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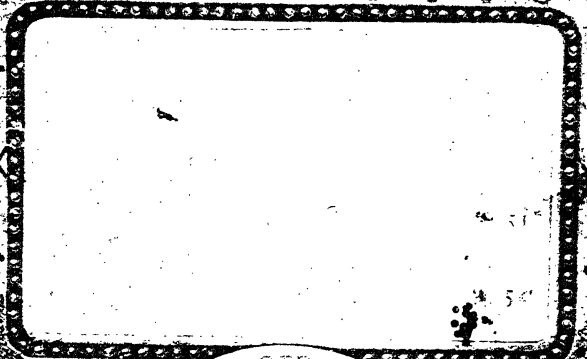
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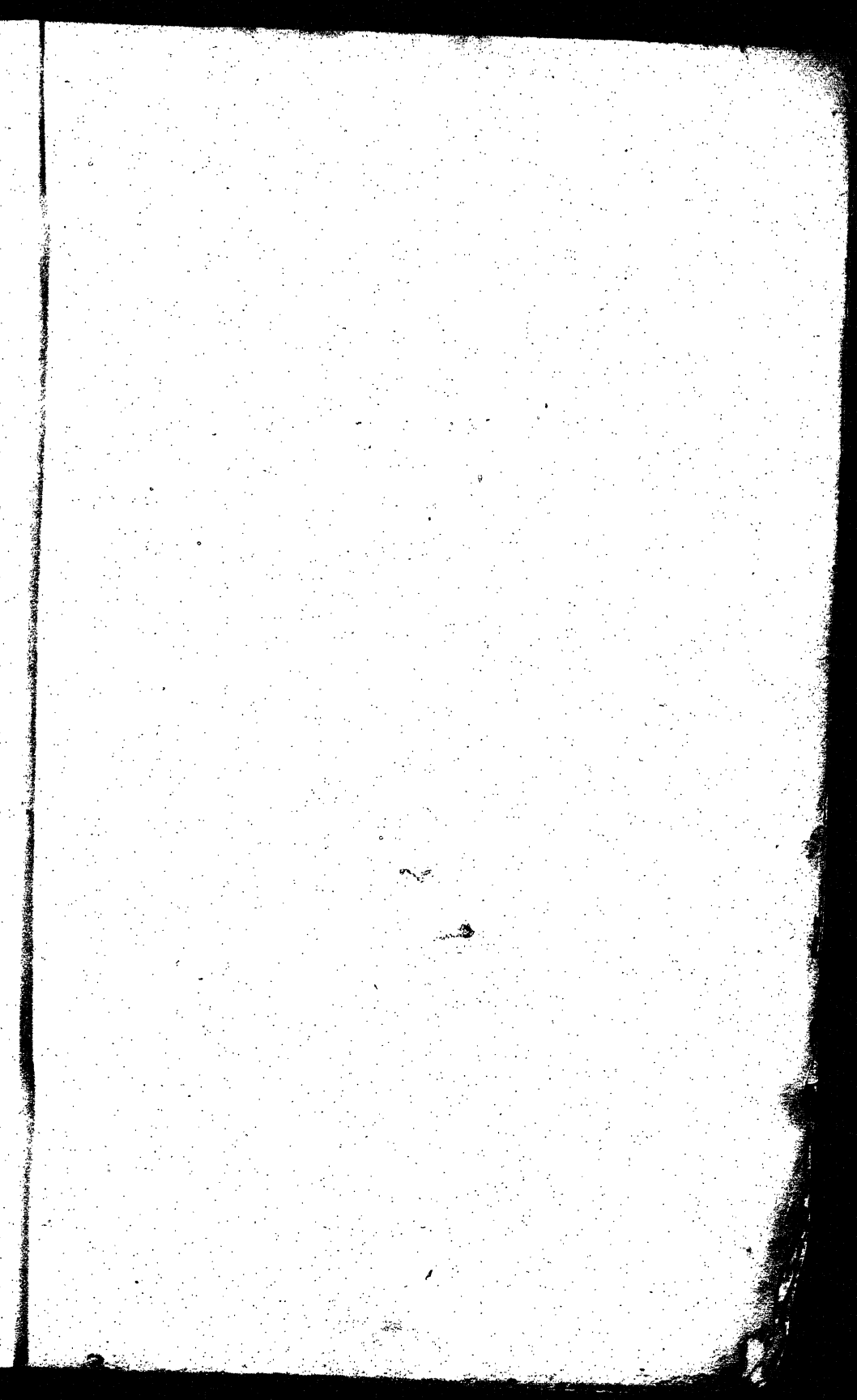
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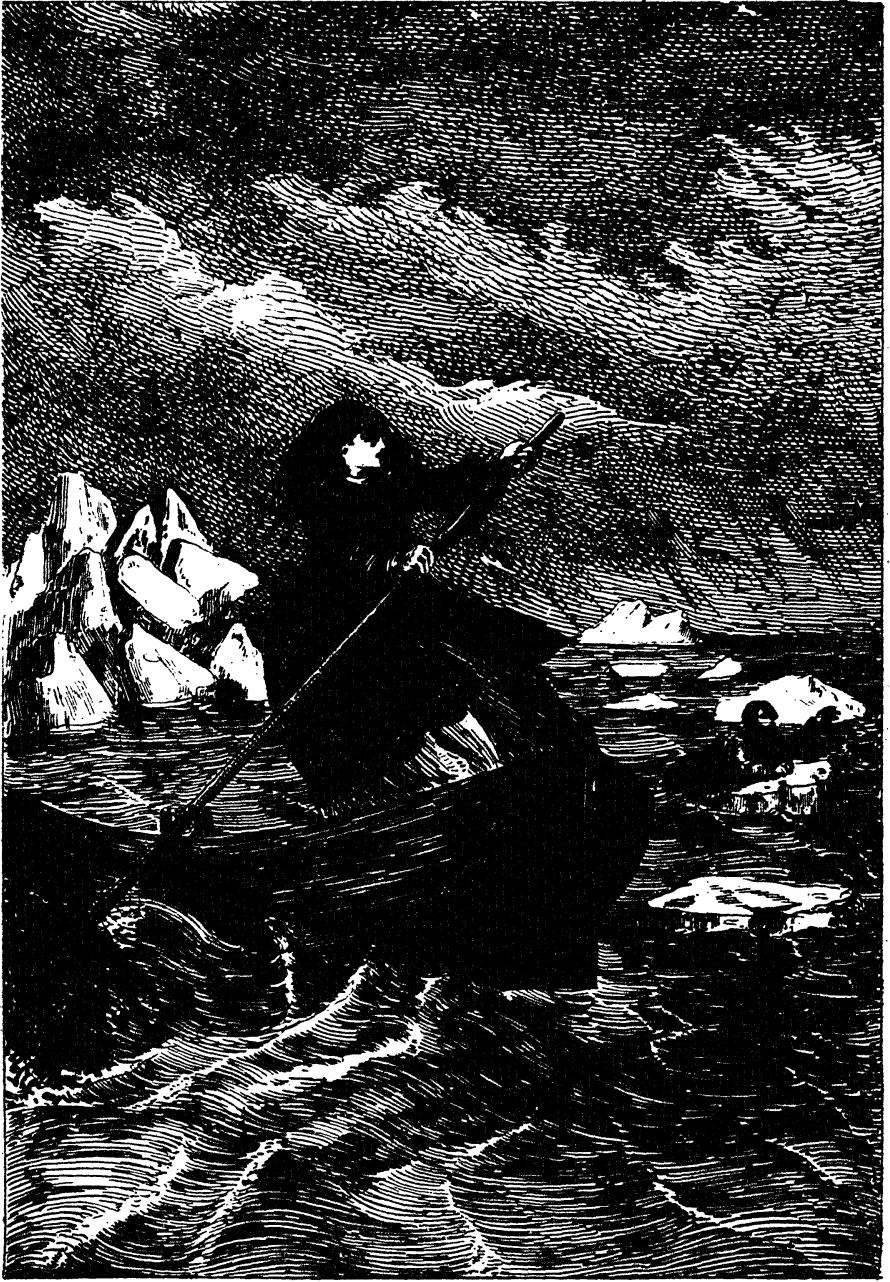
In reprinting in a cheap and convenient form the original Novels and Novellettes written for the *Canadian Illustrated News*, the publisher hopes to meet with a hearty support from the reading community of Canada. The moderate price at which these volumes are offered to the public puts them on a fair footing to compete with the light literature of other countries; and their style and incident, though neither so extravagant nor sensational, give a better reflex of the literary taste of the Dominion.

Of the five stories which make up the present volume, three are interwoven with stirring events in Canadian history, each marking a different period and dealing with widely different incidents: The writers are all Canadians and as such have some claim to the sympathy and patronage of our people, as the building up of a national literature is an achievement of great importance to the future of any country, and one which, we regret to say, in its early stages generally gives but small reward to the faithful and devoted toilers in the work. In this respect, Canada has heretofore been no exception; but it is hoped that now, when it has so far progressed in wealth, intelligence and refinement, and when the national spirit is evoked in the cause of every mechanical industry, the labours of the *littérateur* will not be neglected.

In this hope the publisher launches this little volume, and in proportion to its success will he be induced to follow it with others, and in turn to give greater encouragement to Canadian authors.

Montreal, July 1871.





"She steered straight in the direction of the voice."

(*Rosalba*, p. 5.)

ROSALBA;

OR,

FAITHFUL TO TWO LOVES.

INTRODUCTION.

AT GIANELLI'S.

THE coldest spot in Montreal is Place d'Armes. In summer, when all the other streets are steaming like furnaces, that pretty square is as fresh and breezy as a country lane. Its little garden is a bower, made sweet by the shadows of small trees and the spray of a central fountain, while its southern outlet, St. Sulpice street, reminds one of a Colorado canon, through which the high winds rush from the mountain to the river, with the force of a torrent. In winter, the garden becomes transformed into a species of Arctic cairn. The trees are not only stripped of their leaves, but their branches are broken short, and even the bark seems to crackle. The snow, piled high above the iron railings, gleams with peculiar ghastliness against the cold, blank surfaces of the stone edifices by which it is surrounded. Montreal Bank looks like a stately charnel-house where the stark nivalids are entombed. The turrets of the French Church, glittering like glaciers in the crystal atmosphere, cast their white shadows across the square, freezing the ineffectual sun rays. All that area seems desolate and uninhabitable.

Late one afternoon, in January, 1867, two gentlemen turned from Notre Dame street into Place d'Armes. One was a stout-built, athletic man, who seemed to bound along the pavement as if buoyed up by the keen air, and he held his head erect, in defiance of the storm. The other was a tall, spare figure, but almost double in his efforts to make headway against the blinding snow.

"Where are we?" gasped the latter, "I am almost blown off my feet."

"In Place d'Armes," answered his companion, with a ringing voice. "Here, of all places, you can have a test of a Canadian winter."

"It is frightful. I cannot cross the square."

"The *Hôtel* is only a few yards off."

"No matter. My breath is nearly gone. Is there no shelter nearer?"

"Oh yes," answered the stout man, with a laugh. "Here is the *Cosmopolitan*."

"Then, let us go in."

A few steps more, and the green-flannel doors swung upon their hinges. A draught of warm air flowed down from the lighted interior which expanded the feeble chest of the exhausted pedestrian.

"Ah!" said he, drawing a long breath, "heat is life, cold is death. How do you Canadians manage to live in such a climate?"

"We thrive in it, my friend. Look at me."

"I should die here."

"Not a bit of it. If you have weak lungs, our sharp air is the very thing to strengthen them. Damp is what kills delicate people. A dry atmosphere exhilarates and invigorates them, and ours is the driest atmosphere in the world. Canada is a far healthier climate for consumptives than Florida, and doctors are beginning to recognize that fact."

"A new argument in favour of annexation," said the first speaker, who had now fully recovered his spirits.

The two companions walked up to the bar, evidently quite amused at this last remark. Why they were amused will be understood when the reader is informed that the Canadian was a rabid anti-annexationist, and his companion an American who had come to Montreal purposely to study the history and condition of the country.

"What shall we have?" asked the American.

"Why, *Tonico Reale*, of course."

"*Tonico Reale*? What is that?"

"Did you never hear of Gianelli's Bitters?"

"Never."

"Well, what Tortoni was to Paris, what Delmonico is to New York, that Gianelli's is to Montreal."

"Oh! I see. One of those Italian caterers whose names are conspicuous in every capital of Europe, from London to Constantinople."

"And he has imported a bitter called the *Royal Tonic* which is all the rage here just now. With a drop of brandy it is superb."

"Well, let us try it. The brandy, especially, will be just the thing after the chill I have had."

An intelligent bar-tender is the life of a restaurant. Gianelli had one of these, a ruddy-

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faced, bright-eyed, quick-eared young man, who understood several languages. He had overheard a part of the foregoing conversation, and, in the twinkling of an eye, spun out two wine-glasses on the marble counter, filled them to within a line of the brim with an aromatic golden liquor, then added to each a bead or two of *Martell*—just a *larme*, as the French would say.

The Canadian sipped his glass, with the dainty leisure of a Parisian, as if to savour the sweetness of every toothful. The American, on the contrary, after the fashion of his countrymen, tossed his off, at one draught, and smacking his lips loudly, exclaimed:

"Capital! With such an appetizer as that, I think we can indulge in an oyster supper. Have you Canadians any national variety of the mollusk?"

"Yes, the *Caraquette*, a small oyster, rather salt, but very succulent."

"Well, let us have a dish of them."

The two Canadians were shown into an upper room, where they were soon busily engaged in enjoying the luxury of their repast. The sharp air which he had breathed, and the sparkling glass of bitters had edged the appetite of the American, who found his oysters so delicious that he called for a second plate. His spirits, too, were with the comfort which his warm meal produced. He could not help comparing his present sense of luxury with the deadening chill which he had experienced only half an hour before. He looked at the thick velvety carpets, the heavy, green damasks hanging at the window, the soft, scintillating gasolier, the lambent heat pleasantly reflected on the mica plates of the central stove, and he felt a delightful sensation of well-being creep over his whole person, as he lay lounging diffusely in his arm-chair.

"I enjoy this immensely," said he to his companion.

"I am glad to know it," was the polite answer.

"Yes, I have something of the artist's eye for contrasts. To me they are the poetry of life, as to graver thinkers they are its philosophy. I enjoy this warmth, because I think of the storm outside."

"Our Canadian life is full of contrasts, and I am, therefore, certain you will like it," said the stout man, who seemed to drift naturally into the current of his friend's thoughts. "Our life is very much like our climate—a rough cold exterior, but warm happy homes."

The American turned his chair, as if to listen more attentively.

"We seem a retrograde people, yet we have all the elements of progress. This must have struck you, as it does all your countrymen who come here."

The American was too courteous to make a definite reply.

"Then, we have much ignorance among us; the literary vocation is not encouraged, although we have a world of native talent."

The American listened with increased interest.

"Next, we are a timorous, shame-faced people, inclined to exaggerate our littleness and to magnify the prosperity and resources of our neighbours."

"I have noticed something of this already," said the American.

"The remark applies particularly to the French population, who are the original holders of the soil. Many of them are backward, unambitious, and seemingly doomed to perpetual inertness. One of our former governors had the impudence to brand them as an 'inferior race.' The insult has rankled, but it has not had the result of stimulating the great majority. There is a large class of French Canadians who look upon their English fellow-citizens as their betters. They hanker after inter-marriage with them; affect their manners; speak their language to the neglect of their own beautiful tongue."

The American smiled, and answered that he was acquainted with this species of folly. He had seen examples of it, at home, among the Irish and Germans, where the young brood, for some nameless cause, get ashamed of their fathers and nationality to palm themselves off for *native Americans*.

"It is a disgusting hallucination," said he.

"Especially," resumed the Canadian, "where there is so little reason for it, as in our case. For—and here please mark the contrast which I intend to enforce—the French colonized this country, civilized it, fought heroically for it, dutifully obeyed the new domination forced upon it by the capitulation of Quebec, and ever since—that is, for a hundred years—have held their own, spite of every physical and moral obstacle. They have reason to be ashamed neither of their ancestors, nor of themselves. Their existence to-day in the new world, after two centuries and a half of hardship, is a phenomenon."

"A phenomenon to be proud of," said the American.

"Their history, from the days of Champlain to our own, is a romance."

"I know that Quebec is the historic Province of the Dominion; Nova Scotia comes next, but her most pathetic annals are dated from the days of the valorous Acadians. I have come to study that history, and should be pleased to do so, with the guidance of such a philosophic spirit as yours."

"Thank you," replied the Canadian. "I presume to know less the history of my country than the social and domestic character of my countrymen. This I have studied deeply, with the many opportunities which have been exceptionally my lot. I should be most happy to assist you with any experience of mine in this special study."

The American inquired particularly into the rebellion of 1837. With its political results he was sufficiently well acquainted, but he seemed anxious to know whether the movement had had any marked effect on the internal condition of the people.

"The rebellion you refer to," replied the Canadian, "marks an era in our history. It is an event to date from. To men of my generation

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CHAPTER I.

THE ICE-SHOVE.

THERE is nothing lost in this world. In the moral as well as in the material universe, there is a recuperative force, a vitality that not only shrinks from annihilation, but ultimately triumphs over it. There was a germ of profound truth in the Pythagorean theory of Metempsychosis. A perfect transfusion and transformation of elements is going on around us, operating new effects and producing unlooked-for results. Not a tear is shed, not a sigh is heard, not a pang is endured in this passionate world of ours, that does not, sooner or later, far or near, secretly or publicly, work out its influences.

The traveller, descending the St. Lawrence from Montreal to Quebec, is struck with the picturesque site of the village of Varennes, perched on a high bank, within easy view of the Royal Mountain. It is one of the most ancient settlements of Lower Canada, bears the name of an honoured French house, and is mostly peopled by the descendants of those who, with the Bouchervilles, the Longueuils and the Contrecoeurs, figured in the wild, ungracious warfare which enlivened the early annals of New France. Varennes wears the quiet look of all Canadian villages, where nothing hardly ever occurs to disturb the routine and uniformity of a simple virtuous life which has few wants beyond the boundaries of the household. If now and then something unusual ruffles the serenity of its atmosphere, gossip runs high for a while—for this people are very talkative—then suddenly subsides with the even current of nursery tales. April 5th, 1837, was one of these remarkable days in the memory of the inhabitants of Varennes. The winter had been unusually severe, and the ice of the St. Lawrence held out longer than it had done for several previous years. The ice-shove or *débauche* is always an event—sometimes a critical one—in Lower Canada, and this year, it was looked forward to with unusual foreboding. Rumours had come from Montreal that the current was rapidly swelling, and that ice-banks were forming on the eastern end of St. Helen's island. Ominous rumblings were heard opposite Longueuil and in the vicinity of Boucherville islands. If, as some hoped, the ice sank enough at those points to make the tide rush over it, all would be well, and an easy rupture would take place in the Varennes channel. But the older inhabitants, who had studied the freaks of the great river, feared that the ice would resist all the more, for the partial openings above, and massing in cliffs along the Varennes highlands, would present there a tremendous breakwater. In that case, the northern bank of the river would surely be flooded, and the ice might create havoc even on the more elevated southern side.

April 5th was a day of portents. The sun rose bright and shone resplendent for three hours, then gradually receded behind a curtain of vapour. All that remained was a dull purplish ball, which

It is a starting point, but that is because it is the era of our Union. Outside of this fact, I can trace no direct influence it has had on the Canadian people. The rebellion was crushed before it became a revolution, and it is only revolutions, you know, that can materially alter a national character, one way or the other. Hence the Canadian people, barring always their steady advance with the wave of universal progress, have remained since the rebellion pretty much what they were before it. Still, there are numerous episodes connected with that event—scraps of the legendary and ballad literature of our village firesides, most of them still unwritten—which, while they give us a deeper insight into the details of the rebellion, testify to some of the personal virtues and vices of the French Canadian people in a period of unusual anxiety and danger. Many of these I am acquainted with—having heard them related by the old folks in my boyhood. One especially I have written out in full, because the personages included in it belonged to my own family. If you desire it, I shall take pleasure in handing you the manuscript."

"At once, if it is convenient," exclaimed the American, with the eagerness of the student who finds himself suddenly on the threshold of a new field of information.

The Canadian looked at his watch.

"Very well. It is now seven o'clock. We have had our supper. The whole evening is before us. So we shall light a cigar and proceed directly to my residence. Are you equal to a walk up to St. Catherine street?"

"That north wind!" replied the American, shaking his head dubiously. "I think we had better take a cutter."

