

the sorrowful dusk of the April evening was falling over the further plains and the full tide behind them, but the sky in front was ablaze. There was little wind, and the flames shot straight aloft and the smoke hung on the scene in dense curtains, doubling the height of the hill behind the village, and reflecting back alike the fierce heat and the dreadful glare. At one side, skulking behind some outlying barns just bursting into flames, a few Indians were sighted and pursued. The savages fired once on their pursuers, and then, with a yell of derision and defiance, disappeared behind the smoke. The English force went into camp with the conflagration covering its rear, and philosophically built its camp fires and cooked its evening meal with the aid of the burning sheds and hay-ricks.

As Pierre Lecorbeau drove his ox-cart up the slope of Beauséjour toward the commandant's cabin, where his father was awaiting him, he halted and looked back while the blowing oxen took breath. His mother, who had stayed to the last, was sitting in the cart on a pile of her treasures. The children had been taken to a place of safety by their father, who had left the final stripping of the home to his wife and boy while he went ahead to arrange for the night's shelter. Antoine Lecorbeau had lost his home, his farm, his barns, his orchards, and his easy satisfaction with life; but thanks to Pierre's promptitude and his own shrewdness he had saved all his household stuff, his cattle, his hay and grain, and the little store of gold coin which had been hidden under the great kitchen hearth. His house was the last to be fired, and even now, as Pierre and his mother stood watching, long red horns of flame were pushed forth, writhing, from the low gables. The two were silent, save for the woman's occasional heavy sobs. Presently the roof fell in, and then the boy's wet eyes flashed. A body of the English troops could be seen pitching tent in the orchard. "Mother!" said the boy, "what if we had stayed at home and waited for these English to protect us? They are our enemies, these English. And the Abbé is our enemy; and the Indians are our enemies; and our only friends are—yonder!"

As Pierre spoke he turned his back on the lurid sky and pointed to the crest of Beauséjour. There, in long, dark lines, stood nearly a thousand French troops, drawn up on parade. The light from the

ruined village gleamed in blood-red flashes from their steel, and over them the banner of France flapped idly with its lilies.

That night, because Antoine Lecorbeau was a leader among the villagers of Beaubassin, he and his family had shelter in a small but warm stable where some of the officers' horses were quartered. Their goods were stacked and huddled together in the open air, and Pierre and his father cut boughs and spread blankets to cover them from the weather. In the warm straw of the stable, hungry and homesick, the children clung about their mother and wept themselves to sleep. But they were fortunate compared with many of their acquaintances, whom Pierre could see crowded roofless about their fires, in sheltered hollows and under the little hill-side copses. The night was raw and showery, and there was not house-room in Beauséjour for a tenth part of the homeless Acadians.

By dawn Pierre was astir. He rose from his cramped position under a manger, stretched himself, shook the chaff and dust from his thick black hair, and stepped out into the chilly morning. The cattle had been hobbled and allowed to feed at large, but the boy's eye soon detected that his pet yoke had disappeared. Nowhere on Beauséjour could they be found, and he concluded they must have freed themselves completely and wandered back home. Pierre had no reason to fear the English, but he dreaded lest the troops should take a fancy to make beef out of his fat oxen; so, after a word to his father, he set out for the burned village. Early as it was, however, Beauséjour was all astir when he left, and he wondered what the soldiers were so busy about.

As Pierre approached the smouldering ruins of his home, an English soldier, standing on guard before the tents in the orchard, ordered him to halt. Pierre didn't understand the word, but he comprehended the tone in which it was uttered. He saw his beloved oxen standing with bowed heads by the water-trough, and he tried to make the soldier understand that he had come for those oxen, which belonged to him. On this point Pierre spoke very emphatically, as if so to make his French more intelligible to the Englishman. But his struggles were all in vain. The soldier looked first puzzled, then vacuously wise; then he knit his brows and looked at the oxen. Finally he laughed, took Pierre by the elbow and led him to-