

pistol filled the hut, but it did not drown the yelp of pain that followed. The hand dropped away and the opening in the wall yawned into the night. For a while there was no reappearance at the window, but there was still the crashing at the opposite one, and still the attack on the door. The latter was now giving way more appreciably, and there suddenly came a crash that sent a shining axe blade well through. At the sight of it Hal leapt, and the keen-edged blade of his own axe went slicing down upon the haft of the other that was about an inch through the wood. A sudden cry, as the axe thudded, and then the blade at the door dropped to the ground.

"Well done, Hal!" the youngster heard Red say as he straightened himself up from the blow, and was just in time to see Mackintosh fire at a head that had appeared, cautiously but foolhardily, at the broken window. It was the head of an Indian, and it went away much quicker than it had come, though whether the shot had got home neither Hal nor Red could say. It was, however, apparently sufficient to give the attackers cause to pause and reason to consider that though there were but two defenders of the hut they were very much alive and standing no nonsense while either of them could hold a weapon.

The silence during the pause was almost as terrible for the defenders as the noise that told of determined attack. What devilry were the men outside plotting? What was to ' the next step?