"Sleigh, sir? Sleigh, sir?" was the hoarse cry that greeted the two companions as they stepped out of the *Cosmopolitan*. The Canadian carter is a peculiar but very uniform type. His winter aspect is an awkwardly muffled figure, with worn beaver cap drawn down over the eyes, red sash at the waist, thick moccasins, whip stiffly adjusted in the curvature of the thumb and forefinger, red nose, cheeks tanned by all weathers, slecty beard and lashes, and voice harshly resonant with the inspiration of a thousand snow-storms. The two gentlemen soon made a choice, for they threw themselves into the nearest sleigh, and rolling under the robes, away they flew over the icy streets. In five minutes they had reached their destination.

The Canadian introduced his friend into a cosy cabinet, showed him to an easy chair, and taking out of the library a roll of manuscript, laid it on the table beside him.

"Read," said he, "what a Canadian girl can do."

Accordingly, while he pored over *Les Anciens Canadiens* of De Gaspé, the American read what follows.

slightly in the nebulous atmosphere, like one of those semaphores set upon rocky ledges in the sea, or at the head of mountain viaducts to signal danger or distress. Old farmers pointed with trembling finger to that sign. Clouds upon clouds of mist arose from the direction of the city, like the smoke of battle or of a great conflagration, shooting up rapidly in straight lines, or slowly in languid spirals, till reaching a higher stratus of air, they banked in compact terraces over the broad surface of the river. The horizon was hazy and indistinct, now streaked with bars of pearly whiteness, then dimmed with masses of floating shadow. At times, the sounds of bells, the cries of men and animals could be heard from one bank to the other; then, as some sudden atmospheric change took place, all sounds were deadened, and the silence was painful. Evidently, there was the shock of currents and counter-currents on the face of the river, and the mysterious gyrations of some cosmic force down in its hidden depths. All physical science is merely empiric. We note signs, but we cannot investigate causes, and it is as well that it should be so, for if the elements were unveiled to us, even in a glimpse, we should be appalled from all further research.

The forenoon passed thus. The farmers said that if no change took place at meridian, the day would go on darkening, and there would be a crisis of some kind before nightfall. There was no change at noon. The sun flashed a little, once or twice, then disappeared completely. The wind rose gradually, first brushing the light snow from the surface of the ice, then reaching to the upper layers of vapour, tore them in shreds and drove them helter-skelter along the sky. Fool-hardy pedestrians crossing from one bank to the other, looked like muffled giants stalking on the edges of the horizon. Such apparitions—due to refraction—are frequent in boreal climates and give rise to many superstitions. The travellers themselves were as frightened as those on shore, for the ice crackled everywhere under their feet, undulated at times like a molten mass, and the water, gurgling under the numerous air-holes, seemed ever about to burst through and overflow.

Evening came at last, and with it a sudden lull in the storm. The Angelus bells from the turret of Varennes church answered, across the ice, the silver peal of the Pointe-aux-Trembles chimes. This was the signal for the crowd that lined the highlands during the day, to return to their homes. Some hoped that the weather would moderate, but the more knowing shook their heads and predicted that the present calm was the forerunner of a more furious storm. For that reason, many prepared to continue their look-out, rather than go in to supper.

An hour later, while the inhabitants of Varennes were quietly seated around their tables or near their firesides—many of them, perhaps, quite forgetful of the portents of the day—they were suddenly startled by a terrible sound that seemed to rock the foundations of their

houses. It was not like the dull roar of thunder, nor like the sonorous explosion of cannon, but rather a sharp, harsh clash, as if a Plutonian rock were hurled on some great metallic shield. Men and women started to their feet, children awoke in their cradles. "*La débacle!*" was the universal cry.

In a moment, the hill-side and the edge of the bank below were crowded with people. And what a spectacle met their eyes! The night, which was pitchy dark before, was illuminated by crepuscular gleams. It was the ghastly irradiation of the ice, piled up now in all kinds of fantastic ledges and blocks, here in the shape of a pyramid, there in the form of a Gothic castle or Cathedral, and yonder in an incongruous heap of phosphorescent fragments, suggestive of an earthquake or a wreck. The water roared and hissed as it struck against a solid barrier or struggled through a narrow aperture. Now it boomed like a cataract, as it toppled over some gigantic crag, then murmured like a brook, when it crept over the open spaces. The wind blew a hurricane. It seemed as if an array of blasts and currents, ice-bound during the winter, had been let loose with the opening of the river, and were now careering wildly in the cruel exultations of recovered freedom. Who knows whether the old fancy of the Æolian cave have not some scientific reality?

It was an hour of agony and suspense. The frightened inhabitants stood there waiting for the worst. As yet, they could do nothing. Behind them were their homes which the ice might tear away, or the water submerge. Before them, some unfortunate victims might be struggling for their lives, having been caught up in the bursting of the waters. There was one chance. If a second shove, equal in force to the first, came on soon, all danger would be past, because the shock would be sure to clear the stream. If, on the contrary, a sufficient interval elapsed to allow the ice to re-form a little, the consequences would be most disastrous when the final collapse came. Unfortunately, this very thing happened.

Ten minutes elapsed—twenty, thirty, forty minutes—an hour passed by, and no change took place. The ice stood firm, though the waters thundered and the winds roared as in mid-sea.

There was an old man who watched the catastrophe in all its phases, with more calm than the rest, and, perhaps, with more intelligence. It was the bellman of the church. He had foretold from the beginning of the evening how events would turn out, and at this stage declared to those around him that the crisis would come on at nine o'clock.

"Be on the alert," said he. "I am going to the tower, to sound the tocsin at that moment. We must arouse the people of the neighbouring ranges, in case their help is needed. That is, if they can hear the bell, which I doubt. Then, if any should be on the ice at that dreadful hour, the sound of the bell may indicate to them where to direct their cries. God help us and them! It is a fearful *débacle!*"

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The old bellman had guessed true. Scarcely had the last stroke of the ninth hour sounded, than a crash louder than the first was heard, and the masses of ice in front of Varennes sank into the water, like a tumbling mountain. A cry of terror flew along the crowd that was gathered on the bank.

"The water rises! The water rises!"

Those who were below rushed up the broad road which leads from the water's edge to the front of the church. Those who were above, being pushed back by the retreating crowds, broke into disorderly groups towards the first houses of the village. All was noise and confusion. But clear above the uproar tolled the bell of the tower.

CHAPTER II.

THE GIRL-PILOT.

As these scenes were enacted in the village of Varennes, where we cannot yet estimate how much mischief is being done, we shall descend the river a few miles, and there detach an incident, which, while it will give us a vivid idea of the dangers attendant on the ice-shove of the St. Lawrence, will likewise supply us with the first event of the series which is to make up the matter of our story.

Four miles below the village of Varennes, but within the parish, on the main road which overlooked the river, stood an isolated farmhouse, distant some twenty arpents from the nearest neighbour. On the night in question, the father and his two eldest sons had hurried up to the village, to see what was going on, and to render whatever help might be needed. They feared nothing for their own home, for it was so high up the bank that the river had never yet reached it, even in its most elevated flood. The mother remained within the house with the younger children, engaged in prayer for the salvation of such as might be in danger on that dreadful night. Their only grown daughter, after looking and listening from the doors and windows for a long time, at length crossed the road and leaned upon the fence which overhang the embankment. She was there when the tocsin sounded, and the mighty tumult on shore and river announced to her that the ice-shove was at its height. Nothing more was needed to inflame her imagination. She stood gazing down into the black abyss before her, lamenting over the fate of those who might be battling for their lives in its dangerous recesses. Fully half an hour had she thus been unconsciously buried in her thoughts, when on a sudden she was aroused by a faint cry far across the river. Was it fancy? Or was it really the shriek of a human being in distress? If it were, she felt—as she grasped tightly the upper rail of the fence—that she had the courage to go to his assistance. She heard the cry again, louder, clearer and more poignant than before. Alas! yes, it was a human cry, and possibly no one but herself could hear it, as it was brought to her by gusts of north wind which came beating on the bank at her feet.

There was a natural stair which led down the hill from the house to the river. She knew every step of its windings, having ascended and descended it from childhood. At the foot of the stair and projecting into the river was a narrow platform such as is used by country housewives on washing days. Fastening her hood and drawing her shawl over her shoulders, the girl rapidly descended the steps and ventured out on the platform. There, unmindful of the rushing water and the floating ice, she bent forward to listen. A third time the scream of agony arose, from the middle of the stream, in a direct line before her. She was electrified. What could she do? Answer the cry? She stood against the wind and her voice would be lost? Rush up the bank for help? Her father and her brothers were gone, and all that part of the parish was deserted. She ran back along the platform, and she struck her foot against some planks that lay across it. She then remembered the boat-house. In those days, there being no ferries or propellers of any kind, nearly every farmer along the river had his boat with which to cross from one bank to the other, and ascend to the "Foot of the Current," when that was required. Often had this girl rowed, single-handed, across the wide St. Lawrence, even in early spring or late in fall. She approached the little shed. The lock was fast, but the sides had been partly torn out by the ice. She stretched her hand to the boat. It was not frozen to the ground, but rocked easily on its blocks. She pulled it to her; it yielded easily. Seeing which, without further reflection, without expressing to herself even in mental words the wild resolution she was forming, she drew the boat from the house, launched it into the water, and leaped into it. She hardly knew what she was doing, yet every motion she made was clearly defined, and her courage was strung to the highest; for while she rapidly performed these evolutions—loud and shrill—louder and shriller—near and nearer—came the cry for help to her ears.

She steered straight in the direction of the voice. One ice-cake after another struck her boat, but as she advanced obliquely, they glanced harmlessly off the sides. The water was very thick and the current rather slacker than she had expected. These circumstances being in her favour, the brave girl plied a vigorous oar. What encouraged her was that the cry became more and more audible, so that when she had rowed about two hundred yards from shore, the voice seemed only a few feet from her. She saw nothing, however, though there was sufficient reflection from the ice to allow any object so large as a human form to be seen. Suddenly, too, the voice ceased its cries. Had the sufferer fallen into the water? Or, being in the water from the first, had he gone down, to rise no more? Was all this peril which she encountered to be ineffectual? For the first time since she had left the platform did the poor girl understand the critical position in which she had placed herself. Having withdrawn her oar from the water,

while looking around her for the object of her search, her boat began to shift with the current, and thus exposing its broad side to the action of the floating ice, was rocking very rapidly. A moment later, and some sudden shock would have capsized it. But at that supreme moment her keen eye descried a dark object a few feet on her left, and she fancied she heard a subdued moan. Grasping her oar with both hands, she dashed it into the water with a nervous stroke and, turning the front of the boat, shot right up to the object. It was the form of a man doubled up on a cake of ice, about two feet square. The hands and feet were nearly fastened together, the head was down, so that the forehead touched the ice. A low groan escaped from the struggling chest. The brave girl understood the situation at one glance. The poor exhausted victim was falling asleep upon the ice. It was the prelude of his death. There was no time to be lost. He must be awakened. But how? She might strike him with her oar, and thus arouse him, but the shock would so startle him as to make him lose his already unsteady balance. She might draw up her boat beside him, but besides that she had not the strength to lift such a dead weight, the very effort to do so would certainly overturn her little craft. Alas! what was to be done? Some ten rods below she thought she noticed that there was a large and solid bank of ice which was probably held by a series of frozen grapnels to the thicker shore ice. If she could reach that and propel the prostrate figure with her, she would there find a fulcrum wherewith to raise it into her boat. With the heroism of despair, she tried the manoeuvre and succeeded. Placing the fragile lump of ice to the larboard, she drifted rapidly to the temporary haven of safety. Then only did she venture to arouse the sufferer. He started up as if stung by a galvanic shock. He stood on his feet and his eyes glared wildly around him. Where was he? What was he doing? He heard a sweet, silvery voice saying: "Courage! Step out on the ice-bank and you are saved." Saved! That word was like a draught of cordial streaming to his heart. Summoning all his strength, he made a bound upon the bank. The slender cake that had supported him sank into the water like a stone, brushed under the bottom of the boat, then spun out into the middle of the river. The man was wild with excitement: he threw his arms aloft; and turned in narrow circuits, stamping his feet. He seemed not to see his deliverer, as she stood up in the prow of her boat. His one delirious sensation was to have a firm support under him. The girl spoke again: "The ice will soon break. Get into my boat and let us make for the shore."

The man trembled and murmured a few unintelligible words. His overwrought energies suddenly collapsed, as was to be expected, and making a few mechanical strides forward, he fell full on his face in the bottom of the boat. It was a syncope. The girl turned her prow and started rapidly for shore. The return voyage was far more dangerous, for she had to drift with the current, and might be

jammed in by blocks of floating ice. But Providence, that had enabled her to save the life of a fellow creature, was not to abandon her in the most perilous part of her adventure. As she looked to the shore, in order to shape her course, she saw the light of many torches on the water's edge and heard the echo of many voices.

"It is my father and my brothers!" thought she. And she was right. The father and his sons had returned to their home from the village of Varennes with the good news that less damage than was feared had been done by the ice and overflow. But the pleasure of their return was soon marred by the young girl's absence. Where was she? She was gone from the fence. They tracked her footsteps to the brink of the embankment. Could she have ventured down these steps? They descended. They ran out on the platform. Thence back to the boat-house. The boat was gone! In a few minutes the whole neighbourhood was aroused, and soon the bank was bright with torches. The excitement was at its highest when the thud of a boat was heard, and, full in the circle of light, stood the upright figure of the girl pilot. It was Dante's Beatrice ferrying her burden on the waters of Lethe! A moment more, and the prow grated on the bank. The delighted father snatched up his daughter in his arms.

"My dear, my dear, what does this mean?" She smiled for all answer.

"Are you not frozen? Are you not exhausted?"

But the poor delicate child had already fainted on his breast.

Meantime, four men had picked up the prone figure in the boat, and the procession ascended the hill to the farm-house.

The reader may be anxious to know the heroine's name.

She was called Rosalba Varny.

CHAPTER III.

THE BUREAUCRAT.

THE Varnys were among the most ancient of Canadian families. They ranked with the first settlers of Varennes. Their genealogy need not be traced to France, for it was essentially plebeian, and whatever prestige the name may have possessed was derived exclusively from virtues practised in the new world. It is one of the amiable delusions of French Canadian families to claim aristocratic origins, which the student of history laughs at, because he knows that only one or two really noble families settled in Canada. This people would be wiser to take pride in the sterling democracy which is the best feature of their country.

Samuel Varny, the head of the house, had, unlike the majority of his fellow-pioneers, acquired considerable wealth in real estate. His residence, though built after the uniform pattern of all Canadian farm-houses, betokened more ease and comfort than the generality of them. It was a large stone structure with a

erandah all around it, and extensive gardens encircling it from the outlying fields. The family retained the old Acadian simplicity of manners, and though affable for all their neighbours, preferred the seclusion and freedom of their own domestic circle.

The Canadian mothers are proverbially prolific, and Madame Varny was no exception. She had given birth to seventeen children, even of whom still survived. The favourite among them, the pearl of the family, was Rosalba, the subject of our sketch.

Rosalba Varny was by no means a faultless beauty, but she had many of the charming traits of the unalloyed Canadian type. None of your thin diaphanous creatures whose life is a perpetual jerk and struggle after effect, but broad-shouldered, full-chested, and with just that amplitude of flesh which betokens vital development and gives fair play to the lines and curves of beauty, without dwindling into the grossly sensuous or grotesque. Her hair was a light brown and there was plenty of it—one of the choicest signs of female health and spirit. Her eyes were deep blue, large and sparkling with expression. She was full of activity, but her deportment was always graceful, free at once from the gawdiness of the country girl, and the prim affectation of the urban damsel. That she was a brave girl we have already seen. Indeed, in presence of that feat, we might have dispensed with any detailed description of her person, for a heroine is always loveable, even independently of her charms.

We have said that though the Varnys led rather a solitary life, they stood well with their neighbours. This had been the case in the past, but it was not strictly true at the present stage of our narrative. During the winter that had just elapsed, political excitement had been great throughout the province. The elements were stirring which were soon to break out in open insurrection. Not only the large centres, such as Montreal, Quebec, and Three Rivers were agitated with the shock of contending opinions, but even the quiet country places were successively catching up the rumour of discontent, and busying themselves therewith. Of course, Varennes, from its proximity to Montreal, was among the first to take part in the movement. The vast majority of its inhabitants sided with the popular cause, and the few who either held back or pronounced against them, were already the objects of a hidden, but not less decisive hostility. It was only natural that those who had a stake in the land, who had a reputation for peaceful and loyal citizenship to maintain, or who had aspirations towards rising with the legitimate future of the country, should think long and anxiously before compromising themselves by participation in a movement whose results were always, but especially in its initiatory steps, extremely problematical. Such men were, of course, objects of suspicion. It has been said that patriotism is the virtue of the common people, not of the higher or wealthy classes. On the other hand, prudence is distinctive of the latter, and is never found

among the former. But patriotism without prudence is nothing worth. This, in the opinion of many then and since, was the mistake with the rebellion of 1837. Waiving the question of its justifiability, many believed that it was unwisely planned, and foolishly conducted.

Long before the insurrection broke out *bureaucrat* was an odious term in the eyes of the patriots. Whoever received that designation was effectually tabooed in his parish. This partially happened to the father of Rosalba.—Samuel Varny was suspected of being a bureaucrat. For months the suspicion had been spread, but it acquired some colour of consistency after the following little incident. Two farmers living in the neighbourhood had been discussing the political situation on their return from the Saturday village market. The bad rum which they had guzzled at the different taverns on the way had rather obscured their ideas, but it excited their passions.

“And Samuel? Do you believe it?” said one.

“Believe what?” asked the other.

“That he is a bureaucrat?”

“Samuel is my friend and a man of sense. I don't believe it.”

“But Lorient the inn-keeper has assured me of it.”

“Lorient has a spite against Varny because he always puts up at Alexis.”

“I shouldn't wonder, however.”

“How so?”

“Varny is rich and is apt to put on airs. Then there is his daughter, whom he has educated at a convent. She is no *habitant's* daughter, but a city lady, and they tell me he intends to send her up to Montreal to bargain for a marriage with some officer.”

“An officer!” exclaimed the other, with an oath. “See here, this is too bad. It must be inquired into. We are going to pass before Varny's door. We will stop and speak to him. What do you say?”

The first speaker hesitated a little, for, belonging to the class of small farmers, he felt somewhat awed at the idea of entering the mansion of the Varnys with an accusation on his lips, he who had rarely entered it, and then only with a full sense of his inferiority. Curiosity, however, and perhaps the ignoble desire of being able to inculpate Varny among his fellow-farmers, if the odious charge were not denied, prevailed upon him, and he assented.

A few moments later, the two knocked on ceremoniously at the back door of the Varny house, and, after the fashion of farmers, entered without waiting for an answer. They found Samuel Varny in his large kitchen, smoking his pipe after the evening meal. Each taking a seat, the more friendly of the two, bluntly, and without any oratorical precaution whatsoever, asked their host what he thought of the political state of things. Varny flared up at once and said:

“Did you come in here expressly to ask that question? Have you no other business?”

The small farmer twirled his cap sheepishly, but the other met his questioner's look without quailing. He had evidently got the better of his liquor.

"Samuel," said he in a more subdued and calm voice, "we are old friends, you know, and if I have addressed you that question, it is because I have friendly reasons for it. You see I have brought Bavard with me. He is to be my witness."

Varny drew his pipe from his lips and reflected a moment, then looking earnestly at his interlocutor, said:

"Well, let me first hear your reasons. I have no doubt they are friendly, as far as you are concerned, but they may not be such, after all, as to justify me in answering you."

"Varny, you are aware that this is an anxious time," said the visitor.

"I know it is."

"Spirits are very much excited."

"So I perceive," smiling maliciously.

"And it is every man's interest to let people know unequivocally how he stands."

"That depends."

"How?"

"On what people you mean."

"Why, in the first place, your enemies."

"I care nothing about them."

"But what if they should care about you?"

"Let them. I shall thank them for their politeness."

"But don't you mind their rumours?"

"Not a particle."

"And what about your friends?"

"That is another matter."

"Some of them may believe those ugly rumours."

"Then they are not my friends."

"Former friends become the worst of enemies."

"Alas! that is too true."

"Some of these have already threatened you."

"I despise their threats."

"Two or three are very violent."

"I dare them."

As he said this, Varny rose from his seat, looking very stern. A great passion was rising within him, but he contained himself so far as not to betray it too openly to his visitors. During the foregoing dialogue his eye had frequently rested on Bavard, and there was something in the fellow's manner which displeased him. It was upon him that he discharged the first volley of his ill-humour.

"Bavard, you have not yet opened your lips," said he sharply.

The small farmer bounded on his seat, looking puzzled and embarrassed. The man who is a bully behind your back is a sneak before your face. In both cases he is a coward.

"Mr. Sinard brought me in here as his witness," he at length replied with hesitation. "I have nothing to say."

"Witness of what?" rejoined Varny sharply.

