

the dark thunder cloud, did the blush of virgin modesty overspread the face and neck of the Indian girl, her dark orbs, true luminaries of the soul, which shone and emitted sparks of fiery light whilst she was uttering her warning notes of danger, were now cast to the ground, veiled by long pencils of jettly silk. Her bosom rose and fell as that of her native lakes after an angry storm, the coral tinted lips were pressed together convulsively, and her interlaced fingers clutched each other with quivering tenacity. Surely, that slight, almost childlike little body was being overpowered, even unto anguish, by some unknown, unaccountable turmoil of the soul.

Was it love? she knew not, poor child. She only felt that she was ill; perhaps losing her reason—she would go, and acting on the impulse sprang into the bushes and would have disappeared had not Ralph in a few bounds overtaken her, seized her gently but firmly by the wrist and in a calm gentle tone of voice entreated her to grant him a few moments to express his thanks for her timely warning and advice.

Trembling like an aspen, the forest girl leaned against a tree and yielding to the pressure of the now feelings which were agitating her bosom, she broke forth into a torrent of tears and heart-rending sobs, piteous to behold and painful in the extreme to the young officer. Did Ralph guess at the cause of this mysterious distress? If he did he was not the man to show his knowledge, far less to avail himself of the discovery.

'Thank you very much for your kind warning,' said he, taking her hand, at the same time drawing from his finger a beautiful diamond hoop which he placed upon one of her fingers. 'Keep this, maiden, in remembrance of this day. Sometime I may redeem it at your own price, for it was once my dear mother's. May it ever prove to you a talisman of innocence and holy thoughts. Adieu! but stop! what is your name? Mine is Ralph Edwardes.'

'Ralph,' she said, 'Ralph Edwardes!' (giving it the French pronunciation) 'I will remember. *Oui, toujours!* yes, ever! I am called Marie LaMontagne. My father's name at Quebec is Pierre LaMontagne. Adieu!' The next instant she was out of sight and before Ralph had recalled his companions was half way across the lake, the quick strokes of her paddle stroving the wake of her bark canoe with showers of liquid diamonds.

Ralph listened to recall Sharp and Anes, and after he had communicated to them his interview with Jouskeha's daughter, the three left for the main camp with the intention of starting for home the following morning.

Sharp, closely followed by Anes, took the lead along the bank of the river, Edwardes being some five hundred yards in the rear. They had proceeded thus about two miles, and were crossing a point of land sparsely covered with butternut trees and mountain ash, at a point where the river ran very swiftly before it tumbled, on the lower side of the point, into a foamy rapid. Sharp and Anes had crossed the point and had reached the shingle below the first chute or fall. Ralph had kept his distance in the rear and was pausing, in the act of lighting his pipe when he saw on the outer margin of a little basin or eddy at the extreme end of the point, a small birch-bark canoe into which was stepping the tall form of an Indian fully equipped in a picturesque costume made of dressed and elegantly ornamented deer-skin. His head was bare with the exception of a broad leather band also embroidered with glistening beads which bound his low broad forehead; in this band were stuck two feathers which had once adorned a raven's wing and in front he wore an aigrette made of the fan-like tail of a ruffed grouse. The man was well and strongly made and of dignified aspect. He had evidently detected the presence of Edwardes and was eying him keenly as he leisurely paddled his canoe out of the eddy and round the point.

Edwardes knew at once that he beheld

Jouskeha. Shouting his name he called upon him in French to stop. At the same time he ran across the point of land to intercept him as the canoe came round. Again he called as Jouskeha's light bark glided round to the other side, but the Indian continued his course, merely waving his paddle as if warning Edwardes to keep back. Ralph then finding that he could not arrest the savage, discharged his rifle low into the bow of the canoe with the intention of warning Sharp and Anes by the report, and also with the hope of tearing a hole in the canoe which might disable it or at least retard its progress.

He then hastened towards his friends as fast as the roughness of the ground would permit, leaping over fallen logs and boulders and other impediments.

In the mean time the canoe was increasing its speed as it glided over the swift water of the current, and was nearing the foaming rapid below, when Ralph fired another shot into its bow. The young officer was loath to fire at Jouskeha himself until the latter had shown some overt act of hostility but the canoe was every instant gaining in velocity, and Ralph's bullet shaved off one of the sable feathers of the Indian's head dress.

That last shot, although an unintentional one, brought retaliation, and before the smoke had well cleared from the muzzle of his rifle, our young officer lay stretched on his back, his blood staining the front of his shirt and trickling slowly down his side into the ground.

Jouskeha quietly laid his long rifle on the bottom of the canoe, quickly resumed his paddle and the next instant shot over an immense wave into the boiling rapid below. Then was enacted that wonderful feat of aquatic skill and dexterity which has seldom been attempted by a white man; that of steering a frail bark canoe through the foaming intricacies of a mountain torrent.

Gallantly did Jouskeha's little bark accomplish her lightning like course through the first chute or rapid, and guided by the unerring hand of the Huron was rounded-to in a narrow eddy, between the rapid just run and that below it. Jouskeha stooped forward and drew his long gun towards him with the intention of reloading it, when the crack of a rifle was heard, a piercing yell mingled with the roar of the turbulent waters, and Jouskeha, the vindictive Huron chief lay still and silent at the bottom of his canoe, which being no longer under control, drifted towards the rapid, plunged wildly into the vortex, reappeared on the crest of a huge wave—empty—filled, sank and reappeared once more a broken, tattered bundle of birch bark floating on the eddy at the foot or tail of the rapid. Jouskeha's body did not come to the surface. Whether his blood-thirsty soul ever reached the Indian's happy hunting ground is not for us to say. We may only whisper with awe 'Vengeance is the Lord's.' We can proclaim with a shout of joy—'Mercy is his also.'

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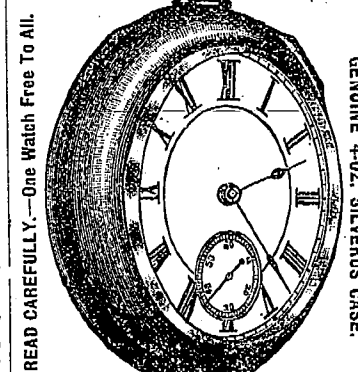
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