

LOST ON THE SAGUENAY.

By BESSIE MARCHANT.

Kinglassie Free Church  
Congregation

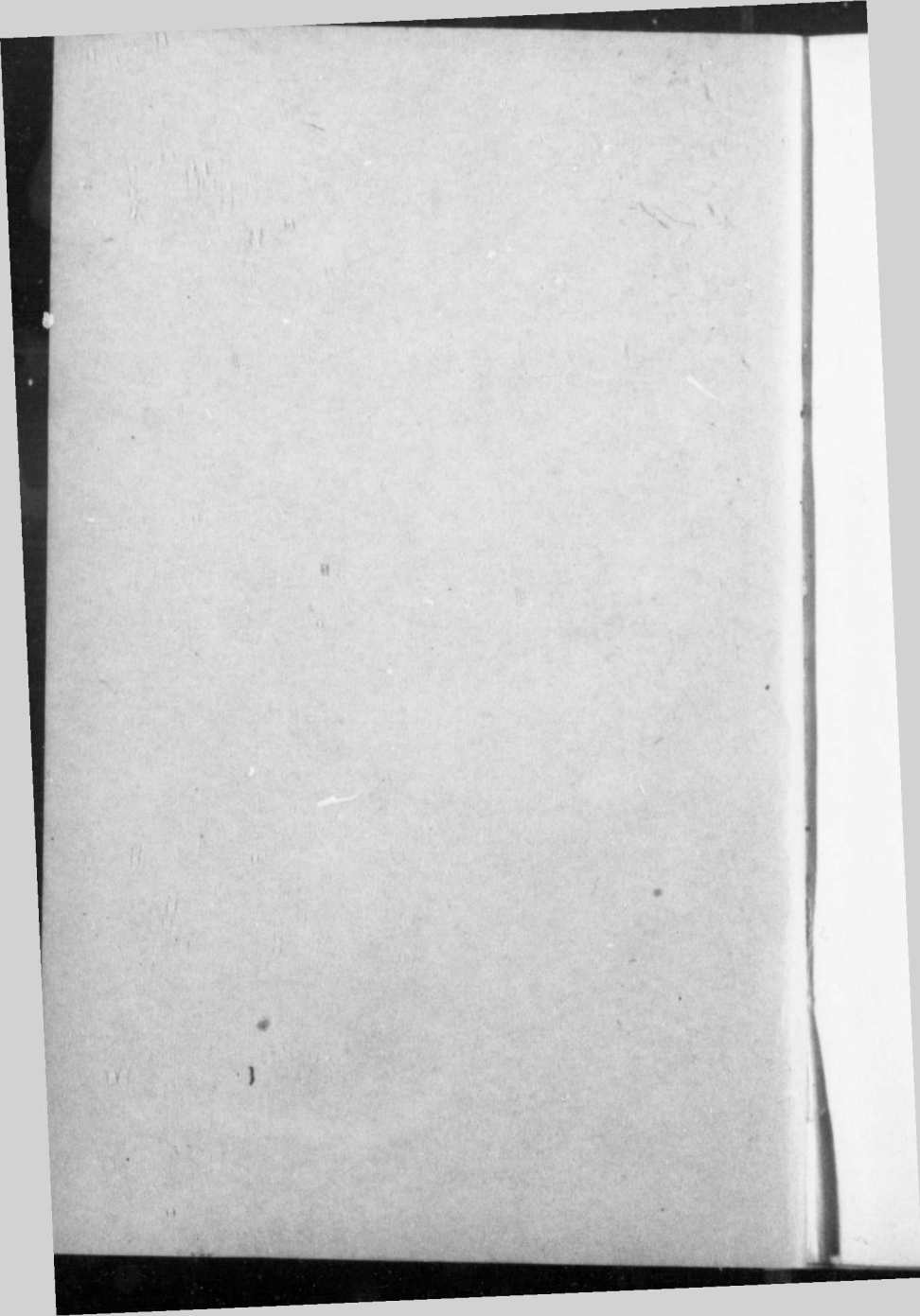
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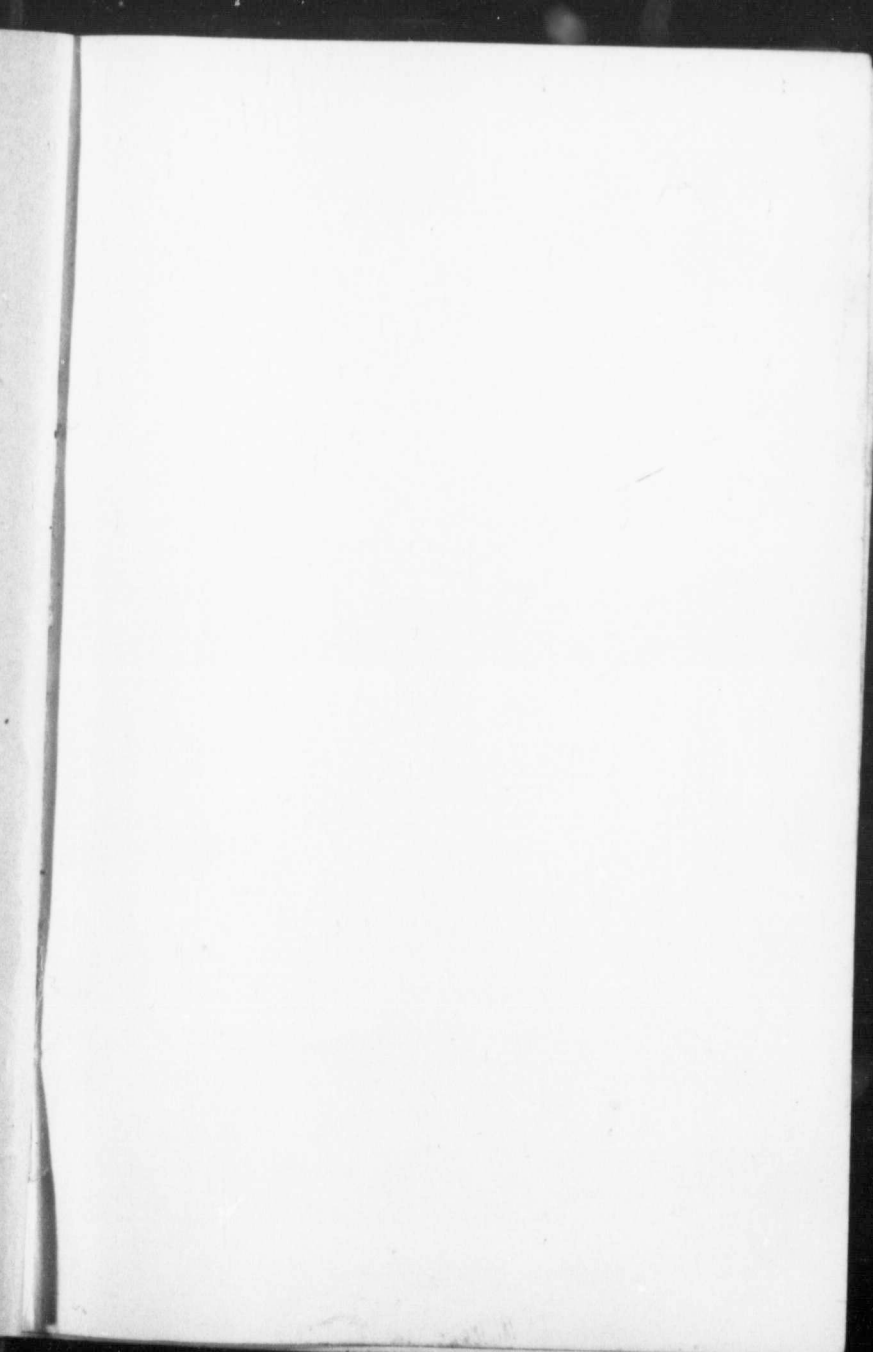
Bella Morris

minister:

Rev. J. Deas Logan

Isabella Hart







Frontispiece.  
L.S.

"Two women were busy with the pot."

Page 75.





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# Lost on the Saguenay

## by Bessie Marchant

Author of "Held at Ransom," "The Secret of  
the Everglades," etc., etc.

Four Coloured  
Illustrations

Collins'     
Clear-Type Press   
London and Glasgow

PS 8526

A635

DW

19036

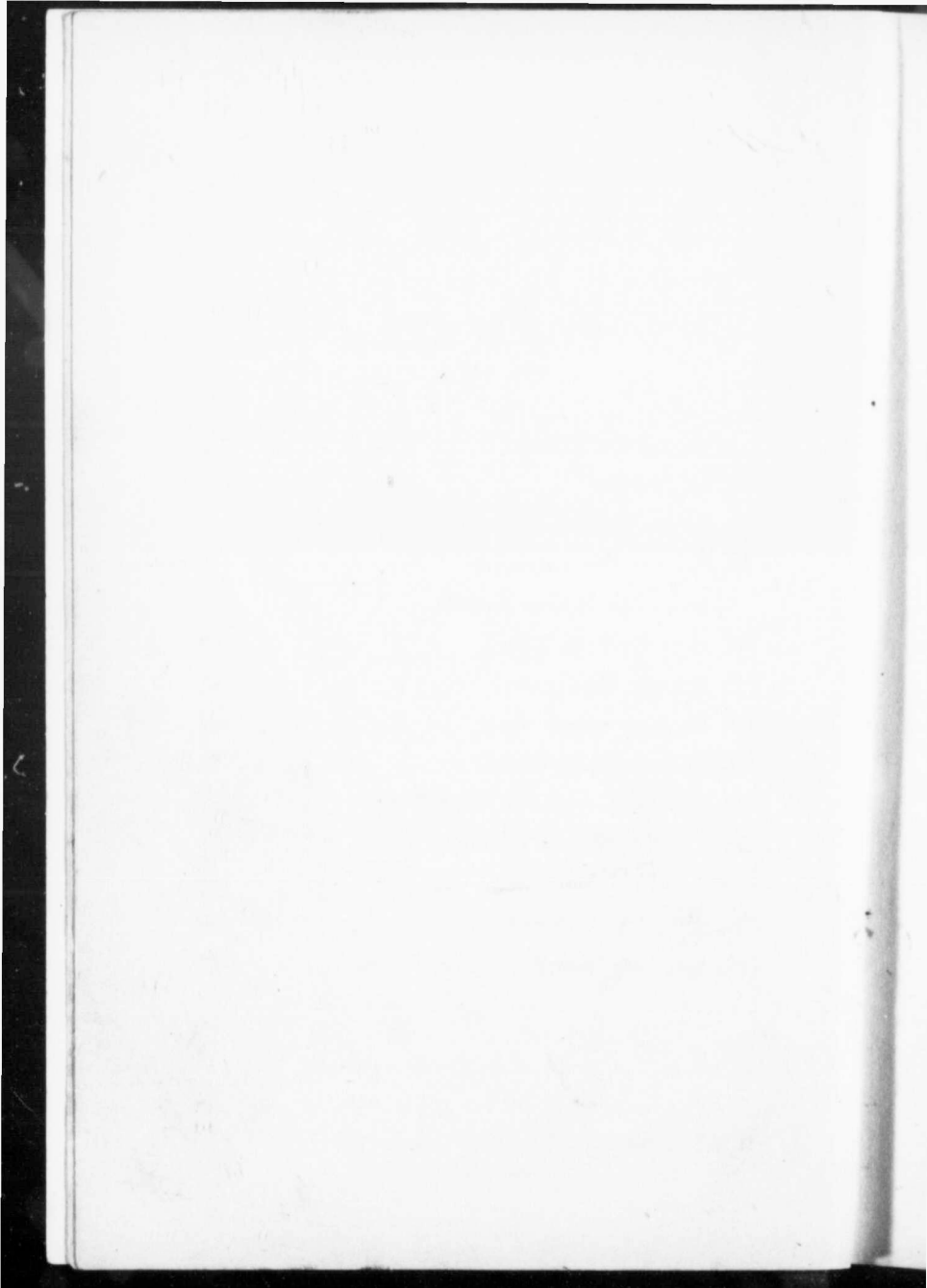
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# Lost on the Saguenay.

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## CHAPTER I.

### An Awkward Plight.

“YOUR ticket, please, sir!”

As he spoke, the official poked his head round the corner of the seat, where sat a sandy-haired boy, half-asleep, with a rough-coated dog curled up beside him.

“Ticket, eh? Let me see,” and giving himself a shrug to shake off his drowsiness, the boy sat up and commenced to fumble in his various pockets for the missing property.

But it was not to be found, and, after emptying a numerous collection of carefully-hoarded treasures from seven different pockets, turning each one inside out as he did so, the boy suddenly exclaimed, with a start, “Well, now, if I don’t really believe Squirms must have eaten the thing!”

At the sound of its name the dog woke up, sneezed violently, beat a lazy tattoo with

its tail on the cushion, and then went to sleep again, apparently very well satisfied with itself and its surroundings.

But the official gave a short, snorting laugh of utter disbelief. "A likely story that, young master, when most probable you didn't take a ticket at all. You'll have to pay again, however."

"I can't, because I've spent all my money, and Squirms hasn't got any to lend me," rejoined the boy, with an easy, untroubled laugh, whilst the dog, roused again at the sound of its name, sleepily beat the cushion with its tail.

The official frowned. "Then you must leave the cars, and come with me to the superintendent's office," he said, roughly; "we can't afford to carry passengers free, gratis, and for nothing, on this railway."

"There's no need to get mad about it, and I don't want to leave the train either, until I get home. If you can't believe I've had a ticket, and insist on my paying over again, I'll tell my father, and he will send the money to you," the boy replied, opening his mouth in a wide-reaching yawn, as if tired of the subject.

"And you think that will do as well as

money, do you? Well, but you are a cool one, and no mistake. What is your name, and what security are you prepared to leave behind you?" demanded the man, with a lumbering gaiety of expression which made one think of an elephant trying to dance a hornpipe.

The boy's eyes emitted a dangerous flash, and he lifted his sandy head with a haughty air. "My name is Gregory Gigot Delmayne, and my father's position is security enough that the company will not be cheated."

"Colonel Delmayne's son, and I not to know it! I beg your pardon, young sir, and there ain't no call to trouble about the ticket. If you'd said your name at first, I should have known what to do," and, lifting his hand with a military salute, the man turned away, finished his work of collecting, and the train, after waiting its appointed time, rushed on again.

The boy laughed softly to himself, as he settled to his interrupted nap once more, after restoring his treasures to his pockets. "Might have been awkward for me, if I hadn't had a good old dad of my own, just then, Squirms; and I'll give you a thrashing next time you go chewing up official

documents, as if they were of no more value than chicken bones," he said, giving his four-footed companion an affectionate hug, which very much retracted from the reproachful character of his speech.

Another half-hour, and the train slowed down to stopping point again. The boy roused himself, covered his sandy head with a schoolboy's cap, picked up a small bag, and, closely followed by his dog, prepared to leave the cars.

Just then, a lady, clad in black from head to heel, her face hidden in a thick veil, glided up to him, saying, in a low, penetrating tone : "You are Colonel Delmayne's son ! Can you be trusted to do him a great service, secretly?"

"Of course ; what is it?" and the boy's head went up with a quick jerk, and his sharp eyes tried to pierce the disguise of the veil, and discover what manner of woman had accosted him.

"Put this into his hand, then, with the least possible delay ; let no one see you do it, and bid him take care, for evil walks abroad, and will not be gainsaid," exclaimed the woman, waving one hand with a melodramatic flourish, whilst with the other she pressed a letter into his hand.

"But, madam——" he began, desiring to be better informed concerning the nature of the danger which menaced his father.

But the letter was in his hand, an ordinary envelope with the name, Colonel Delmayne, written across it. Giving just one look at it, he stowed it carefully away in an inner pocket; then, making his way out of the crowded depot, hurried off on his homeward way as fast as he could go.

There was no one to meet him, but he was not disappointed, having arrived home on Friday instead of Saturday, when he should have come, an unexpected holiday having made the difference in his plans.

Home was a low, picturesque house, standing in its own grounds on the outskirts of the town, and he turned in at the gate, just as the July sun was dropping below the horizon.

A low, reclining chair stood within the shadow of the big, square porch, and on it lay a fair, pale girl of fifteen or sixteen. Lifting her head at the sound of the gate opening, she cried out in delighted surprise, clapping her hands with pleasure, "Oh, Giggles, how good of you to come home, just when I was wanting you so badly!"

The boy went and kissed her with great affection, whilst Squirms performed such antics and contortions as proved him worthy of his name.

"All alone, are you, Ina? I say, where is father?" and a rather anxious look dropped over the face of Giggles as he put the question, for he was thinking of the mysterious woman in black, and the letter she had intrusted to his care.

"Gone for a fortnight's salmon fishing on the Saguenay River, with mother, and Their Excellencies, and you are to have a holiday until they come back; that is why I am so specially glad to see you home to-day, instead of to-morrow. What made you come so soon?" As she spoke, the girl put a thin, white hand up to pat the sandy head in a loving, tender fashion, and draw it to a resting-place on the soft silken cushion near to her own face.