Bavard looked at his companion, who, finding that the situation was getting awkward, took upon himself to explain:

"To come to the point at once, my friend,

I will tell you in one word what brought us here. On our way home, our conversation turning on politics, Bavard accused you of being a bureaucrat, and I made him come into your presence to hear from your own lips a denial of the charge."

"Accused me of being a bureaucrat?" roared Varny, pacing the room two or three times in towering anger, "and he dares come to me for an explanation? In my own house? Bavard, out of my presence, this moment. I knew you were a miserable gossip, but I never dreamed you had so much impudence. Off with you and never dare set foot on my premises again."

Bavard was a big man, physically a match for Varny, but he was so awed by the latter's voice and look, that he rose foolishly out of his seat! walked stealthily to the door, with his cap dangling in his hand, and stepped out with the hang-dog air of a whipped booby. Once, however, on the dark stair-case outside, he was in character again. His face assumed a hideous expression of anger and hate. Shaking his finger at the lighted window, he muttered the words *infamous bureaucrat*, and vowed revenge. Vengeance being a passion, for the purpose of vengeance a viper is often more dangerous than a tiger. Bavard was a viper.

During the altercation, Sinard appeared uncomfortable, probably reflecting that as he was the instrument of introducing Bavard in the house, he was amenable to the same treatment as he received for the insult which he had offered. He was even about rising to take his leave, when Varny, who had recovered his composure a little, walked up to him, and said in a quiet tone:

"You see that I would not give that beggar any explanation. He may think me a bureaucrat or not, as he pleases. But for you, the case is different. We can reason together. You are always a Papineau man, of course."

"Always," was the proud answer.

"Ready to follow him anywhere?"

"Yes, anywhere."

"Well, it is just here that we differ. I admire Papineau. I respect him. But I would not blindly follow him. I would blindly follow no man."

"Papineau is the greatest man in Canada. Hurrah for Papineau!"

The cry was uttered snappishly and almost aggressively. Sinard was evidently not much of a debater, and seemed almost anxious to drive his opponent into saying something disagreeable. But Varny kept cool.

"Papineau shares the fate of all prominent men. He is overrated by his friends and underrated by his enemies. I would try to adopt a fairer estimate of him. As a parliamentarian, he is in his *role*; as long as he remains there, I will support him. If he steps out of it, let him bear the consequences. For one will not follow him."

This declaration aroused Sinard:

"Ha! ha! you are showing your colours. Come speak out. Patriot or bureaucrat, which are you?"

"I told you before that I answer no such point-blank question. Patriot and bureaucrat

the catch-words. You may understand and interpret them as you like. I am above all a *Canadien Français*, proud of my race and ready to defend it against the world. This is the home of my heart. But I have likewise the obedience of my reason. That is devoted to the British Crown. We have wrongs, I know. I honour Papineau and his party for signalling them, and urging their redress. But their agitation must be only parliamentary. Thus only will they obtain justice. Russell will not always be a minister. But even if he remains in office, he will have to yield to our demands."

"You are opposed to an appeal to arms?"

"Most decidedly."

"It may be our only resource."

"It would ruin us."

"Why so?"

"Because it is treason!"

"Pooh! pooh!"

"And because it is suicidal."

"But we can succeed by a *coup de main*."

"Ah! my friend, that is the delusion of enthusiasm. I am sorry to see that several of your leaders share that delusion. They are preparing a movement which they cannot manage, exciting passions which they will be unable to control. That is my fear. I hope it will not be realized."

"So after all, though you are not against us, neither are you with us, if the worst comes to the worst."

"Our destinies are in your hands; if you injure the cause, instead of advancing it, I certainly am not with you."

"It is enough. Till the crisis comes let us be friends. When that arrives, it may perhaps be different."

"As you please," said Varny, in a gentle but firm voice.

Here the interview terminated. Sinard was not much the wiser for it, and neither, perhaps, is the reader, though the conversation was repeated in order to convey an idea of the attitude maintained by many of the most conscientious men of the country during the lamentable troubles of 1837-38. Sinard felt that though he could not precisely call Varny a bureaucrat, he could safely assert that he was not a "patriote" in the extreme sense which was already in vogue. This, indeed, was his double answer to those who, having heard of his interview with Varny, were curious to ascertain its results. The replies of Sinard joined to the more pointed lies of Bavard, who had lost no time in putting his threat of vengeance into execution, deepened the feeling of suspicion and growing animosity against Varny.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE MAPLES.

At the time when we introduced Rosalba to our readers, she was seventeen years of age, and, as may readily be imagined, she was not without numerous and devoted admirers. During the year that elapsed between her return from the Academy, where she had con-

cluded her studies, and the opening event of our story, the visitors to her father's mansion comprised representatives of the best families of the parish. On Thursdays and Sundays—the two days set apart in Canadian practice for courtship—her envious rivals said that there were as many horses hitched at her door, as there were before the church at the service of even-song. But during the previous winter, owing to the hostile feeling prevalent against her father, these suitors dropped off one after another. The girl, of course, not divining the true cause, imagined all kinds of personal reasons for this desertion. In the case of this one, she was amused; in the case of that, she was distressed. Some whom she barely tolerated—they were such bores—she was glad to get rid of, others whom she favoured, she grieved to see abandon her. And then, of course, Rosalba had her little girlish fancies and resentments. She was piqued to hear the whisperings of her rivals. It teased her to see the same young fellows who used to be so attentive to her, wait for other girls at the church door on Sunday mornings, or drive them through the ranges on Sunday afternoons. But these were all trifling disappointments and annoyances compared to the one great sorrow of her life, which was even then flapping its great wings over her.

It happened one Sunday afternoon, towards the middle of that same winter, that not a single visitor had called at the mansion up to four o'clock. Rosalba felt very lonely, not through any such gross feeling as the loss of mere male company, but because she was of an age when the heart hungers for sympathy, and pines to find itself suddenly abandoned by everyone. Long had she gazed from the gable window on the high road leading to the village, and seen sleigh after sleigh dash by without pausing at her door, and when the day began to glimmer, she rose from her solitary seat unable any longer to bear the load of despondency that weighed down her spirits. Going to the family sitting-room, she joined her mother who was amusing herself with the younger children. The fond parent immediately noticed the altered features of her daughter, and instinctively guessing at the cause, said a few pleasant words to cheer her.

"Take heart, Rosalba," said she, "and remember the old Norman proverb, for the many that go, one will come, and that one will remain."

By a singular coincidence, she had scarcely uttered these words, when a loud jingle of sleigh bells was heard at the door. The children rushed to the window, took a good peep and exclaimed:

"A new *cavalier* for Rosalba!"

"What a nice *Monsieur*!"

"Come and see, Rosie, come and see!"

Madame Varny smiled a maternal smile, but with a certain flutter of heart, as though she saw the fulfilment of her prophecy. But Rosalba would not go to the window. Sweet perversity of the feminine! She was certain that the visit was for her—that it would be a joyful visit, too, but she remained where she

was, apparently unconcerned, and with the traces of sorrow still imprinted on her face.

The visitor announced himself as Edgar Martin, asked to see Mr Varny, whose acquaintance he had made some time before during the Assizes. He hailed originally from Lotbinière, but had come further West, to study law in the district of Montreal. During his studies in that city, his tall, commanding person, graceful manners and agreeable conversation won him admission into the best society, while his talents and a remarkable gift for popular oratory made him a marked favourite in the political circles of "Young Canada." Indeed, in a short time, he attained the highest rank among the enthusiastic, generous spirits who were to the crisis of 1837 what the "collaborateurs" of *L'Acadie* were in the transition period of 1849. When he received his license to practise law, he selected Belœil as his abode, whither he carried with him the best wishes of his friends, and where it was expected he would become the local leader of the party of action.

A young lawyer, struggling for a livelihood in a country town or village, soon gets rid of his youthful illusions. He is not slow to learn that something more is required of him than pretension and gasconade. Edgar Martin had not been many months in his new sphere, when he resolved to apply himself strictly to his profession, and settle down to domestic habits. Being uxorious, like most Canadian youths, he cast about him for a suitable match, and thought the ensuing winter would be well spent if he used it in making a choice and succeeded in his wishes. He had heard of Samuel Varny and his beautiful daughter. The stories circulated against the farmer kept him aloof for a while, but when he made his acquaintance, he was so pleased with the open, frank manner of the farmer, that he asked and obtained leave to visit him and his family. It was in answer to this invitation that he called, as we have just related.

It is not essential to the interest of our narrative that we should enter into the details of the interview between Rosalba and Edgar. It will suffice to know that they took to each other at once, and, probably without being conscious of it themselves, engaged their affections irrevocably the one to the other. Indeed, it was a case of love at first sight. Edgar obtained permission to renew his visit, and though Belœil is some sixteen or eighteen miles from Varennes, not a Sunday passed without his attendance at the mansion. Of course, this sedulous attention could have only one result, and to it the course of our history leads us at once, leaving aside some intermediary events, which we shall take up further on.

One Sunday in June, about six months after his first visit, Edgar called with the intention of making a declaration to Rosalba. She seems to have anticipated him, for instead of coming forward to meet him, as she used to do, she managed that he should first have a private interview with her father. Edgar improved his opportunity, and after a few common-

places, turned the conversation toward Rosalba. The old gentleman, taking the hint at once, responded with characteristic French impetuosity,

"Yes, Edgar, yes. I never imagined that your sole object in coming out to my mansion was to chat with an old foggy like me. I knew you must have an eye on my daughter, and am glad of it, Edgar, glad of it. She is worthy of you, I believe, and I can't say more than that."

"Far above me," answered Martin, looking a little sheepish, though the glitter of his eye betrayed the immense joy which he felt. "Yes, I would venture to ask your assistance in advancing my suit."

"As to that," replied the old man, "I had rather not interfere. It is a matter between you and Rosalba. I managed that business myself when I was young, and so must you. If she asks my advice, I will put in a good word for you, but I must not otherwise influence her will. I presume you would like to see her this very afternoon, so we had better step into the other room where the ladies are waiting for us, with, perhaps, something nice to eat and drink."

"Ah! here you are at last," exclaimed Rosalba, who went forward to receive the two as they entered the large sitting-room. "I thought you would never end discussing your old politics."

"Are you quite sure, Rosie, that we talked politics all the time?" asked her father, playfully pinching her cheek.

"Why, certainly, nothing else could have kept you so long."

"Ask Edgar, then, ask Edgar. He will probably tell you what else we talked about."

Of course Rosalba blushed, and hushed up. Her little game had been betrayed. Edgar, too, drooped his eyes and looked troubled.

The father and the mother glance at each other and smile, knowing all about such things. The rest of the family take no notice of this love scene, and little Agnes—the youngest child—puts everything to rights by rushing up to Martin and asking to be taken into his arms. She is the *enfant gâté* of the whole household, and a great favourite with the young lawyer. When all had been seated at table, she climbed on his knee and was soon busily engaged foraging in his coat and vest pockets. She was of much assistance to him during the light luncheon that followed. Being seated beside Rosalba, he, of course, improved his golden chance as much as he could. Now a compliment, then a question, next an anecdote, all with wonderful effect, as he fondly fancied. But when he ventured on some expression a little warmer or more tender than the rest, he would suddenly duck his head into the white neck of Agnes, as if half ashamed of himself, or else squeeze her plump arms.

"You pinch me, Mr. Edgar," she would cry out.

"Ah! little fairy," he inwardly murmured, "if you knew how sorely I am pinched myself."

Justice was done to mother Varny's niece

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summer collation. Her creams, her French pastry, her fruit of different varieties received due attention and praise, as they merited, for her dairy, her kitchen, and her orchard were unsurpassed in those days. No wines or liquors were served, owing to the heat, but instead there was a delicious species of drink called *bière d'épinette*, for the brewing of which Madame Varny had a particular receipt. Several healths were pledged in this delicious beverage, and the last moments of the little feast—usually so irksome, because the guests do not know what to do next—were spent in exchanging philopœnas by the aid of almonds. Of course, Celestine had a philopœna with Edgar to be decided that day month.

"It is rather long to wait," said the young man.

"Not too long for my purpose," replied the girl with a bright smile.

"Humph!" thought Edgar, "she has a purpose in it. Well, so have I. I must win that pledge, by all means, and ask a mighty boon for its redemption."

Saying which, he thrust the kern I into his waistcoat pocket for a remembrance.

The rest of the evening was spent on the gallery fronting the river. The summer air was deliciously cool, and a faint moonlight vaguely revealed the most prominent features of the landscape. Rosalba and Edgar sat a little apart from the rest, half hidden among the convolvuli that clambered up to the roof. Though they took part in the general conversation, yet the young lawyer found ample opportunities to press his suit with the girl, who fought shy indeed, and never departed even once from the instinctive modesty of her nature, but was unable, in spite of herself, to dissimulate her pleasure at the attention she received. Martin, too, was highly satisfied with the progress which he fancied his courtship was making.

The tall French clock on the first stair-landing struck eleven.

"Eleven!" exclaimed Edgar. "I must be off."

"I did not imagine it was so late. We did not feel the time passing," murmured Rosalba.

"Stay over night, Edgar, stay over night," said the host. "We shall light another cigar."

"Thank you, Mr. Varny. It is impossible. I have far to go and must be at my office early in the forenoon."

Edgar remained sitting while he spoke, for Agnes was fast asleep on his knees. One arm was thrown around his neck, another lay hanging by her side, and her white baby face was shielded from the moonlight by the folded calyx of a morning-glory. Mother Varny had tried once or twice to ease Martin of his little burden, but he would not consent. Now, however, when Rosalba bent over the child to receive her from her lover, he whispered in her ear.

"May I meet you one moment, before I go?"

Rosalba held back, a little surprised. The young man under stood her hesitation, and immediately added:

"Not alone, Miss Varny. In presence of your father."

"In that case, yes," was the timid reply.

She then snatched up her little sister and retreated into the interior of the house.

It is wonderful what changes the soul can go through in a trifling space of time. The feminine heart especially, so sensitive, delicate and impressionable, often runs through a scale of transitions, with every beat of an excited pulse. These changes, too, frequently affect character and mark the most important crises of life.

When Rosalba appeared again at the threshold of the hall, her features betrayed a transformation of the kind. She looked serious, anxious, and almost frightened. There was the same sweet smile as ever, but her mouth was slightly compressed and the corners of her lips were indented, a clear sign that she was endeavouring to master her emotion.

As soon as he saw her, Edgar bade good-night to the family and turned to the front walk in her company and that of her father. The old man took the lead, pretending to be very anxious about his young friend's horse. The groom was just coming out of the stable with the animal, and he went forward to meet them, keeping in sight, but out of hearing of the two lovers.

Edgar understood that now was his chance.

"Miss Varny," said he, "this is altogether a day of happiness for me. Yet, I have one difficulty, which you only can remove."

"How so?"

"I would wish to speak to you unreservedly and yet hardly dare to ask your permission to do it."

Rosalba expected this, but was not yet thoroughly prepared for it. She answered not a word, for she was too violently agitated, and looked at the young man with an expression of utter sadness.

"May I speak?" he resumed boldly.

"You may," she whispered, almost inaudibly, her eyes fixed on the gravelled walk, and her cheek pale as death.

"My words will be few. I have them graven in my heart and have no others to say. I loved you from the moment I first saw you. I love you still with adoration, and no one can love you as much."

No lawyer's tricks about that. A plain, blunt, point-blank declaration of love. Yes! too plain; almost cruel in its bluntness, for the frail form of the girl swayed like a broken lily stalk in the moonshine, her eyes streamed with tears, her lovely head drooped, and she had to lean against a maple for support in her faintness. Let not cynics scoff, nor rigid moralists cry fie. God made the girlish heart and it is well. The love-arrow is planted in it now and it bleeds. No foolery in that, O wise philosopher; no, nor sin either, but one of the purest, the most exquisite, the most ecstatic torments of life. That one moment in woman's history compensates for all future disappointments, sanctifies the joys and sorrows of maturity, and sheds a halo even on the grim approaches of premature death.

Edgar did not presume to lay a finger on Rosalba to support her. He was lost in amazement at sight of her, and regretted his abrupt discourse, but his grief was soon turned to joy, on seeing that she gradually rallied and stood upright. Just then a puff of cloud that had obscured the moon floated away, and the soft, silver light fell full on the face of the girl. It was supremely beautiful. It was a transfiguration. There was a bright tinge on her cheek, her eyes gleamed through her tears with vivacity, and an ineffable smile trembled on her lips. The crisis was past—the dream was over. The words which had riven her like lightning flashes had been pondered and understood every one. The wild passionateness was gone; the calm felicity remained.

Did Rosalba speak? Not a word. Did Edgar? No, not he. He would not have broken that thrilling stillness for the world. He understood her—she understood him—that was enough. The communion of hearts is deeper and subtler than any words. They might have remained there under the maples till the glare of day had broken through the gossamer web that bound them, had not the old French clock been there to bring them back to their senses. It struck twelve. They were further restored to their consciousness by a loud laugh at the front gate. It was M. Varny making game of them.

"Your horse is nearly asleep, Edgar, but I am not."

Martin suddenly took out of his watch-pocket a small box which he placed in the hand of Rosalba.

"Open that this day month," said he; "and as that is the date of our philopœna, I give you that long to reflect on an answer."

Saying which he ventured to kiss the tips of Rosalba's fingers and hurried down the walk. She followed.

"Were you talking politics all the time, eh, Rosie?" asked the old man, as he placed his arm round his daughter's neck.

She looked a little abashed and he laughed very heartily.

Edgar mounted into the saddle and moved away.

"Good night!"

"Good night!"

"*Bon voyage!* exclaimed Rosalba, as the horse hoofs resounded on the stones.

On going up the walk the girl paused a moment under the maples, and pressing her lips on the little box which Edgar had given her, she hid it in her bosom.

Before parting for the night, the affectionate old father took his daughter's head in his hands, looked long into her large blue eyes, and then kissed her tenderly, saying:

"Happy dreams, my dear!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SILVER OAR.

We must return a moment to the events of that terrible night when Rosalba rescued the stranger from a watery grave. It will be re-

membered that both he and she were transported to the Varny mansion in a state of insensibility. Medical aid was immediately summoned, and the verdict was that the girl's condition required as much attention and nursing as that of the man, because her nervous system was very much shattered, and there were indications of brain fever.

Things turned out for the best, however, and after a few anxious days, the heroic girl entered into full convalescence. The rumour of the brave action which she had done having spread rapidly through the parish, public sympathy was aroused in her behalf, and all the young girls of the neighbourhood vied with each other for the privilege of watching at her bedside. This renewal of friendship contributed perhaps more than anything else to revive the patient.

As to the unknown man, next to the anxiety for his safe recovery, was the curiosity to discover who he was and whence he came. He himself was unable to furnish the information, for, although on the following morning he had regained his consciousness, he was far too feeble to speak. Neither were there any indications about his person of his name. However, Mr. Varny was not left long in suspense. On that day the mails from Montreal were delayed, owing to the danger of crossing the river, but on the next he received *La Minerve*, containing a long account of the disasters of the ice-shove. Among other details he read that the loss of life had been small, but that it was as yet impossible to give the names of those who had perished. It appeared certain, however, that Mr. Walter Phipps, a wealthy young merchant of the city, was of the number. He had left his office on the evening of April with the intention of witnessing the breaking up of the ice, and had not been seen or heard of since. It was supposed that he had ventured on the river, either out of curiosity, or to render assistance, and had been swept away. Then followed an editorial eulogy of the supposed deceased.

Immediately on reading this, Mr. Varny thought he had the clue—which he sought. Throwing aside the paper, he took a slate that was lying on a table beside him, and wrote WALTER PHIPPS in large letters upon it, then entered gently into the sick man's apartment. Finding him lying easy and with eyes open, he put the slate before him, with an enquiring look. The patient gazed a moment, smiled sweetly and gave a slight nod.

"Rest easy," whispered Varny. "*C'est bien!*"

Stepping out of the room, he quickly summoned his eldest son, and directed him to depart at once for Longueuil, cross there and drive to the *Minerve* office with the account of Mr. Phipps' fortunate rescue. If he could learn from the editor where the sick man's family lived, he should proceed to them and communicate the same facts.

That evening Phipps' business partner and other of his friends arrived from Montreal. They undertook the nursing of the patient, and did so with so much intelligence and as-

duity that, in a week's time, he was able to leave his bed and rest in an easy chair. As the last traces of winter had disappeared by this time, and the weather was very favourable, preparations were made to transport the convalescent to Montreal. To this arrangement he readily consented, being anxious to relieve the family of the trouble which his presence and that of his friends necessarily occasioned, but he felt that he had a solemn duty to accomplish, and could not think of departing before he had fulfilled it. He seized the occasion of Varny's usual morning visit to break the subject to him.

"This is going to be a beautiful day, Mr. Varny, and I think I cannot do better than profit by it to set out on my journey home."

