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A TALE
OF
THE WAR OF 1757.

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CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

Night was coming on, and his captors made a fire, round which some of them lay down to sleep, while others drank deeply of what they called fire-water, and the potent spirits were working in various ways upon them. Some were singing and laughing loudly, others recounting their exploits on the war-trail, while not a few were bent upon spilling the blood of their captive, towards whom they excitedly advanced with gleaming knives and ferocious looks, but each time they were deterred from executing their purpose by the warrior who kept guard over him. From this Edwin inferred that he was their chief, and such was in reality the case, and his name, although our hero did not know it, was Redhand, the deadly enemy of Lightfoot, the scout.

Edwin had by this time sunk into a dull kind of apathy, and had been in a less painful position no doubt would soon have fallen asleep. Even as it was his heavy eyelids kept closing against his will. From this drowsy state he was roused by his guard moving away to replenish the fire, which was now almost out; this done, Redhand awoke one of his band and signified to him that he was to take his turn at watching. Having done this, Redhand composed himself by the fire to sleep.

As his new guard was moving towards him, Edwin was startled by a voice which proceeded from above him. In tones he well knew, he heard:

"Lightfoot is here, be cautious, and be ready; our time for escape is coming," and then all was again still.

Scarcely had an hour elapsed when the Indian who was deputed to watch over him, came near to examine his fastenings; his head was stooped forward in doing so, and Edwin saw the scout's gun raised a moment above the Indian's head. The next moment it descended with fearful force, felling the Indian to the ground. The scout in an instant descended from the tree where he had been so long concealed, and cut Edwin's bonds. He then seized the stunned Indian and bound him fast to the tree, then tearing a strip from his shirt he securely gagged him, so that if he recovered his senses he could not raise the alarm; in case any of the band awoke they would probably in the early dawn mistake him for Edwin, and seeing him still tied there suspect nothing.

"Now, Captain," said the scout, "we must run for it, and try to leave the varmints far behind. Follow me and be careful not to make a noise. Fortunately for us, the Redskins have been drinking, but remember there is one of them who has not touched a drop, and the slightest noise might reach his quick ear. You cannot be too careful how you tread, for the snapping of the smallest twig might be the cause of our capture, and if you or I were again taken, nothing could save us from instant death at the hands of the already blood-stained villains."

It hardly needed the admonition of the scout to make Edwin cautious, indeed he had determined not to fall again into the hands of the Indians alive. Both he and Lightfoot, therefore, while within hearing of the savages moved with the greatest care and silence. Once at a safe distance they made more rapid progress.

At length they came upon the scene of yesterday's fearful work, and Edwin's heart sickened at the appalling sights which the silvery moonlight disclosed to his view. In one place was a mother fearfully gashed by the knives of the Indians, and still holding in death's grasp her little child, who had shared her fate. Beside them was stretched a powerful man, who had evidently perished while endeavouring to protect them; his countenance still wore a look of hate, and his right arm was raised above his head, as if about to deal a blow. Sights such as these were to be seen on every side, and Captain Herbert recognized many of his men among the dead. He now no longer wondered at Lightfoot's terrible vow of vengeance, to fulfil which seemed the sole object of his life.

While Captain Herbert and his companion traversed this scene of death, morning began to dawn, and rendered it necessary for their safety, once more to seek the neighbouring forest, for every moment they remained in the open ground, they were in danger of being seen by the roving Redskins. Hastily they retreated to the friendly cover of the woods, where, pausing to consult as to their future movements, they resolved to make for Fort Edward, by a circuitous route, but little known or frequented.

CHAPTER VIII.