But Giggles was much too energetic to linger for more than a minute with his head in any particular spot, and, starting up, he began pacing the roomy limits of the big porch with quick, agitated steps.

"When did they start, Ina, and how did they go?" he asked, wondering if the letter

was so very important after all, and whether the secrecy with which it was to be delivered might not be stretched sufficiently to include his favourite sister, from whom he had no reserve.

"Their Excellencies went on Wednesday, but father and mother started this morning by boat from Quebec."

"Bother!" exclaimed Giggles, with more emphasis than elegance.

"They would have called to see you on their way, only they were hindered in getting off, and knew there wouldn't be time," Ina went on, secretly feeling rather piqued, because her brother displayed no more enthusiasm concerning his unexpected holiday, and the pleasure of her society.

"It isn't that I was thinking about, but something that occurred coming home, and—and a matter I wanted to—to consult father about," he said, dropping his voice to a mysterious whisper, and looking round for chance eavesdroppers in such a suspicious fashion, that Ina laughed outright.

"What is it, Giggles? You look just like a conspirator, and your face is as tragic as if you were acting Macbeth."

"It isn't a laughing matter, I can tell you,

and I'm in a dreadfully awkward plight," he retorted, with some heat.

Ina's face grew instantly grave. Giggles was, as a rule, such a merry, irresponsible kind of boy, that something quite out of the ordinary must have happened, to make him wear such an air of gloom.

"Do you want to talk about it now, or will after supper do?" she asked, with such an air of understanding the difficulty, that Giggles felt comforted, even heaving a big sigh of relief, and beginning to smile in his usual happy-go-lucky fashion.

The gong sounded at this moment, and Susan, Ina's maid, appeared to help her young lady into the dining-room, whilst Giggles bounded off to his room in a great hurry, in order to wash his hands and brush his hair before appearing at table; Mrs. Morris, Ina's governess, being even more exacting in the matters of decorum than the Lady Katherine, his mother.

Of however much importance the letter might be, it was plainly impossible that he could put it into his father's hands before to-morrow. Even then he would have to ask Ina's advice and consent, before starting off in pursuit of the river party, so, with a

sigh, he resigned himself to the inevitable, and was just leaving his room in quest of the supper to which he would bring an excellent appetite, when, chancing to take the letter from his pocket to look again at the writing on the cover, he was amazed to see that the envelope was not stuck down. It had probably never been fastened, as there was no appearance of the gum having been wetted on the flap, and no trace of it on the lower part of the envelope.

Perhaps the letter was not important after all, nor secret either, for the matter of that, and, as he looked at it, an irresistible impulse came to him to pull out the folded paper that was inside the envelope and see for himself what it contained.

After one moment of irresolution, he yielded to the temptation, and, sliding the folded sheet from its cover, opened it and read its contents for himself.

They were sufficiently appalling; and giddy, sick, and faint, he staggered to the nearest chair, where he sat down, trying to collect his thoughts and decide what was best to be done.

But his brain was in too great a whirl for thinking and planning to any purpose,

so he just sat stupidly staring at a picture of St. Paul's Cathedral, which hung on the opposite wall, until there came a knock at the door, and a footman entered to say that Miss Ina and Mrs. Morris waited his coming, to begin their supper.

He went to the dining-room then, but his fine appetite had given place to a real repulsion at the mere sight of food.

## CHAPTER II.

### Ina Advises.

INA and Giggles Delmayne were the two youngest children of Colonel and the Lady Katherine Delmayne, whilst Esmé, the eldest daughter, was with her husband in India, and Adeline, who came next, was spending the summer in Scotland, with her aunt, the Hon. Mrs. Tempest.

Between Adeline and Ina was a blank of five years, which had once been filled by two boys, long since dead, so that Giggles, or to call him by his proper appellation, Gregory Gigot, was now the only boy of the family.

There was quite a romantic story attaching to his second name. In the year before he was born, his father, who was quelling a petty rising of natives in an outlying part of the Dominion, was saved from a very horrible death, by a staunch-hearted French-Canadian named Jean Gigot, who himself perished in saving the Colonel.

The Lady Katherine was so touched by the brave act of devotion which gave her

back her husband, that when her little son was born, she insisted on the infant receiving the name of his father's noble preserver, that being the only way in which she could honour the dead hero, and hold him in life-long remembrance.

But, alas, for good resolutions ! It proved a much easier thing to give the child a name than to call him by it ; long before the baby could walk or talk, the two awkward-sounding names had merged into "Giggles," and thus he had been called ever since.

It was not inappropriate, for the boy had a happy nature, and was always indulging in little bursts of chuckling laughter, his sense of humour being easily tickled, and his risible faculty quite abnormal in its development.

The supper was served with all the ceremony observed when Colonel and the Lady Katherine were at home, the only difference being that the meal was called dinner then, while now the homelier name of supper sufficed.

Mrs. Morris, a stately personage, with a chilly manner, received the apologies of Giggles for the delay in his appearance, with a stiff inclination of her head, whilst Ina

shot a keen glance of inquiry at his worried face, as he took the seat opposite to her and made a poor pretence of eating.

Supper was a long-drawn agony of endurance for both children that night; only it was Giggles who suffered most, because he knew what was wrong, whereas Ina could only torture herself with speculations concerning the trouble, none of which, however, came anywhere near the truth.

They had to keep some sort of cheerful talk going all the time, too, which made it harder for both. But Mrs. Morris would have called them to book, if conversation had been permitted to flag and drop into holes.

The servants, too, had also to be taken into account, so the conversational ball was bandied to and fro, whilst Ina laughed more than usual, in order to cover the unwonted gravity of her brother. It came to an end at last, however, and Mrs. Morris left them alone, giving Ina a word of caution against the unwisdom of sitting up late; then going off to her room to write letters for the out-going mail.

"What is the matter, dear? Come here, and tell me all about it," said Ina, in anxiety,

motioning the boy to a low seat close by her couch.

But now that the opportunity had come, he seemed loth to take it, sitting with his chin resting on his knees, which he embraced with clasped arms—a favourite attitude when he was in doubt or undecided about anything.

"Tell me, Giggles, please," she urged, with a touch of impatience in her tone.

"I've read that letter," he burst out, with such a tragic air, that Ina would have laughed if she had not been so anxious.

"I don't understand," she said, gently. "Have you been doing anything dishonourable, dear?"

"I don't think so. Is it dishonourable to read letters when the envelopes have not been stuck down?" he asked, as he swayed slowly to and fro.

"Sometimes, but not always; it depends on the circumstances, and whether you feel in yourself that you were doing wrong," she replied a little vaguely, being more interested just then in discovering the nature of the mischief, than in applying the remedy for it.

"A woman—I think she was not exactly a lady—gave me a letter, as I was leaving

the cars to-night, which she begged me to put into father's hand secretly and without delay. This I promised to do, only to find out when I got home, as you know, that he had gone off, no one knows where, fishing for salmon," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Yes, we do know where he is," interrupted Ina; but he wagged his head with an impatient gesture, and she subsided into silence again.

"When I looked at the envelope just before supper, I saw that it wasn't stuck down, and I pulled out the letter and read it through."

"Oh, Giggles, father would feel that was not honourable, I am sure," she cried reproachfully.

"Read it yourself, then, and tell me if it wasn't just as well I did look it through; though what to do about it, or how to get a warning to him in time, is more than I can say."

Ina went very white, and the hand she stretched out for the letter trembled a great deal, so that an active fear crept into the boy's heart lest the contents might be harmful to her; but he needed a confidante

and adviser so badly just then, that he simply had to tell her the whole of the dreadful business.

The writing was legible and bold, the words standing out with quite appalling clearness on the white page.

“DEAR SIR,

“I am, at considerable risk to myself, sending you a warning that a plot is on foot to assassinate the Governor-General. How or when it is to be carried out, I cannot tell you, for I do not know. It is of no use appealing to the police, for, to my certain knowledge, some of them are in it, and the safety of His Excellency depends entirely upon your untiring vigilance. The only clue I can give you, is to beware of a man named Patrick Moore.

“NELLY O'RILEY.”

“Oh, Giggles, it is those dreadful Irish again!” exclaimed Ina, when she had read the letter.

“The Irish are not all bad; it is only those horrible Fenians,” objected Giggles, who was always ready to champion the light-hearted rogues of the Emerald Isle, saving, indeed, when they were classed under the heading of Fenians. “But the question is, how to get the warning to father?”

"That is easily settled," replied Ina, with determination. "You must take it yourself, and start to-morrow morning; if you go by the first train, you may get an early boat."

"But, Ina, I haven't got any money," objected the boy, whose pockets always seemed to have holes in them, through which coins disappeared. "And it wouldn't do to ask Mrs. Morris for any, I suppose?"

"Oh, dear no; I would rather ask Marshall to lend me some of the housekeeping money. But I have quite enough of my own without borrowing from anyone, and father will pay me back when he comes home. Only, Giggles, dear, you must be careful and not lose it, or you would be in a very awkward fix, and father might be kept waiting for the letter, too."

"I never lose money. If I see anyone in trouble, I give them some, but that isn't losing it," he replied, with a thrill of indignation in his voice.

"I know, dear," she answered gently; "but in this case you must turn a deaf ear to even such appeals, because you must husband your resources, in order to have enough money to carry you through."

"All right, I'll be as prudent as—as—

well, think of the meanest person you know, and take him for a comparison. But, Sis, how shall I get up the Saguenay, after I leave the St. Lawrence boat, and how far up have the fishing party gone for a camp?"

"You will have to get a boat of some sort, and the camp, I know, was to be at Haha Bay. Oh, how I wish I were strong enough to go with you; it will be just dreadful to lie here wondering what is happening to you," she said, with a flush of pain in her pale cheeks.

"Nothing will happen; people don't have adventures in these enlightened days, only in books, at least; I wish they did. Besides, there is always Mrs. Morris to be reckoned with; I don't fancy it would fit in with her ideas of propriety for you to go careering off on a wild-goose chase up the Saguenay with only me for a chaperon. But, Ina, what will she say to my going, do you suppose?"

"She must not know until you are gone. It seems dreadfully dishonourable of me to connive at your running away in this fashion, but I see no help for it, and I am sure father and mother will forgive me when they know. I shall tell Mrs. Morris the truth when she

comes to breakfast. But you must be up and away before then, Giggles."

"I should just think so. Why, the first cars for Quebec go through before seven o'clock, and if I can board them I may get the nine o'clock boat."

"In which case you may reach Haha Bay on Monday evening, at the latest."

"I may, but also I may not," he replied, lightly, and little dreamed how true his words would prove.

## CHAPTER III.

### **An Unexpected Travelling Companion.**

GIGGLES was up with the lark on the following morning, and, stuffing one or two articles that he regarded as necessaries into his school satchel, he locked Squirms in the stable, persuaded cook to give him an extra good breakfast, and reached the depot just as the cars came in. Hurrying aboard, he took his seat with a feeling of great satisfaction at having made his arrangements with such promptitude.

The fateful letter, which was the cause of his sudden journey, he carried in a small oilskin bag slung round his neck and worn under his shirt ; in this, also, he stowed away one half of the money given to him by Ina for his travelling expenses.

He was leaning back feeling very important, and extremely well satisfied with himself and his surroundings, when suddenly a cold nose touched his hand, and, glancing down, he saw, to his great amazement, Squirms, crouched on the floor at his feet, looking

### **An Unexpected Travelling Companion. 27**

the picture of guilty confusion, and wagging an eager, thumping tail.

"You old rogue, where did you spring from?" exclaimed Giggles, stooping to bestow an affectionate pat on the animal's head; for it was simply impossible to be angry with a creature as cunning and clever as Squirms.

Reading forgiveness in his master's face, the dog thumped a grateful tattoo of thanksgiving on the floor, whilst the conductor, coming along at that moment, laughed, and said, "Didn't you mean to have the critter with you this trip, sir? I saw him come aboard, and laughed to see the 'cute way in which he slowed down, and ran behind someone else, when he thought you might turn round. Had him long, sir?"

"About two years now," Giggles answered, but was too modest to add that he had nearly been drowned through venturing into deep water, in order to rescue the miserable mongrel pup, which had afterwards developed into the faithful, devoted friend at his feet.

Squirms, however, had a lively recollection of that act of childish bravery, and adored Giggles, being never happy out of sight of his master, and making himself a nuisance

sometimes by his volunteer-companionship. When locked up, he always found a way to get out, and, once free, his nose did the rest, enabling him to run his quarry down in no time at all, for, mongrel though he was, and not over handsome to look at, he had the nose of a bloodhound, joined to the sagacity and faithfulness of a collie.

Still, with all these good qualities, Giggles would have preferred to leave the dog at home, whilst he made his journey up the Saguenay; but as Squirms had insisted on coming too, there was nothing for it but to make the best of a tiresome business, and be glad of the animal's company.

After Quebec was reached, and he had boarded one of the big river steamboats, on which to make his way down river to Tadousac, a curious sense of forlornness came over the boy, though the morning was bright and fine, and the boat was crowded with passengers, the buzz of cheerful conversation and rippling laughter sounding on all sides.

It was then he began to feel glad that Squirms had insisted on coming too, since it was impossible to be quite so lonely with the dog at his side.

## **An Unexpected Travelling Companion. 29**

Then he found to his great delight, that a party of tourists were bound for Lake St. John, and had chartered a steam-yacht to meet them at Tadousac and convey them up the Saguenay to the lake.

After some little hesitation, he mustered up sufficient courage to accost the principal person of the party—a severe-looking gentleman in spectacles—asking if they would permit him to take passage in their boat, as far as Haha Bay.

“What do you want at Haha Bay, pray? it is a long way for a young child like you to be travelling.” The severe-looking gentleman looked even sterner still, as he put the question, and Giggles quailed before him.

“If you please, sir, my father is there, and I am going to him. I am not so very young either, for I shall be twelve in September,” he answered, rather resenting the other’s insinuation that he was too young to take care of himself.

“Oh, indeed. I should have said you were not more than ten, but children grow old early in these new countries. Yes, boy, we will endeavour to make room for you, if you on your part will undertake not to be a nuisance.”

Giggles flushed a hot, indignant red, right up to the roots of his sandy hair, and he would have turned away with an air of insulted dignity, if he had not so very badly needed the favour.

"I will do my best not to trouble you, sir; but will you tell me before we get to Tadousac what the fare will be to Haha Bay? Then I can have the money ready to pay you," he said, with respectful deference, trying not to look as angry as he felt.

The severity of the gentleman's face relaxed a little at this, and something bearing a dim and distant relation to a smile curved his thin lips. "We shall not require any money for your accommodation, boy; the only stipulation I make is, that you efface yourself as much as possible, you and the dog. Our party is engaged in scientific and botanical research, and undisturbed quiet is absolutely necessary to us."

Giggles flushed again, keeping his temper by a great effort, but he stammered out some sort of an incoherent reply which appeared to satisfy the gentleman. Then he retired to think over the situation, and wondered if he had acted for the best in putting himself under the protection of this

### An Unexpected Travelling Companion. 31

party of learned tourists, who might, for aught he knew, intend botanising on the way up the Saguenay, thus making the voyage extend over some considerable time.

A chance word dropped by one of the botanical wiseacres reassured him on this point, however, for he heard one of them say to another that he trusted their passage of the Saguenay would be unhindered by accident of any kind, as they could do nothing until they reached the lake.

Tadousac was reached soon after dawn on Sunday morning, so very early, that only the birds were astir, and even they had a sleepy twitter as they compared notes on the chances of an early worm.

But the steam-yacht was waiting at anchor. And then, indeed, Giggles began to congratulate himself in good earnest on his wisdom and foresight in having attached himself to this party of savants. For Tadousac appeared to possess a very scanty supply of shipping, judging by the small number of boats to be seen at their moorings, and those that were there were only the smaller kind of river craft, with little to recommend them in the matters of comfort and speed.

Herr Von Muller, the severe-looking gentleman, bestirred himself in such good earnest, that the party of scientific botanists were hustled on board the waiting steam-yacht in an incredibly short space of time, Giggles and Squirms going with the crowd, and being allotted comfortable quarters in a tiny cabin opening off the main deck.

Steam was got up then, and whilst the good folk of Tadousac were wending their way to the church, the yacht slipped her moorings, and headed a course for the Saguenay.

Giggles was tremendously impressed by the terrific wisdom of his fellow-voyagers, who rarely spoke save in words of four syllables and upwards, whilst an animated discussion, in which they indulged at table, gave him a pretty good idea of what the scene of the building of the tower of Babel must have been like, when the confusion of tongues took place.

He was very quiet and subdued, replying in the meekest of monosyllables when anyone spoke to him, which, however, was very seldom, even winning a word of commendation from Herr Von Muller on his behaviour.