The farmer repeated, as he had done several times before, that there was no hurry, and that the fair weather would benefit his friend much more in the country than in the city.

"Thank you," replied Phipps. "I can never sufficiently acknowledge your generosity, but I have delayed too long already and must really go. How is Miss Varny this morning?"

"Always improving, but still feeble."

This had been the answer to Phipps' repeated enquiries, for several days back, and it discouraged him.

"Must it be so, then?" muttered he to himself. "Shall I have to go without speaking to her? Will I not be allowed to see the angel who saved my life, fall at her feet, press her hand, and pour out before her the gratitude of my heart? When I heard what she had done for me, I could not believe it, and now the mystery returns upon me from the impossibility of meeting her before I depart. No, it cannot be so. I shall ask the favour of herself."

And rousing himself, he addressed the farmer again:

"Will you humour a sick man, sir?" said he.

"Anything to please you," answered Mr. Varny, with a smile.

"Will you ask your daughter to grant me a brief interview?"

"I fear . . ." said the farmer, hesitatingly.

"I will not be able to leave her, unless she goes."

"Then stay with us," said the old man, sadly. "No one dismisses you."

"Nor will I recover my health and spirits fully."

"Ah! that is another matter. I will, then, go and see."

The reader will readily understand why Phipps was so desirous of seeing Rosalba. He will understand, too, that there was literally no exaggeration in the declaration that he could not thoroughly rally unless he did see her. What, perhaps, will be more difficult to account for, is the fact that the young girl was not desirous of seeing Phipps. Nay, she was afraid to meet him. It is characteristic of certain high natures—and Rosalba's was of the highest—that when two lines of duty, seemingly antagonistic, cross themselves in their heart, such natures make it their religion to

be faithful to both, and, because this is an exquisitely difficult thing to do, they try to prevent or postpone as much as possible the meeting of these sentiments. This is a weakness it is true, but it is excusable in view of the fidelity which it is intended to safeguard.

It would be too much to say that Rosalba loved Walter. Love is a definite feeling, and, under the circumstances, no such feeling could be defined in her heart. But next to that, Walter could not be otherwise than very dear to her. Did she not save his life at the peril of her own? Thenceforth, even in spite of herself, he was more to her than any other, one only excepted.

And then, Rosalba was a perspicacious girl. She knew instinctively what must be Walter's sentiments towards her. Judging him by her own standard, she was certain that he was ready to devote himself entirely to her—sacrifice himself, if need be, in the discharge of his gratitude. In other words—though she hardly represented it to herself thus crudely—he loved her and only awaited the occasion of their first meeting to declare it.

Entertaining these views, is it not reasonable, after all, that she should dread an interview with him?

When her father announced Walter's desire, she promptly refused, alleging her convalescence as an excuse. When he gently pressed her, she burst into tears. Finally, reflecting that the request would certainly be urged—with a pertinacity which she thoroughly understood—until it was granted at last, she yielded reluctantly and bade her father tell Mr. Phipps that she should meet him within half an hour in the parlour.

"What is she like? Is she the beauty that I have pictured in my feverish dreams? Is she a robust country lass that would do any muscular work as well as she saved me from the ice? Or is she really feminine in the delicacy of her strength, so that her heroism is all the more wonderful, because it is beyond her nature?" These and similar questions occupied the thoughts of Walter as he sat in the parlour, awaiting the promised interview.

Suddenly, when he turned from the window-panes where his vacant eyes had been staring, Rosalba had advanced half way across the room. The sight of her startled him from his seat. "Heavens! Was this really she? No! she was not like any of his imaginations? She was beautiful; how could he believe her other? She was robust, but tender and delicate withal. He saw in her all that makes the pathos of feminine weakness and the sublimity of female heroism. And the paleness of her features, deepened by the whiteness of the morning-dress which she wore, reminded him of the danger she had encountered and the sufferings she had undergone for his sake. He had prepared a long address of thanks, but this utterly failed him at sight of her. Following a single impulse, he threw himself on his knees before her and exclaimed:

"Miss Varny, my deliverer, how can I sufficiently thank you?"

No melodrama in this scene. It was all

heart. Rosalba felt it such, as extending her hand to raise him up, she murmured :

"Mr. Phipps, I too thank God that you were saved! Everything is in that. The instrument is nothing."

When they had both recovered from their surprise and emotion, they conversed together a long time, Walter, at his own request, receiving from Rosalba all the particulars of his rescue, which he constantly interrupted with passionate exclamations of thanks. What the young merchant, on his part, communicated to the girl, was not made known till many years after, and even then only imperfectly, but it is certain that he declared his entire devotion to her and protested that his life and fortune were at her disposal. Whether he had heard it from others, or whether Rosalba herself hinted the fact, Walter knew that she was bound to a prior love, and consequently did not importunately press his suit, beyond the fervent and emphatic assurance that he would be always and everywhere at her service, and that if ever she needed aid or comfort of any kind, she should apply to him unreservedly. That there was more than mere formality in these words, as meant by Walter and as understood by Rosalba, the sequel will show. Meanwhile, we shall close this interview.

That same day Walter Phipps returned to the city with his friends. Not many days after, he sent Rosalba (with her permission) a small gift, which, it was understood between them, should be regarded as both a memorial and a pledge.

It was a silver oar of exquisite workmanship, with this inscription :

R. V.

APRIL 5th, 1837.

W. P.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEPARATION.

In times of revolution, events march with startling rapidity. One day breaks up the hopes and calculations of the preceding, to be itself effaced by the unforeseen complications of the morrow. The rebellion of 1837, though trifling in comparison with other similar movements, was no exception to this rule, chiefly because it happened among a very excitable people, and also, because the leaders really did not know the extent or probable results of the agitation which they were fomenting. History has not recorded the personal suffering, the domestic sacrifices, and the social disruptions which this little insurrection occasioned, yet if the truth were known it would be found that in the Richelieu parishes, and in most of the northern counties, from Berthier to there, there is hardly a family which does not bear to this day some or other trace of the trouble by which they were affected at that time.

The summer of 1837 was spent by the malcontents in plans of organization. From St. Eus-

tache to St. Hyacinthe and from Chateaugay to Sorel, emissaries were quietly at work, and haranguing groups of them at night in barns or isolated houses. It is certain that the idea of the majority was a pacific agitation, in the shape of monster petitions addressed to the Provincial and Imperial legislatures, and mass-meetings at important points to back these resolutions by a show of determination and unanimity. But what with the articles of the *Vindicator*, the violence of several young leaders, and the impudence of certain itinerant speakers, it was difficult to maintain this programme, and still more difficult to determine what sudden and compromising action might be taken by influential persons; which would draw the whole party in its wake.

It was a time, too, when every man was required to take sides, one way or other. In country places, more especially, where communication is difficult, and among an unlettered population, where verbal messages are necessary instead of written despatches, it was imperative that a man should know whether his neighbour could be trusted or not. The patriots had their pass-words and other cabalistic signs. The bureaucrats were hemmed in among their enemies, their least movements were watched, and communication among themselves well nigh impossible. To a person of Samuel Varny's fiery and fearless temperament this state of things was intolerable. As he had before refused to be catechised on the subject of his political preferences, so now he resolved to be unfettered in his movements. His patient, quiescent attitude gradually disappeared, and he assumed a position of defiance. He was aware of all that was said against him, in public and in private, in the village taverns, at the church-door on Sunday, and in the secret conclaves of his enemies. He knew, too, that a band of small farmers in his neighbourhood, prominent among whom was Bavard—men who owed him many a personal grudge—had now openly vowed to ruin him. But all this did not prevent him from going about as usual, working in his fields, and driving into Montreal whenever he had business, though his enemies said that he went there to consult with the military authorities, and act the odious character of an informer.

June and July passed thus. In August the excitement ran very high, and Mr. Varny experienced the first of the misfortunes which the rebellion was destined to bring upon him. As we have seen, he had all along been on the best of terms with Edgar Martin. He had favoured the latter's suit with his daughter, and looked forward fondly to their probable marriage. He was acquainted with Edgar's political opinions, and had respected them, as he required that his own should be respected. Out of deference to Mr. Varny, the young man had moderated many of his views, and persisted in the resolution he had formed during the winter of avoiding political assemblies, and taking active part in political organization. But in August Edgar lost his head completely. He could not resist the tide of

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enthusiasm. His patriotism bore him off his feet, and he was translated right in the whirl of the wildest excitement. At Belœil the patriots of the parish had a meeting, and Edgar was chosen their executive officer. There was no use excusing himself, he was only too proud to serve. Then a monster assembly was held at St. Bruno, and he was chosen one of the speakers. He likewise took part in a conclave held at Lacadie, where stirring resolutions were passed, one of which denounced the "bureaucrats" in no measured terms.

All these facts came to the ear of Samuel Varny, and he was deeply grieved at them. He even then foresaw what they would lead to, and, as far as his family was concerned, in that an excess of sorrow and misery they would culminate. His chief care was for his daughter. How cruelly the blow would fall upon her heart! Yet his mind was fully made up, after many misgivings and much anguish of spirit. Probably the young man's absence might prevent the dreadful scene. He sincerely hoped for this, seeing that Edgar had failed to make his appearance for two consecutive Sundays.

But the hope was vain. On the last Sunday in August, just one month after the interview under the maples, the young man drove up to the mansion. He was dressed in his best, and seemed in the highest spirits. The children ran out to meet him, and even before Rosalba, who walked behind them, Agnes had to have the honour of a first reception.

"Mr. Edgar!" exclaimed the little pet, as she held out her hands to him. He had to bend down till the child had folded her arms around his neck and kissed him.

They reached the broad, breezy gallery overlooking the river, where, after some time, Rosalba and Edgar found themselves alone. The young lawyer profited by his opportunity. He pressed the girl's hand in silence, and looked into her pure eyes with an expression of unutterable tenderness. Then with a shy smile, he slipped his fingers into his waistcoat pocket and drew out a small object which he held up to view. It was the kernel of an almond, already dried and shrivelled.

"Philopœna!" he murmured. Celestine looked a little surprised at first, but remembering all, she put her hands before her face, and exclaimed gaily:

"Caught!"

"Yes, I hope so," replied Edgar, meaning more than the girl intended. Then, after a brief pause, he added:

"The month is up, dearest."

"Oh! yes, I understand. The token which you left me, I have always worn about me."

She took from her neck a coral chain, to which was attached a velvet case containing the little box which Edgar had given her.

"This is the time to open it," said he. She opened it and a superb emerald ring flashed before her.

"The emblem of hope," she murmured faintly, while her eyes glistened with tears.

"Yes, hope not to be deferred," said the youth.

We need not intrude on the privacy of the lovers. They approached closer to each other, spoke in whispers, but all the while their faces were radiant with that unmistakable light which the bliss and rapture of requited love always impart. The result of the interview may be gathered from this little circumstance. Edgar took the emerald ring, set it on the tip of Rosalba's forefinger, held it up and exclaimed:

"Is my hope fulfilled at last?"

Just then the heavy tread of the farmer was heard in the hall behind them.

"My father!" exclaimed Rosalba nervously.

"Let us go in to see him," said Edgar.

Samuel Varny looked grave and sad, as he shook hands with the youth. His manner completely chilled the young couple. Edgar had to summon all his courage to introduce the subject nearest to his heart. Scarcely had he uttered a sentence, when the old man shook his head ominously, and stopped him short.

"Edgar Martin!" said the farmer in a husky voice, his iron frame shaking with emotion, "you love my daughter, and my daughter loves you. So far it is well. But when there is question of marriage, we must pause. I had looked forward to this day with as much pleasure as yourselves, but now —"

There was a thrilling silence in the room.

Varny drew out a newspaper from his breast-pocket, unfolded it and pointing to a particular passage, handed it to Edgar.

"You were at that Lacadie meeting, Edgar?"

"Yes, Sir; I was," replied the young patriot, not yet awakened to the reality of the situation.

"And you voted for that resolution against bureaucrats?"

"Yes, Sir. Why not?"

"Well, Sir, I am one of those hated bureaucrats!" said Varny, with a bitter smile.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Edgar in amazement.

"I never thought fit to acknowledge it before, but I do so now."

"Mr. Varny," replied the youth with deep feeling, "I had often heard this and other accusations against you, but I never believed them. I can hardly believe your own words now."

"You must believe them, Edgar."

The young man struck his forehead in anguish and bewilderment, while Varny drew his sobbing daughter to his knee.

"This scene is too painful, Edgar," said the old man, "let us cut it short. You have a right to your opinions. I do not blame you. But both of us must be prudent. I am responsible for the happiness of my daughter. Let us defer this whole matter. At the rate you are pushing things, a crisis must soon come. I wish you well out of it. If you meet with adversity in the day of conflict come to me and I will give you my roof to shelter you, and my daughter for your wife. If you succeed, and drive the accursed bureaucrats before your face, then it will be for Rosalba herself to decide how she will act towards you. Till then, let us await the awards of Providence."

During the whole discourse, Edgar remained

standing like a statue before Mr. Varny. The blood was gone from his face, and his eyes flashed with a wild light. He had evidently formed a desperate resolution, and was making efforts to express it.

"I never dreamed it would come to this, Sir," said he. "What if I gave up the whole business, and demanded immediate possession of your daughter's hand as the price of the sacrifice?"

"You would have it, Edgar," exclaimed the old man exultantly.

During the whole of this painful interview Rosalba had not uttered a word. It was now her turn to speak. Springing from her father's knee she extended her arm as if to interpose between Varny and Edgar.

"No!" said she. "This cannot be. You have your principles, Edgar; follow them. Your country before everything else. I will wait for you till better times come. Patience and anxious expectation are the woman's lot."

"She is right," murmured the old man, bending down his head.

Edgar said nothing, but he looked up at the flushed face of the girl with triumphant pride.

From this point the interview lowered into the usual common-places of regret and sorrow. The main question having been summarily settled, there was nothing left but to repeat the sincere protestations of fidelity, and bid each other an anxious farewell.

Half an hour after Edgar Martin had departed from the mansion. Life now opened before him under new aspects. As he darted the rowels into his horse's flanks and flew across the country, the wildest projects flitted through his brain. He was resolved to plunge headlong into the revolution, and never turn back till it was accomplished. He had Rosalba's permission to do so. Nay, it was her command. At the half-way house he stopped to rest. His mind grew calmer, and he wrote this note in pencil:

"DEAREST, ROSE—That is not lost which is deferred. Our love will be all the stronger for the fearful trial it has encountered. Its end and duration will be sweeter for the ordeal it passed through at the very threshold. Courage and patience! Whatever may betide, I will always be

Yours lovingly and devotedly,
E. M."

Our whole life is an illusion, and hope is the sweetest of them all. Without the hope expressed in this note, Edgar could never have done what he did, or suffered all that was in store for him.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. DENIS.

SEPTEMBER came, and with it the unmistakable signs of inevitable conflict. The farmers had gathered in their harvests, and having partially provided their families with supplies for the winter, were free to undertake a long winter campaign.

There had been hesitation in the insurrectionary camp, but it was over now. Debarzsch at whose house in St. Charles a plan of provisional government had been adopted, suddenly recoiled from the danger, abandoned the party, and took refuge with his wife's family at St. Ours. Papineau and O'Callaghan strenuously opposed any military demonstration, on the ground that the country was not prepared. But they were over-ruled. Ardent, enthusiastic spirits like Nelson, Brown, and others swayed the masses, and their rallying cry was "To Arms!"

It has often been asked why St. Denis and the neighbouring village of St. Charles were made the rendezvous and headquarters of the rebellion on the south of the St. Lawrence. Strategically, the position was unfavourable, being easily attacked from the front by the garrisons of Sorel and Chambly, and offering no chances for retreat from the rear through the broad belt of the Eastern Townships, which lay between them and the United States. The answer to the question is simple. These points were chosen without any deliberation, merely because the former was the residence of Nelson, the soul of the movement.

Wolfred Nelson was a splendid man, and around him clustered his partisans with that blind confidence which great talents and a high character invariably inspire.

The authorities were naturally loath to take up the gauntlet which was thrown down before them. In the first place, there really were very few troops in the country—too few, if a general uprising was attempted. Then, a needless show of vigour might increase exasperation instead of inspiring terror. For a long time, therefore, the Government was quiet and prudently expectant. But towards the end of October it suddenly resolved to act. The official plan of campaign was excellent. The insurgents were to be attacked simultaneously from opposite quarters, completely enveloped and forced to surrender *en bloc*.

Gore was to march from Sorel; Wetherall from Chambly. The insurgents, hearing of the project, resolved to thwart it by a double front. Nelson was to hold St. Denis against Gore, and Brown to meet Wetherall at St. Charles.

On the morning of the 22nd of November, Nelson suddenly summoned Edgar Martin before him. The young man was one of his favourite officers.

"Captain," said he, "a scout has just informed me that the enemy were to break camp at Sorel, in the course of this night. I want you to go forward, with some trusty companion, to reconnoitre. The roads are very bad; they will have to make easy marches, so I shall hardly expect you to report before sunset."

Five minutes after, Martin, with a guide who was well acquainted with the country, set off on his expedition. They made direct for St. Ours, where they learned that Gore was indeed on the march, but had chosen his route along the interior ranges. Edgar tried to arouse the people of that village, who had

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promised their aid in case of emergency, but he found them reluctant. Issuing thence into the country, he saw many signs of the enemy's approach. Women and children were escaping across the fields; men were hurrying their teams along the road in mental dread of having them impressed. Once or twice, in open spaces, he had seen from afar the bright uniforms of the advance guard. There was enough to base a report upon, and he returned to St. Denis.

The village was in an uproar. Many families fled during the night; those that remained took measures to place themselves under shelter, for Nelson had decided to make a stand on the outskirts of the village itself, not daring to trust his small band otherwise than under cover. He had only about 800 men, only 120 of whom were provided with muskets, the rest being armed with pikes, pitchforks, and clubs.

At length the morning of the 23rd dawned, and the British column appeared in sight. Nelson made his dispositions for battle. He threw a picked force into a large stone-house, belonging to Madame St. Germain, which stood out a little from the centre of the village, on the water's edge. Those who had fire-arms were stationed in the upper story, while those who had no muskets kept guard below. This was a great mistake, for if Gore had been able to surround the house, every man in it would have perished. As it was, the first solid shot directed against it scattered the masonry in every direction and killed five men. The rest hastily retreated. The troops advanced steadily, firing from behind the houses, but the insurgents rallied after their first discomfiture and presented an unbroken front. Gore was irritated. He ordered forward his single field-piece, but owing to some mismanagement, it did scant execution. He likewise directed Captain Markham to carry a distillery that was annoying his flank, but Markham was wounded in the charge, and his men badly repulsed. Martin distinguished himself in this encounter, for it was he who commanded the fifteen or twenty Canadians who held the distillery. Though wounded in the shoulder by a portion of a wall of the stone-house which fell upon him, he moved about incessantly wherever his services were needed. It was he picked up poor Ovide Perrault when he was shot down in the streets. Lusignan was killed at his side.

During this part of the engagement, the women and children had taken refuge in the large central residence of the parish priest. Some were in the cellar; others in dark rooms. Messrs. Demers and Lecur moved among them with words of cheer, whenever they were not engaged in attending the wounded that were brought to them from the field of action. Children, unconscious of danger, though the balls fell thick on the tin roofs of the Church and presbytery, climbed up into the garrets to see the battle. One little girl, five years of age, knelt on the window-sill and prayed that the Lord would not allow the soldiers to kill her, because she had not lived long enough.

"Life is sweet!" said the little creature.

In the early part of the afternoon, reinforcements came to Nelson from the surrounding country, and he immediately resolved on assuming the offensive. Slowly but surely the troops were dislodged from behind fences and houses, and a body of them entrenched in a barn were driven off with loss.

The contest raged with great severity for two hours, after which Gore massed his men on the high road and ordered a retreat, leaving his ammunition and many of his wounded behind him. He was anxious to carry off his cannon, so as to abandon no material trophy with the victors, but the roads were heavy, and a couple of artillery horses having been shot down, he was compelled to relinquish that too. Nelson was too prudent to pursue any distance.

Captain Martin was one of those deputed to drag the captured smooth-bore into the village, where it remained only a few days, when it was retaken by the victorious troops.

An event of some importance to the development of our story should not be omitted here. On the day following the battle of St. Denis, and preceding that of the fight at St. Charles, intelligence was received at Nelson's camp that several bureaucrats had been arrested and were then held in custody at St. Marc. One of these was Samuel Varny. For several weeks previous he had been the object of many petty persecutions. His sheep had been killed by dogs purposely set on them. Two of his horses had been ham-strung, and several of his cows had mysteriously strayed away. His barn had twice been set on fire, and he himself had been threatened with bodily harm. These annoyances were the work of Bavard and a gang of worthless fellows who profited by the excitement of the period to wreak their personal spite under colour of patriotism. We need scarcely say that the insurgent chiefs not only disavowed but reprobated such rowdism.

