

aside—I was afraid that you two would be quarrelling, and so I crept after you——” She waited for him to understand.

“I see,” said John gravely.

“Tell me what has become of her.”

“I suppose that she is living still with her own people; and there is nothing more to tell, Azoka, except that she cannot be mine, and would not if she could.”

“Whose fault was it, Netawis? Yours or hers?”

“There was much fault indeed, and all of it mine; but against my marrying her it did not count, for that was impossible from the beginning. Suppose, now, your nation were at war with the Ottawas, and a young Ottawa brave fell in love with you. What would you do?”

“That is idle talk, for of course I should do nothing,” said Azoka composedly. “But if I were a man and an Ojibway and fell in love with an Ottawa maiden, it would be simple. I should carry her off.”

John, being unable to find an answer to this, lit his pipe and sat staring into the fire.

“Was she an Englishwoman then?” Azoka asked after a while.

“An Englishwoman?” He looked up in surprise; then, with a glance around at the sleepers, he leaned forward until his eyes met the girl’s at close range across the flame. “Since you have learnt one secret, Azoka, I will tell you another. She was a Frenchwoman, and it is I who am English.

But Azoka kept her composure. “My father is always wise,” she said quietly. “If he had told the truth you would have been in great danger; for many had lost sons and brothers in the fighting, and those who came back were full of rage against the English. You heard their talk.”

“Then you have only to tell them, Azoka, and they may take their revenge. I shall not greatly care.”

“I am no babbler, Netawis; and, moreover, the men have put their revenge away. When the summer comes very few will want to go fighting. For my part I pay little heed to