But it was far and away the longest Sunday

### **An Unexpected Travelling Companion. 33**

that Giggles had ever spent, whilst but for Squirms it would have been longer and lonelier still. The two sat on deck most of the day, watching the wild grandeur of the scenery through which they were passing—at least, the boy watched it, whilst the dog slept fitfully, with his nose on his paws.

The weather changed as evening drew on; the pleasant breeze died down to a close, suffocating heat, whilst heavy masses of ominous-looking cloud hung on the edge of the horizon, just overtopping the beetling crags and sheer, precipitous rocks which hemmed in the river on either side.

Squirms woke up, stretched himself, and sneezed violently, then, casting an uneasy look round, whined in a piteous fashion, and, throwing back his head, indulged in a loud, dolorous howl.

Giggles vainly endeavoured to soothe him, being fearful lest the noise should disturb the gentlemen in the saloon. But the storm came up very fast, and Squirms heralded its approach with a weird performance in a minor key, until, unable to endure it any longer, Giggles took off his jacket and wrapped the dog's head in it.

A thick darkness dropped down over the

river, and some of the crew rushed to furl a sail which by some fatal carelessness had been overlooked. At the same instant, the storm struck the yacht, the men in the rigging were flung into the water, and a wild, despairing cry burst from Giggles, as the boat heeled right over, flinging himself, the dog, and a mass of rope and deck lumber all together into the seething, hissing flood.

But he could swim, and so could Squirms, and, coming to the surface, he struck out for the nearest bank, calling to the dog, which, encumbered by the jacket wrapped about his head, had been longer in rising. Just then, however, something hit him a stunning blow, and he knew no more.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### The Colonel's Return.

IT was just over a week later when Ina Delmayne was supporting her feeble steps with the aid of a crutch and a stout staff among the flowers of the garden. It was only on the days when she felt unusually well and strong, that she was able to walk at all; and, to be out in the sunshine, creeping about even in this feeble fashion, brought a thrill of intense happiness to her heart.

Mrs. Morris, who had been out with her, was momentarily absent, having gone in to fetch a book, when Ina, who was thus left alone, heard the gate click, and, looking up, saw Colonel Delmayne approach the house.

"Father, father, where did you spring from?" she called out, waving her hand to attract his attention and bring him to her side.

He turned then, and, seeing her, came striding across the grass with his quick, firm, military tread, a smile of pleasure lighting his face, because she was able to be on her feet again.

"Oh, father, how sweet of you to come walking in upon me in this fashion! Where is mother?" she asked, putting up her face to be kissed.

"Gone down to Mille Vaches with Her Excellency and party; they won't be home till the end of the week. Where is Giggles?" and the Colonel looked about him as if in search of his son.

"Father! haven't you seen him?" cried Ina, her face going ghastly white, and a wild look of terror in her eyes.

"How could I? We only reached Quebec late last night, and there was a large accumulation of matters needing my attention; besides, we told you he might take holidays whilst we were away. Why, Ina, child, what is wrong?" And, by a quick movement, the Colonel caught his frail daughter in his arms, just as she swayed, and would have fallen but for his protecting care.

"Father, I sent Giggles to you with an important letter, a week ago last Saturday morning; if you have not seen him, where can he be?" she panted.

Colonel Delmayne frowned a little. It was not like Ina to do foolish things, yet this surely was an absurd freak to send a

boy all those miles in search of a fishing party, when the letter, however important, might have been sent to headquarters and forwarded if necessary by a special messenger. But he would not say a harsh or even impatient word to the trembling, sobbing girl he held in his arms.

"He has missed us, perhaps, and will come back when he finds the camp has been broken up. But what was the letter about, that you thought it of sufficient importance to send so far?"

"I can't tell you here, father; someone might overhear. Take me into the house, please," she said; her voice very feeble and low, whilst a purple shadow the Colonel knew only too well, and always feared to see, stole over her thin, delicate face.

Without a word, he bore her swiftly into the house, and gently laying her on the couch in her own room, summoned Mrs. Morris and the maid Susan, staying himself to see the proper remedies applied, which should ease the wild, painful throbbing of her poor, fluttering heart, and give her back her strength again.

But it was an hour or more before the pain had ceased, leaving her lying white and exhausted on her pillows.

"There is no hurry, darling. What you have to tell me will keep a while longer yet; rest quietly now, and I will come back in a couple of hours or so," the Colonel said, tenderly, bending over the couch to drop a light kiss on her forehead.

She smiled up into his face, just to reassure him, then lay with closed eyes, resolutely keeping herself as quiet as possible, in order that she might be better the sooner.

But the Colonel in leaving the room had beckoned to Mrs. Morris to follow him, leaving only Susan in charge of the invalid.

"Mrs. Morris, what does it all mean?" he asked, in great anxiety, as soon as they were safely out of earshot of the invalid.

"I simply know nothing, Colonel Delmayne, except that Giggles came home on Friday evening instead of Saturday, because of some birthday holiday of his school. He was very quiet and *distract* all the evening, and when I came to breakfast next morning, he was gone. Naturally, I made inquiries as to his sudden and unexplained departure, but all the information Ina would give me was, that a very secret and important letter

had come, which must at once be put into your hands, since it concerned the safety of the Governor-General."

"The safety of His Excellency? What next, I wonder! We aren't living in Russia. If a man isn't safe in Canada, I should like to know where he can hope to be free from danger?" burst out the Colonel, in great indignation. To him, the Dominion was the fairest and happiest land under heaven, and the idea of black treachery within its borders filled him with an angry horror.

"That is all I know. I did not try to force Ina's confidence when I saw how reluctant she was to bestow it, since, whatever was said and done could not recall Giggles, who must have been well on his way to Quebec before I even knew he had left the house," Mrs. Morris rejoined, in a dignified tone, which contained a reproachful hint that she did not consider herself to have been well treated.

The insinuation was not lost upon the Colonel, who was, however, too anxious and troubled to take any notice of it then. So, after a little more talk concerning Ina's seizure, and the cause of it, the Colonel went off to attend to some necessary business,

whilst Mrs. Morris retired to her own quarters.

Later in the morning, as the Colonel was returning from a round of the premises, he was surprised to see how very badly the stable window was broken.

"Ah, Robson, that is a big smash; how did it happen?" he asked of the groom, who was an old soldier, and had served under the Colonel through more than one campaign.

"Yes, sir, I should have seen to its being mended, but Mrs. Marshall said it had better be left for you to see, and so left it was," and Robson stood at attention as rigidly as if he had been on parade.

"But how did it get broken?" demanded the Colonel, with a frown, for window-mending cost money, and this was no ordinary breakage, part of the frame being smashed, as well as several panes of glass, the whole looking as if some big object had been hurled violently against the window, thus making a passage through.

"It was that dog Squirms, sir. Master Giggles had shut the beast up in the stable to be safe out of the way that morning when he went off, but there's no keeping the dog

away from our young gentleman. I verily believe he'd go through timber, much less glass, if he was shut away from his master," and Robson shook his head with solemn emphasis, as if to say that even devotion had its drawbacks, and might at times prove very inconvenient.

"So Squirms went too," said the Colonel to himself, after he had given orders for the window to be mended, and was walking away even more perplexed and surprised than he was before. It was a comfort to him now, that he had insisted on his only surviving son being brought up in the independent, self-helpful fashion of Colonial children generally, so that Giggles was as well qualified to take care of himself, as if he had been the son of an ordinary settler, instead of being a little sprig of the English aristocracy.

Presently he went back to Ina, who by this time was almost herself again—only with her usual serenity upset, and disturbed by her anxiety and excitement regarding the whereabouts of her brother.

"Father, I am afraid I did wrong, but there was no one to advise me, and every hour might be of the greatest importance

in warning His Excellency of the danger," she said, laying her thin, white hand in her father's, and looking up at him with beseeching eyes.

"Why did you not trust Mrs. Morris with the whole story, my child? At least it would have lifted a burden of responsibility from your shoulders," he said, gently.

"I did not dare. Of course, in reality, neither Giggles nor I ought to have known what was in that letter; but then if we had not read it we should not have understood its importance," she said, eagerly.

The Colonel shook his head with an incredulous air. "My dear Ina, letters of that kind are often not worth the paper they are written on. I always put anonymous stuff of that description in the fire unread.

"It was not anonymous, dear father, it was signed Nelly O'Riley."

"I can't help it. The name was probably fictitious, as fictitious as the danger against which I was to be warned. I certainly have no recollection of having ever heard the name before," rejoined the Colonel, with decision.

"Have you never heard the other name either, Patrick Moore, the man of whom you were to especially beware?" asked Ina.

The Colonel gave a start, and jumped up from his chair in great excitement. "Why, yes, of course, that was the name of the man who was with His Excellency in the boat, when that very big salmon was landed. I remember the fellow perfectly now, a most expert fisherman, but he disappeared suddenly two days or so before we broke up the camp, and no one seemed to know what had become of him. Really, Ina, the mystery thickens, and I must hurry off now to follow His Excellency to Montreal, and confer with him before putting the matter in the hands of the police. Do you mind being left, darling; and shall I send a messenger to bring your mother home to you?"

"I don't mind at all, thank you, father; there are so many people to take care of me, and it would be such a pity to frighten mother, or summon her home whilst Her Excellency is needing her," answered Ina, with a bright, brave smile.

## CHAPTER V.

### Herr Von Muller Arrives.

INA DELMAYNE sent her father away with a smile, but the slow torture of suspense which she endured through the days which followed, might well have broken down a far stronger nature than hers.

Acting on her father's advice, she told Mrs. Morris the story of the import of the letter which had induced her to send Giggles off on his journey to the Saguenay, suppressing only the names of the writer and the man mentioned in the epistle. That lady was, like the Colonel, incredulous at first about the good faith of the letter, but even she began to believe there might be something in it, when day after day passed, bringing neither word nor sign from the missing boy.

Colonel Delmayne was still detained in Montreal, and, though his letters to his daughter were cheerful and full of hope, it was easy to see how baffled and perplexed he was by the impossibility of tracing Giggles,

or of finding out at what point in his journey he had disappeared.

In the midst of the strained waiting, and secret apprehension, Lady Katherine came home, and had to be told of the trouble.

But she took an entirely different view of the mystery from that held by the others. She declared the boy had been abducted, and that the letter was only part of a deeply laid scheme to tempt poor Giggles away from his home and friends to the wild regions of the Saguenay. The only thing to be done, in her opinion, was to advertise far and wide, offering a substantial reward to anyone who could throw light upon the affair, or give a clue to the whereabouts of the missing boy.

As to any real plot against the lives or persons of Their Excellencies, the Governor-General and his wife, Lady Katherine declared the bare idea to be preposterous and absurd. And she brought so many sound and reasonable arguments to bear upon the matter, that not only was the Colonel influenced by them when he returned from Montreal, but the chief of the police who came with him was of the same opinion too.

So, advertisements were put in all the papers, and huge placards posted in every

available spot from Quebec to Haha Bay, offering a substantial reward for any information concerning Giggles and Squirms. Then Colonel Delmayne went himself to Tadousac, to see if he could pick up a clue at the place where the boy and the dog must have trans-shipped for the voyage up the Saguenay.

But no one there seemed to have the slightest recollection of any boy, answering to the description of the Colonel's missing son, who had taken passage in any of the river craft. No one knew of any dog either, although Squirms, by reason of his antics and sagacity, was not the kind of animal to pass unnoticed in a crowd.

Baffled, and almost in despair, Colonel Delmayne returned to Quebec, feeling more trepidation at the thought of meeting his wife and Iua than he had ever felt or displayed in going into action, or facing the guns of the enemy.

Before leaving the city for his home at Greenhaven, and the painful ordeal he feared to be awaiting him there, the Colonel went to have an interview with His Excellency, who chanced to be just then in residence.

"It is incredible that a boy like my friend

Giggles could drop out of sight, without anyone knowing where or how he went. Besides, there is the dog, which should be an additional clue," said His Excellency.

"It should be, but it isn't," groaned the anxious father.

"The fact is, too much time was lost at first, through the impression that the plot was a *bona-fide* one, and that silence on our part might lead to a discovery of those concerned in it. Lady Katherine is right, I fear, and the plot—if such there be—is directed against you, not me."

The Colonel shook his head at this, but whether in doubt or acquiescence did not appear; then he asked if anything had been discovered concerning the present whereabouts or the antecedents of Nelly O'Riley, or the man Patrick Moore.

"Nothing of importance to the case, I fear," replied His Excellency. "The chief of the police was with me an hour ago, and told me he has discovered the man comes from the neighbourhood of Rivière du Loup, where he bears a most excellent character for steady, hard work, and incorruptible honesty—by no means the kind of person likely to cherish Anarchist notions, I should say."

"Then, why doesn't he come forward? Men don't as a rule vanish from sight suddenly, remaining hidden in spite of every effort to trace them, when their conduct is entirely innocent and above reproach," said the Colonel, bitterly.

"It may be that the man is dead—met with some accident, or even slipped into some salmon pool and was drowned," went on His Excellency. "The fact that there are wages still due to him bears out the theory."

But the Colonel shook his head again, and this time there was abundant disbelief in the movement.

"If he had died, his body would have been found, or someone would have known something of the tragedy, or of the man himself. But, to me, this all-round silence speaks volumes," the harassed father said, and then he took his leave.

He wondered, when he boarded the cars, if haply any news of Giggles had been received during his absence, and although such a thing seemed highly improbable, a sort of instinct told him that tidings of some kind awaited him at home.

Nor had his instinct played him false.

Marshall, the housekeeper, met him in the big, square porch with agitation on her face and in her manner. "Oh, sir, I am glad to see you. A gentleman has come from Haha Bay, and is with my lady in the drawing-room: he has brought news of Master Giggles, but I fear it isn't good news."

The Colonel looked at her, made some sort of incoherent ejaculation, and then strode past on his way to the drawing-room, where sat Lady Katherine talking to a distinguished-looking stranger, with a coldly severe face.

"This is Herr Von Muller, and he has come all the way from Haha Bay to bring us news of our boy," said the Colonel's wife, introducing the stranger, who rose, bowing stiffly, like a mechanical figure in need of oil.

"I can only hope the news is good." The Colonel's heart sank, in spite of himself, as he uttered the words, for the cold, stern aspect of the visitor appeared strangely unfit to be the herald of hope or cheer.

"I grieve to say it is very much the reverse, if, indeed, your missing son and the boy on my boat were identical," Herr Von Muller answered, with another bow,

in which his limbs might almost be heard to creak.

"Our Giggles has sandy hair, and a merry face. The dog was a mongrel, but with more tricks and intelligence than any animal I have ever seen," said the Colonel, drawing himself as rigidly erect as his visitor, and stiffening every line and muscle, in order to bear with becoming fortitude the blow that he feared was to fall.

"Your description tallies perfectly with the boy of whom I have come to tell you, only to it must be added, an easy, gentlemanly manner, and the nicest discernment and tact of any boy I have ever seen," replied the visitor, with a sudden, involuntary unbending, which showed how warm and kind was the heart hidden away beneath the ice.

A dew of tears blurred Lady Katherine's vision, whilst the Colonel turned his head, coughing nervously.

"I noticed the boy and his dog soon after we left Quebec, on our way down the St. Lawrence to Tadousac, where our party had arranged to have a steam-yacht in waiting for the remainder of the journey to Lake St. John. When the boy asked permission to go with us to Haha Bay, I willingly

consented, although I told him plainly that we could not be hindered or interrupted in any way.

"We trans-shipped at Tadousac early on Sunday morning, and started up the Saguenay before noon, all going well until the evening. Then came an accident which nearly put an end to our expedition and research, for a sudden storm caught the crew unprepared, the boat heeled over with the weight of the canvas on her, two men being drowned, and a third so badly hurt that he died a few hours later.

"The boat righted herself by a miracle, and so we were saved. But the disaster was greater even than at first we had imagined, and, when the weight and fury of the storm subsided sufficiently for us to look round and see who was missing, we found that the boy and the dog were gone."

There was a sharp cry from Lady Katherine, and a smothered groan from the Colonel.

Then Herr Von Muller strode to the window, and stood looking out in silence. His story was not done yet, but heavy tidings take long in the telling.

It was some time before he ventured to look round again, and then, although the mother was quietly weeping over the untimely fate of her son, the father sat rigid and stern, as if the blow had petrified his being.

"There is more to tell, if you can bear to hear it?" said Herr Von Muller, gently.

"Yes, if you please, we will hear it all now, all that there is to hear," replied Lady Katherine, taking her handkerchief from her eyes; but the Colonel said never a word, only sat looking before him in stony silence.

"Night was upon us, dark and tempestuous, before we had recovered from the shock of our disaster," said the visitor, "and, anchoring with great difficulty, we prepared to wait until daylight, in the hope of recovering the boy, who might have clung to some wreckage when he was swept overboard.

"Giggles could swim very well, and the dog, too," interrupted Lady Katherine, a flash of eager hope showing for a moment in her eyes, then as quickly fading again.

