriam entered the door of her tent once more her spirit was calmed, again hope had lighted up her heart, she was resolved to wait patiently and to seize the first opportunity of escape that offered itself. Yet little prospect did there seem of escape for the strict surveillance of Tecumseh and his creatures was ever over her, and she knew that even Waggoner would not help her, for being now quite contented himself he was unwilling to incur the displeasure of the Chief by being a party to the escape of one whom Tecumseh yet hoped to win for his bride, for although Tecumseh had already had several wives, still he had soon tired of them and after a few months had sent them back to their fathers' wigwams, with the presents he had given them when they first came to his home.

Miriam now spent the greater portion of her time in endeavouring to instruct those among whom she dwelt in the doctrines of Christianity, but she found that it was very uphill work to overcome the passions and prejudices of the Indians. On one occasion after she had been enlarging on the rapturous joys of heaven and the fearful miseries of hell to a dying squaw, her listener in feeble accents replied:

"I wish to go where my forefathers are gone and where my children are gone, your heaven may be a good place for pale faces, but I want to be among Indians when I go to the land of spirits, for the white men are so greedy they would give me nothing to eat were I hungry in heaven."

Then, again, after she had spoken to some of her young companions of the great God, and how he had made heaven and earth and all things therein, they scornfully laughed at her and told their tale of how, while the whole world was covered with an immense lake of waters, a female spirit, rejoicing in the name of Ataentsic, with her dog was hunting a bear through the regions of the blue sky, the bear slipping through a hole fell down to earth, the dog in the eagerness of the chase followed, while Ataentsic full of despair at the loss of her favourite jumped after them. The animals swimming about in the watery waste below saw her descending through the air and met in council to decide what was to be done to save the fair huntress from destruction. The matter was left to the discretion of the