When Edgar Martin heard of the arrest of Mr. Varny, he immediately repaired to Nelson's quarters and demanded his release. It was granted at once. Martin could not be spared to perform this welcome service himself, but an orderly was despatched in his place.

Mr. Varny never knew or suspected to whom he was indebted for his speedy deliverance, but Rosalba always thought it was Edgar that had intervened.

Nelson's victory over Gore was an important one. Not a doubt of it. If Brown could do the same by Wetherall, the cause was gained. But there was uncertainty in this. Wetherall had come up very slowly from Chambly, owing to the destruction of bridges over the creeks on his route, but he was known to have a strong force and two heavy pieces of artillery. The works at St. Charles consisted of a quadrangle, fenced in with felled trees and covered with earth. The river lay in front, a wooded mound in the rear, and the garrison was further protected by Debartzch's house and barn. The men were poorly armed,

indeed, but some few had muskets, and there were two pieces of ordnance. The position ought to have been made a strong one—it was certainly stronger than that at St. Denis—but, somehow, Wetherall's first attack put him in possession of the wooded mound, which was the key of the position, and planting his cannon there, he swept the insurgent camp. Later, he charged it with fixed bayonets and carried the day.

Nelson was hourly expecting the result of the battle, when who should arrive, among the rest, to announce the defeat, but Brown himself. Then all was hopelessly lost. Nelson dispersed his men and prepared to escape. A price was on his head, as on that of the principal leaders.

CHAPTER VIII.

"PER VARIOS CASUS."

EDGAR MARTIN was broken-hearted. Not one of the patriots who fought at St. Denis and St. Charles felt the blow of defeat more severely than he. It was not so much that his professional prospects were blighted, but that he had to fly from Rosalba. He remembered Mr. Varny's invitation, in case of disaster, but he could not avail himself of it. He was on the list of the proscribed, and his life was in danger if he remained in the country. He must fly. Nelson and the others had taken the route of the Townships, but he resolved to follow the course of the Richelieu, out into New York or Vermont. The advantage of this plan was that, as there were men of his race, most of them patriots, living all along that road, he could find shelter and hospitality from them as he advanced. Having shaved his beard and disguised himself as a journeyman, he boldly crossed the river at St. Antoine, and commenced his weary, dangerous pilgrimage into a long exile. He reached St. Marc in safety, as the troops were still all on the other side. He avoided Belœil, where he was too well known, though he came in sight of its steeple, and remained overnight in the house of a friend. Thence, to keep away from the garrison of Chambly, whither Wetherall's column had already returned, he steered off into the interior and crept along the base of Boucherville mountain. Here he spent a whole night in the woods, with no other bed than a heap of dry leaves, and no other food than a biscuit and a fragment of cheese. Here too, his real danger began, for the whole of that plateau up to the frontier was overrun with volunteers and regular cavalry, who had strict orders to "gobble up" every suspicious character. He had almost formed the desperate resolution of going directly to Montreal, where he fancied he could be effectually concealed by his friends, for a time at least, but the whole southern bank was guarded and every boat that landed near the city was diligently searched. By stealthy stages and with infinite difficulty he reached Lacadie, and there spent several days hidden in a barn, being nursed of an ugly sore foot by the aged mother of a noted patriot. She warned him not to go

near St. John's, which was full of bureaucrats and volunteers, but directed him, instead, to shape his course in a bee-line for Lacolle, giving him a pass-word and the names of several partisans who would be sure to take him in and further his safe progress to the neighbouring frontier.

Edgar had already been twelve days on the tramp, and spite of the good treatment which he had occasionally received—so much in contrast with the terrible sufferings of other fugitives—he was well nigh exhausted in body and mind. The burden which he carried at his heart grew heavier every day. He could not get reconciled to the fearful disappointment of defeat in a cause in which he had staked everything, and the farther he removed from Rosalba, the more his spirits were depressed. There were moments of overwhelming despondency when he felt like going direct to the nearest military station and delivering himself up to his enemies.

Until now, he had effectually eluded all pursuit, not having even seen a red coat, but the presentiment seized him that he would stumble on a guard when he least expected it. What would come of such an encounter he hardly dared to think, for he had no arms about him, and was too much broken down to offer physical resistance.

Racked by such forebodings, he set out again, hiding by day and travelling by night. It was now nearly the middle of December, and the winter had fully arrived. The snow was piled high in the woods; it lay in huge drifts along the roads. Walking in such weather was doubly exhaustive. On the evening of the third day, as he emerged from his concealment to resume his march, he was encouraged by the thought that he had only twelve miles to reach the border line. If Providence favoured him for this last effort, the morning sun would see him safe in the land of liberty.

For the first hour he advanced without incident, having, as he thought, left Lacolle a good way behind him. But, on issuing from a little wood, what was his surprise and consternation to find himself within a few feet of a bivouac. A bright fire was burning before a small log-hovel, and in front of it sat a guard with his musket carelessly thrown across his legs.

"He is sleeping," thought Edgar. "I am safe."

And holding his breath, he went past rapidly but noiselessly, until he was once more in the dark road. Here he stopped a moment to draw a long sigh of relief.

"Who goes there?" cried out a clear, resonant voice.

Edgar leaped as if he had been shot. He was far too much startled to answer.

"Who goes there?" roared the voice again.

"Friend!" was the low, stammering reply.

"Let friend advance and give the counter-sign."

Edgar stood stock-still.

Instead of firing, as he had a right to do—though the orders in that respect were not very stringent for the volunteers—the picket

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CHAPTER X.

FAITHFUL TO THE FIRST LOVE.

TOWARDS the close of the summer of 1847, Walter Phipps was engaged on the quays receiving some merchandize which had arrived to him from England. After his work was done, he was about returning to his store, when his attention was attracted by a large crowd gathered around a newly arrived vessel. As he approached nearer, he observed a ghastly sight of men, women and children just disembarking on the pier. It was an emigrant ship disgorging its mass of human freight. The spectacle was so piteous, that the benevolent merchant advanced still nearer, and stood at the head of the gangway, as a sick and apparently dying man was being borne out on a stretcher. There was something in that wasted figure, those sunken eyes, and that thin, iron-gray hair which appealed forcibly to his compassion, and without further reasoning, with himself, he requested the captain, who was standing by, to allow him to take charge of the invalid.

"Do so, sir," said the captain, in a low voice. "It will be a charity. He has not a friend in the world and he is dying."

Instead of taking a vehicle on the quay, Walter directed a boy to run to his store and bring in his own carriage which was waiting to take him home. In that he transported the invalid to the Hotel-Dieu, where he recommended the nuns to give him every attention. He himself would be responsible for all the expenses.

"Poor Edgar Martin" he murmured, as he descended the steps of the hospital, "come home to die. I did not recognize him at once—he is so altered. But now I know it is he. What a Providence that we should thus meet! And Rosalba! Alas!"

He drove immediately to his physician's and brought him to examine his patient. The result of the diagnosis was that the sick man had not more than twenty-four hours to live. "I must perform the sad duty myself,"

thought Walter, "and that speedily." It was five o'clock in the afternoon. He returned home, ordered his double carriage and his night down to the Longueuil ferry. Once across the river, he proceeded rapidly to Varennes.

A little after eight he reined in his horse in front of Rosalba's cottage. She, as well as her mother, were very much surprised to see the unusual visit. They received him courteously, but his grave and constrained manner was not ill-at-ease. What could this mean? "Why did he come, and in his double carriage? Their anxiety was all the greater that Walter refused to slow to explain himself. He was visibly embarrassed and uttered at a loss for words to produce the subject of his painful errand.

But time was pressing and he had to make an effort.

"Miss Varny," said he, "I have come to invite you and Mrs. Varny to accompany me to Montreal."

The mother and daughter stared at each other.

"When?" asked Mrs. Varny.

"This very night."

"And why?" demanded Rosalba, nervously, rising from her seat.

"On a mission of charity," said Walter, laying stress on the word *charity*, which he here understood in its full sense.

"Explain yourself. Where?" continued Rosalba, who noticed the increasing agitation of the merchant.

"At the Hotel-Dieu!" replied Walter in a whisper.

Swift as lightning flashes are the instincts of love. Rosalba grew deadly pale, as she screamed:

"O mon Dieu! He is there!" and pressing both hands on her poor heart, she sank to the floor.

Walter and Mrs. Varny raised her up and placed her on the sofa, but reviving convulsively, she sprang out of their hands:

"Quick, quick; let us go," she cried. "I am ready. Let us start at once. Oh! if I should arrive too late."

"Calm yourself, Miss Varny, I entreat you," said Phipps, in a soothing and gentle tone. "We have time. You need to dress yourself warmly, for we have a long drive and the night is chilly."

"Yes, yes, we have far to go, and that is why we must depart immediately."

"My horses are fleet, Miss Varny. Once upon the road, we shall advance rapidly."

"And the ferry?" said Rosalba, who, in her wild passion, still thought of everything.

"I have engaged for a special trip at midnight. We shall be at Longueuil at that time."

"O thank you, thank you! Mr. Phipps. God will reward you for this."

The girl became calmer, and, with the help of her mother, made all suitable preparations for the journey. At ten the three departed. Before twelve they were at Longueuil. The ferry had steam up and they crossed immediately. At one they rang the bell of the Hotel-Dieu.

In the first part of the night the sick man seemed to sink rapidly, and one of his nurses was commissioned to apprise him of the fact. He heard the nun's exhortations with those open, staring, blank eyes which give so sad an expression to the face of the dying, and without answering a word his mind gave way, drifting slowly into delirium. He lay very still, and his frame was convulsed by no agony, but every now-and-then his lips moved, uttering faint words. The nurse stooped above him to catch their meaning, but all she could understand was the exclamation, "Rosalba, Ros-al-ba!"

When the visitors arrived, the nun, who, with the infallible feminine instinct, had understood all, went forward into the corridor to meet Rosalba, and prepare her for the scene that awaited her, when the latter exclaimed:

"No need, *ma sœur*, no need. I know exactly what it is. I have always had that hope and presentiment. They are to be fulfilled to-day."

With this she penetrated into the sick room. The patient turned on his pillow when he heard the rustling of her dress; his breast heaved and his eyes dilated with love; he stretched out both his arms and exclaimed:

"At last, O Rosalba, at last!"

She threw herself on her knees at his bedside, and hid her face in his bosom. There they both wept in silence for a long, long time, till the accumulated sorrows of a dreary decade were discharged in tears. Then they grew calmer and conversed together of many things which only they could know and feel.

At length the practised eye of Rosalba discovered that the invalid was sinking fast. She arose and had the clergyman called in. Edgar made his reconciliation with God, and his peace with the world. When that supreme act of religion was accomplished, Rosalba reentered, accompanied by her mother and Walter, and another ceremony was gone through. There in the hospital ward, by the waning lamp-light, in the presence of the Great Angel who makes all things right at the close, Edgar and Rosalba were married. The emerald ring which Rosalba had treasured through all those years; was set upon her finger, the bridal kiss was exchanged, and the long parted twain were as one at last.

"God is good God is very good!" murmured the dying man, with his hand resting on his wife's beautiful head, and his eyes fixed on the benignant face of the clergyman.

"The world has treated me cruelly. My young life has been wasted. But I am happy now, and willing to die."

Ten minutes afterward he was dead.

The next day, the following appeared in the *Gazette* among the obituaries:

DIED.

Early yesterday morning, at the Hotel-Dieu, Edgar Martin, formerly of Belœil, but latterly a political exile. A few minutes before his death, Captain Martin was married to Miss Rosalba Varny, daughter of the late Samuel Varny, Esq., of Varennes.

CHAPTER XI.

FAITHFUL TO THE SECOND LOVE.

An incident which we omitted in describing the death of Edgar finds its appropriate place in this concluding chapter. When the physician called to examine the sick man, he was accompanied in the room by Walter Phipps. Edgar had only partially recovered his consciousness after the fatigue of the transit from the ship, and answered few of the doctor's questions; but when the examination was over, his attention seemed to be attracted a moment by the presence of Walter. He said nothing, though he was evidently trying to fix his thoughts upon something. As the doctor took his hat to depart, he approached

the bed and said a good word to the patient. Walter, imitating his example, bent forward to Edgar's ear, and whispered:

"Courage, Edgar Martin, I will fetch her to-night."

The sound of that voice, its broken French, or the kind announcement, or perhaps all three, made Edgar start on his pillow. He opened his eyes wide, and would have spoken, but Walter had left the room.

Some hours later, when the dying man found himself alone with Rosalba, he asked her who had apprized her of his arrival and had brought her to him. She answered that it was Walter Phipps.

"Walter Phipps?"

"Yes, a generous young Montreal merchant."

"The same whose life you saved?"

"Yes, the same. It was he who brought you from the ship to the hospital."

"Ah, the noble man!"

And he related to Rosalba the incident of the bivouac, and how his life had then been saved.

"When I heard his voice, a few hours since, I remembered it immediately. Who could I forget that voice having once heard it in that dreadful night, ten long years ago."

Edgar had related this circumstance to Rosalba in the very first letter which he had written to her in his exile. She knew, too, that Walter had served as a volunteer on the frontier, during the rebellion, but when she mentioned the facts, he affected to ignore them completely. Rosalba did not press him, but she always thought it was he who had done that noble deed, and she was equally certain that he had done it for her sake.

Her surmise was now confirmed.

Edgar begged that Walter should visit him before he died. It was in obedience to this request that Walter assisted at the death-bed marriage. After that ceremony was over, Edgar called him to his side, seized his hand, kissed it with tears, and thanked him for all his kindness. He further recommended Rosalba to his protection.

One of the relics which Rosalba preserved of Edgar was a beautiful bronze cross, which as a memorandum in Edgar's pocket-book informed her, he had worn about him in all his wanderings. He had it on him when he died. Besides this, he left her the *chamois* belt neatly folded in tissue paper. She had the curiosity to undo the seam of this, and there in a corner of the muslin lining she discovered the letters "W. P." Poor Edgar had never seen them.

Five years elapsed after these events. Five years of quiet and silence, during which Providence was slowly shaping things to soften a long sorrow, reward a patient hope, and give the world another example of a two-fold fidelity.

In 1852, the cottage where Rosalba and her mother dwelt was accidentally reduced to ashes, and the two found themselves obliged to seek another abode. They could have returned to the paternal mansion, but the brother who in

habited it had a large family, and they could not have been comfortable there. There was Agnes who lived in Montreal, but her husband, while he tendered an invitation to Rosalba, objected to receiving her mother who was now confirmed invalid. It was an unworthy break, and decided the matter. In addition to these annoyances, it must be said that Rosalba was sorely pinched for want of means. The turning of her cottage left her nearly destitute.

In her distress there was one to whom she could have applied with the assurance of prompt and abundant relief. But she refused to ask him. Nay, she was afraid to ask him. This will surprise no one who has understood the relations which necessarily existed between Rosalba and Walter Phipps.

But Walter did not wait her decision. He knew all that was going on. How could it be otherwise for him whose eye ever watched over her, and whose life was absorbed in the one thought of seeing her. He judged that now was his opportunity. He who had always been so reserved now suddenly resolved to present himself. If Rosalba had to change homes; if she had to search a new home, his was open to her for ever, and he would ask her to take it for her own.

Walter called on Rosalba, and never, in any of her interviews, had she been so moved on seeing him. He noticed her discomposure. Was it due to the cause which he suspected and which agitated his own breast? If it was, the way was open for him, and half of his suit was won.

It was a meeting of many tears and throbbings, evoking so many sad remembrances and fraught with such sweet, yet awful responsibilities. Walter disembosomed himself without reserve.

"I have always loved you, Rosalba!" said

And Rosalba wept all the more, for she knew how true that was. She knew how that, for very love, he had denied himself much intercourse with her, keeping aloof that he might not interpose himself between her and her own first love. How that, for her sake, he had befriended her Edgar on that lonely frontier, and again when he came home to die.

"I am getting old (he was forty-five) and wish to retire from business," paused Walter. "I would so like to have a companion in my lonely home. And now that your own health is weak and your mother a cripple, if you had a friend to aid you both?"

Friend! Companion! Walter touched lightly on those words, but they grated on the sensitive heart of Rosalba.

"Ah! Walter," she sobbed, "those are poor words; it is not a companion that you have deserved, but a fond, devoted wife. And you would be more than a friend to her, I know, you would be the tenderest of husbands."

"Dear Rosalba, I would not claim more than you could give, but with that I should be supremely happy. If I have not this, then I shall be a lonely wanderer all my days."

This was said with an accent of such pathos, that Rosalba could contain herself no longer;

and she exclaimed, holding out both her hands to him:

"He was my first love, Walter, but after him there was none in the wide world that I loved so much as you. This much you have a right to know, though I thought I should never have to say it. Now that he is gone, while I cherish his memory,—how should I ever forget it?—the service and obedience of my heart and hands is yours. I had thought—I had hoped—though often it was a rebellious hope—that you would never ask me, but now that you have asked me, I cannot, I should not refuse. I am yours, Walter, do with me as you please."

She was calm now, and how tender were her eyes. She rose from her seat, knelt down before Walter, and bent her head into his hands.

If there was a happy man in the world then it was Walter. He pressed his two hands against that serene, beautiful forehead, bent it back in full view of his face, and imprinted a burning kiss upon it.

"Rosalba," said he to her a little afterwards, "but for the destruction of your cottage, I should never have asked you. That was a providence, was it not?"

"Yes!" she answered with a calm reverence.

Two weeks later, Walter Phipps and Rosalba Martin-Varny were married in the parish church of Varennes. Though the ceremony was meant to be private, it was witnessed by many friends, and there was but one voice to proclaim that Rosalba had at last reaped the reward of her sufferings and her virtues. The new couple, accompanied by Mrs. Varny, retired immediately to Montreal, to take up the sumptuous residence prepared for them by Walter. He himself soon after retired from business, with a large fortune.

In due course of time, and as if thus visibly to sanction their union, one child was born to them. He was christened Edgar Martin Phipps.

In the private apartment of Rosalba, over Rosalba's prie-Dieu, there stands a crystal casket, containing these three articles:

A bronze cross—relic of Edgar's martyrdom.

A chamois belt—token of Walter's generosity.

A silver oar—memorial of Rosalba's heroism.

These explain and justify Rosalba's fidelity to two loves.

Here closed the manuscript. As the American rolled it up, he glanced at his friend, who had laid aside his book, and was reclining in his easy chair, waiting for the former's comments.

"Well?" said he.

"Where does Rosalba reside?" asked the reader.

"At the foot of the Mountain."

"Do you know her?"

"Intimately."

"Then you must introduce me to-morrow. I want to get her blessing."

THE END.

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A TALE

OF

THE WAR OF 1757.

INTRODUCTORY.

For years before the date of our story, the English and French colonists in America had made war upon one another. The causes of these incessant wars were numerous—sometimes the dispute was about territory, sometimes about the fur trade, while not unfrequently some intrigue concerning the redmen of the forest brought the two nations to blows. In these wars the colonists were assisted by trained armies from the mother countries; and the most experienced European generals were sent to command them.

Such was Braddock on the one hand, and Teskau on the other; both of whom, although the most successful leaders at home, failed entirely in the American wilderness, owing to the wide difference in the mode of warfare, a difference which they could not see, and for which they accordingly made no allowance. Probably no part of the country was so often the scene of encounters between the hostile troops, as the valley of the beautiful Lake Champlain; its unrivalled water communication made it the natural highway for the predatory Indian bands with their fleets of swift and light canoes, while the more disciplined whites often met in battle upon the borders of the lakes. Numerous forts had been erected upon the shores of Lakes Champlain and George, and it is around two of these, namely, Forts William Henry and Edward, that most of the incidents which are related in our story took place.

Fort William Henry was situated at the lower extremity of Lake George, the waters of which were celebrated for their clearness; this lake was named the Horicon by Cooper the novelist. Fort Edward was situated further south on the river Hudson. Both these posts were wellarrisoned in the spring of 1757, the former by Colonel Munro, who had under his command the 60th Rifles, or Royal Americans, and some militia; the latter by General Webb and about 1000 troops. During the previous year the French had gained many advantages, under the Marquis of Montcalm, whose name after-

wards became so well-known in connection with the siege of Quebec by Wolfe. This short sketch will give the reader some idea of the state of the country when our story opens.

CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful spring day, the earth had escaped the icy bonds of a long winter, and awakened to new life and vigour. Already the leaves were commencing to appear upon the trees, flowers were sending forth their tender buds, and nature arraying herself in her brightest colours. In the drawing-room of one of the principal houses of the town of Albany reclined on a sofa a beautiful girl of some eighteen summers. The countenance of Florence Temple, for such was her name, was one of a type rarely seen, as remarkable for the regularity of its features, as for the loveliness of their expression; her complexion was dark, but into its darkness a rich colour seemed to diffuse itself. Her hair, black as the raven's wing, flowed in luxuriance over her finely-proportioned shoulders, while her mouth was small and beautifully formed, and whenever a smile was elicited by the book she was reading, disclosed exquisitely white teeth; and what lovely eyes were hers! They are none of your flashing eyes, which seem to look down upon mankind in scorn; though dark, they only shone with innocence and love. While perusing the volume before her, a knock was heard at the door, followed by the entrance of a man servant. Florence noticed with surprise that the servant's face wore a discontented look, an occurrence which with the good-natured Irishman rarely happened.

"Well, Patrick, what is the matter with you?"

"Plase, Miss Flory, there's nothing's the matter with me, but that young gintleman as is so often coming to see you is down stairs, and wants to know if you are at home. And mighty impatient he was when I tould him I thought you would not see any one to-day. He tould me I might spare meself the trouble

af thinking about it, and desired me to give you his name, and ax ye to see him."

"Well, Patrick, you may shew him up, as he particularly wishes to see me."

"Oh bedad, I'm shure he does, just that same; and small blame had for some weeks been affianced. Edwin Herbert, with whom Florence was now conversing, was the son of an eminent lawyer of the same town, between whom and Judge Temple, Florence's father, had existed a fast friendship from their earliest days of childhood; and the attachment between their children had been favourably looked upon by both parents. At an early age Florence had been left motherless, and had thus become to her bereaved father's heart its sole consolation, at once his greatest care and joy. Edwin Herbert was in stature slightly above the medium height. His form was well proportioned, and gave indication of great muscular strength and activity; he would not have been accounted handsome were it not for a high and intellectual forehead, and eyes whose expression shewed more than ordinary brightness and vivacity. His complexion was naturally fair, but had been finely bronzed by exposure to the weather. His hands and feet were small and well formed, and his whole manner bespoke the well-bred gentleman. Edwin had now called to apprise Florence of the unexpected events of the morning. At a meeting of the citizens of Albany, held for the purpose of considering how they could best aid the regular troops, leaving for the seat of war, it had been resolved to raise a company of volunteers, whom Edwin's father had promised to equip, and of which the citizens proposed giving Edwin the command. In one short month they were to take the field, and then Edwin, in obedience to duty's call, would be inevitably parted from his loved Florence, and to impart this intelligence to her was now his painful task. Florence knew well the dangers which Edwin would have to encounter both from the French and Indian foe, and her heart sunk within her as she contemplated their fast approaching separation. Struggling, however, to maintain an appearance of calmness she was far from feeling, she warmly expressed her sympathy for the noble cause in which her lover had enlisted in defence of home and country. The hours flew swiftly by while the lovers sat in happy converse, and evening was far advanced ere Edwin could bring himself to leave his fair betrothed. Too soon that peaceful month had passed, and the lovers were at last compelled to say adieu. Their farewell interview over, Edwin repaired to where his soldiers were assembled; who, before the day was much farther spent, were destined to commence

their march to the distant seat of war. The duty of attending to his soldiers' wants, and the needful preparations for so long a journey now fully occupied Edwin; but ever anon saddening thoughts of his recent parting from his betrothed would return, and it was with difficulty he concealed his emotion at seeing her unexpectedly appear on horseback accompanied by her father, amongst the crowd of those who had gathered to witness the departure.

All is now ready, and amidst the cheers of those who had assembled to look, perhaps for the last time, on those brave and patriotic men, the company commenced its march towards the seat of war. Edwin's last look were directed towards a slight figure on horseback, who seemed graciously waving encouragement and adieu.

CHAPTER II.

The reader must now accompany us to the shores of Lake George, so named in honour of His Majesty George the Second.

The first rays of the sun had scarcely made surrounding objects discernable when a canoe was seen, evidently guided by no unskilful hand, making its way towards the land. It had no sooner grated upon the beach than its occupant, a powerful and athletic man, jumped ashore.

After carefully concealing the canoe in the nearest brushwood, he commenced making his way into the woods. Arrived at the first cleared space, he bent his long rifle, which he had till now carried on his shoulder, against a tree, and stooping to the earth placed his ear to the ground; in this posture he remained about five minutes, listening intently. He then slowly rose to his feet, and while doing so began soliloquizing:

"General Webb told me they would follow the right bank, and I am quite certain they cannot have passed me; the only thing for me to do now I suppose is to exercise patience as the parson told us at the fort."

Suiting the action to the word, the late occupant of the canoe sat down as if with the intention of making a lengthened stay. Before doing so, however, he looked around as if to assure himself that no lurking enemy was near. Long experience as a forester no doubt made him thus cautious.

Two hours had passed, when the quick ears of the scout enabled him to detect a noise as if of men on the march. The sounds gradually became more and more distinct.

"It must be them," he said, "but I cannot be too careful; so I will just climb this tree until I have made certain."

The scout had scarcely effected his object, when several men entered the glade; they were quickly followed by others, until the number amounted to about one hundred.

As soon as the scout saw their uniform and heard their captain address a few words to them, all doubt seemed banished from his mind. Letting himself to the ground, he ad-

vanced with perfect confidence towards their leader. As he came into sight exclamations of wonder and surprise escaped from some of those before him, and not a few rifles were menacingly raised at his person; but on a word from their leader all hostile demonstrations ceased.

"Who are you, who thus so strangely present yourself before us?" asked Captain Herbert, who, as our readers may have surmised, was the commander of the party.

"I am known by the name of Lightfoot, and have been sent by General Webb from Fort Edward to guide a company of volunteers by the nearest and safest road to that post; from what the general said, yours must be the company he meant."

"No doubt, Lightfoot, we are the company for whom you have been waiting, but before entrusting ourselves to your guidance, it will be necessary for you to furnish evidence of your being thus authorized."

"Lightfoot does not often hear what he says doubted, but General Webb told me that in case I was not believed to show this letter."

Edwin took the missive from the scout's hands, the contents of which were:

FORT EDWARD, June 4, 1757.

The commander of the company lately raised by the citizens of Albany will accept of the scout Lightfoot as a guide to Fort Edward. He may be perfectly trusted, as he has faithfully served the British cause from the commencement of the war.

In haste,

WEBB.

As soon as Captain Herbert had read the letter, he grasped the hand of the scout and said:

"Forgive me if for a moment I doubted the truth of your assertion, but in the war at present being carried on, I have heard that one can never exercise too much caution."

"What you say, captain, is true, and I think it would be better for you, instead of marching your men in one body, to send one or two in front to feel the way, and report any danger which might be ahead."

"Your advice is good, and when we resume our march I shall act upon it; in the meantime the men are both hungry and tired, and as this is a suitable place, we shall remain here for breakfast."

Smoke was soon seen to rise from several fires which the soldiers had kindled, and with such fare as they had they managed to make a hearty meal.

As soon as the party were sufficiently rested orders were given to continue their march; it was not long before they were started again, and the spot where they had halted was soon left far behind. Could any of them have seen what was now taking place within its limits, it would not have given them any desire for straggling from their ranks.

Scarcely had the last of the soldiers left the glade before a dark and malignant face might have been seen cautiously peering through the bushes, and apparently satisfied with his

scrutiny, the Indian, for such he was, stepped fearlessly among the fires, where the soldiers had been taking their meal. After again looking around, he imitated the screech of an owl three times. The signal was soon answered. Four dusky warriors like himself emerged from the surrounding woods, all armed and dbedaued with war paint; the first to speak was the one who had signalled to the others.

"Redhand sees that the pale-face warriors are careless; they light fires to tell their enemies where to find their scalps. If Redhand had some more of his warriors here, he would soon cause the enemies of his French father to sing their death song; now, however, Redhand is afraid his warriors will have to return without scalps, as the enemy are too many, and the great scout Lightfoot is among them."

As soon as Redhand had ceased speaking, one of his warriors, remarkable for his sinewy frame, angrily stepped forward and commenced to speak against returning.

"Does Redhand think that Greywolf left his wigwam by the great lakes to look at his enemies without fighting them? No, if Redhand likes to go back to the Onondaga women without scalps, Greywolf will not; he has already barked, he will now show his enemies he can bite."

"Greywolf has spoken like a great warrior, but he is hasty because he is young, and cannot yet show many scalps; if he wants to stay behind he can, but Redhand and the rest of his warriors will go to the north. Redhand has finished."

In accordance with his words, the chief and his warriors, taking a line to the right of the glade, soon disappeared. But Greywolf, the warrior who had spoken against returning, remained behind for a few moments till the other Indians were lost to view; he then proceeded at a sharp run immediately on the track of the column.

CHAPTER III.

TAKING the advice which the scout had given him, Captain Herbert sent several of his men at different distances in advance of his column. Thus they journeyed on for several days without anything unusual happening.

One day, however, this monotony was varied by a frightful occurrence. The men were marching along in the best of spirits, when they suddenly spied not far distant from them, one of their advanced guard. He was sitting with his back to them on the trunk of a decayed tree, his head was drooping between his hands, and he appeared to them as one in deep thought. Surprised at this, for the man should have been at least half a mile in front of them, Captain Herbert advanced towards him with the intention of chiding him for his disobedience to orders, and touching him on the shoulder he was surprised to find that he still remained motionless and silent, his cap rolled off, however, and revealed to Edwin's horror a bleeding skull. The man had evidently been killed by a treacherous blow from

behind, and his diabolical enemy had completed his fiendish work by scalping him, and then mockingly arranged the dead man so that until his companions were close upon him they would believe him alive. That it was the work of an Indian was undoubted, and soon they were enabled to tell to what tribe he belonged, for Lightfoot after long and attentive consideration, said :

"An Onondaga has done this, I can tell from the print his moccasin has left."

Our readers know that the scout was right. They also must have guessed that it was Greywolf's work, and so it was. For days he had watched for a favourable opportunity, and at last he saw one of the soldiers more careless than the rest, seat himself unsuspectingly upon a fallen tree; from his attitude Greywolf also noticed that the man was tired; he had therefore crept noiselessly upon the weary soldier, and with one blow from his tomahawk had killed him. The man did not utter a sound, so sudden had been the blow, but a convulsive tremor shook his frame, and then all was still. Greywolf had then arranged the dead man in the position in which he had been found by his companions. As he did so, he muttered :

"The soldiers will no longer laugh when they see this." He then quickly left the scene.

As soon as the men had recovered from the horror which the terrible fate of their comrade inspired, deep threats of vengeance resounded on all sides, and not a few were for starting off immediately in pursuit of the perpetrator of the deed. Lightfoot, however, gave it as his opinion that any such attempt would prove futile; it was, therefore, decided to push on at once to the Fort, and strict orders were issued to the soldiers to be wary and cautious in all their movements. Before continuing their march, the body of their unfortunate comrade was buried near where he was so treacherously slain.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER many days at forest marching, at almost unvaried monotony, the little band at length reached Fort Edward, where for some days General Webb had expected them; they therefore found comfortable quarters ready, which to the tired soldiers was a great relief after their long and toilsome march. The Fort was strongly garrisoned, and the troops were eager for an opportunity of testing their courage on the field of battle. A month elapsed, however, before it seemed probable that such an opportunity would occur, and Herbert was becoming heartily tired of the sameness of the life he was leading. Thus weary of inaction he stood at the gate of the fort in deep reverie, when he was suddenly startled by the challenge of the sentry: the next moment an Indian runner entered the fort, and asked to be conducted to Gen. Webb. His arrival was the occasion of busy conjectures, and many a gallant heart hoped that at last they would be led against the French. They had not long to wait, before the real character of the news transpired.

Col. Munro, the Commander at Fort William Henry, had sent for a powerful reinforcement, as he had received intelligence to the effect that Montcalm, the French General was marching with a numerous army to invest Fort William. This news caused the greatest commotion in the fort. Orderlies hurried to and fro, and that strange noise which always precedes any event of importance was heard to float in the air above Fort Edward. Fifteen hundred men had received orders to be ready to march by morning, and among these were Capt. Herbert and his company.

Edwin therefore passed a sleepless night in making preparations for the morning's march. Added to this was the excitement natural to a young and spirited man, now for the first time about to enter the field of war. The day had scarcely dawned when all was activity and preparation in the fort.

Adieux were hastily exchanged; and at last all was ready, and amidst the rattle of the drum, and the scream of the fife, the column commenced its march; the morning was very fine and the foliage on the trees at the height of its summer beauty. The road which the soldiers took was not a very difficult one, as it had been improved by art, with the view of enabling large bodies of troops, or convoys of provisions to pass with ease between the two forts. The distance between the forts was about fifteen leagues; the troops therefore managed to reach Fort William late that night. Here they found all excitement and bustle, for Col. Munro was prudently endeavouring to strengthen his earthen bastions. At the present time, when the art of war has reached such perfection, Fort William would not have been considered tenable for three hours, as it was completely commanded from several adjacent hills, but at that time, cannon did not send their iron messengers such an immense distance as they do now; the fort therefore, if properly defended, would take some time to reduce. Not long after Edwin's arrival the fort was invested by Montcalm. Before commencing siege operations, however, the French General demanded its surrender. But Munro, relying upon General Webb for assistance, returned a defiant answer to this proposal. The French General therefore at once invested the fort, and day and night did his cannon belch forth fire at the besieged works. He was greatly assisted by a large body of the Six Nation Indians; these warriors (concealed by trees) would from their cover pick off any of the garrison who incautiously exposed themselves. On the other hand Munro's men were becoming daily more proficient with the musket, and many a redman fell beneath their unerring aim. Of those who were specially noted for their marksmanship, was the scout Lightfoot, who dealt death to numbers of the foe. Among other peculiarities noticeable about him, was that whenever his shot was seen to take effect, he would, with his knife, make a notch on the stock of his musket. Wondering at this strange proceeding, Edwin one day ventured to ask him the reason of it "Well, you see, Captain, it's a record of vengeance, every notch here means

a life taken: a terrible vengeance has been mine, but it is not yet full, nor will it be until I have slain Redhand, whose bloody deeds drove me to my present wandering life; when his blood shall have been spilt, then will the vengeance of Lightfoot be complete," pressing his enquiries still further; Edwin at length managed to obtain the following account of the scout's early life.

CHAPTER V.

"You must know, Captain, that once I was not the kind of being I am at present; all I live for now is vengeance on the authors of my misery, all I now care for is the lonely forest and the sighing of the wind in trees of a stormy night, with the exception of being the means of saving life from the deadly knife of the Indian, this is my only pleasure. My first experience of life was in the woods; my father was one of the early settlers who had left their native land, to find a new home in unexplored and almost unknown wilds. For a long time our prospects of happiness and plenty in our new home seemed favorable, but this was not destined to last, for one night one, who for some reason was an enemy of my father, set fire to his barns, into which the freshly cut grain had been but lately stored, and left him almost a beggar. Under these circumstances my parents thought it better to remove further into the wilderness, and try their fortunes upon a newer soil; they therefore, with another family, whom they had persuaded to join them, determined to move northwards, where report said lands of extraordinary fertility were to be found. At the time of their removal I was about seventeen years of age and had two elder brothers—fine stalwart fellows. But of all my family the one most loved was my only sister, about a year younger than myself. She was the angel of our home, never did a more loving or gentle being walk this earth, and now that she is gone her sweet eyes seem sometimes in my dreams to be looking down upon me in love and sorrow.

But I must go on with my story, Captain. Well! we had hardly been settled six months when a rumour reached us that the savages to the north of us were on the war path. My mother thought it best for us to return to the more secure settlements until the danger had passed, but being of a daring disposition and but little inclined to leave his newly-formed home, my father determined to trust to his blockhouse, and his sons' stout arms to keep back the foe. The family who were settled near us came to the same decision, and it was determined that the two families should occupy the same blockhouse until the danger had passed. We then laid in a good stock of provisions and water and did all in our power to make our position as secure as possible. In all we numbered seven men and two boys—my father and his three sons, and our neighbour and his sons. There was also a boy employed by the other family. All hands were good with the musket, and one of our neighbor's sons was a prodigy in strength. He could lift as much as any three

of us and to see him felling a tree did one good. From the time of the alarm it was our custom to appoint a guard every night, but for a long time all went on as usual and we were all beginning to feel more light-hearted. The fatal hour, however, was surely coming. One morning the boy went out to see after some strayed cattle; he had not been gone an hour, when we saw him running towards the blockhouse with alarm depicted upon his countenance. As soon as he was near enough to be heard he exclaimed "the Indians, the Indians are upon us, master. Prepare to defend yourselves, or we are lost." In an instant the women and children were huddled in the blockhouse for safety, while the men took their stations around the rude palisades which we had constructed. The duty of apprising the defenders below when the enemy should appear devolved upon the boy and myself. No warning, however, was needed, for before long the dreadful war-whoop was heard resounding from all parts of the forest. Now I do not dread its sound, then the blood seemed to curdle in my veins, as it broke on the still air. I could hear my father in the midst of the horrible din telling his little garrison not to waste their fire but to make sure at every shot. In the meantime my poor mother had not been idle, but had been loading a second set of rifles for the defenders' use and trying to sooth my poor sister's alarm. And now a scene which is burnt into my brain as with fire occurred. My mother, seizing a pistol, gave it to my sister, saying, "Should our brave defenders be beaten, remember, my daughter, that there is a fate which to one of your purity would be worse than death itself; therefore if it must be so, my sweet child, die by your own hand rather than live to be degraded." My sister took the weapon and promised to obey, and now all hands were engaged trying to repulse the enemy, and it seemed to me as though every one of our small number fought with the energy of ten men. After the first assault, the savages retired for a while as though discouraged, but it was only for a while, and then the attack commenced again. Already two of us had fallen, and another was so badly wounded that he could not remain at his post. My father therefore saw that it would be useless any longer to continue the defence of the outer palisades, he accordingly gave orders, as the savages advanced, to give them one more volley, and then retire to our blockhouse. Again the savage crew advanced, and when they were within sixty yards of the works, several shots were heard, and six more warriors fell. On they came, however, confident in their numbers, and in despair we sought the shelter of the blockhouse. The Indians soon commenced scaling the palisades. As they did so many of their warriors fell, but they were few among so many, and I saw by my father's look of anguish, that he now knew that our death was only a question of time. I also saw by his face that he was determined to fight to the last, and, boy as I was, the same spirit possessed me. The savages had at length managed to enter our enclosure: some of them remained outside of the stockade so as to fire upon us

if we attempted to sally out. In the meantime others got beneath the fire from our portholes and commenced setting fire to the basement of the building. Another gang had seized the trunk of a large tree, and advanced to batter down the door. We all saw then that escape was impossible, and my father, after kissing my mother and sister, prepared for the last struggle. My mother, brave woman that she was, had seized a rifle, and stood ready to do her part in that desperate hour. Ben Freeman, for that was the name of the man of whose gigantic strength I have already told you, shot down one more savage, and then seizing an axe prepared to fight like a tiger for her cubs. I also noticed that he had loosened a large hunting knife in its sheath; in fact it was evident that before the Indians had finished their deadly work, their victory would be bought at a terribly dear price. And now the door, strong though it was, commenced to give way. To add to our horror, night was now coming on and under its cover the savages had become more bold; at last the door gave way and then a tremendous rush took place. For a while the doorway was choked up by dead bodies, but at length two warriors managed to obtain an entrance: more followed until each of our gallant little band is struggling with two or three of the fiends. One by one they fall until there is only Ben, my sister and self left. Ben has been fighting like a lion, and now placing himself before us he endeavours with his last strength to defend us. Seven or eight of the Indians are trying to get at him, but without success; all at once a gigantic warrior enters the room, he laughs derisively and says: are you women that it takes so many of you to slay one man? See how soon Bigknife will take this man's scalp. Saying this he advanced towards Ben, who was now covered with wounds; as he did so I caught a glimpse of the hero's eye, and from what I read there, I knew that he was about to make his last effort, and that this would be to kill the giant Indian. Hurling the axe away, for the first time he seized hold of his trusty hunting knife, and bounding through the ring which his enemies had formed around him, with one fierce thrust stabbed the Indian to the heart. So terrible was the blow, that the hilt of the knife actually followed the blade into the Indian's body. Before the blow was well spent, however, poor Ben was a corpse. As he fell I heard the report of a pistol behind me, and looking round beheld my sister falling covered by her own blood. The hand that caused her death was her own. The next moment I was knocked senseless to the ground. I cannot say how long I remained unconscious, but I was brought to my senses by something hot which seemed to be fanning my cheeks. Recollection now returned, and well it was that it did so, for in a few moments more I should have perished in the flames which were devouring the blockhouse. With great difficulty I managed to escape from the burning ruins. When at last I did so, and found that I was free, I knew that to stay where I was until morning would be madness, as the Indians would discover and

kill me. I also knew that by taking to the woods I might walk into their midst, but I resolved to take the chance. Creeping along slowly, and with pain, for my head felt as though on fire, I at length reached the woods. I was fortunate enough to find a spring of water and the cool liquid in a great measure revived me. I need not tell you, Captain, how I made my escape, but on that terrible night I made a vow to revenge my murdered family, and especially my sweet sister, and though my whole life since then has been occupied in fulfilling my vow, yet have I never in anything but fair combat slain a redskin. Revenge upon Redhand, who was the leader of the band who deprived me of all I loved best on earth, is what I now live for."