Herr Von Muller bowed, but at the same time shook his head, as if to extinguish any hope which might perchance have risen.

"It was not a question of swimming, I fear. The captain of the yacht thinks that

the boy must have been struck by some of the wreckage, and have sunk at once; the dog, also, for though we used every means in our power we could discover no trace of either of them."

"What did you do then?" demanded the lady.

"What could we do, saving to continue our voyage? However long we lingered there, we could not bring any of them to life again, while our work lay before us and had to be done. The trouble was that we knew nothing of the boy, so could not communicate with his friends. However, he had said he was to join his father at Haha Bay, and there we stayed some time, endeavouring to find some trace of the father. Nothing came of it, however, and we went on to Lake St. John, intending to advertise the accident on our return. Then one of our party, going down to Haha Bay for nails and stores, returned with a description of the bills posted in the town-ship, regarding the missing son of Colonel Delmayne, so I left my work and came to you," the scholar said, simply, not mentioning the fact of the pecuniary loss he had incurred in so doing.

"From my heart, I thank you," said the Colonel, finding his voice at last. "My wife and I are greatly indebted to you, and later on——"

But what the Colonel would have said next, is matter for conjecture, for at that moment the door of the drawing-room was flung open, without any ceremony of knocking, and an agitated footman appeared on the threshold.

"If you please, my lady, Robson sent me to tell you that Squirms has come home; the poor creature is nearly a skeleton, but it is Squirms right enough."

## CHAPTER VI.

### How He Came There.

GIGGLES opened his eyes, and gazed about him in great bewilderment. It seemed to him that he had been having a very long, very bad dream, from which he had awakened at last, only to find himself in a state of greater unreality than before.

He was lying on some sort of a bed, in a room the like of which he had never seen before. The walls were formed of unbarked trunks of trees, filled in with a kind of red clay to keep the draught out of the chinks, whilst the fire was made on a low platform in the centre of the floor, the smoke escaping through a hole in the roof.

"Well, now, I wonder where I can have got?" he said aloud, trying to remember what had happened to bring about a set of circumstances like these.

As he spoke, a young woman came up to him from a remote corner of the hut, to ask him in French, if he was feeling better.

But her French had the same likeness to

the French Giggles learned at school, that broad Scotch has to cultured English, and he could only guess her meaning and answer her accordingly.

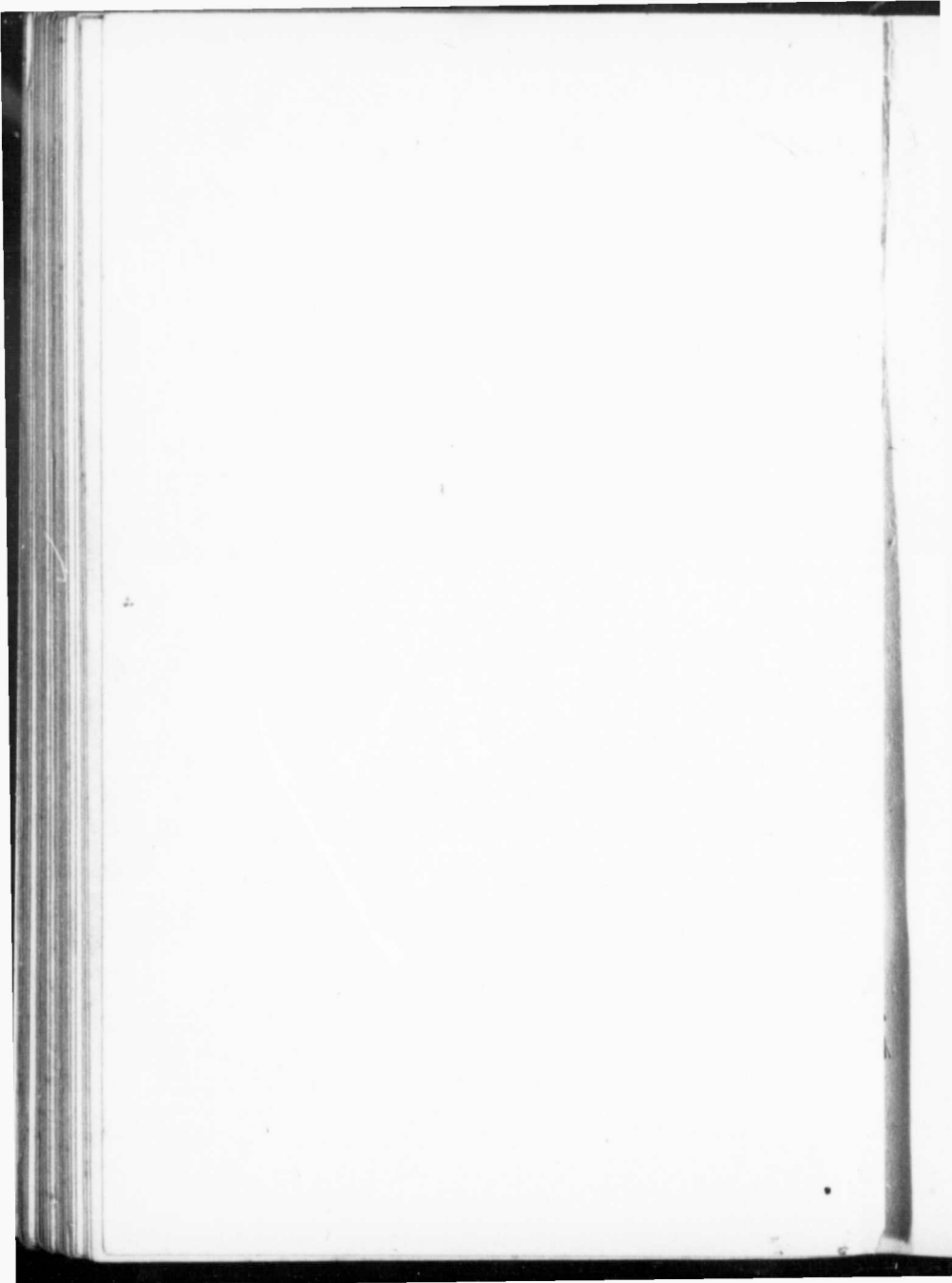
She was hardly more than a girl in appearance, with a beautiful face and large, lustrous eyes, that seemed melting now with tender sadness. But her clothing was so poor and coarse, in texture, that it was evident she belonged to a class that has to toil very hard to wrest a living from the land.

"Where am I?" demanded Giggles, in schoolboy French, but the girl shook her head, looking as uncomprehending as if he had addressed her in Greek, so he repeated his question in English, with slightly better success.

"You are with friends," the girl answered, but with such a tightening of her lips, and hard, bitter expression of face, as brought a chill doubt of her sincerity to the heart of Giggles.

"What is the matter with me?" he asked then, for a little inspection had shown him that his head was bandaged, and felt very stiff and sore, whilst one leg was done up in splints as if it had been broken.





But to this question the girl shook her head so resolutely, that he saw it was of no use to press the point. Evidently she did not intend telling him; and he was dolefully wondering if he was very bad indeed, when Squirms trotted in at the door with a plump young partridge in his mouth, which he brought to the bed, and offered to Giggles with a great demonstration of joyful affection.

"Good old dog, I'm glad we are both alive, anyhow, though where we are, and how we came here, is certainly beyond even me to guess," said the boy, as he lovingly fondled the dog's rough coat, more glad than he cared to admit, even to himself, at the sight of a familiar thing, in the midst of these strange and unexpected surroundings.

Then the girl dipped a ladle into a pot of savoury stew that was hissing and bubbling over the fire, and, lifting some of the broth into an old tin cup, cooled it down and brought it for Giggles to drink.

He fell asleep then and did not wake again until darkness had fallen, and the strident buzz of numerous mosquitoes could plainly be heard at the open door of the hut. Few ventured in, however, for some kind of

smudge was burning on the raised hearth, which no self-respecting insect would care to brave, so suffocating and pungent in odour was the smoke resulting from it.

Giggles decided at the first, that he would have preferred the mosquitoes to the slow, painful torture of the smoke. But that was only just at first, and he soon found that by drawing the corner of a blanket over his face, he could filter out some of the worst qualities of that very potent vapour, and so breathe more easily.

Squirms was lying asleep beside him on the bed, whilst the bowed figure of a woman crouched beside the fire. But it was not his friend of the morning, the girl with the beautiful face, for he could see her standing on the threshold of the hut, a moonbeam lighting up her delicate and lovely profile.

She seemed to be listening or waiting for someone, standing in an attitude of strained expectancy, yet in such absolute stillness and silence, that she might have been a statue carved in stone.

Giggles did not venture to disturb her, but lay thinking of his own condition, and trying to bridge that curious blank in his

memory, which made him unable to remember the events that had led to his present helpless condition.

He had one hand resting on the head of Squirms, when, suddenly, there came the sound of a quick step approaching, and the dog's head came up with a jerk.

"Hist!" breathed Giggles, in the faintest whisper, and Squirms dropped his head again in contented obedience, just acknowledging by a thump of his tail on the blanket, his complete understanding of his master's wishes.

The girl had heard the step, too, and losing her statuesque pose of figure, became instantly and eagerly alert.

"How late you are, Marty," she exclaimed, in excellent English, to the great amazement of the listener on the bed, who had imagined the wretched patois she had used in the morning, to be her sole command of language.

"Couldn't help it. I had promised to bring you news, and there would have been but a poor welcome for me, if I had broken my word," answered the one who approached. Then Giggles saw a young man step on to the patch of moonlight before the door, and

sink with an air of utter weariness on a low, rough bench which stood there.

The woman who was crouched by the fire rose then, and taking her ladle, dipped a bowlful of stew from the pot which still hung over the fire. This she carried to the new arrival, hobbling across the floor with an uncouth, shambling movement, talking volubly the while in the patois which the girl had previously used.

The young man took the food and began eating ravenously, as if it was long since he had broken his fast. But the girl had dropped back into her old attitude of waiting, and did not move or speak.

Meantime, Giggles fought a battle with himself concerning the righteousness of eavesdropping. Finally, he decided that the end justified the means in this particular case, and that he would be quite within his rights to lie still, and listen to any conversation which might ensue between these strange people, amongst whom he found himself, since they had refused to answer his questions, or, at least, the girl had objected to gratify his very natural curiosity about himself and his surroundings.

His supper ended, the young man called

Marty put the bowl aside, and leaned back in his seat with an air of profound satisfaction, whilst he filled his pipe and lighted it.

Then the girl's patience broke down under the strain of the waiting, and she burst out, passionately, "Why don't you tell your news, when you know how badly I want to learn what tidings you have brought? It is like withholding water from one who is dying of thirst."

"But if the water in the cup is poisoned, what then? A person can but die once, and it avails nothing to prolong the agony," rejoined Marty, with slow deliberation.

A low cry broke from the girl, "Has Pat been arrested, then?"

"No, not yet; but search is being made for him in every possible direction, for him and Nelly, too," answered Marty, drawing long, slow whiffs at his pipe, and answering the girl's passionate inquiries with a calm indifference, which betokened him to be an outsider as regarded her trouble and pain, however much he might be interested in her personally.

"Where is he?" she cried, pressing her hands against her breast, and leaning slightly forward.

"How can I tell? He is missing, that is all I know. I say, Louise, perhaps there was some truth in that letter Nelly O'Riley wrote, for they say Pat disappeared just about that time, and with wages owing to him too. It looks as if he had been warned to slip away before things got too hot for him."

"I will not believe it, I tell you: it is all a hideous mistake, I am sure of it—or a parcel of lies invented by Nelly, who would do anything to spite him and me," retorted the girl. Then she covered her face with her hands, as if she were crying, and Giggles felt sorry enough for her to cry too—if he had been a girl, that is.

Things were coming back to his remembrance, as he lay quietly listening to the talk of the two by the door. He recalled the mysterious letter entrusted to him for his father, by the stranger woman on the cars. That letter had been signed "Nelly O'Riley." As the recollection flashed into his mind, he slid his hand up to his neck to feel for the bag, where he carried his money and the letter.

It was gone, of course. And then it flashed upon Giggles that he was the hero

of an adventure, which might, for aught he knew, prove very awkward for him indeed, since he might find it difficult to allay the suspicions of the girl called Louise, who appeared to be of a passionate disposition.

He remembered everything now with perfect clearness, the disaster on the Saguenay, when he and Squirms had been thrown into the water by the sudden heeling over of the yacht, and the blow on the head, which had followed his attempt to strike out for the shore. The pain of that blow was present with him still, causing his head to throb with such intensity, that he could scarcely endure the torture.

The manner of his rescue was easy to be imagined. Squirms must have towed his unconscious body ashore, and, by some means or other, these people among whom he found himself, had rescued and succoured him ever since.

How long he had been there he had no means of knowing, nor yet whether his fellow-passengers had been drowned. He was puzzling this over in his aching head, when a word of Marty's struck his attention, and caused him to strain his ears for the reply of Louise.

"Oh, they would never find him here; it will be weeks before he can walk again, and by that time the danger may be over," she answered confidently.

"But the dog—you can't mew a creature like that up as close as a sick boy, and, once seen, it would be all up with your little scheme, I reckon," he said, with a short, grating laugh, which made Giggles shiver, whilst his hand stole with a caressing movement toward the rough coat of his dog.

"I know; but what I should have done without the creature, is more than I can imagine. There's never a day passes without it bringing in partridges, hares, rabbits, and that sort of thing, and laying them down for the boy. It is such a dear, too; I declare, I've got quite fond of the animal."

"I daresay; a girl mostly can get fond of anything. But I warrant you won't feel much affection for the beast, when it walks in some day with the police at its heels. You'd find it difficult to answer their questions about this, that, and the other," he said, sourly.

"If I thought that, I would——" but she stopped abruptly, with her sentence unfinished.

"You would what?" he asked, standing up and stretching himself.

"I'd see that the creature went out hunting some day and didn't come home again, that's all. But are you going so soon, Marty? Why, you seem to have been here no time at all."

"It's latish, and I'm dog-tired too. Walk down the hill with me, Louise, the same as you used to do before Pat came," he pleaded, wistfully.

And, without a word, she strolled away at his side.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Squirms Disappears.

GIGGLES listened to the footsteps of the two growing fainter in the distance, whilst his heart beat fast, and hot anger strove with cold apprehension in his breast.

How he hated that girl Louise, just then, though, without doubt, he owed his life to her kindness and care.

But she had threatened to kill Squirms, or to have him killed, which was the same thing, even though she admitted that the dog had been her benefactor, and that she had grown fond of him.

But he, Giggles, was so helpless to protect his favourite, not able to stir from the bed on which he lay, his money gone—stolen, doubtless, by this girl Louise and her old mother—and with no means of communicating with his friends, his outlook was about as gloomy as it could be.

Louise returned after a short absence, and, coming to the side of the bed, spoke to him in patois, asking how he felt, whether he had

been awake long, and if he was ready for some supper? He answered as he could to the first two questions, but there was no mistaking his meaning with regard to the supper, for by this time he was so hungry that he could have eaten anything, even though his head was aching horribly.

She laughed at his eagerness for food, as she ladled out a bowl of the same savoury stew which the old woman had given to Marty, and, bringing it to him, sat down by his side whilst he ate.

Giggles surveyed her furtively between the spoonfuls. She was so very pretty and innocent-looking, as she sat beside him, chattering in that wretched patois, or in a broken English, which was almost as bad, that it seemed almost impossible she could be identical with the girl who had stood at the open door talking to Marty, and scheming to keep the knowledge of Giggles' whereabouts hidden from his friends.

If only his head had been clearer, and not ached so badly, the boy thought he might have hit upon some means of outwitting her even then; but, as it was, he fell asleep while she was talking to him, and knew no more until morning.

When he woke, his brain was clearer, his head had left off aching, and things did not look nearly as hopeless as they had done on the previous evening.

He was alone, too, saving for Squirms, who was contentedly gnawing a bone in the corner. But away through the open door, he could see the old woman and Louise at some distance from the house, busily engaged in doing something at a fire kindled in the open, over which a pot was slung, gipsy fashion, from three sticks.

The fire in the house had died down to a heap of smouldering embers, and the fresh morning air coming in at the door was cool and pleasant, driving away as it did the pungent, nauseous odour of the smudge, which, in its turn, had been so effective in driving away the mosquitoes.

Suddenly, an idea occurred to Giggles of a plan whereby Squirms might be saved from falling a victim to the plotting of Louise, and he himself be discovered by his friends.

This plan was nothing less than to bid the dog find its way home to Greenhaven. Giggles had sent him home once before from the school in Quebec, and the dog had gone

right enough, only he would not stay there, but had turned up at the school on the following day, with every appearance of being uncommonly well satisfied with his own performance.

The journey to Greenhaven from the wild country of the Saguenay, was of course a tremendous undertaking compared with finding a way from the school at Quebec to Colonel Delmayne's house, but Giggles believed the dog was clever enough to do it. At least, he would make him try.