An hour had scarcely elapsed since Captain Herbert had effected his escape, when the chilliness of the air caused Redhand to awake. He found the fire quite out, but his followers were still slumbering, under the influence of spirits. Almost his first act was to look towards the tree, to which he imagined Edwin was fast bound. Nothing was seen to justify any suspicion of our hero's having escaped; on the contrary, there he was securely bound. The Indian gave vent to a grunt of satisfaction, and then his eyes wandered in search of the captive's guard, but he was nowhere to be seen. Redhand, thinking that he might have fallen asleep on the ground near his prisoner, and that the dim light prevented him from perceiving him, advanced towards the tree with the intention of waking the careless watchman in no very gentle manner. Judge then of his surprise and wonder, when upon reaching the tree, he discovered the one whom he supposed to be watching, securely bound to the tree. Taking a sharp knife from his belt he cut the thongs which bound him. As he did so the body fell heavily to the ground, for the blow which Lightfoot had dealt had caused instant death, and the gag with which the scout had tied the Indian's mouth was an unnecessary precaution. Redhand at first gazed upon his companion, Ottonabee, who had but lately been so full of life, in awe, for he could not understand his death; then discovering the fracture in his skull, he raised a fearful yell of rage, which effectually roused his drunken band from their sleep. As soon as they were informed of the fate of their companion, fierce exclamations of anger were heard on all sides, and eager eyes and hands were soon trying to ascertain who had caused his death.

The first clue to this was given by a young warrior, who, seizing the gag which Lightfoot had used, pointed to it and said:

"Onondagas, this has been torn from some hunter's shirt, for it is made of buckskin. Our dead brother was not killed, therefore, by the man who was bound to the tree."

Another warrior noticed that a branch of the tree to which Edwin had been secured, was bent down, as if some heavy weight had recently rested upon it. Following his search still further, he climbed the tree, and found marks which left no doubt of its having lately had an occupant.

As soon as the Indians found by what means their victim had escaped, a second yell broke from them, but at a signal from Redhand all became quiet again, and the Indians assembled round their chief, who had signified to them that he was about to speak.

"Warriors, the cursed firewater of the pale faces has blinded our eyes; the man who was concealed in that tree must have been there when we first made our fires. Shame to the braves that they did not see him, for if they had done so, instead of Ottonabee lying dead at their feet, another of the pale faces would have died. But, warriors, let us not stand like women crying; they who were the cause of this (pointing to the dead brave,) cannot be far distant; let us follow them, and avenge the great warrior, Ottonabee, for none were before him in battle, his knife was sharp and the sight of it caused his enemies to fly,—while in council his tongue was wise, and gave good advice."

As Redhand ceased speaking the band prepared for instant pursuit, and soon they were scattered over the ground, trying to make out where the fugitives had first entered the woods. This ascertained, like a pack of bloodhounds they set off in pursuit of Edwin and Lightfoot.

At length they arrived at the spot where Captain Herbert had paused to look on the dead. Here for a long time they were completely baffled, as the ground was hard, and no footprints were visible; but with the cunning peculiar to them, they again scattered, to find traces of those for whom they were in anxious search.

At length one of them was successful, and by a peculiar cry he communicated his discovery to the rest, and the whole band were soon assembled round the spot. Four marks were distinctly imprinted on the soft soil; two of these had been made by a man wearing boots, the other footprint shewed that the second man wore moccasins. Redhand stooped to the ground and examined intently the moccasin-tracks, and after a long pause arose, muttering as he did so one word, "Lightfoot."

As that single word escaped his lips, anyone within hearing would have thought that Bedlam had been let loose, so fierce were the cries which the Indians uttered, and when the pursuit was again resumed, the savages seemed more eager, if possible, than before, to come up with their prey, for the name of the dreaded scout had acted as an incentive to their passions, and after about three hours spent in following the fugitives, they were so far successful as to come in sight of Captain Herbert and his companion, who were journeying along at a leisurely pace, little thinking that danger was so near. Fortunately, however, they were apprised of the peril they were in, soon enough to give them time to make an attempt at escape, for one of the younger warriors, eager to distinguish himself, had tried to shoot the escaped prisoners, but owing to some defect in

the gun, it had missed fire. The click of the lock, however, had been heard by Lightfoot, and turning round, he at one glance comprehended the state of affairs.

