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THE PEACE-KILLER; OR, THE MASSACRE OF LACHINE.

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CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"That is a question, Isanta, which I have never as yet asked myself—a question which it would take me a long time to answer."

"If I were Julie de Châtelet," said Isanta, speaking in a serious tone, "and loved Lieut. de Belmont, I would not let the secret eat up my heart; but I would tell it to Isanta."

Julie de Châtelet, who knew too well the open and guileless nature of her companion to take offence at what she said, but wishing, at the same time, to give the subject a different turn, inquired, with a smile,

"If you would be thus frank, Isanta, I want you to tell me if you would act in the same manner in the case of yourself and Monsieur Tambour."

"Julie de Châtelet," replied the Huron maiden, "I could not tell you that I loved him; because it would not be true."

"Has he ever told you he loved you?"

"M. Tambour has told me so several times."

"And what did you say in reply, Isanta?"

"Nothing; because I thought it would pain him; and I remembered what I had been taught,—never to cause pain to others."

Here a quick, low knocking was heard at the door; and the next moment, Monsieur Tambour, making such a bow as showed that all his life had not been spent in camps, advanced into the room.

"You have arrived at an opportune moment, Monsieur Tambour," said Julie. "We have been very anxious to know what was the cause of the tumult amongst the Abenakis this morning. Can you gratify our curiosity?"

"It will give me pleasure to do so," replied Monsieur Tambour. "The uproar was occasioned by the prisoner, who was captured by the Serpent, having successfully run the gauntlet of the Abenakis. By my patron Saint, I vow, ladies, that a more gallant man than the prisoner I never saw either in Europe or America. He not only escaped, but killed the best runner amongst the Abenakis; and what I liked better than all, he came near giving the finishing blow to that rascally Serpent."

"Who was the prisoner, Monsieur Tambour?" asked Isanta, deeply interested.

"He says he is of the nation of the Hurons," replied M. Tambour.

"Of the nation of the Hurons!" exclaimed Isanta, in a voice quivering with emotion.

"Then I shall go at once and see him; for he is one of my own people, and perhaps can tell me of the fate of my brother."

"I have been charged by the prisoner," said M. Tambour, "to execute a commission for him. He enquired of me if there were a Huron maiden in the Fort. I answered that I knew one who was the handsomest Indian girl that ever was born (here the gallant Tambour cast a glance of admiration on Isanta) and that I would rather bear her a message than would please her, than carry from headquarters my own commission as Colonel in the Guards of King Louis of France." As he said these words, the frank and expressive countenance of Tambour was witness that they were spoken out of the fullness of the heart.

"What message, M. Tambour, did the Huron prisoner charge you to carry to me?" said Isanta, in a manner at once anxious and impatient.

"Tell me the message first, and I can listen to your fine sayings afterwards."

"I perceive," said Tambour, with a look of disappointment, "that you care more for the message than for him who brings it. But I cannot blame you, Isanta; it is but natural that you should feel more interest in one of your own people than in a foreigner. Here, however, is the message." With these words, Tambour drew forth from a pocket inside his coat breast, a little roll of birch bark folded, and handed it to the maiden.

"Isanta opened it quickly, glanced at it intently for a few seconds, then let it fall on the floor, uttering a scream. The prisoner is my brother—the great Huron chieftain, Kondirak!"

"Tambour picked up the little bark missive, and saw traced upon it, inside a circle which was evidently intended to represent a necklace, the figure of a RAT."

"Explain this mystery to me, M. Tambour," exclaimed Julie de Châtelet, who was both surprised and alarmed.

"Not now, not now," replied the Huron maiden in a hurried and excited tone. "Come with me," she said to Tambour, taking hold of him by the arm.

"Isanta, Isanta," entreated Julie, "wait until M. de Callières arrives. He may be able to save your brother."

"I cannot wait another moment," replied Isanta; "ten years have I longed for this, and I cannot disobey the voice of my own people."

With these words she left the room, half dragging Tambour along with her; and to his

temporary chagrin, leaving him no opportunity of excusing himself to Julie de Châtelet for the abruptness of his departure.