"Good old dog, come here!" he called, softly; and, wagging his tail, the dog obeyed at once, bringing the bone with him, which he laid down beside his master with an air which seemed to say, "Wouldn't you like to have a gnaw at it, too?"

"No, thanks, I'm not particularly set on raw meat—not when I can have it cooked, that is," Giggles said, drawing the dog's ears through his hand, and thinking how horribly lonely and dull he should be without his favourite.

But there was no help for it, since the dog's safety depended on its absence; so the boy steeled his courage to face the

parting, determined to get the wrench over with as little delay as possible.

"Home, Squirms, home!" he exclaimed, in an eager whisper, and the dog threw up its head, looked round with a quick, impatient movement, and gave a low, whimpering bark, as much as to say the idea was very much to his mind, and they had better set off there and then.

"I can't come too—not this time at least. You will have to come back for me, and bring someone with you; but I want you to go home now, as fast as you can travel. Off you go, good old dog!" and putting both his arms very tightly round the dog's neck, Giggles gave the faithful creature a farewell hug, and made signs to him to be off without further delay.

A minute Squirms stood looking in doleful uncertainty as to whether his master really meant what he said; but Giggles swung his hand with an imperative movement, saying, "Home, home, good dog; off you go, make haste!"

Squirms turned then, and trotted out at the open door with never a look backward, even leaving the precious bone lying within reach of his master's hands.

But Giggles threw the thing across the hut, and then, diving his head under the blanket, shed actual tears of grief, because he had sent from him the only friend that he had near him just then.

By the time Louise came in to give him his breakfast, and to ask how he felt, Giggles had recovered from the worst of his despondency, and was even beginning to look hopefully forward to speedy release from his present irksome surroundings.

Louise herself looked tired and wan; she seemed irritable and suspicious, too, and was frequently looking over her shoulder, as if fearful of someone approaching her unawares from behind.

"Where is the dog?" she demanded presently, when a sharp glance round the hut had betrayed the absence of Squirms.

"He was over in that corner a while ago, gnawing a bone," replied Giggles, nodding his head in the direction where the bone still lay. His cheeks burned as he spoke, and he felt horribly guilty and depraved by his evasion of the truth. But he believed he had fallen among thieves, and that it was necessary to meet guile with craft.

"I hope he has not gone off hunting,"

said Louise, and Giggles noted that as she spoke she turned her eyes away, whilst her cheeks grew red as fire. "Some Indians have come to camp among the sugar-maples at the bottom of the hill, and they are setting snares for game in every direction. If they catch your dog, they will quickly kill him!"

"I hope they won't catch him, then. Dear old Squirms deserves a better fate than to be stewed into broth to nourish a lot of squaws and papooses with," rejoined Giggles, with a grimace.

"You should not have let him leave the house," she said, sharply, and with no little agitation in her manner; "I meant to have tied him up before I went out to do the sugar-boiling, only I forgot."

"Oh, he'll turn up again safe enough, never fear," retorted Giggles, with a thrill of joyful hope at the thought of the following the dog might bring. "Were you boiling maple sugar out there in that pot? I couldn't think what you were doing."

"Yes, for now the Indians have come, they are tapping the trees as fast as they can, and stealing all the best of the syrup. But it is always so in this world—if one has

a thing of value, someone else always steals it," she retorted, bitterly.

"Poor Louise," said Giggles, softly, adding, with an abrupt change of tone, "but why can't you get me a piece of paper to write a letter to my people at home, and then pack someone off to the nearest post-office with it? You would find it would pay better than boiling maple sugar, by a long way."

But she only flung out her hands with an impatient gesture, crying harshly, "Have patience! have patience, I tell you, and you shall go to your friends." Then she went away to her sugar-boiling again, and Giggles was left to his own meditations.

He could not make Louise out at all; the more he saw of her, the more she puzzled him. At one moment he was ready to believe implicitly every word she uttered, but another time he doubted everything she said.

All the morning long the two women were busy with the pot over the fire. It was late in the season for sugar-boiling, as Giggles knew well. But the spring had been late that year, and the country of the Saguenay was very cold and backward.

Presently, the old woman came hobbling

to the house with some peculiar-looking, ropy substance on a tin plate, which she offered to Giggles with a great deal of rapid gesticulation, and much unintelligible patois.

He tasted it cautiously at first, then cried out that it was uncommonly good, for what boy ever fails to appreciate maple-sugar?

He was still licking the sticky sweetness from his finger-tips, while the old woman pottered about, reviving the fire, and hanging the pot over, when Louise came flying up the path to the house, crying excitedly—

“The Indians have caught a dog in one of their snares, and I am afraid it is yours, but it is too late to save it, for the creature is dead already.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Warming to the Trail.

THE footman's agitated communication fell upon the little party in the drawing-room with all the force of a shock.

"Squirms? It is not possible!" exclaimed the Colonel, who was the first to find his voice.

"Let me see the dog. I am certain I should know it again," Herr Von Muller said, eagerly.

The footman was turning away in haste to grant the stranger's request, when there came creeping past him a poor, dejected-looking animal, whose bones appeared to be starting almost through its skin, and the hair of whose coat was worn threadbare in patches as if from much fighting and hard usage.

But it was Squirms, without doubt. Lady Katherine flung herself on her knees beside the dog and hugged him ecstatically, alike unmindful of the presence of Herr Von Muller and the footman, or the terribly dirty, dusty condition of the dog's coat

"Where is my boy, Squirms? Oh, doggie, doggie, can't you tell us what we want to know so much?" cried the lady, whose arms were still about the dog, which feebly tried to lick her face.

"If you please, my lady, the poor thing is dead beat, and half-starved. Shall I take it away, and let it feed and rest a bit?" asked Robson, who, in defiance of all domestic etiquette, had made his way to the drawing-room, where, elbowing the footman aside, he stood bareheaded on the threshold.

"No, Robson, I cannot have the creature out of my sight yet. Bring him food here—beef-tea, milk, anything that is best for him. Oh, make haste, or the poor thing will die," her ladyship cried, in a great state of terror, as Squirms dropped on the floor, panting heavily.

"That is the dog, I am certain," said Herr Von Muller to the Colonel, as Robson departed in all speed for the required nourishment, nearly knocking the footman over in his haste.

Just then, Ina came feebly into the room, supported by her maid Susan. She had heard of the arrival of Squirms, and had

come to see him. When she sank into a low chair close to the door, the dog tried to crawl to her feet, but, lacking the strength, rolled over on the floor, and lay there, panting heavily.

Robson came hurrying back with some strong beef-tea, which he had obtained from the cook, and, stooping down, he proceeded to administer it, a little at a time, with a tea-spoon.

Squirms soon revived under this sort of treatment, and, crawling feebly to where Ina sat watching him with the tears running down her face, he made such a demonstration of delight over her, that it banished her tears, and brought out the smiles instead.

"Good old dog, where is Giggles?" she asked, stooping over him, and patting him tenderly.

The dog lifted his head, gave a weak but joyful bark, and made as if he would go in search of *his* master; but Lady Katherine interposed, coaxing the tired animal to lie down on a cushion, and petting him until he lay quiet and at rest under her ministrations.

"We must wait a little, Ina, darling, or we may, through over-haste, destroy our

chance of finding out what we want to know so badly. Squirms is too weak and worn out to be fit for much exertion for a day or two ; but as soon as he gets his strength again, he will be setting off in search of his master, and then we will have him followed."

"Meanwhile, he will have to be watched pretty closely. We all know his little ways, and how he takes short cuts through windows, and all that kind of thing, when he thinks the time has come to start," remarked the Colonel ; and Robson, who was still on the floor administering spoonfuls of beef-tea at intervals, declared his willingness to sit up at night, if need be, in order to be on the alert when Squirms showed signs of moving.

"That will not be for a day or two," said her ladyship, who was bending down and examining the dog's foot. "Wherever the dog has come from, he has not walked very far lately ; there is no sign of his being footsore."

"It would most likely have come up river on the boat ; crept on board, like a stowaway, I expect," rejoined Herr von Muller. "May I be permitted to assist in the matter to its close, for I am very keenly interested, as you will understand?"

"We shall be very glad of your help and companionship," replied Colonel Delmayne, heartily; and then he pressed the savant to be his guest until the poor dog should be fit to set out in quest of Giggles.

That night Squirms slumbered in luxurious fashion on a downy cushion in Ina's room, whilst Susan, banishing all tendency to sleepiness, with quite Spartan firmness, watched by his side, feeding him at intervals with bread and milk.

Meanwhile, the railway people had been interviewed, and one clerk told how a conductor going through with the evening cars had spoken of seeing the dog come aboard the train at Quebec. Recognising him as belonging to the missing son of Colonel Delmayne, he had allowed him to ride as far as Greenhaven, where the creature left the cars, with as much wisdom and common sense as if he had been a biped with brains, instead of merely a quadruped with instinct.

Colonel Delmayne took prompt steps then for an uninterrupted journey for the dog as soon as he could be fit to travel. Every conductor going through Greenhaven was warned to treat the dog with every possible

kindness, and let him go unchecked if he should enter or leave the cars.

The police were warned too, and, as they were already actively on the alert searching for the missing boy, they placed detectives at the railway depots, with instructions to follow the dog if he was seen.

All the next day Squirms slumbered on his cushion in Ina's room, only rousing to take nourishment. And although no one ventured by word or movement to disturb the repose of the exhausted animal, everyone was waiting in breathless expectation for the dog to make a move.

When the second night came, Lady Katherine declared her intention of sleeping on a couch, ready dressed, to start at any moment when Squirms should deem the right time had come for taking his departure. The Colonel and Herr von Muller did likewise, not even removing their boots, through fear lest the dog should be too quick for them.

Mrs. Morris undertook the office of watcher that night, whilst Ina, who was sleepless from excitement, lay with half-closed eyes watching too, as the slow hours of the night wore themselves wearily away.

With the coming of the dawn, Squirms

woke up, sneezed violently, took an active turn or two round the room, barked once or twice in an encouragingly business-like fashion, and then jumped at Ina's bed with an imploring whine.

"Good dog, good old Squirms, go and find Giggles; bring the dear boy home!" cried Ina, patting his head with hands that trembled violently.

At that moment the door was thrown open, and Lady Katherine appeared on the threshold, her face white and strained in expression, her breath coming in quick pants, as if she had been running. She had heard Squirms' bark, and guessed that he was preparing to move.

"Mother, he wants me to go too. Oh, can't you make him understand that it is you who are going?" cried Ina, as the dog whined and scratched, pawing at the bed-clothes, as if inviting her to rise and come too.

Lady Katherine called to him, talking of Giggles in eager, impatient tones, until at last the animal seemed to understand, and, running to the door, whined to be let out.

The whole house was astir now, and cook,

in very nondescript attire, hurried forward with a cup of coffee for her mistress.

But Lady Katherine would not touch it. "I could not swallow anything now, thank you, cook, and we must follow the dog," she answered hurriedly. She went out of the door and along the drive to the gate, in the wake of Squirms, who looked back once or twice to see if she was coming, then went on his way with an absorbed air, which plainly showed him bent on business.

Colonel Delmayne and Herr von Muller followed behind, whilst Robson and the footman were standing among the evergreens by the gate.

"That dog means to board the early cars when they come through; that is how little master went. My word! the creature has got as much sense as a human!" exclaimed Robson, as Squirms turned into the road leading to the depot; and Lady Katherine, walking with a quick, firm step, followed closely after.

"It makes me creep; it ain't canny, as you may say, for a creature on four legs to know so much," the footman said, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he turned back to the house.

"It don't take much to scare some people, that's certain. When a person hasn't much sense himself, it's apt to be a little disconcerting to see a thing on four legs with an extra share of the same," rejoined Robson in a caustic tone, as he too turned towards his neglected work.

It was a very silent little party who boarded the cars that morning, Squirms still leading the way with an air of easy confidence, not dodging here and there to avoid observation, as on the morning when he followed Giggles away from home, but entering the cars as if the whole train were run for his especial benefit.

The same thing was noticeable at Quebec. The dog showed no hesitation, but went straight forward to the landing-stage, only looking round to see if Lady Katherine was following; of the Colonel and Herr von Muller he took no notice at all.

Two detectives had joined the party now, both keen-eyed, experienced men, and both of them feeling a covert amusement at following such a leader as Squirms. But the dog held the clue which they had so signally failed to find, and so there was nothing left for them but to follow.

People so well known as Colonel and the Lady Katherine Delmayne, could not fail to attract a certain amount of observation whenever they appeared abroad, but few of those to whom they were known ventured to accost them on this occasion. The heavy cloud of mystery surrounding the fate of the lost boy, set the parents apart in a solitude of sorrow, upon which no one ventured to obtrude.

The journey down river to Tadousac was performed without incident, but when the boat slowed up to allow the passengers to disembark, Squirms behaved like a wild creature, barking, jumping, and displaying such a mad desire to get off the boat, that Lady Katherine was in terror lest he should jump overboard and be drowned.

"He is warming to the trail," said the Colonel, as he held the dog fast, "and it may be, please God, we shall soon find our boy now."

## CHAPTER IX.

### An Unexpected Check.

A PARTY of Indians were encamped in the bend of a little bay formed by the winding of the river.

Giant cedars shadowed the spot, whilst every wind that passed bore on its breath the aroma of hemlocks and balsams, turning the wilderness into a scented paradise of delight. The edge of the water was fringed with dense beds of blue irises, now in full flower, whilst every little pool was covered with the starry blossoms of the water-lilies.

The wigwam was a temporary summer affair of birch-bark and bare poles, but it served as a place of residence for three separate families, an indefinite number of half-naked papooses, and several big, meek-eyed deer-hounds.

Most of the men were away hunting in the still, hot noontide. The squaws were busy about the encampment, whilst the little dark-eyed, dark-skinned children ran in and

out, up and down, playing such games as their fancy dictated, or doing their small best to assist in the household work.

One vigorous-minded female was fishing from a canoe, using her rod and line with the air of an expert, and killing her fish as she caught them with as much indifference as if the writhing, tortured creatures had been only mosquitoes or cockchafers.

Suddenly, a wild-looking, slender boy of twelve or thirteen, who had been prowling through the woods in search of bees' nests, came rushing back to the encampment, saying that a party of white people were coming on foot through the maple-lands, and a boat with a sail and a smoke was heading up the river.

Chitmunk's squaw, who was seated on a blanket, solemnly embroidering a knife-sheath in coloured porcupine quills, picked up an old iron pot, which she hurled at the head of the informant, because she did not believe his story, and desired to nip in the bud any tendency to prevarication in which he might be indulging.

But the boy dodged the pot with a deftness born of long experience in that kind of thing, and ran shouting down to the river, declaring

his intention of paddling a canoe down stream to sell fish to the boat with a smoke.

To this suggestion, Mrs. Chitmunk raised no objection, being of a very practical turn of mind, and desirous of making money, either honestly or dishonestly, whenever she could.

It was not more than three-quarters of an hour later by the sun—for there were no clocks at the Chitmunk camp—when a weary-looking party, comprising three tired men, a dog, and some Indian guides, came slowly filing down the steep, tortuous track, which led them from the maple-lands.

“The Rat was right,” snorted the squaw, but she felt no regret for having flung the pot at the boy’s head, although, in secret, she bemoaned the fact that she had not hit him.

There was a great scuttling to cover of all the papooses at this unexpected invasion of strangers. Those who could not reach the secure shelter of the wigwam, crawled into any patch of grass or tall herbage that was handy, trusting to their own insignificance to escape observation.

But the party did not stay even to exchange civilities with the squaws, further

than to drop a packet of tobacco and some gaudy handkerchief pieces on to the blanket of Mrs. Chitmunk, as they passed. They did not even turn their heads to look, when, forgetting the dignity due to her position as head squaw of the wigwam, she chased the retreating strangers along the forest track, shrieking out in broken English for them to look "at mocsins, an bir-bar basticks, at one, two, three dollars apiece."

To make matters worse, the indignant squaw recognised in the hindermost guide an old acquaintance, against whom she and her tribe had a grudge.

"Ha, ha!" she grunted, not in the sense of laughter, but with a peculiar indrawing of her breath, which made it sound like a curse. "Does the Duck Foot of Otonabee guide the stranger to the trail? Then, let the stranger look well to the ways of his feet, lest a need arise to swim on dry land!"

Just what this figure of speech really meant, it was not easy to understand, but Mother Chitmunk was plainly highly satisfied with it as she hobbled back to her blanket, and exchanged a few unintelligible grunts with a sister squaw, who was skinning an otter in the background.

The result of this grunting colloquy was that the otter-skinner slid into a birch-bark canoe, and, paddling down stream with great swiftness and dexterity, succeeded in overhauling the craft of the Rat, together with that of the fishing squaw, both of which were heading to meet the boat with a smoke.

What she said, or how she said it, does not transpire, but when she had delivered the message entrusted to her by Mother Chitmunk, all three canoes turned back up stream, making for the bay as fast as they could paddle.

