

had heard no suspicious cries of any kind. When the men had retired to their room Mr. Welch told Harold that he should take a turn round the stockade and visit the dogs. Harold was to keep watch at the gate, to close it after he went out, to put up the bar, and to stand beside it ready to open it instantly if called upon.

Then the farmer stepped out into the darkness, and, treading noiselessly, at once disappeared from Harold's sight. The latter closed the gate, replaced the heavy bar, and stood with one hand on this and the other holding his rifle, listening intently. Once he thought he heard a low growling from one of the dogs, but this presently ceased and all was quiet again. The gate was a solid one formed of strong timbers placed at a few inches apart and bolted to horizontal bars.

Presently he felt the gate upon which his hand rested quiver as if pressure was applied from without. His first impulse was to say "Is that you?" but Mr. Welch had told him that he would give a low whistle as he approached the gate; he therefore stood quiet with his whole attention absorbed in listening. Without making the least stir he peered through the bars, and made out two dark figures behind them. After once or twice shaking the gate, one took his place against it and the other sprang upon his shoulders.

Harold looked up and saw a man's head appear again in the sky. Dim as was the light, he could see that it was no European head-gear, a long feather or two projecting from it. In an instant he levelled his rifle and fired. There was a heavy fall, and then all was silent. Harold again peered through the bars. The second figure had disappeared, and a black mass lay at the foot of the gate.

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