And now it was a race for life; both Edwin and the scout were good runners, more especially Lightfoot, who had been thus named by the Indians, for his great fleetness of foot. For a long time they kept running pretty evenly together, but it was becoming more and more apparent that Edwin could not keep up the terrific pace at which they were going much longer. He had, therefore, told Lightfoot to make his escape as best he could, but as for himself he determined he would turn and fight. At this proposal the honest face of the scout assumed a look of indignation, and moderating his pace for a moment, he said:

"Captain, do you think Lightfoot the man to desert another, and leave him to fight the Redskins alone? No, he is not of that kind. I yet hope we may escape; I see you are of well-knit frame! Not two rifle shots from here, is a steep ravine,—to attempt to jump this at another time would be a foolhardy act, but situated as we are it is well worth the trial; few, if any, of the Redskins will dare to follow us."

Encouraged by this Edwin continued running.

While the scout had been speaking, the Indians had gained considerably upon them, and the foremost were now within twenty-five yards of the pursued, around whom bullets began to rattle. Arrived at the ravine, Edwin and the scout nerve themselves for the effort, and now they are in mid-air, but following in the same jump are three Indians.

Four of the jumpers landed in safety, the fifth missed the other side, and his body was seen by the Indians, who did not dare the feat, falling with terrible force and velocity down the side of the steep ravine. This was enough to deter any of the rest from making the attempt so fatal to their companion.

Those who succeeded in reaching the other side, immediately rushed at the fugitives and grappled in deadly fight. The two Indians were Redhand and Greywolf. With instinctive hatred Lightfoot and Redhand sought out one another, and Edwin and Greywolf were thus matched together. Ere they closed, Edwin noticed that the scout limped; he had no time, however, to make reflections upon Lightfoot's hurt, for in an instant Greywolf and he had closed in deadly combat. Never were combatants more equally matched. All were armed alike, for Lightfoot, before jumping, had to throw his rifle before him, and had not sufficient time to snatch it up before Redhand was upon him. Edwin's only weapon was the tomahawk which Ottonabee had let fall, when he was felled to the ground. In strength also the adversaries were well matched, for although the whites excelled slightly in muscular development, they could not compare with the Indians in quickness and agility; the latter also had an advantage in being almost naked, and often when Edwin thought he was getting the better of Greywolf he would slip like a serpent from under his grasp. The fight was a terrible one. All of them knew that it was life or death. The scout and Redhand rolled over and over, and for a long time it was impossible to decide who had the best of it. At length Redhand managed to get the upper hand, for Lightfoot's sprained ankle, in an unlucky moment, had given way. But, although he was under the Indian, the scout was by no means conquered; he held with a grasp of iron, the knife arm of the Indian, and in this position they tried to tire one another out. Lightfoot knew that if his strength gave way for an instant his fate was sealed; he was also aware that his ultimate chance of safety now rested upon the success or defeat of Edwin. The fight between Edwin and Greywolf had been in the meantime progressing. Each one had slightly wounded the other. Unfortunately for Edwin his tomahawk had been knocked from his hand early in the fight, and he had now only his personal strength to rely on. Well for him was it that in his early days he had been skilled in wrestling. Gradually, but surely Greywolf's strength gave way, under our hero's bearlike hug, and now Edwin has him down. All this time they have been approaching nearer and still nearer to the brink of the awful precipice, and the noise caused by a swollen, and impeded stream beneath sounded in the ears of the combatants. Greywolf, seeing that his own death was certain, now confined his efforts to compassing that of his antagonist's at the same time. At last they reached the brink of the giddy height, and Edwin saw that it would be impossible to throw Greywolf over, as he clung to him with the tenacity of a leech. By a desperate effort he contrived to get the Indian's head over the brink, then placing his elbow on the warrior's neck, and planting his knee on his chest, he forced his head so far back that his neck broke. He was now at liberty to see how Lightfoot was faring, and he found he was just in time; for, from the position in which Lightfoot was, it was impossible for his strength to hold out much longer. Throwing himself upon Redhand, he grappled with him, and succeeded in wrenching from him his knife. Lightfoot now jumped up, and before Edwin could stop him, thrust his long hunting knife repeatedly into the Indian's bosom. As he did so, he mut-

tered: "At last my vengeance is accomplished, and he who was the bane of my life is no more."