A moment's delay there had been, owing to some display of rebellion on the part of the Rat, but a dexterous cuff on the head from a paddle wielded by one of the squaws quickly brought the young mutineer to reason, the canoes reaching the bay and being drawn out of sight before the boat with the smoke appeared round the bend of the river.

Colonel Delmayne, who, with the two detectives, the Indian guides, and Squirms, had passed through the encampment, was too intent on his quest to waste more than a passing notice on any object encountered by the way.

At Tadousac, they had found it impossible to induce the dog to remain on the steam-yacht, which had been hired for the navigation of the Saguenay. So, yielding to the suggestions of the police officers, he had left his wife and Herr von Muller to go slowly up river in the boat, whilst he, in company with the detectives and some Indian guides, followed Squirms on a tortuous, overland trail.

Sometimes they espied a solitary settlement, or passed within hail of an Indian village. Squirms steadily avoided these haunts of men, and stuck to the wilds, which served to confirm the opinion of his followers that he knew what he was about, and might be trusted to lead them straight.

They were terribly weary though, the four-footed traveller seeming to find the journey much easier than those who had only two feet to their share.

For supplies on the road they trusted to the boat, which kept pace with them by means of signals, and as the course pursued by Squirms was never far from the river, it was not difficult for the two parties to remain in fairly close communication with each other.

From choice, Lady Katherine would have

preferred tramping across country in the wake of Squirms, to sitting inactive on the boat. But she was not very strong, and dared not risk being made ill by the fatigue of long, forced marches across the rough forest land, when it was possible that Giggles would need all her strength and care when he was found.

When he was found! But would he be found? The poor lady had need of faith and patience through that slow time of waiting, whilst the boat crawled up the river; and the only thing that could be done was to keep a sharp look-out for signals from the party which travelled on foot.

In his cold, restrained fashion, Herr von Muller did his best to comfort her, and show how keen his sympathy was for her. But after all he was only an outsider, and could not be supposed to feel the same degree of anxiety which shook the mother's heart.

"We are getting very near to the spot now, Lady Katherine," said the savant, coming forward to where she was standing, with her eyes fixed on the wild, rocky bank of the river.

She smiled faintly. "That counts very little, because Giggles may not be anywhere

in that direction now. And no signals have been seen for hours past."

"Their course may have lain farther back from the river; you see the country is so broken and hilly here, that it may not have been possible to keep in touch with us," he answered, soothingly.

For answer, she nodded without turning her head; then, as the boat came round the curve opposite to the little bay where was situated the wigwam of Chitmunk, she called his attention to the thin, blue smoke rising from the forest green. "Herr von Muller, is that a house, a village, or only an Indian encampment?"

"An Indian encampment, I should imagine. Ah, yes, now you can see the wigwam through the trees, a little on your right it is. But it does not look like a permanent camp. I expect it is merely a summer abode; there is a large amount of sugar bush in this district, which attracts the roving red man."

"But are there no white settlers at all?" asked the lady, with an intonation of dismay. She was wondering if Giggles had all this time been domiciled in the wigwam of a Red Indian.

"Oh, yes, there are scattered settlements, and a few villages, but the white dwellers in these parts are mostly French-Canadians, and very poor. They seem to lack the enterprise and energy of your nation, whilst they certainly are not so frugal and industrious as my own compatriots," rejoined Herr von Muller.

"Ah, see, there is the signal on the top of that bluff yonder," cried Lady Katherine, in sudden excitement, as a bit of colour waved frantically for a moment on the summit of a point jutting out from the forest line, and forming another bend of the river.

The signal was replied to from the boat, and then the pace quickened. It had been so long since anything had been seen of the shore party, that the captain had slowed down to a mere crawl, through fear of outstripping those who journeyed on foot.

But scarcely had the little vessel swept round the bend, than a couple of rifle shots rang out from the shore. A preconcerted signal this, that something important had been discovered, and the captain proceeded to anchor, in accordance with his previous instructions.

Lady Katherine was in a pitiful condition of apprehension and anxiety. The Colonel had promised to fire twice when he came upon a trace of the boy, and three times if he found Giggles. But as only two shots had been heard, the mother's heart was weighed down with misgivings.

"Herr von Muller, I am going to land. There is something like a path winding up amongst those crags, and I cannot bear to stay here any longer," she said, when half an hour had dragged past without any further sign from the party on shore.

"Then I will come with you, though I think you would be wiser to remain here, and let me go alone," he replied in a cold, formal tone, all the colder, and more formal, because of his dread as to what that silence might portend. Dim visions of what the nature of their discovery might be were floating through his head, and making him feel how truly harrowing it might be for the lady if she insisted on landing; but nothing he could say sufficed to deter her, and so with some difficulty they were put ashore in one of the yacht's boats.

Lady Katherine was right when she spoke of seeing what she fancied was some sort

of path leading from the water's edge, as they found a well-defined track leading steeply up through a tangle of shrubs, tall grasses, and ferns. A quarter of an hour's scramble landed them safely on the top of that very bluff from which they had seen the signal fly.

Then Lady Katherine gave a little cry of mingled hope and dismay, for, on the landward slope of the cliff was a small clearing, in the centre of which stood a log hut. Before the door of this building were gathered Colonel Delmayne and the detectives, whilst at a little distance the Indian guides squatted on the ground in a circle, resting and smoking.

Even at the distance, Lady Katherine could not fail to see the dejection in her husband's attitude, whilst, at the same moment, as if in confirmation of her fears of disaster, a weird, mournful howl sounded from Squirms, who, though not visible, was plainly audible, and likewise in distress.

Trembling in every limb, she hurried across the rough ground of the little clearing, where the upspringing crop of potatoes was almost choked by a still more vigorous crop of weeds.

"What have you found?" she cried, with dry lips.

"Only this, and an empty house," rejoined the Colonel, in a tone of exceeding bitterness, holding out, as he spoke, a broken pocket-comb, with "G. G. Delmayne" cut on it with the point of a pen-knife.

Then Squirms, who had been wandering about the hut, lifted his head and howled more dolefully still.

## CHAPTER X.

### **The Boycott of the Duck Foot.**

FOR a moment the Lady Katherine felt the solid ground reel beneath her feet, whilst the weedy potato-clearing, the log hut, and the tall forest trees, swung round and round, up and down, in a wild dance of confusion.

But by a great effort she steadied her nerves, and regained her self-control. The time for breaking down must not come until the need for action was past.

"Where did you find this, and why is Squirms in such distress?" she asked, as the dog made the silent forest-land re-echo with his lamentations.

"We found it here in the corner by the bed," said Mr. Martin, the younger of the two detectives, stepping back into the hut whence he had but just emerged.

Lady Katherine followed him, her woman's eye taking keen and careful note of many evidences and details of recent occupation, which even the trained and experienced

detectives failed to observe, during that first hurried and disappointing search.

"Giggles has been here, that is certain," she said, looking round; "and if you found the comb there by the bed, he was probably hurt or ill in some way, and had to lie there. But see how little dust there is on the shelves, and how white that table is by the door. They were evidently clean people who lived here, and they have not long been gone away."

"But why did they go, and why did they make no effort to let us know about the boy?" asked the Colonel, who had followed his wife into the hut. Now that it had come to the point, he was readier to despair than she.

"That we have to find out. But evidently there has been a plot of some kind, and by a wonderful coincidence the people who rescued Giggles were in some way involved in it," she said, with one of those intuitions that appear to an outsider like second sight.

"In that case, we have only to follow our clues a little longer, and we shall have the whole affair unearthed and plain to understand," said the elder detective, whose name

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was Price, and who had a way of snapping his teeth on his utterances, which irresistibly reminded one of the snap of the handcuffs on the wrists of a captured criminal.

"Perhaps those Indians at the encampment under the hill might be able to tell us something about the people who used to live here," suggested Mr. Martin, who had been most carefully examining the rough little log house, inside and out, in the hope of finding some clue to the late occupiers of the deserted abode.

"Not a bad idea; we will go at once," replied the Colonel, whose drooping courage revived at the prospect of something to be done. Turning to his wife, he asked, "My dear, will you go back to the boat, or wait here until we return?"

"I will wait here," said Lady Katherine, who could not make up her mind to leave a place which offered even the remotest probability of affording a clue to the fate of Giggles.

Squirms, also, showed no desire to move on, but after howling until he had no breath or voice to make any more noise, he settled down in a remote corner of the hut, where he gnawed a bone with great

appearance of relish. Doubtless the savoury fragment was an old acquaintance, as he had unearthed it without hesitation from a heap of rubbish.

The elder detective remained with the lady, whilst the Colonel and Mr. Martin journeyed back to the encampment in search of information. They took with them the Indian guide who had displayed the most intelligence on the trail from Tadousac.

But by this choice of an interpreter and go-between, they made the gravest possible mistake, as the man they took with them was the Duck Foot of Otonabee, between whom and the family of Chitmunk existed so much rancour and hatred.

Herr von Muller was wandering about the little clearing, apparently botanising, in reality searching keenly for some trace of the missing boy, which might have been overlooked by the others.

The Colonel and his two companions went back by the same sloping path by which they had come, up the steep side of the bluff. But just where the ground dropped from the level of the cleared land, Mr. Martin stopped, looking curiously at a blackened hollow of the ground at the side of the track.

"There has been a fire here within a week, that is certain—for sugar-boiling, I suppose! Ah, yes, there are traces of where the molasses boiled over, or were spilled," and, stooping down, he picked up some of the loose earth, cautiously applying his tongue to the same.

"French-Canadian, no red man build fire like that," interposed the Duck Foot, pointing to a kind of projecting crane made by a tree-stump, leaning at an acute angle, under which the fire had been kindled.

"I thought so," remarked the detective, and then, frowning heavily, he was lost in abstraction until the wigwam at the bend of the bay was reached again.

A strangely-deserted look had come over the place. All the papooses, whether bound on boards, or crawling on all fours, had disappeared; there were no half-naked children running in and out; the squaws were nowhere to be seen, and the blanket entrance to the wigwam was most inhospitably closed.

"Why, where can all the people be gone? The place was alive when we came through not much over an hour ago," and the Colonel looked at his companion, as if asking him

to solve the problem; but the Duck Foot withdrew farther into the background, casting uneasy glances around him as he did so, as if meditating speedy flight.

"Something is wrong, apparently, unless the old ladies are away on a picnic, and have taken the babies with them," said the detective, coming out of his reverie with a start, but frowning more heavily than before. "Here, Jimmy Duck Foot, just poke your head in at that blanket yonder, and inquire if the ladies are able to see company, will you, please?" and he turned to the red man, with a significant gesture of his head towards the blanket-curtain.

The Duck Foot hesitated, but the white man's pay was good. Moreover, there was an air of command about the Colonel and his companion, which filled the man of Otonabee with awe, under the influence of which he moved slowly towards that silent, curtained portal, and, after calling upon those within to come forth, ventured, though very gingerly, to lift a corner of the blanket.

But his retirement was made in haste, and without dignity, for, as his presumptuous hand twitched the blanket to one side, there rushed out upon him a couple of deer-hounds,

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with snarling teeth and bristling hair, which went for him open-mouthed, followed by a clamour of shrill invectives from the squaws within.

Then he of Otonabee went too, fleeing back on the upward trail with the speed of a hundred deer, leaving the two white men to deal with the dogs.

Being unprepared for such an unlooked-for assault, they simply stood still and stared at the enraged beasts, and the equally angry women, which was by far the wisest thing to do. The dogs were impressed by it into turning away with their tails between their legs, and even the women's shrill voices dropped to sullen silence.

Then, when the clamour had hushed a little, the Colonel called out to them not to fear, as he had only come to trade, and to buy of them wisdom and knowledge, for which he would give them dollars, cotton stuffs, blankets, or whatever they would like best.

But the gentle occupants of the wigwam were not to be drawn, and, after using all the persuasive eloquence of which they were capable, and talking until they were hoarse, the Colonel and Mr. Martin were fain to

retreat without even the satisfaction of a parley to console them.

"If the men had been at home, we should have stood a better chance; but there is nothing on the face of the earth more difficult to reason with than a red woman with a wrong idea in her head," said the detective, with a baffled air.

But the Colonel turned, with a sudden horror shaking his erect figure. "Do you suppose any harm has come to the boy—that—that he has been in some way done to death among these people, and that it is fear which makes them so unfriendly?"

"No, I don't," rejoined the detective, bluntly; "I am much more inclined to believe that their conduct is the outcome of a boycott of the Duck Foot. If you noticed, the fellow hung in the background, looking very sheepish and silly when he found the wigwam closed; I had my eye on him then, for I thought he meant running away. But I was not prepared for the warm reception accorded him, when he poked his nose inside that blanket yonder," and the detective smiled grimly at the remembrance of the Duck Foot's flight.

"Still, we offered them ample recompense

for any information which they could give us, and the Indian as a rule is very keenly alive to the main chance," returned the Colonel, in a dubious tone.

"The men are, but the women, as I said before, are to the last degree illogical and obstinate, when there is any question of personal animosity involved. My own opinion is that *we* had better hang round the neighbourhood for a day or two, in order to see the men when they return, and pump them concerning the matter."

"Not a bad idea, especially as there seems nothing else to be done," said the Colonel, as they emerged, breathless with their climb, on the edge of the clearing once more.

Just as they reached the place where the remains of the sugar-boiling fire showed beside the big stump, they saw Herr von Muller coming towards them, with consternation writ large upon his face.

"Ah, sir, you have found something?" questioned the detective, as he hurried forward to meet the savant, and, with a half-involuntary gesture, signing to the Colonel to remain where he was.

"Yes, indeed," rejoined Herr von Muller; "I have found a grave. It is over yonder

in the cleared space on the other side of the house."

"Ah!" the detective drew his breath sharply, then asked in a brusque tone, "Anything in it, do you know?"

"What, the grave? My dear sir, you don't suppose I meddled with that, do you? Why, it would be sacrilege!" and the savant looked as shocked as he felt.

"Sacrilege, or no sacrilege, it will be my duty to see what is inside it, though. Would you be so kind as to get Colonel Delmayne into the hut yonder for some refreshment, and ask my colleague to join me here?" The detective's tone was urgent and peremptory, and Herr von Muller made haste to obey his behest.

## CHAPTER XI.

### The Rat Breaks Bounds.

IT is hard work digging with only pointed sticks for tools, and when, after a short search, Mr. Price discovered an old broken shovel under a heap of *debris*, the two detectives were ready to jump for joy, as schoolboys do over an unexpected holiday.

After that they took turns at digging. That is, one laboured perspiringly for five minutes or so, whilst the other lounged at ease, smoking a pipe; then they changed places, and the old shovel was thus kept in a state of uninterrupted activity.

The Indians had lighted a fire outside the hut, and the Duck Foot was rigging up a tent by means of the forked sticks and a blanket.

Inside the house, Colonel Delmayne, his wife, and Herr von Muller, were sitting in close conversation, whilst Squirms dozed uneasily in a corner, his sleep broken by bad dreams apparently, for he growled, barked, and moaned, waking up every now

and then to take an uneasy walk of investigation about the narrow confines of the hut, and then lying down again.

Lady Katherine had declared her intention of remaining where she was for the night ; and, as the Colonel approved of the arrangement, Herr von Muller did not venture to raise any objections to the plan, although the thought of what the detectives might find in that new-made grave yonder, so unnerved him, that it was all he could do to keep from shivering outright.

Husband and wife were still discussing ways and means of prosecuting a further search for their lost child, and the savant was maintaining his cold, calm self-control by a great effort, when suddenly Mr. Martin made his appearance on the threshold, very hot, very dirty, and with a peculiar expression on his face, as if he wanted to laugh very badly, only did not dare to give way to his feelings.

He addressed himself to Lady Katherine. "Herr von Muller found something which looked like a new-made grave in the clearing, so Mr. Price and I have made an excavation there. Would you like to come and see what we have found?"

"Is it——?" began the Colonel, starting up, but stopping short in his sentence, unable to voice what he wanted to say.

"Human remains? Oh, no, sir, nothing so dreadful, I am happy to say. "But if you would come and see for yourself, and you, my lady." Mr. Martin bowed with profound respect as he spoke, for the sorrow-stricken mother of Giggles was an object of profound veneration to him, because of the bravery of her endurance, and the uncomplaining patience with which she waited and hoped.

Lady Katherine rose at once. She had been sitting up for a brief rest, on the bed where Giggles had lain, and her thoughts, though sad, had not been despairing; for, like her husband, she gathered comfort from the reflection that the boy had been brought up to take care of himself, and would not be helpless under difficulty, as a more delicately-nurtured child might have been.

But, in spite of her hopefulness, she could not repress a shiver, when, reaching what Mr. Martin called the soft spot, she saw an open grave, or what looked like one, and Mr. Price standing by it, leaning upon his

shovel in a meditative fashion, with a face solemn enough for a chief mourner.