CHAPTER V.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

AFTER leaving the fort, Isanta, accompanied by Tambour, and without speaking a word to her companion, made her way straight to the camp of the Abenakis. It was situated amid a clump of trees, outside that part of the palisading of the fort which faced upon the lake. Tambour could scarcely keep up with his companion, so rapidly she glided through the brushwood and fallen timber that extended from outside the fort to the encampment of the Abenakis. He questioned her several times as to the object of her journey, but had to be content with the brief and invariable reply, "To save my brother."

In a short time Isanta and Tambour entered the encampment. The former was immediately surrounded by a group of the Indian women, with whom she was a great favourite. Tambour, on his part, had attracted a number of braves. They all knew him, and regarded him, on account of one avocation in which he excelled, as the greatest "medicine man" among the French. Some of them had had practical experience of his skill in surgery, which was looked upon as nothing less than a miraculous accomplishment. But although the Abenakis were a good deal startled by the appearance amongst them of Tambour and Isanta, they manifested no outward signs of surprise; but, with the stoicism of their race, awaited with indifference an explanation of the visit.

The Huron maiden was the first to speak. "Show me," she said, "the wigwam of the Serpent."

The Indians, this time, looked at each other in surprise. But none present were so much taken aback as Tambour. He could scarcely credit his ears, and with a look of unfeigned astonishment he asked:

"Have you come here for no other purpose than to see the Serpent?"

"I have come here," she replied in a low voice, "to save my brother."

"I am afraid, Isanta, you have come upon a useless errand."

"If M. Tambour is afraid, there is still time for him to return back."

"Afraid of whom, or what?" replied Tambour, his blood rising. "If it would gratify you, Isanta, to have this rascally Serpent slain, I will challenge him before we leave this camp; I will lay him dead before your face, although I may be torn to pieces by the Abenakis the next instant."

"I am afraid you will spoil everything by your violence," said the girl. "But promise me now to restrain yourself, and thus aid me to save my brother, or I will return back, and his death will be on your head."

"I will promise," said Tambour, "but I hope the Serpent will not provoke me too far."

"I want one of you, my sisters," said Isanta, addressing herself to the women around her, "to bring me to the wigwam of the Serpent."

A young and good-looking squaw volunteered to lead the way. In a few moments more, Isanta and her companion stood within the wigwam of the Chief of the Abenakis.

That personage was sitting on the floor of his wigwam, engaged in the congenial occupation of sharpening his tomahawk. Raising his head slowly, he stared fiercely upon his visitors; then giving a loud whistle, several armed Abenakis glided into the wigwam.

The Serpent then spoke. "Why," inquired he, "has the sister of The Rat, and why has Tambour, who is my enemy, come into the wigwam of the Serpent?"

"Why do you call me the sister of The Rat?" inquired Isanta. "Did you not send one of your tribe to tell me that my brother had been taken by the Iroquois, and put to death?"

"I sent one of my tribe yesterday to tell you so," said the Serpent, assuming his coolest manner. "But why does the sister of The Rat complain? If her brother was not dead yesterday, he will be dead to-morrow."

"And so the great Chief of the Abenakis thinks it no shame to lie to a woman?"

"No, nor to a man. It is the wise man who lies; it is the fool who tells the truth."

"But why did the Serpent tell this lie?"

"He was afraid that you might hear my prisoner was your brother, and so beg him off from the Governor. But now it is too late."

"And why is it too late? The Governor has more power than the Serpent, and can set the Rat free this moment. The Governor is humane; but the Serpent never showed mercy."

"I tell the sister of the Huron chief it is too late to save her brother. For this morning he killed Deerfoot, the best runner in our tribe. The Governor heard of his death with anger, for he was about to send him away at the setting of the sun, to-day, to spy upon the Iroquois. And an hour has not passed since the Governor said to M. de Callières, who asked for his life, that he should be given over to me."

Isanta, who felt a shudder pass through her at this intelligence, inquired:

"Who told this tale to the Serpent?"

