

up the ladders, dropped within the fort, and swept through the Commandant's quarters into the courtyard.

In the doorway at the foot of the flagstaff tower a woman's skirt fluttered for an instant and was gone. They raced after it like a pack of mad dogs, and with them ran one, an Ojibway, whom neither hate nor lust, but a terrible fear, made fleetier than any.

Six of them reached the narrow doorway together, snarling and jostling in their rage. The Ojibway broke through first and led the way up the winding stairway, taking it three steps at a time, with death behind him now—though of this he recked nothing—since he had clubbed an Oneida senseless in the doorway, and these Indians—Oneidas all—had from the start resented his joining the party of guides.

Never a yard separated him from the musket-butt of the Indian who panted next after him; but above, at the last turning of the stair under a trap-door through which the sunlight poured, he caught again the flutter of a woman's skirt. A ladder led through the hatchway, and—almost grasping her frock—he sprang up after Diane, flung himself on the leads, reached out, and clutching the hatch, slammed it down on the foremost Oneida's head.

As he slipped the bolt—thank God it had a bolt!—he heard the man drop from the ladder with a muffled thud. Then, safe for a moment, he ran to the battlements and shouted down at the pitch of his voice.

“Forty-sixth! This way, Forty-sixth!”

His voice sounded passing strange to him. Not for two years had it been lifted to pronounce an English word.

Having sent down his call he ran back swiftly to the closed hatchway, and as he knelt, pressing upon it with both hands, his eyes met Diane's.

She stood by the flagstaff with a pistol in her hand. But her hand hung stiffly by her hip as it had dropped at the sound of his shout, and her eyes stared on him. At her feet lay the Commandant, his hand still rigid upon the