He lifted his cap in courteous salute as she approached, then, vaulting lightly into the hole, proceeded to display for her benefit the different articles which had been found there, stowed away in a long wooden case, not unlike a coffin.

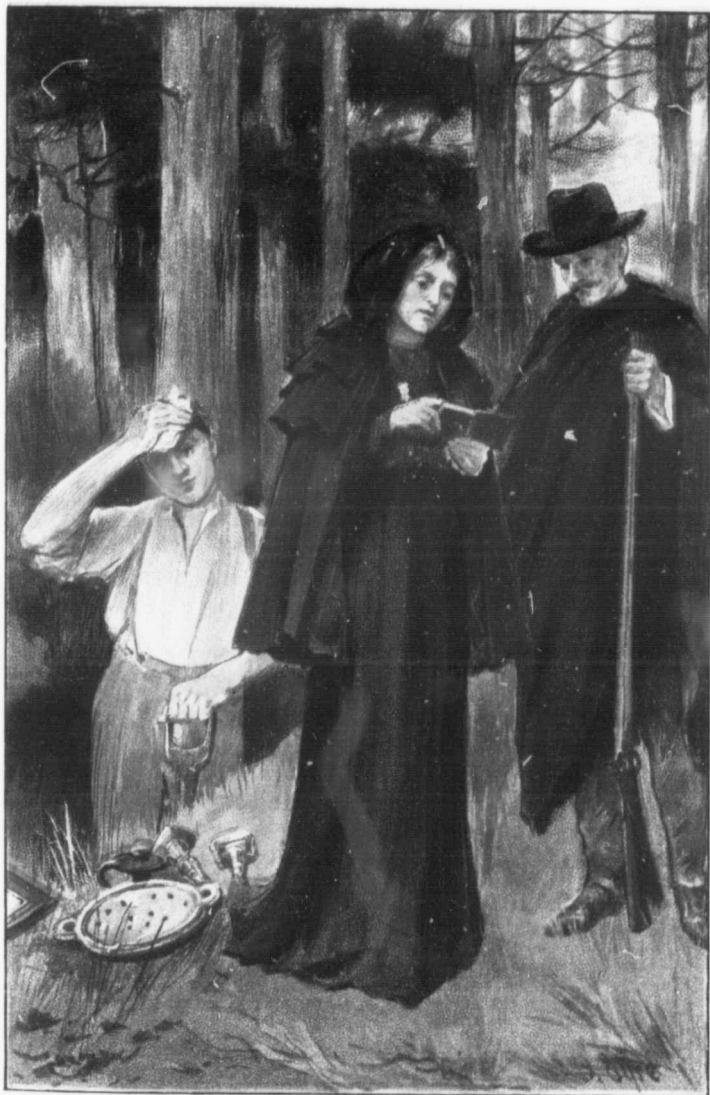
Evidently they were the household treasures of the people who had vacated the log hut, and consisted of a few articles of crockery, a pair of battered brass candlesticks, a skillet of the same metal, a small picture of the Madonna and Child, and an old copy of Irish ballads. This last, Lady Katherine took with some curiosity, then cried out in amazement, for, on the title-page was written—

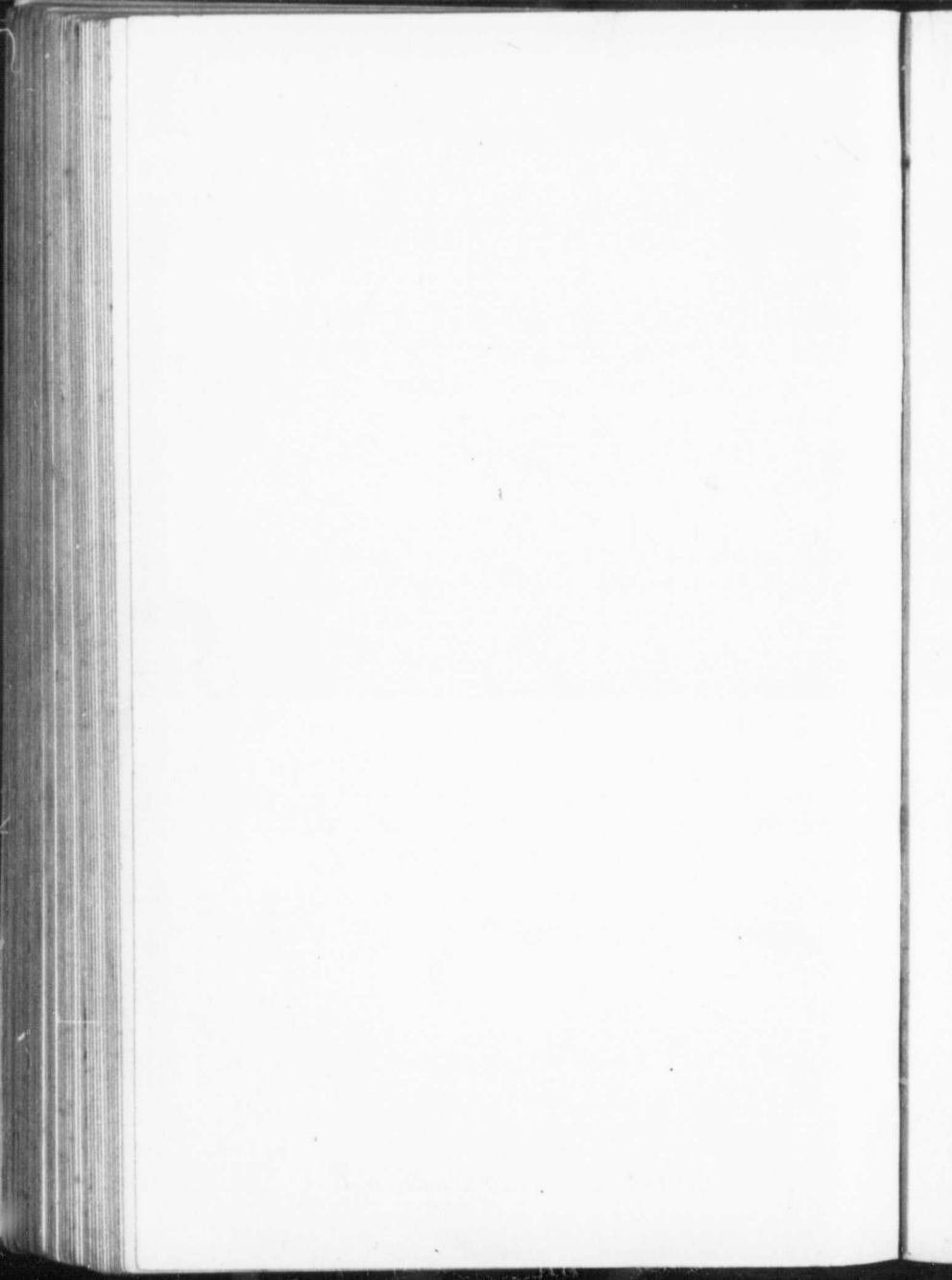
PATRICK MOORE,  
TO  
LOUISE PAYFILLETE.

“What is it?” asked the Colonel, startled by her exclamation.

“This,” she answered, holding up the book for him to see.

“Patrick Moore! Why, that is the man mentioned in the letter that Giggles was





bringing to me," the Colonel said, in a puzzled tone.

"Of course, and the boy must have fallen into the hands of this man's friends, with that letter upon him. No wonder it has been so impossible to trace him, or that Patrick Moore disappeared also! Oh, my son, my son!" and the poor lady broke down, sobbing in a fashion grievous to behold.

The detectives turned away, and were apparently very much engrossed in doing nothing at some little distance, whilst Herr von Muller walked off, battling with an emotion which made a child of him, savant though he was.

But the Colonel laid his hand on his wife's arm. "My dear, we have no reason to despair. If this seeming grave had contained the remains of our boy, then, indeed, we might have sat still in our sorrow. But we can still hope, and put our trust in the Divine Providence which has guided us so well hitherto."

"I know, and I pray every day for patience to wait God's time for finding Giggles; but oh, I am so tired of disappointments!" she answered, struggling hard with her tears.

"Perhaps we shall not have to wait so very much longer now," he said, encouragingly, trying to cheer her, as she had cheered him, when despair tugged at his heart-strings.

With considerable trouble, the two detectives succeeded in getting the box out of the hole: then, packing its various contents safely into it again, started, with the help of two of the Indians, to carry it down to the side of the river, and have it put on board the steam-yacht.

"It seems a little hard on the owners to carry off their property in this fashion," said Lady Katherine, as she watched the process of re-packing.

"They can have it again by making personal application for it. Meanwhile, it may be useful as evidence," replied Mr. Price, with a snap of his jaws, which made Herr von Muller jump.

The remaining Indian had wandered to the edge of the clearing on the landward side, searching for firewood; the Colonel and Herr von Muller had gone back to the hut to see that Squirms was all right; and Lady Katherine was standing alone at the top of the steep track leading down to the river, watching the men far below loading the box

on to the little boat, when a movement in the tangled shrubs and grasses at her side, made her start back in some alarm. She thought a snake or some wild animal of fierce nature might be lurking there.

To her surprise, however, it was a boy's face, with bright eyes and black hair well plastered down with fish-oil, which was thrust out from among the matted grasses, and a slender, brown hand beckoned her a little nearer.

Seeing it was only an Indian boy, and supposing he wanted to beg, she moved a little nearer to him, her heart wonderfully tender to all children because of her own missing one.

"I kin tell yer all about 'ems people as was here," said the boy, in an eager undertone. It was no other than the Rat, who, having evaded Mother Chitmunk's vigilance, and made a way of escape for himself by squeezing under the flapping birch-bark which formed the walls of the wigwam, had made his way up the hill, with the intention of selling his information for the very best price he could obtain for it.

The Rat had been to school during the last winter, and prided himself not a little on his

knowledge and command of the English tongue.

"What do you know? Oh, please, come out from that grass and tell me!" pleaded the lady, holding out her hands in winning entreaty, yet not venturing to move any nearer through fear of frightening him.

"What is yer trade?" he inquired, thinking it best to have the bargain properly arranged before he disclosed the nature and extent of his information.

Lady Katherine looked puzzled. She had no trade, and the question did not seem to the point either; but, being fearful of frightening the boy away before she had discovered what he had to tell, she said, "We will pay you well for anything you can tell us of the people who used to live there," and she pointed to the hut in the clearing.

"I know," he ejaculated, nodding his head sharply, and wriggling out of the undergrowth like a very active, brown snake; "and just won't the old woman be riled at yer for filching of her candlesticks," and he pointed down through the trees to the gleaming waters of the river, where the big box was at that moment being hoisted on to the deck of the steam-yacht.

Lady Katherine looked shocked at being mistaken for a common thief. "We shall let the woman have her things again when she comes to ask for them; meanwhile, it is as well to take care of them for her. But won't you come with me to the little house yonder, and tell what you know to Colonel Delmayne?" she said, smiling in order to inspire the boy with confidence, though it was all she could do to restrain her impatience.

"What's yer trade?" he asked again; "dollars, or goods?"

"Oh!" A light of revelation broke upon the lady now, and she hastened to satisfy him on the score of payment. "We will give money or goods, just which you prefer, only we must know first how much you can tell us, as that must determine how much we pay you."

The Rat shook himself as he turned to accompany the lady to the hut, and remarked thoughtfully: "I'd rather have dollars, they are easier to hide, and Squaw Chitmunk is a grabber; unless you'd trade a rifle for all I know?" and his black eyes fairly blazed with eagerness.

Lady Katherine was both diplomatic and

shrewd, so she hid her burning impatience under an aspect of calm indifference. "It is possible we might give you a rifle in return for your services, if you know all about these people."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the Rat, with a true Red Indian guttural of delight. "I kin tell yer all about 'ems; look, see, I know everything: the old woman, Louise, the yaller-haired boy, what the dog dragged out o' the river, and——"

"Boy, boy, if only you can tell me where they have taken him, you shall have the rifle and some dollars too!" cried Lady Katherine, too overjoyed to be prudent any more.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A Sure Hiding-Place.

GIGGLES grieved over the supposed untimely fate of Squirms, as one who has lost his best friend, and the fretting did him so much harm, that he lost what little ground he had gained, speedily becoming delirious once more. The hurt to his head was even more serious than the injury to his leg, which was not broken, as he had at first supposed, but only severely lacerated and strained.

Then Louise made a discovery which so frightened her, that she could barely wait with patience the coming of night, and the visit from Marty that it would bring.

The dog killed by the Indians was not Squirms, but a poor, half-starved cur from a distant settlement, and Squaw Chitmunk grumbled until she was hoarse, because the creature had so little flesh on its bones.

At first, seeing how Giggles mourned for his favourite, Louise was tempted to tell him of the mistake she had made, but desisted,

from prudent motives, remembering in time that it might be necessary for her to dispose of Squirms herself, seeing he had not met the fate she had hoped and intended for him.

Then Giggles began to rave in his delirium, and to talk of things which, in his senses, he would most certainly have left unsaid. He told Louise, in broken, incoherent sentences, that he had bidden Squirms go back to Greenhaven, that the dog would most assuredly find its way there, and then it would return, bringing help and succour with it.

No wonder Louise was frightened! The least sound made her sick with fear; and when the old woman, her mother, happened to enter the hut suddenly, thereby causing her to jump with apprehension, she turned upon the unoffending old lady with quick, fierce anger.

"Why will you startle me so, walking with a tread like that, and making me think it was Patrick who had come back, or—or some stranger?"

"It was not in my heart to frighten you, my child," replied the old woman, gently, in the patois which was her only speech;

but, if your ears yearn for Pat's return, something tells me you will have a long pain. I saw a vision last night."

"Oh, I want to hear of no visions," cried the girl, fretfully, and then she went again to stoop over Giggles, doing her best to soothe his delirious fancies, yet morbidly anxious to discover all that he, in his senseless condition, would tell her of what she wanted, though dreaded, to hear.

The boy, however, was babbling now of his home and Ina, talking of festivities and feastings, of picnics and parties, and all pleasant frolics: he was in the region of fancy now, and had lost even the memory of pain.

It was late that night before Marty came, and Louise paced restlessly up and down, fearful lest he would not come at all. But at last she heard his step on the steep path from the river, and hurried to meet him.

But again he had no news to give her, and only listened in chilling silence to the tidings she, on her part, had to tell.

"It serves you right, Louise, for not acting on the square," he said, in a determined and unsympathetic tone. "If you had not sought to hide the boy from his friends, then this evil had never come upon you."

"It was for Pat's sake I did it—you know it was—and to give him a chance to get clear away," moaned the girl. "When I read that letter, and found he was suspected, I thought my heart would have broken."

"You had no right to read the letter, to begin with ; it wasn't for your eyes, and you knew it," grumbled the young man, who was still unappeased.

"I had no thought of wrong in my heart then—that came afterwards. It was only pity and kindness that I felt for the poor boy when I found him lying on the river shore, with the dog keeping guard over him. And I read the letter only to find out to whom he belonged, as I told you before," she answered, with some heat.

"But, since then, you have done everything bad that came into your heart, short of letting him die, poor laddie," said Marty, with an inclination of his head towards the corner where Giggles lay, sunk now in a troubled sleep.

"I have done nothing at all, saving to keep silent when I should have spoken ; and I have tended the boy as a loving sister might. But, oh, Marty, I shall die if that dog comes back with the boy's

friends, and so harm should come to Pat through me !”

“Bother Pat ! But for him, there need have been no trouble at all,” growled Marty, in jealous anger.

“Can’t you help me, Marty ?” sobbed the girl, clinging to him in her distress, and looking more beautiful than ever in her despair.

His pity got the better of his anger then. He was, moreover, seriously concerned on her account, and, in his ignorance of the law, feared lest she might be arrested and imprisoned, on suspicion of being concerned with Patrick Moore, in a conspiracy against the life of the Governor-General.

“Would you like to bring the laddie and the old woman, and stay with me at Wolf Creek till the search blows over ? Then, when the laddie is better, I’ll put him down to Tadousac in my boat,” suggested Marty, who was resourceful and quick of action.

“Do you think it would hurt the boy to be moved ?” asked Louise, with a dubious air, though the brightening of her face was evidence sufficient of the relief his proposal brought to her.

“I don’t see why it should ; it isn’t as if

his leg was broken, and, if he's off his head, he won't know anything about it either. It's lucky I brought the big canoe, for that will take us all comfortably."

"How good you are!" cried the girl, with tears of gratitude springing into her eyes.

"I'm none so sure good will come of it, though. I hate things that are not on the square," he rejoined, grimly.

"It is only for a little time—just a few more days of silence, until Pat comes back, and this evil is past," she pleaded, with wistful eyes.

"But, suppose he does not come back?" persisted the young man.

"Oh, he will come back; something in my heart tells me that I shall see him again," she retorted, passionately, and then hurried to make the few preparations necessary for their departure.