"One who knows; one who says you hate him, and that therefore he will be glad to see you suffer through the death of your brother."

"Were you told this tale by Lieut. Vruze?"

"You know my mind before I speak it. Lieut. Vruze, the friend of the Serpent, told him this just before you came."

"A pair of loving friends indeed," observed Tambour, "Satan and his eldest son."

"Hush," said Isanta, in a low voice, "if you speak you will spoil all."

"And now," said the Serpent, "who told Isanta that it was her brother who was captured yesterday?"

Before the Huron maiden could respond, Tambour answered defiantly:

"I told her!"

"And why should the white-man meddle with these things?" demanded the Serpent in a voice of anger. "Has his own women discarded him, that he should wish to mate with a daughter of the forest?"

The Frenchman's blood boiled, as he roared out, in a voice of thunder:

"The white-man's choice is free. But the choice of the Serpent is not free. The Serpent has no wife, for the women of his tribe would not mate with one who can only show them the scalps of the squaws and children of the Huron."

The Serpent covered at the tones and the fierce look of Tambour; and his keen eye did not fail to notice that the latter had his sword half out of the hilt, as if prepared for any emergency. In common, too, with the rest of the Abenakis, the Serpent regarded Tambour with a species of awe. He knew, moreover, that the Frenchman was an accomplished master of his weapons; and remembered that on a late occasion when persecuting Isanta with his attentions, Tambour, having disarmed him of his tomahawk, would have run him through the body had he not taken to flight.

After a pause of a few moments, the Serpent said:

"I ask the sister of the Huron again, why she comes to the wigwam of the chief of the Abenakis?"

"To save the life of her brother."

"She has come to ask a great gift. But the Serpent can save him; though the Governor, without the consent of the Serpent, cannot save him."

"The Governor is no Abenakis; he is merciful."

"He is not foolish. He wants the Abenakis, if there were five times more of them than there are, to fight the Iroquois. If he sets your brother free, against my will, I and my people will not help him to fight the Iroquois. But if I say to the Governor—I forgive the prisoner the lives of my two warriors; I forgive him the blow he struck me on the breast with the tomahawk this morning, then he will go free and join his own people."

"And what ransom will the chief of the Abenakis take for the life of my brother?" demanded the Huron maiden.

"What ransom will his sister give?"

"Hear me," suddenly interposed Tambour, before the girl had time to reply. "Serpent," said he, determining to adopt a tone of conciliation, "you are a great chief; the Iroquois tremble at your name; your fame has travelled from the great waters of the sea to the setting of the Sun. But you want the garments of a white warrior, in order to appear more terrible to your enemies. You and I are about the same height. I have garments which were never worn but once, and that was in the presence of our great father, the King of France. They are beautiful; they are covered with golden embroidery; they would make you look like the biggest chief of the white warriors; they would blind the eyes of your foes; they would delight the eyes of your friends; they would make the woman that hated you yesterday, admire you to-day. These garments I will give you, if you consent to set the Huron chieftain free. I will give you, also, a sword, with a silver handle; a beautiful belt to gird the sword round your body; two pistols for your belt; and a hundred shining crowns. I will show you, too, the "medicine" which causes the hair to curl; and with this medicine you will be the handsomest chief among all the chiefs in Canada. Now, Serpent, be wise. Take these things from me. Other chiefs would give their right hands for them; but I would offer them to no other save you. Consent to set this man free; and you will have all these presents before the time of sunset."

The Serpent replied, "does the companion of the Huron girl speak truth, when he says he will give me the "medicine for the hair?"

Tambour, overjoyed at the idea that his ransom was about to be accepted, responded, "I speak the truth, Serpent; it shall be yours."

"And what has the sister of the Huron chief to offer?" inquired the Abenakis.

"All that I have," replied Isanta, with passionate earnestness. "M. de Callières has given a thousand crowns against my wedding-day. These are yours. You have seen and admired the two golden bracelets which Julie de Châtelet used to wear; they are made in the form of your emblem, the Serpent; they

were given to me, but they are yours. You often coveted the black horse which M. de Callières rides. I will ask him for it; he will not refuse me. That also will be yours; besides, Julie de Châtelet, for my sake, will bestow upon you even more valuable gifts than I have named. And now, Serpent, prove you have the big heart of a warrior. Say you will take the offered ransom."

