

the capture of Niagara and the death of Prideaux, upon which he at once despatched Gage to take command. The two months at Crown Point were not wholly inactive ones. They were marked, at any rate, by one of the most sensational pieces of dare-devil enterprise that even Robert Rogers ever achieved.

Now there was a large settlement of Abenakis Indians on the St. Francis River, about 180 miles north of Crown Point, near Montreal, and far in Bourlamaque's rear. They had been settled there for several generations under the protection of the French, and were what the Canadian Church was pleased to call Christians, observing, that is to say in ignorant fashion, the mere outward forms of the Roman Church, but in practical Christianity being no better than the darkest western savage. Perhaps they were even worse, as intertribal obligations had been cast off and they had no limitations to their lust of blood. They were invaluable, however, to the Canadians, and the scourge of the New England frontier. Rogers set out on September 13th with 230 picked men, to read them a lesson. "Take your revenge," Amherst told him; "but, though these villains have promiscuously murdered our women and children of all ages, it is my orders that none of theirs are killed or hurt."

Rogers and his party stole along the western shore of Lake Champlain in whale boats, unobserved by the French cruisers, as far as Missisquoi Bay, 90 miles to the northward. There he hid his boats, leaving some friendly Indians to watch if they were discovered, and bring him word. He had now another 90 miles to march through the trackless forest, overlapped upon every side by enemies. His Indian watchers soon overtook him with the information that his boats were destroyed and that a large force of French were in hot pursuit. With this crushing blow the courage of Rogers and his men rose rather than fell. They determined to press on, keep ahead of their pursuers, destroy the Indian hornets' nest at St. Francis, and then, sweep-

ing to the eastward, make for the frontier of New England. Perhaps a closer knowledge of local topography, and of the then state of the country than could be expected of the general reader, is required to quite grasp the daring of Rogers' exploit and the woodcraft that made it possible. He sent a message back to Amherst to forward provisions to a certain spot on the Connecticut River, and then he and his men toiled on for ten days through some of the densest swamps and forests in North America. When they reached the St. Francis River the current was swift and chin deep. All of them, however, but a few British officers, volunteers, were hardened backwoodsmen, and, linking arms, they reached the further bank in safety, though with great difficulty. Soon afterwards Rogers climbed to the top of a tree and espied the Indian village three miles away, nestling amid the woods in supreme unconsciousness of its impending fate. Secreting his men, he himself crept to the edge of the settlement and found the whole population absorbed in one of their characteristic festivals, a mad orgie of dancing and clamour. Creeping back to his force, which by sickness, death and hardship had been reduced to 142, he lay with them in hiding till the dark hours of the morning. Then, in a half-circle, they silently advanced upon the town, now wrapt in sleep more profound than common from the exertions of the previous evening. At a given signal from Rogers the whole band rushed upon the cabins and wigwams. The surprise was complete. There were about 200 men in the place, nearly as many, unfortunately from Rogers' point of view, being absent on an expedition. Every one of them was killed. A few got away upon the river but were followed up and slaughtered, though no women or children were touched. Five English captives were released, and 600 English scalps, torn from the heads of both sexes and all ages beyond the New England frontier, were found nailed to the doors of the houses as trophies. The Catholic