The scout's conversation was here interrupted by a bullet, which whizzed in unpleasant proximity to his head.

"That was near, and the hand that directed it is behind that stump. Take a shot at it, Captain, no doubt for a moment the brave will shew himself and I will see what I can do for him in that moment."

Captain Herbert took aim and fired, hitting the stump in the centre. The report from his musket had scarcely died away, before the warrior shewed his head and gave vent to a cry of derision. The end of that cry, however, was swallowed up in his death-scriek, for the scout with terrible quickness had taken advantage of his incautiousness and with unerring aim given him a pass to the other world.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE these incidents have been taking place at Fort William, Florence naturally felt the greatest anxiety as to the fate of her lover. Various rumours had reached Albany relating to the fortunes of the war. Some of these were alarming in their nature, others reassuring.

One evening our heroine and her father were seated together in the library; they were examining a map, and judging from Florence's close attention it was evident that she was deeply interested in their occupation. The father was pointing out the sites of Forts William and Edward, and they were both talking of the time when Edwin would return to claim his bride.

"You see, my child, here Fort William is situated; it is commanded by a man who has never known fear, under him Edwin will learn many valuable lessons in the art of war."

"Yes, dear father, and Edwin's is a nature which will easily remember any lessons of a noble kind. Oh, father, how I pray for his safe return."

"My dear Florence, you must not give way to over-anxiety about Edwin; no doubt Providence will safely guide him through the passing storm of war, and when he does return it will be with more experience and knowledge of the world, acquired under circumstances which will tend to make him appreciate more than ever the peace and comforts of home."

CHAPTER VII.

SINCE our last look at the fort, Col. Munro had despatched a messenger to Fort Edward, asking General Webb to advance to his aid, as he could not hold out much longer, ten of his cannon having burst, and provisions rapidly failing. The answer to this letter had been intercepted by Montcalm, and in it General Webb not only refused to advance to the distressed garrison's assistance, but actually advised Munro to surrender. The chivalrous Montcalm, not desiring to take a mean advantage of this news, which he knew would gall and mortify the spirit of his brave adversary, offered the English honourable terms; they were to be allowed to leave the post they had so gallantly defended, with all the honours of war. The troops, however, were not to be allowed to load their muskets, Montcalm having promised a sufficient guard from his army to protect them from the Indians, should they be so treacherous as to attack the virtually unarmed men.

It was on the night before the capitulation that Edwin and the scout were standing together; Lightfoot was assuring Edwin that he knew the Indian character too well to trust to their standing passive spectators while the troops whom they hated passed in safety from their reach. He also told Edwin that he would not wait for the departure of the troops, but would steal forth that night and endeavour to make his escape. He accordingly, having looked carefully to the priming of his rifle, cautiously left the fort.

For some time Edwin could distinguish his form by the light of the moon, creeping slowly along, and when last he saw the scout he was lying on the ground as motionless as a log. At this moment a cloud passed across the face of the moon, and when she again shone forth Lightfoot was nowhere visible.

"Strange, he has taken a direct line to where the Indians are lying; he cannot intend to go over to the enemy."

Far different was the scout's motive for acting thus strangely; he was about to see what the Indians were doing in their encampment. He soon managed to reach the border of the forest; here he remained for some time intently listening. At last he seemed to have made up his mind, and once more commenced making his way towards the Indian camp, when about twenty yards from their fires he halted and lay down.

"It's not likely any of the varmints will come this road, as the ground is so swampy that even to an Indian it would not be pleasant to make his way across it."

From Lightfoot's hiding-place he could plainly see the Indians, to whose view he took the greatest care not to expose himself for a moment, lest some of their number might perceive him. There appeared to be about five hundred, and it was evident that some of their chiefs were preparing to harangue them, for they were seated in a circle and seemed to be holding a council. A strange and savage band were they, and the scout saw among them warriors from each tribe of the Six.

For the time all further attempt at conversion was out of the question, owing to the rage caused by a wordy quarrel in the passage.

Now, Patrick, let me go. I must give the letter, you know."

"Shure didn't the judge tell ye that no one is to go near him, for he wished to spake private with Miss Flory."

"Now, Patrick, don't be foolish; this letter must be given to the judge, or he will be angry."

"Oh, Biddy, you're a woman and I suppose ye have to give in, for there's nothing can be ye at talking; but if ye must have your ye, let me bring in the letter, for I have an elegant way of spakin', and maybe I will make matter of this intheruption all right with the master."

This edifying conversation had been overheard by Judge Temple and Florence, and they determined to wait and see how Patrick would apologize for what he called the matter of the intheruption. A gentle knock was now heard, and Patrick in his best style commenced his apology.

"I would never have dared to disturb you, but Biddy would insist upon bringing you this letter. I think, sir, it's from the sate of our air it is, and so I thought I would be so bould to bring it to you."

"Give me the letter and don't be making ye speeches, Patrick."

"Me speechifying, your honour; I wouldn't tempt it, for of all our family, and they were a large one—there was Bill, and Gim and Mike, but to mention names, as the papers says, is not needful; it's enough for me to tell your honour that out of the whole family there was only one could blarney, and that was my sister Kate."

"Patrick, leave the room at once, and don't let me hear any more of your family history."

Pat obeyed, muttering as he did so: "It's myself as knows that there's royal blood in my family, for me mother tould me so her self."

When the judge and Florence were once more alone the letter was opened and read and re-read. It was from Edwin, and was written from Fort Edward, evidently but shortly before he left that post; its contents were to the effect that the Marquis of Montcalm was advancing on Fort William; that a strong reinforcement was preparing to leave that post, and all hands were confident in the success of the British arms. It was also expected that General Webb would attack the French in the rear, should they invest Fort William. Altogether the letter tended in a great measure to reassure Florence and her mother, so much so that Florence's countenance and manner seemed to change as though by magic upon reading the letter. Perhaps this happy change, however, was brought about still more by a little *billet-doux* which was addressed to her. Leaving our heroine thus happy, we must again draw our readers' attention to Fort William, where events of great importance were taking place.

Nations confederacy. To a man unaccustomed to forest life, they would have appeared all alike. Not so to Lightfoot; by their paint and scalplocks he could distinguish the various tribes. There were Oneidas, Senecas, Mohawks, Cayugas, Onondagas, and Tuscaroras. All at once Lightfoot started, for Redhand, his deadly enemy, arose to address the savage throng.

"Warriors," he said, "you have heard that the pale-faced chief, who calls himself our ally, has determined to let the redcoats leave the fort at to-morrow's sunrise in peace. Is this right? Let the warriors look around their circle, and they will notice many braves are absent. Where are they? They are lying dead in front of the fort; their spirits, before departing for the happy hunting grounds, call upon you to avenge their death. Warriors, shall they not be listened to?"

Then the speaker paused as though waiting for an expression of their opinion, and the pause was not without effect, for a fierce murmur was heard to issue from the throats of the savage band.

"No; I know the Six Nation warriors would not allow it; if they did they would be women, and Redhand would not be seen fighting among them. Redhand does not speak long; he has not a long tongue, but he has a long arm. Redhand is a great warrior; many times has he led his braves to victory. To-morrow Redhand will raise the war whoop. Let the warriors be ready with their scalping knives."

The conclusion of this speech was greeted with applause, and it was evident that it embodied the sentiments of a large majority of the Indians. The next chief to rise was one whose bent form and tottering footsteps gave token of his great age.

"Warriors of the Six Nation Indians, listen to the words of Blackfox, over whose head the snows of many winters have passed. As Redhand has said, the Yengees have made a treaty with our French fathers. But how long will this last? Let the warriors wait, and nourish their strength; before long these nations, who came over the great salt lakes, will again be at one another's throats, and then our young braves will have their chance. As for the spirits of those that are gone, are they not happier than if here? Where they are now the Manitou will give them separate hunting grounds, where no pale-face shall ever tread. Blackfox would rather be there than here, for he sees the day is not many moons off when the redman must disappear from the land of his fathers; the cursed firewater is killing him; if our warriors would not put their lips to it, then they might talk of driving the pale-faces from the great lakes. Let, therefore, the word of our French father be held sacred. Blackfox sees that it will not be for long. Blackfox has finished."

This speech was not followed by any applause, and evidently gave dissatisfaction to the council. Blackfox was followed by various other chiefs, and all of them were in favour of attacking the English. We shall omit noticing these, with one exception, and this was

Greywolf, who, by his many deeds of savage bravery during the siege, had raised himself in the estimation of the warriors.

"Greywolf is young, and perhaps his word may not be so oily as the old man's who has just spoken. Did Greywolf say man? If he did not mean it, for he sees that years have made Blackfox a woman. He says that of warriors who are slain will be happier when they are; but Greywolf would like to ask what is to give them warm skins to journey with to the happy hunting grounds. Our dead are buried, but lie where the birds of the air devour them. To-morrow the redcoats who have caused this will pass from beneath our knives, and when they are safe they will laugh at the children of the forest. Are we to be made toys of? Did Montcalm ask our wishes when he agreed to let the English go? No, warriors, you were treated like dogs, and if you do not show the French and English that you are men, you will always be so treated. Greywolf for one intends to steep his knife in blood to-morrow, and he who stays away from the fight and follows the council of Blackfox is a coward, and should be hoeing corn with the women on the shores of the great lakes."

From the way in which the last speech was received, it was evident to Lightfoot that it would be the Indians' course on the morrow.

"I knew it; there will be a massacre to-morrow," he muttered, "unless the French interfere. What madness for our troops to leave their works with unloaded rifles; it seems to me like giving one's life as a present to the murdering ruffians. Lightfoot will at least try to get out of their reach, but in the end Redhand shall not escape. Let me see, from the look of the sky I should say it wanted but an hour from daylight. I can manage to make some distance by that time."

From very seldom having any one to whom to impart his thoughts, the scout had acquired the habit of soliloquizing. Aware of the danger of discovery, he proceeded warily and with caution on his way; he could hear the challenge of the French sentries, and it required great care to avoid the many out-lying pickets. There was yet another danger, if he approached too near the Fort he might be fired upon, as its occupants had no intention of allowing any of the enemy near their works until the appointed time for surrender. Lightfoot fortunately knew the ground well, and was thus able to proceed with tolerable certainty.

From the appearance of the sky it was evident that the morning light was about to break. He continued on steadily until he deemed it advisable to stop and ascertain exactly his position. He had not long to wait for soon the sky became of a clear colour, and the morning broke.

The scout found that he had made good progress during the darkness, as he was now full half mile from the Fort. Climbing a tree he could perceive that all was stir and bustle at the Fort, and soon he heard the roll of the drum calling the soldiers to their ranks. Thinking he could see all that passed from his

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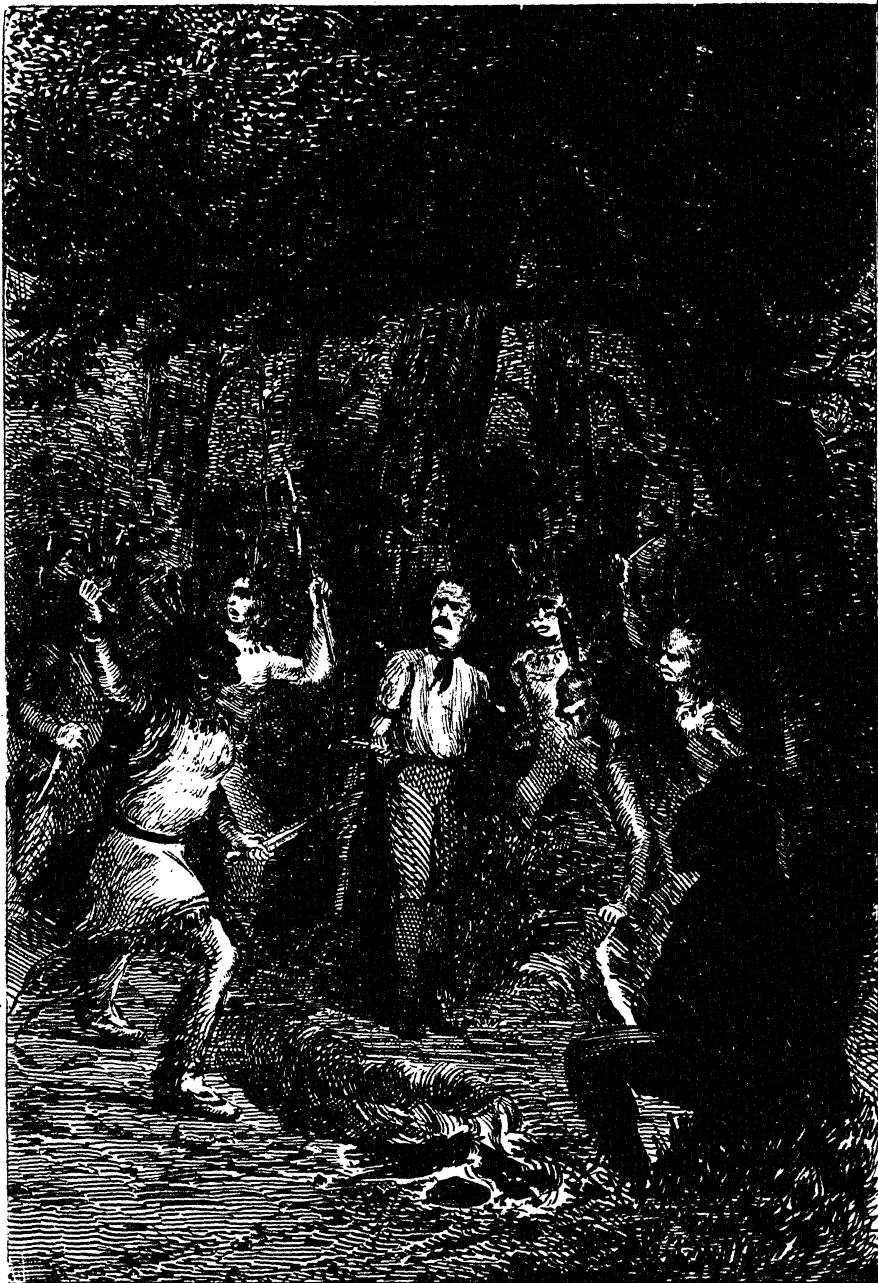
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“Edwin now saw his captors coming towards him . . . with weapons in their hands, dripping with blood.”

(A Tale of the War of 1757, p. 33)

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ding-place, Lightfoot resolved not to desert it.

Before long he discerned the head of the column of soldiers leaving the Fort, and he noticed that as the last of the garrison left the post which they had so long and gallantly defended, the flag of old England was hauled down, and the Fleur-de-llys of France was soon seen to take its place. Following in the rear of the troops Lightfoot observed a crowd of women and camp-followers.

The scout now for the first time remarked several Indians on the outskirts of the woods, and as the troops advanced their numbers constantly increased, and most of them carried rifles. For some time all went on peaceably, and the head of the English column was readily hidden from view by the forest scenery, when suddenly there arose confusion and disorder among the soldiers: Straining his eyes to discover the cause, it was soon explained.

He perceived many dark forms struggling with the camp followers, to whom it was evident the men did not intend to give up their property without resistance. And now the dreadful war whoop sounded upon his startled ear, and the Indians rushed in numbers from where they had been lying in wait, and the work of destruction commenced. He saw many a brave fellow fiercely struggling to protect the poor women and children, and among those who fought most valiantly he could plainly see Captain Herbert and his men: they had been the last to leave the Fort, and Edwin had the mortification of hearing many insulting remarks about the English as he retreated its walls. At open warfare our hero knew no fear, but under the annoyances of a siege his spirit chafed, and it was, therefore, with a feeling of relief that Captain Herbert left the walls of Fort William.

Visions of future happiness with his beloved Florence flashed across his mind, but from his train of thought he was rudely awakened by perceiving fierce and scowling faces peering at him as he passed.

"After all, if the scout should be right," abused Edwin, "and these Indians were to attack us, what a terrible situation for the poor women and children."

As he advanced he noticed that the number of the Indians increased; it was also evident that they were becoming bolder. Already some of the women had been despoiled of various articles; in most cases they bore these losses uncomplainingly, but matters were not destined to remain in this state long.

An Indian using great roughness towards some of the women, a soldier seized the warrior who had thus acted and threw him violently to the ground; in an instant knives were drawn, and the life of the brave but rash man was in jeopardy. Seeing this, several of the soldiers rushed in to save their comrade. We do not assert that this particular quarrel was that caused the storm to burst, for even more barbarous acts were taking place on the line of march, but this was the cause of the first blood spilt near Captain Herbert, for the brave

fellow who had interfered to defend the helpless was at once killed by the Indians.

Captain Herbert now saw that nothing remained but to fight, so drawing his sword, he called upon such soldiers as were near to put themselves under his lead and endeavour to keep back the Indians.

Already the dreadful war whoop had sounded, and Edwin, although fighting bravely, saw that he would have the greatest difficulty in defending his own life, and his eyes were shocked by the sight of women, whom he was powerless to help, being butchered in cold blood. Already he had cloven in the skulls of two of the demons, and he was now engaged in a deadly fight with a third. Parrying a blow from the Indian's tomahawk, Edwin, with lightning-like rapidity, pierced the Indian to the heart, but before he could recover his balance, his arms were pinioned from behind, and he was a prisoner. Two warriors securely bound him, then taking him roughly by the shoulders, they urged him into the forest and left him there, bound hand and foot. From where he was he could hear the shrieks of the victims gradually grow fainter and less frequent, till at length Edwin knew the work of death was at an end.

Edwin now saw his captors coming towards him, many of them with weapons in their hands, dripping with blood, and not a few of them with reeking scalps in their belts. Edwin knew that he was either destined for torture at the stake, or a long captivity, perhaps one from which he might never escape; and although the young soldier was undaunted, yet these apprehensions would force themselves upon his mind.

That morning he had started, as he thought, on a march which would bring him towards home, instead of this he was now a captive, and, for aught he knew, might, without a moment's notice, suffer a cruel and horrible death. And now they made him understand partly by speech, and partly by signs, that he must come further into the forest. Many of the savages were maddened by drink, and with the diabolical love of torture natural to them, would advance towards Edwin as if to stab him, and did his eye but wince in the least when thus threatened, it afforded them the keenest enjoyment.

At length the savages arrived at their destination, and commenced making preparations for remaining there some time. The place which they had chosen for their camp was remarkably suitable for such a purpose; it was one of those natural openings in the woods so noticeable for their beauty. The grass was of a rich green, and through the centre of the little clearing a sparkling rivulet wound its way, giving life and beauty to the vegetation around. Our hero was not left, however, to muse upon the beauty of the spot; he was dragged roughly along, and securely bound to a large tree.

To add to the unpleasantness of his thoughts, he now noticed several of the savages in earnest conversation, and from their frequently pointing towards him, he knew that he was

the subject of their remarks. He had repeatedly tried, whenever the eyes of the guard were not directed towards him, to loosen his bonds, so that upon the first favourable opportunity, he might make a desperate effort to escape. He found all his attempts vain, however, and his spirit began to sink when he considered the tortures which probably awaited him.

Night was coming on, and his captors made a fire, round which some of them lay down to sleep, while others drank deeply of what they called fire-water, and the potent spirits were working in various ways upon them. Some were singing and laughing loudly, others recounting their exploits on the war-trail, while not a few were bent upon spilling the blood of their captive, towards whom they excitedly advanced with gleaming knives and ferocious looks, but each time they were deterred from executing their purpose by the warrior who kept guard over him. From this Edwin inferred that he was their chief, and such was in reality the case, and his name, although our hero did not know it, was Redhand, the deadly enemy of Lightfoot, the scout.

Edwin had by this time sunk into a dull kind of apathy, and had he been in a less painful position no doubt would soon have fallen asleep. Even as it was his weary eyelids kept closing against his will. From this drowsy state he was roused by his guard moving away to replenish the fire, which was now almost out; this done, Redhand awoke one of his band and signified to him that he was to take his turn at watching. Having done this, Redhand composed himself by the fire to sleep.

As his new guard was moving towards him, Edwin was startled by a voice which proceeded from above him. In tones he well knew, he heard:

"Lightfoot is here, be cautious, and be ready; our time for escape is coming," and then all was again still.

