

throttled. The next instant saw him heaving the canoe from the shore, with all the exertion called for by his desperate situation. And all this was done so rapidly, in so much less time than it will take our readers to trace it, that before the horseman, so opportunely arriving, had reached the spot, the canoe, with all its inmates, had pushed from the shore.

Without pausing to consider the rashness and impracticability of his undertaking, the strange horseman, checking his rein, and burying the rowels of his spurs deep into the flanks of his generous steed, sent him bounding and plunging, like a deer, into the lake, in pursuit of the fugitives.

He himself evinced every symptom of one in a state of intoxication. Brandishing a stout cudgel over his head, and pealing forth shouts of defiance, he rolled from side to side on his spirited charger, like some labouring bark careening to the violence of the winds, but ever, like that bark, regaining an equilibrium that was never thoroughly lost. Shallow as the lake was at this point for a considerable distance, it was long before the noble animal lost its footing, and thus had its rider been enabled to arrive within a few paces of the canoe, at the very moment when the increasing depth of the water, in compelling the horse to the less expeditious process of swimming, gave a proportionate advantage to the pursued. No sooner, however, did the centaur-like rider find that he was losing ground, than, again darting his spurs into the flanks of his generous charger, he made every effort to reach the canoe. Maddened by the pain, the snorting beast half rose upon the calm element, like some monster of the deep, and, making two or three desperate plunges with his fore feet, succeeded in reaching the stern. Then commenced a momentary but extraordinary conflict. Bearing up his horse as he swam, with his teeth, the bold rider threw his left hand upon the stern of the vessel, and brandishing his cudgel in the right, seemed to provoke both parties to the combat. Desborough, who had risen from the stern at his approach, stood upright in the centre, his companion still paddling at the bows; and, between these two, a singular combat now ensued. Armed with the formidable knife which he had about his person, the settler made the most desperate and infuriated efforts to reach his assailant; but, in so masterly a manner did his adversary use his simple weapon, that every attempt was foiled, and more than once did the hard iron-wood descend upon his shoulders, in a manner to be heard from the shore. Once or twice the settler stooped beneath some falling blow, and, rushing forward, sought to sever the hand which still retained its hold of the stern; but, with an activity remarkable in so old a man as his assailant, for he was upwards of sixty years of age, the hand was removed—and the settler, defeated in his object, was amply

repaid for his attempt, by another severe collision of his bones with the cudgel. At length, apparently enjoined by his companion, the younger removed his paddle, and, standing up also in the canoe, aimed a blow with its knobbed handle at the head of the horse, at a moment when his rider was fully engaged with Desborough. The quick-sighted old man saw the action, and, as the paddle descended, an upward stroke from his own heavy weapon sent it flying in fragments in the air, while a rapid and returning blow fell upon the head of the paddler, and prostrated him at length in the canoe. The opportunity afforded by this diversion, instantaneous as it was, was not lost sight of by Desborough. The horseman, who, in his impatience to save and avenge the injury offered to the animal, which seemed to form a part of himself, had utterly forgotten the peril of his hand; and before he could return from the double blow that had been so skilfully wielded, to his first enemy, the knife of the latter had penetrated his hand, which, divided and powerless as the muscles now were, had relinquished its grasp. Desborough, whose object—desperate character as he usually was—seemed now rather to fly than to fight, availed himself of this advantage to hasten to the bows of the canoe, where, striding across the body of his insensible companion, he, with a few vigorous strokes of the remaining paddle, urged the lagging bark rapidly a-head. In no way intimidated by his disaster, the courageous old man, again brandishing his cudgel, and vociferating taunts of defiance, would have continued the pursuit—but, panting as he was, not only with the exertion he had made, but under the weight of his impatient rider, in an element in which he was supported merely by his own buoyancy, the strength and spirit of the generous steed began now perceptibly to fail him, and he turned, despite of every effort of his rider to prevent him, towards the shore. It was fortunate for the latter there were no arms in the canoe, or neither he nor his horse would, in all probability, have returned alive; such was the opinion, at least, pronounced by those who were witnesses of the strange scene, and who remarked the infuriated but impotent gestures of Desborough, as the old man, having once more gotten his steed into depth, slowly pursued his course towards the shore, but with the same wild brandishing of his enormous cudgel, and the same rocking from side to side, until his body was often at right angles with that of his jaded but sure-footed beast. As he is, however, a character meriting rather more than the casual notice we have bestowed, we may take an early opportunity of again introducing him to our readers.

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We should never dispute if we can fairly avoid it—especially with a man more than seventy years old, or with a woman, or with an enthusiast.