The Serpent's eyes twinkled with a satanic gleam, as he held up a knife, and enquired,

"Do you know, sister of the Huron, what I have been doing with this knife?"

The girl trembled as she replied, "doubtless to do battle with the Iroquois. The Serpent is a wise warrior, and is careful about his weapons."

"It is not to fight the Iroquois; it is to shred the flesh of your brother when I and my braves shall have tied him to the stake, to-morrow," replied the Abenakis, with a diabolical malignity in his face sickening to witness.

The Huron maiden was stricken speechless with horror.

"Monster!" exclaimed Tambour, unsheathing his sword, and making a rapid pass at the Abenakis, who avoided it by throwing himself flat on the ground, while, at the same instant, his warriors, with uplifted tomahawks, rushed between their chief and the exasperated Frenchman.

The Huron maiden caught the sword-arm of her companion, and half forced him to sheathe it.

By this time the Serpent, with an alarmed expression of countenance, rose to his feet.

"Miscreant!" shouted Tambour, shaking his fist at the Abenakis, "I am sorry I missed driving my sword through your coward's carcass. But send your warriors and this girl aside, or tell them to remain quiet, and you and I will fight it out here. I will give you this advantage, in order to make you fight—I will agree that if I kill you, your warriors will be at liberty to kill me the next moment."

"The Serpent only fights when it suits him," replied the Chief. "He will not now fight with the "great medicine man" of the French."

Tambour was about to reply, when he was interrupted by Isanta, who addressed the Chief in a tone of pitiful entreaty.

"Surely the Serpent will take the ransoms? Surely he will not refuse a woman?"

The Abenakis replied: "At mid day to-morrow we will try the courage of the Huron Chief. First, we will pierce him with blazing splinters; then we will wrench out the nails of his hands and feet with pincers; then—"

"Stop, stop!" cried the girl in agony. "I will make any sacrifice you wish. Tell me what you want me to do."

"If you wish me to save the Chief of the Hurons, you must be my wife."

The girl remained silent for a moment; but the Tambour groaned aloud.

"What does the sister of the Huron say?" inquired the Serpent.

The maiden turned to her companion for a moment, as if to ask for advice. But seeing that the brave man was struggling with emotions of which she knew herself to be the cause, she merely said to him in a low and despairing voice: "I cannot ask you for advice; to do so would be cruel."

Tambour caught her meaning, and answered sadly: "Follow nature, Isanta; what nature bids you to do is right."

"I am waiting for the answer of the girl," said the Serpent.

The answer was brief—"I will be your wife."

The Chief, with a fiendish leer upon his features, grunted out the one word—"Good."

Tambour cast upon his companion a look of unutterable sadness. Then he said sorrowfully: "Let us go."

And without exchanging a word, the Huron maiden and he threaded their way through the Abenakis encampment, and when they entered the precincts of the fort, parted from each other in silence.

To be continued.

THE STORY OF A GAME OF CARDS PLAYED BY BISMARCK, COUNT NESSELRODE, AND A FRENCH CONSUL.

(From Applet's Journal.)

One hot afternoon in the month of August, '67, three men sat around a table in a private parlour at the hotel Darmstadt at Ems, Germany, taking such comfort as they could derive from the juice of Rhenish grape and a pack of cards. The most conspicuous figure of the group was a large man with a bald head, greyish-blue eyes, a heavy light-coloured moustache, airs about him that would have done honour to the imperial purple. This personage had even then achieved some fame and was tolerably well known to reading people by the name of Bismarck. Next to him sat another bald-headed individual, inferior to Bismarck in stature, with a border of black hair about the base of his skull that looked into the rim of an old felt hat (ruthlessly robbed of its crown), condemned to remain there as a permanent fixture. During the Crimean war the father of this man figured at