

her face as she gazed musingly on the glowing embers, or occasionally took part in the conversation of her father and brother.

Suddenly was heard without the fierce barking of the mastiff watch-dog, which as suddenly subsided and was followed by a quick, joyous yelp of recognition. Shuffling feet were then heard in the outer kitchen, stamping off the snow.

"Who can that be?" asked the squire.

"Some of the neighbours, I suppose," said Kate, for the hospitable hearth presented rare attractions to the rustic swains of the vicinity.

"Some of Kate's admirers I should say," laughed Zenas, as he rose to open the door, "only they don't hunt in couples."

Two snow-besprinkled, travel-stained men, came in out of the darkness and stood revealed in the glowing fire-light as Sandy McKay and Tom Loker.

"Welcome home! However did you get here?" asked the squire warmly shaking their hands, and making room for them at the fire. "We thought you were prisoners in the hulks at Sackett's Harbour."

"So we were," replied Tom Loker with all his old *sang froid*, "longer than we wanted."

"How did you like picking oakum for the Yankees, Sandy?" asked Zenas.

"Nae oakum picked I," said Sandy with an air of grim determination. "It was clean against ma conscience to gi' aid or comfort to the King's enemies in ony way."

"What did they say to that?" asked the squire. "I thought they had a way of overcoming scruples of that sort."

"They could na owercome mine," said Sandy.

"They jist clapped him in the bilboes and kept him there for one while," interjected Tom. "For me, I'd rather pick all day at the tarred rope though it *was* hard on the fingers."

"Did they use you well otherwise?" asked Kate with commiseration in her voice.

"Prisoners can na be choosers, Miss Katharine," responded Sandy. "I suppose our treatment was naithing by ordinair. We hadna thae oaten bannocks and hot kale ye aftens gave us. But warst o' a' was bein' pent in the close hot hulks 'tween decks, whaur ye couldna stan' upright wi'out knocking your heid