The few fowls were caught on the perch and bestowed in a basket; the scanty household treasures were placed in a long box, and buried in the ground, beyond reach of the filching fingers of the Indians, who rarely violated a grave.

Then Marty picked up Giggles, blankets and all, and carried him down the steep path

to the river, Louise following with the fowls, and various bags and bundles, whilst the old woman, similarly laden, came last of all.

"This is a moonlight flitting, with a vengeance," said Marty, as, after stowing his passengers as comfortably as he could, he pushed the big canoe off into deep water, and sprang in after them.

"Hush!" breathed Louise, with her hand on his arm. "What was that?"

"I saw nothing," he answered.

"I fancied I saw a face, and heard something move in there," she said, pointing to where the bushes grew down close to the water's edge.

"You are nervous," laughed Marty, who felt he had accomplished a successful stroke of business that night. "But anyone would have a fine job to trace you to Wolf Creek, so you need not be afraid."

Then, as the canoe swept out from the shadow of the shore to the silvery light beyond, the Rat rose from his hiding-place in the bushes, and chuckled softly to himself. "Ah, but I know all about 'ems, and I'll tell it, too, when I'm ready."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### **The Mystery Solved.**

GIGGLES looked about him in surprise, mixed with awe. He was no longer in the rough little log cabin, with its fire in the middle of the floor, and the open door, which did duty for window as well; but he was lying in a small, comfortable chamber, with a boarded floor, and real glass in the window.

For one moment his heart throbbed with delight, for he thought his friends must have moved him whilst he slept. Then, the sight of Louise, moving to and fro across the outer room, destroyed that hope, and filled him with apprehension instead. His friends had evidently not found him, and the moving must have been done at the instigation of this girl, of whom he was more than half afraid.

But he called to her, to let her know that he was awake, and, when she came to his side, looked up at her with the question in his eyes which he did not like to put into words.

"Ah, I expect you are surprised to find yourself in such strange quarters?" she said, in affected good spirits, which did not, however, impose upon him.

"Where is it?" he asked, trying to keep his anxiety out of his eyes.

"You were so bad last night," she answered, in halting English, largely mixed with patois, "that we moved you over to my cousin's place, because the house is so much better for a sick person."

"Oh, is it far from the other house?" Giggles asked, the anxiety now getting into his voice.

"Only a little way," she answered, with a smile, not choosing to tell him that Wolf Creek was a good three hours' journey up a small tributary of the Saguenay River.

"Did you find out really that it was Squirms that was killed?" he asked, in a low tone, wondering if, by any possibility, he could have dreamed a thing so bad.

Louise hesitated, then remembered Marty's injunction to her not to burden her soul with useless lies, and, knowing herself to be safely beyond the reach of even intelligent Squirms, she resolved to tell the truth.

"It wasn't your dog at all. I went down

afterwards, whilst the squaw was skinning it, and saw for myself. I tried to tell you about it then, only you were raving so that you wouldn't listen."

"Ah, that accounts for my head feeling so queer this morning," he said, rubbing his hand across his forehead in a weary fashion, as if the pain and the trouble were not all gone yet. Then he asked, with a quick look round, "But where is Squirms?"

"The creature hasn't shown itself home yet," she answered, with a keen look at him.

Giggles flushed a guilty red, and turned his face away. He did not dare look at Louise just then, because of the gladness in his eyes.

Then he began to calculate how long it would take the dog to find his way home, and then to come back again. It could not be done under a week, he decided, and he set himself to wait with patience, spending his time, meanwhile, in getting strong as fast as he could.

The food at Wolf Creek was better than it had been at the log hut, and Giggles mended fast. He had no more returns of delirium, and his leg healed nicely, too. In three days,

he was able to leave his bed and creep out of doors to sit on the bench under the porch ; and, by the end of the week, he could walk without a stick.

Wolf Creek was about the most solitary spot possible to imagine. High hills, broken into cliff-like projections, shut in the horizon on the opposite bank of the creek, whilst towering forests barred the prospects at the back.

But Marty appeared well satisfied with his position ; he had a good stretch of ground cleared, a comfortable house, a cow, some pigs, and some poultry, whilst the fishing in the creek was not to be equalled anywhere in the dominion, as he told Giggles, with quite pardonable pride in his possessions.

Giggles liked the young man, for there was nothing underhand about him, and no suspicion of a double meaning in what he said or did. Accordingly, they soon became quite good friends, and if Marty was no more communicative than Louise, at least it was possible to believe him when he said a thing.

"I like fishing better than most things," Giggles said, as he sat looking out over the creek, whilst Marty descanted on the

privileges of his location ; "but I have never hooked a salmon."

"Then you shall, this very day. I'm not to say driving busy, and we'll take the boat a couple of miles or so up the creek, to some pools, where you'll stand a chance of a twenty-pounder," rejoined the young man. Then he hurried into the house for lines and tackle, and in a very short time they set off in a small boat, Marty rowing with steady, swift strokes, whilst Giggles steered.

They did not talk much on the way up the creek, for Marty was by nature taciturn, and his desire to shield Louise still further tied his tongue whilst in the presence of Giggles. The boy, too, was disinclined to talk. It was joy enough just at first to be afloat, and gliding up the stream, with the prospect of hooking a salmon by and by.

"Here we are," said Marty, presently, when a particularly gloomy part of the stream had been reached.

They proceeded to whip the waters, Giggles being by this time tremendously excited. After a short space, he got fast to a fish, and then for half an hour he had a breathless spell of hard work, finally landing his salmon—a big one—in triumph.

Marty gaffed it, when, suddenly, without giving them any warning, the creature wriggled over the end of the boat into deep water again.

Giggles yelled out in disappointment and chagrin, but Marty said they might easily find it, as the fish must be almost dead already.

Then he began moving the boat slowly backwards and forwards over the pools, whilst Giggles hung over the side, staring down into the deep, clear water.

Suddenly he came upon a sight which turned him sick and faint with horror, for, far down below, at the bottom of one of the pools, he saw a dead man lying.

"Look! look!" he cried to Marty, who, in his turn, peered over the side of the boat, and then burst out in exclamations of wonder and amazement.

"By the heavens above us, it is Patrick Moore, your worst enemy, my young master, and mine too, though, poor fellow, he never knew it!" said Marty, in a solemn tone, lifting his cap from his head, and staring down at his dead rival lying below.

Giggles also removed his cap, shivering a little in the unaccustomed presence of death;

and then he looked again at the still figure sleeping its last sleep in the icy cold water of the salmon pool, which at that place must have been twelve or thirteen feet deep.

"How did he come there?" he asked, presently, in a half whisper, as if fearful of disturbing the dead.

Marty shook his head. "I can't say. He went up to Haha Bay a few weeks ago, to fish, for a party of swells. Then he disappeared all of a sudden, and Louise was half mad with grief and terror, for she thought he had done something wrong, and was obliged to make a bolt of it. But this looks as if he was innocent enough, poor fellow! He may have been trying for a fish, and slipped into the water; there are so many dangerous places on these streams. Then the currents would sweep the body along for miles and miles, until it got caught in this pool."

Giggles nodded, took another look at the silent figure lying so far below, then, straightening himself up, began to tell his companion the whole story of the letter, and his journey up the Saguenay.

Marty listened in complete silence, and, when Giggles had finished his recital, said, thoughtfully—

"I told Louise at the first that she had better have been straight about the business, but she was off her head with terror when she found that letter in the bag round your neck, and read it." He sighed as he spoke, shaking his head over the lax notions of honour which had prompted Louise.

"But why was she so afraid?" ventured Giggles, who was beginning to see light on the mysterious behaviour of Louise towards himself.

"It was like this," rejoined Marty, in a confidential tone, as he began to row back down the creek, in order to take the heavy news to his cousin. "Pat and Louise were to have been married, but Nelly O'Riley, who hated Louise, vowed they should never be happy together, and Louise was always afraid she'd do something to part them. Then you were found half dead, and well nigh drowned, on the river shore, with the dog doing his best to fetch you round, poor creature! When she was taking your wet clothes off, Louise found that letter and the money in the bag round your neck. The money was put by careful enough for you, but the letter she read."

"Poor Louise!" murmured the boy, his

dislike and distrust vanishing together, now that he knew the cause of it all.

"To please her," went on Marty, "I set off to warn Pat there was mischief afoot, only to find that he had already disappeared; and, though he has been searched for high and low ever since, no one has ever seen or heard anything of him until to-day."

"Then there wasn't any plot?" asked Giggles, thinking what a lot of adventures and trouble had resulted for no purpose whatever.

Marty shook his head. "I can't say. Pat always seemed straight enough, so far as I knew anything about him. But the woman, from all I heard of her, was equal to anything. Hullo! what's up?"

He had turned his head momentarily as they were rounding the angle of the creek, and observed a most unwonted sight—a steam-yacht moored a little below his homestead.

"Perhaps it is some one come for me," said Giggles, with a great fluttering in the region of his heart.

"I hope it is," rejoined Marty, adding, with some anxiety apparent in his tone, "but I think you will believe me when I say that

I had made up my mind to start for Tadousac with you to-night."

"Of course, I'll believe it," replied Giggles, in a sober tone; then he shouted, joyfully, "why, there is Squirms!"

At the sound of his voice, the dog, who had been nosing anxiously up and down, along the shore by the landing-place, set up such an eager, delighted barking, as raised a hundred echoes in that forest solitude.

A number of people came rushing out of the house at the sound of the dog's vociferous welcome, and, just as the boat's head grounded against the bank, Lady Katherine reached the spot to receive her lost boy, safe and sound, and not much the worse for all his adventures.

The joy of Squirms was a sight to see. He first grovelled on the ground at the feet of his master, then took flying leaps in the air, danced on his hind legs, rolled over and over in sheer ecstasy, and finally lay down to rest between the feet of Giggles, lolling a red tongue out of his mouth, and looking the happiest, most self-satisfied dog in the Dominion.

But a heavy shadow rested on the happiness of the re-union, for the detectives had taken

Louise and her mother into custody, on a charge of hiding, if not abducting, the son of Colonel Delmayne.

The poor girl seemed half crazed with terror, though the fear was not for herself; and the old woman kept crying out to Marty to interfere, and drive the strangers away.

He did interfere, too, so far as to tell the Colonel and the detectives how he and Giggles had, that morning, found the body of Patrick Moore, for whom such active search had been made; and then he related again the story he had told to Giggles coming down the creek.

Lady Katherine would not hear of Louise and her mother being held in durance after that, and even the Colonel was won round to his wife's way of thinking, when he heard how unselfishly the girl had ministered to the wants of his sick son.

Then Marty rowed the detectives and Herr von Muller up the creek, to where the body of Patrick Moore lay in the deep salmon pool; and, as there is no use in arresting dead men, even upon suspicion, the two representatives of the law simply accepted Marty's identification, looked at the corpse, and came back again.

The party remained at Wolf Creek that night, and, next morning, at the dawning, the drowned man was brought down the creek by the crew of the steam-yacht, and buried in a grave which had been dug at the edge of the clearing.

The nearest church was thirty miles away, but he would rest peacefully enough under the shade of the mighty hemlocks and the fragrant cedar trees.

The Colonel read the burial service, whilst Louise, leaning on the arm of Marty, stood nearest to the grave, in the position of chief mourner. The others were all grouped closely round, the sharp-eyed Rat, who had guided the party to Wolf Creek, hovering in wonder and amazement in the background.

But Squirms lay fast asleep in the house porch. Other people's affairs had little interest for him; and, seeing that his beloved Giggles had been found once more, there seemed no other mystery left to solve, so now he slumbered in peaceful satisfaction.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Welcome Home.

"OH, Mrs. Morris, I cannot do any work this morning! I cannot even think of lessons. I do want to know so badly," said Ina, pushing her books aside, with a petulant, impatient movement.

"To know what, my dear?" inquired the governess, in an equable tone, just as if there was nothing unusual in the air.

"Why, all about Giggles! where he has been, why no one could hear anything about him, and whether Squirms did lead them straight to him, after all. Mother's telegram was so dreadfully brief and inexplicit," rejoined Ina, with a sigh.

"At least, you found no fault with it when it came," said Mrs. Morris, with a touch of severity in her tone.

"Oh, how could I? Think of the relief of it, after those days of terrible, racking suspense—to know that the dear boy is well, and that they are bringing him home again!" A bright colour flushed the girl's pale face

as she spoke, and big tears brimmed over from her full eyes to roll down her cheeks.

"You will be ill if you excite yourself so much, dear child," Mrs. Morris said, a little anxiously, for Ina's delicate condition was a heavy responsibility for her to bear when Colonel Delmayne and Lady Katherine were away.

"I don't feel as if I should ever be ill again, now that Giggles is safe. It made me so wretched, because, of course, it was entirely my fault that he went. And, whatever privation and misery he may have had to endure, he cannot have suffered more than I have done, sitting here at home, and waiting for news," she said, with a pathetic catch in her voice.

"I am sure you would be happier at work; it would absorb your mind, and make the time of waiting pass more quickly," ventured Mrs. Morris, anxious to divert Ina's thoughts, and keep in check her growing excitement.

"My mind refuses to be absorbed by anything, except Giggles and his adventures, this morning; so, please, Mrs. Morris, be merciful, and do not try to train the young

idea beyond its endurance," laughed Ina, but with so much real entreaty in her tone, that the lady yielded at once.

"It shall be as you wish, dear ; but, for your own sake, I must beg you to keep quiet, or you will be unfit even to look at your brother when he does arrive."

"Oh, I will be so quiet, that the proverbial mouse will be a brawler compared with me," rejoined Ina, with a merry laugh, though her lips quivered painfully. Then she lay back on her pillow, with closed eyes, striving hard to be patient, and to refrain from agitating herself beyond the limits of her feeble endurance.

Mrs. Morris looked at her, after a long time of quiet, and was delighted to find that she had fallen asleep. It was almost the first real, natural slumber the poor girl had enjoyed since the Colonel and Lady Katherine had started on their quest.

The governess stole softly away to warn the household that no noise or commotion of any kind must be allowed to break in upon the sleeper's repose.

The long, bright hours of that hot summer day swung slowly round in undisturbed quiet. The noises of the outside world could not

reach to the house, secluded in its wide gardens, or, if they did come, it was but as a faint echo, too distant to stir the restfulness of the place, even to a momentary alertness.

The servants talked in whispers, or kept silence, as they performed their daily task in a fashion so noiseless, that, for aught one could hear of them, they might not have been there at all.

The hot afternoon was at its hottest, when Ina stirred and awoke, roused from her long and deep sleep by a sound of distant hurraing, which seemed to be coming every moment nearer.

At first, she was too bewildered to guess at what the sounds might mean, then she heard the quick run of a man's feet past the window, and Robson's voice saying, in an eager whisper—

“Master Giggles has come, and the dog ; and the people are cheering like mad. They could not make more noise if it had been His Excellency himself.”

Somebody answered in an agitated undertone, but Ina did not hear what was said. She had struggled to a sitting posture, and thence to the floor, and was making her way

across the room, when the door opened quickly, and Mrs. Morris entered with a beaming face.

"I have come to help you, dear," was all she said, and Ina took her arm thankfully enough, getting out to the big porch just as the carriage containing the travellers turned in at the gate, whilst the people left outside in the roadway sent up cheer after cheer until they were hoarse.

But Ina, tearful and trembling, saw no one but Giggles, and heard nothing but his merry laugh as he sprang from the carriage to greet her.

"Oh, Giggles! Giggles!" she cried, stretching out her hands to him, "can you ever forgive me for sending you on that terrible journey alone?"

"It wasn't so very bad, not all the time, at least; and I hooked a twenty-pound salmon in Wolf Creek, Ina, and landed it too—just think of it—only the creature got away again!" he said, in a breathless, incoherent fashion, giving her a hug which almost swept her off her feet.

"I am so glad," she answered, smiling through her tears, and submitting to his bear-like caresses, with the feeling that

she could never let him out of her sight again.

"What! about the salmon? I'm not. But Marty says I'm to go to Wolf Creek for a month's fishing next summer, and then you'll see the sport we'll have."

Here Squirms interposed, demanding his share of the welcome, which, it is needless to say, was accorded him in unstinted measure by all the household, from Ina downwards.

Giggles and Squirms were regarded very much in the light of heroes after their adventures up the Saguenay, and many people who heard the story begged for an introduction to the dog and his master. The Governor-General told Giggles that he really deserved a medal, but gave him instead a watch and chain as being more useful, while for Squirms there was a magnificent brass collar, with his name and address in full.

Nothing more was ever heard of the woman Nelly O'Riley, or of the conspiracy to which she referred; and in time the authorities came to believe that the plot had never existed, saving in her jealous imagination and desire to work evil to those she hated.

Louise married Marty, when her sorrow for Patrick Moore had faded to a tender regret. And the Rat, who developed a strong fancy for machinery after his journey to Wolf Creek in the steam-yacht, became assistant stoker on one of the lesser river-boats, with the ambitious intention of rising to be an engineer in the course of time.

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