During all this time those on the other side had been anxiously watching the contest, and whenever their side appeared to be conquering exclamations of pleasure and encouragement escaped them; but now that they saw their chosen warriors slain before their eyes, while they were powerless to interfere, cries of rage filled the air, and a storm of bullets swept round Edwin and Lightfoot, from which they were enabled to protect themselves by the bodies of the slain. As soon as the Indians perceived this, they ceased firing, no doubt from a feeling of respect for their dead. But now that the fight was over, and the savages' attention no longer absorbed by it, a new danger threatened Edwin and the scout, for some of the band were seen hurrying off to find the termination of the ravine, while the rest kept watch, and if Edwin or the scout made the slightest movement a dozen sharp eyes were upon them. The Indians were evidently bent upon surrounding them, and to add to their peril, owing to his sprain Lightfoot could not move very fast, and the idea of leaving the man who had fought so nobly beside him was a thought not for a moment entertained by Captain Herbert. One thing, however, he determined on, which was that the savages should not again take him alive. The scout had been watching Edwin for some time to see what was passing in his mind. From his looks he could not tell what his intentions were, but something far more conclusive enabled him to decide what they were, for the young man had drawn from near his heart a tiny locket. This little trinket had been carefully preserved through all his dangers. Need I tell the reader the countenance therein portrayed? It was the face of his beloved Florence. Lightfoot noticed that our hero was intently looking upon the little picture, and that when Edwin returned it to its resting place a look of bravery and determination animated his whole countenance. But well as Edwin knew the scout, he had not rightly estimated his noble nature, when he thought that Lightfoot wished him to sacrifice his life with his. Although Lightfoot had never had the opportunity of studying religion, or of hearing God's word preached from the pulpit, yet in the mighty works of nature, and in the solitude of his forest life, he had seen and worshipped his Creator, and when Edwin thought the scout wished him to die with him, far different thoughts had been passing through his brain; what they were the scout now explained to Edwin.

"Young man, I have been watching your actions, and by them I see that your brave heart would not allow you to desert a friend, no matter what bright hopes the future may hold out to tempt you. I have seen all this, and I respect you the more. Lightfoot knows the happiness of another is bound up in yours, and if you for a moment think that he wishes you to sacrifice that happiness to him you are mistaken. For of what avail to him to see your life thrown away, because he must lose his own. No, if of this nature Lightfoot would not be a brave man; and if he has not already told you to begone while a chance of escape remained, it is because he knows a surer means of escape. I know well the ground on which we are, and before the Indians reach a point where they can cross to this side two hours will elapse, and before they can get to this place another will have passed. In an hour night will be upon us, and under its cover I purpose guiding you to where a natural staircase leads to the bottom of the cliffs, and by means of it I hope we shall escape the Indians."

"But, Lightfoot," returned Edwin, "you forget that you can hardly walk, and therefore it will be extremely difficult, nay almost impossible, for you to descend."

"Captain, you little know what endurance my kind of life gives; before now I have run for an hour, when the flesh from the soles of my feet has been torn off, and when at every step the bone would come in contact with the sandy soil. Besides, even should I not succeed in making my escape, the object of my life was fulfilled when Redhand gave the death shriek, while you have to cause gladness to another."

To be continued.

A young lady, with a small coffin hidden under her cloak, tried to get into one of the Paris cemeteries the other day. She was detected by the gatekeeper, who immediately smelt a case of infanticide. Pale and trembling the culprit was marched off to the commissary's between a brace of policemen, who, on officially opening the coffin, were nonplussed on finding that it contained the dead body of the young lady's companion, viz., a sweet little Havana dog!

The Père Graty, who has just been nominated Director of the Academy, is renowned for his absence of mind. One day when he was going to the Sorbonne, where he lectured on theology, he imagined that he had forgotten his watch, and took it out of his pocket to see if he had time to go home and fetch it.