Scarcely had an hour elapsed when the Indian who was deputed to watch over him, came near to examine his fastenings; his head was stooped forward in doing so, and Edwin saw the scout's gun raised a moment above the Indian's head. The next moment it descended with fearful force, felling the Indian to the ground. The scout in an instant descended from the tree where he had been so long concealed, and cut Edwin's bonds. He then seized the stunned Indian and bound him fast to the tree, then tearing a strip from his shirt he securely gagged him, so that if he recovered his senses he could not raise the alarm; in case any of the band awoke they would probably in the early dawn mistake him for Edwin, and seeing him still tied there suspect nothing.

"Now, Captain," said the scout, "we must run for it, and try to leave the varmints far behind. Follow me and be careful not to make a noise. Fortunately for us, the Redskins have been drinking, but remember there is one of them who has not touched a drop, and the slightest noise might reach his quick ear. You cannot be too careful how you tread, for the snapping of the smallest twig might be the

cause of our capture, and if you or I were again taken, nothing could save us from instant death at the hands of the already blood-stained villains."

It hardly needed the admonition of the scout to make Edwin cautious, indeed he had determined not to fall again into the hands of the Indians *alive*. Both he and Lightfoot were therefore, while within hearing of the savages, moved with the greatest care and silence. Once at a safe distance they made more rapid progress.

At length they came upon the scene of yesterday's fearful work, and Edwin's heart sickened at the appalling sight which the silvery moonlight disclosed to his view. In one place was a mother fearfully gashed by the knives of the Indians, and still holding in death's grasp her little child, who had shared her fate. Beside them was stretched a powerful man, who had evidently perished while endeavouring to protect them; his countenance still wore a look of hate, and his right arm was raised above his head, as if about to deal a blow. Sights such as these were to be seen on every side, and Captain Herbert recognized many of his men among the dead. He no longer wondered at Lightfoot's terrible vow of vengeance, to fulfil which seemed the sole object of his life.

While Captain Herbert and his companions traversed this scene of death, morning began to dawn, and rendered it necessary for their safety once more to seek the neighbouring forest, for every moment they remained in the open ground, they were in danger of being seen by the roving Redskins. Hastily they retreated to the friendly cover of the woods where, pausing to consult as to their future movements, they resolved to make for Fort Edward, by a circuitous route, but little known or frequented.

CHAPTER VIII.

An hour had scarcely elapsed since Captain Herbert had effected his escape, when the chilliness of the air caused Redhand to awake. He found the fire quite out, but his followers were still slumbering, under the influence of spirits. Almost his first act was to look towards the tree, to which he imagined Edwin was fast bound. Nothing was seen to justify any suspicion of our hero's having escaped; on the contrary, there he was securely bound. The Indian gave vent to a grunt of satisfaction, and then his eyes wandered in search of the captive's guard, but he was nowhere to be seen. Redhand, thinking that he might have fallen asleep on the ground near his prisoner, and that the dim light prevented him from perceiving him, advanced towards the tree with the intention of waking the careless watchman in no very gentle manner. Judge then of his surprise and wonder, when upon reaching the tree, he discovered the one whom he supposed to be watching securely bound to the tree. Taking a sharp knife from his belt he cut the thongs which bound him. As he did so the body fell heavily to the ground

for the blow which Lightfoot had dealt had caused instant death, and the gag with which the scout had tied the Indian's mouth was an unnecessary precaution. Redhand at first gazed upon his companion, Otonabee, who had but lately been so full of life, in awe, for he could not understand his death; then discovering the fracture in his skull, he raised a fearful yell of rage, which effectually roused his drunken band from their sleep. As soon as they were informed of the fate of their companion, fierce exclamations of anger were heard on all sides, and eager eyes and hands were soon trying to ascertain who had caused his death.

The first clue to this was given by a young warrior, who, seizing the gag which Lightfoot had used, pointed to it and said:

"Onondagás, this has been torn from some hunter's shirt, for it is made of buckskin. Our dead brother was not killed, therefore, by the man who was bound to the tree."

Another warrior noticed that a branch of the tree to which Edwin had been secured, was bent down, as if some heavy weight had recently rested upon it. Following his search still further, he climbed the tree, and found marks which left no doubt of its having lately had an occupant.

As soon as the Indians found by what means their victim had escaped, a second yell broke from them, but at a signal from Redhand all became quiet again, and the Indians assembled round their chief, who had signed to them that he was about to speak.

"Warriors, the cursed firewater of the pale faces has blinded our eyes; the man who was concealed in that tree must have been there when we first made our fires. Shame to the braves that they did not see him, for if they had done so, instead of Otonabee lying dead at their feet, another of the pale faces would have died. But, warriors, let us not stand like women crying; they who were the cause of this (pointing to the dead brave,) cannot be far distant; let us follow them, and avenge the great warrior, Otonabee, for none were before him in battle, his knife was sharp and the sight of it caused his enemies to fly,—while in council his tongue was wise, and gave good advice."

As Redhand ceased speaking the band prepared for instant pursuit, and soon they were scattered over the ground, trying to make out where the fugitives had first entered the woods. This ascertained, like a pack of bloodhounds they set off in pursuit of Edwin and Lightfoot.

At length they arrived at the spot where Captain Herbert had paused to look on the dead. Here for a long time they were completely baffled, as the ground was hard, and no footprints were visible; but with the cunning peculiar to them, they again scattered, to find traces of those for whom they were in anxious search.

At length one of them was successful, and by a peculiar cry he communicated his discovery to the rest, and the whole band were soon assembled round the spot. Four marks were distinctly imprinted on the soft soil; two

of these had been made by a man wearing boots, the other footprint showed that the second man wore moccasins. Redhand stooped to the ground and examined intently the moccasin-tracks, and after a long pause arose, muttering as he did so one word, "Lightfoot."

As that single word escaped his lips, anyone within hearing would have thought that Bedlam had been let loose, so fierce were the cries which the Indians uttered, and when the pursuit was again resumed, the savages seemed more eager, if possible, than before, to come up with their prey, for the name of the dreaded scout had acted as an incentive to their passions, and after about three hours spent in following the fugitives, they were so far successful as to come in sight of Captain Herbert and his companion, who were journeying along at a leisurely pace, little thinking that danger was so near. Fortunately, however, they were apprised of the peril they were in, soon enough to give them time to make an attempt at escape, for one of the younger warriors, eager to distinguish himself, had tried to shoot the escaped prisoners, but owing to some defect in the gun, it had missed fire. The click of the lock, however, had been heard by Lightfoot, and turning round, he at one glance comprehended the state of affairs.

And now it was a race for life; both Edwin and the scout were good runners, more especially Lightfoot, who had been thus named by the Indians for his great fleetness of foot. For a long time they kept running pretty evenly together, but it was becoming more and more apparent that Edwin could not keep up the terrific pace at which they were going much longer. He had, therefore, told Lightfoot to make his escape as best he could, but as for himself he determined he would turn and fight. At this proposal the honest face of the scout assumed a look of indignation, and moderating his pace for a moment, he said:

"Captain, do you think Lightfoot the man to desert another, and leave him to fight the redskins alone? No, he is not of that kind. I yet hope we may escape; I see you are of well-knit frame! Not two rifle shots from here is a steep ravine,—to attempt to jump this at another time would be a foolhardy act, but situated as we are it is well worth the trial; few, if any, of the redskins will dare to follow us."

Encouraged by this Edwin continued running.

While the scout had been speaking, the Indians had gained considerably upon them, and the foremost were now within twenty-five yards of the pursued, around whom bullets began to rattle. Arrived at the ravine, Edwin and the scout nerve themselves for the effort, and now they are in mid-air, but following in the same jump are three Indians.

Four of the jumpers landed in safety, the fifth missed the other side, and his body was seen by the Indians, who did not dare the feat, falling with terrible force and velocity down the side of the steep ravine. This was enough to deter any of the rest from making the attempt so fatal to their companion.

Those who succeeded in reaching the other side, immediately rushed at the fugitives and grappled in deadly fight. The two Indians were Redhand and Greywolf. With instinctive hatred Lightfoot and Redhand sought out one another, and Edwin and Greywolf were thus matched together. Ere they closed, Edwin noticed that the scout limped; he had no time, however, to make reflections upon Lightfoot's hurt, for in an instant Greywolf and he had closed in deadly combat. Never were combatants more equally matched. All were armed alike, for Lightfoot, before jumping, had to throw his rifle before him, and had not sufficient time to snatch it up before Redhand was upon him. Edwin's only weapon was the tomahawk which Otonabee had let fall, when he was felled to the ground. In strength also the adversaries were well matched, for although the whites excelled slightly in muscular development, they could not compare with the Indians in quickness and agility; the latter also had an advantage in being almost naked, and often when Edwin thought he was getting the better of Greywolf he would slip like a serpent from under his grasp. The fight was a terrible one. All of them knew that it was life or death. The scout and Redhand rolled over and over, and for a long time it was impossible to decide who had the best of it. At length Redhand managed to get the upper hand, for Lightfoot's sprained ankle, in an unlucky moment, had given way. But, although he was under the Indian, the scout was by no means conquered; he held with a grasp of iron, the knife arm of the Indian, and in this position they tried to tire one another out. Lightfoot knew that if his strength gave way for an instant his fate was sealed; he was also aware that his ultimate chance of safety now rested upon the success or defeat of Edwin. The fight between Edwin and Greywolf had been in the meantime progressing. Each one had slightly wounded the other. Unfortunately for Edwin his tomahawk had been knocked from his hand early in the fight, and he had now only his personal strength to rely on. Well for him was it that in his early days he had been skilled in wrestling. Gradually, but surely Greywolf's strength gave way, under our hero's bearlike hug, and now Edwin has him down. All this time they have been approaching nearer and still nearer to the brink of the awful precipice, and the noise caused by a swollen, and impeded stream beneath sounded in the ears of the combatants. Greywolf, seeing that his own death was certain, now confined his efforts to compassing that of his antagonist's at the same time. At last they reached the brink of the giddy height, and Edwin saw that it would be impossible to throw Greywolf over, as he clung to him with the tenacity of a leech. By a desperate effort he contrived to get the Indian's head over the brink, then placing his elbow on the warrior's neck, and planting his knee on his chest, he forced his head so far back that his neck broke. He was now at liberty to see how Lightfoot was faring, and he found he was just in time; for, from the position in which Lightfoot was,

it was impossible for his strength to hold on much longer. Throwing himself upon Redhand, he grappled with him, and succeeded in wrenching from him his knife. Lightfoot now jumped up, and before Edwin could stop him thrust his long hunting knife repeatedly into the Indian's bosom. As he did so, he muttered: "At last my vengeance is accomplished and he who was the bane of my life is no more."

During all this time those on the other side had been anxiously watching the contest, and whenever their side appeared to be conquering exclamations of pleasure and encouragement escaped them; but now that they saw their chosen warriors slain before their eyes, while they were powerless to interfere, cries of rage filled the air, and a storm of bullets swept round Edwin and Lightfoot, from which they were enabled to protect themselves by the bodies of the slain. As soon as the Indians perceived this, they ceased firing; no doubt from a feeling of respect for their dead. But now that the fight was over, and the savages' attention no longer absorbed by it, a new danger threatened Edwin and the scout, for some of the band were seen hurrying off to find the termination of the ravine, while the rest kept watch, and if Edwin or the scout made the slightest movement a dozen sharp eyes were upon them. The Indians were evidently bent upon surrounding them, and to add to their peril, owing to his sprain Lightfoot could not move very fast, and the idea of leaving the man who had fought so nobly beside him was a thought not for a moment entertained by Captain Herbert. One thing, however, he determined on, which was that the savages should not again take him alive. The scout had been watching Edwin for some time to see what was passing in his mind. From his looks he could not tell what his intentions were, but something far more conclusive enabled him to decide what they were, for the young man had drawn from near his heart a tiny locket. This was an little trinket had been carefully preserved through all his dangers. Need I tell the reader the countenance therein portrayed? It was the face of his beloved Florence. Lightfoot noticed that our hero was intently looking upon the little picture, and that when Edwin returned it to its resting-place a look of bravery and determination animated his whole countenance. But well as Edwin knew the scout, he had not rightly estimated his noble nature, when he thought that Lightfoot wished him to sacrifice his life with his. Although Lightfoot had never had the opportunity of studying religion, or of hearing God's word, preached from the pulpit, yet in the mighty works of nature, and in the solitude of his forest life, he had seen and worshipped his Creator, and when Edwin thought the scout wished him to die with him, far different thoughts had been passing through his brain; what they were the scout now explained to Edwin.

"Young man, I have been watching your actions, and by them I see that your brave heart would not allow you to desert a friend,

no matter what bright hopes the future may hold out to tempt you. I have seen all this, and I respect you the more. Lightfoot knows the happiness of another is bound up in yours, and if you for a moment think that he wishes you to sacrifice that happiness to him you are mistaken. For of what avail to him to see your life thrown away, because he must lose his own. No, if of this nature Lightfoot would not be a brave man; and if he has not already told you to begone while a chance of escape remained, it is because he knows a surer means of escape. I know well the ground on which we are, and before the Indians reach a point where they can cross to this side two hours will elapse, and before they can get to this place another will have passed. In an hour night will be upon us, and under its cover I purpose guiding you to where a natural staircase leads to the bottom of the cliffs, and by means of it I hope we shall escape the Indians."

But "Bert, Lightfoot," returned Edwin, "you forget that you can hardly walk, and therefore it will be extremely difficult; nay almost impossible, for you to descend."

"Captain, you little know what endurance my kind of life gives; before now I have run for an hour, when the flesh from the soles of my feet has been torn off, and when at every step the bone would come in contact with the sandy soil. Besides, even should I not succeed in making my escape, the object of my life was fulfilled when Redhand gave the death shriek, while you have to cause gladness to another."

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE our friends have been arranging their plans, the Indians on the other side are still patiently watching. To a careless onlooker, no sign of their presence would have been apparent, but behind every convenient shelter was an Indian. Respect for Lightfoot's rifle kept them thus, for whenever any of them sought to leave their hiding place, its dark muzzle would instantly cover them, and they too well knew how fatal was its fire to trifle with the owner's temper. Edwin and the scout had formed a rampart of the dead, and behind its cover they were safe, but whenever they ventured to leave this strange breastwork bullets pattered on all sides. At length darkness spread its mantle over the earth, and then Lightfoot, touching Captain Herbert on the shoulder, let him know that it was time to commence their journey: The scout was the first to leave. He crawled slowly and silently along the ground, and Edwin followed his example, and the two were soon out of rifle shot from the Indians. They were congratulating one another upon their success so far, when flames arose from where the savages lay, evidently kindled with a double object, to indicate to those of their band who had gone round the ravine, where the enemy lay, and to prevent the two whites from attempting to escape in the darkness. Edwin and his companion, although they still continued

their progress, were even more wary in their movements. They saw that the fire was a large one, and the scene of their late encounter was soon perfectly visible to the savages, and it was not long before their sharp eyes detected that the dead were the sole tenants of the spot. Fearful yells told Edwin and Lightfoot that their absence was discovered. They could see some of the warriors preparing to take the leap which had been already so fatal to one of their number, but after considering a while, to the great relief of the watchers, they seemed to think it too hazardous. This was not from want of bravery, but rather because not knowing of the descent from the cliffs, they imagined that our hero and his companion would be intercepted by the rest of the band.

After half an hour's walking they arrived at the place where they were to commence their perilous descent. In the day time this would have been difficult, but by night the danger was still greater, as they had to feel for every ledge of rock. In one way, however, the darkness favoured them, for they could not see the terrible steepness of the ravine, nor were they aware how great at times was their danger. Lightfoot had commenced the descent first, and seemed to think more of Captain Herbert's safety than his own, for every now and then Edwin could hear his voice encouraging him, and indicating to him as best he could where to place his foot. To Edwin it seemed as though they would never end their mid-air journey, when suddenly a struggle was heard, succeeded almost immediately by a thud on the ground beneath. Lightfoot had missed his footing, and it was the sound of his body coming in contact with the ground which his companion had heard. Edwin made the best of his way to the bottom of the cliff, where he was greatly relieved by finding that Lightfoot had not been much hurt by his fall, although it was plainly to be seen, from the way he limped, that this accident would somewhat impede their progress.

Morning set in with a heavy rain, that kind of fine rain which almost imperceptibly wets one through. The sky was overcast, and of a dull leaden hue, and no sign of a favourable change was to be seen; and to add to their discomfort hunger was now torturing them.

Continuing their progress Edwin and his companion reached Fort Edward before night-fall, where they were received with delight. Captain Herbert's company especially were overjoyed at his reappearance among them, for they had believed him dead, and he learnt to his horror that word to that effect had been despatched to Albany.

CHAPTER X.

EDWIN could not endure the idea that false tidings should reach Florence, and remain long uncontradicted. With the instinct of a lover he had perceived before his departure that Florence deeply loved him, and he was fearful of the effect which the news might have upon her. He therefore deemed it ad-

visible to ask the commander of the fort for his discharge, which he obtained without difficulty, as there did not appear to be further need of his services, Montcalm having retired to Crown Point, and Teconderago and the British general not feeling justified in advancing upon the enemy. Having resigned his command, his next care was to look for a companion who would willingly brave the dangers of the wilderness with him, and his thoughts naturally reverted to the faithful Lightfoot, who acceded to his request, although still suffering from the effects of his fall.

On a lovely autumnal morning the two friends started on their long journey. The leaves of the trees had been touched by an early frost, which had caused them to assume those beautiful and varied tints so peculiar to Canadian scenery. The nights of this season of the year are always chilly, and our travellers had taken the precaution of carrying with them a thick blanket each. In high spirits they commenced their journey, Edwin because he fondly believed that before long he would be able to console Florence for the grief which he doubted not she would feel upon receiving the intelligence of his supposed death; Lightfoot because he was glad to be of service to one of whose confidence he had received undoubted proof. They had not travelled far when the scout said:

"It would be far better for us, and we should reach Albany much sooner, if we travel by water. Before we started I thought of this, and I remember the place where I concealed a canoe on my way to meet your detachment this spring, and which in another day we shall reach."

Arrived at the place spoken of by Lightfoot, they found the canoe exactly as he had left it, and soon they were afloat upon the Hudson. Relieved of the weight of their guns and blankets, they made rapid way in their little craft, the management of which they both thoroughly understood. To recount the progress made each day would be wearisome and monotonous; suffice it to say, nothing special occurred to retard them. At night they landed, and finding a suitable place made a fire, and after partaking of their simple meal, one watched while the other slept; for though they knew of no lurking enemies, yet were they careful lest when least expected some wandering Indians might attack them. Leaving Edwin and Lightfoot thus travelling, we shall now seek the home of our heroine.

CHAPTER XI.

In the library which we once before had occasion to visit, Florence and her father were seated. From the appearance of both it was evident that the sad news of Edwin's death had already reached them. Florence was dressed in deep mourning; her lovely complexion was sadly altered, and her eyes, although their beauty could not be dimmed, yet had lost much of their vivacity and bright-

ness. It was but too plain that deep grief was afflicting her, grief which would not only last for days, but might be the means, unless allayed, of bringing the lovely girl to an untimely grave. Her father was striving to console his beloved child by telling her that although the news appeared true, yet looking at the many uncertainties of Indian warfare, Edwin might have escaped into the woods, or was perhaps now a captive of the Indians. These attempts at consolation seemed at times to soothe the young girl, at other moments however they had a contrary effect.

"Oh, father, what is the use of trying to hide the truth from me; did not the cruel letter say that when last Edwin was seen he was bravely fighting against overwhelming numbers, and since then nothing has been heard of him. Oh that I had never consented to his leaving his home, if I had not done so he would not have gone! Alas! he is now lying cold and dead on the battle-field, the prey of wild beasts, or still worse, desecrated by the fiends in human shape who caused his death."

The horrors which Florence had conjured up were too much for her; all strength seemed to desert her, and no longer able to conquer or conceal her emotion, she wept long and bitterly. Her father hoped this natural outburst of grief might relieve the weight of sorrow which oppressed the heart of his gentle daughter, and for a time forbore all remonstrance. With every expression of deep affection, he strove to soothe and console his only and beloved child. Reminding her how injurious such excessive grief must prove, he endeavoured to impart to her mind resignation and calmness.

"Florence, my child," he said, "if Edwin is taken from this world of trial and suffering, he is not lost, but gone before, and doubtless his spirit will be continually watching over his beloved one. Besides, has my Florence no one left on whom to bestow some affection? Does not her father still live? and do you not feel any love for him who so deeply sympathises with your grief, and still hopes to see it relieved? We may yet again even in this life see our Edwin. Who knows but at this moment he is living, but held captive by the Indian foe. Let us not cease in our prayers, nor yet give up hope that he will ere long return to gladden our hearts."

In some measure consoled by her dear father's words, Florence was at length induced to retire to her room, but not to sleep, for grief and anxiety deprived her for many long hours of that "friend of woe." The old man still sat up, and when his daughter left the apartment, his features plainly gave evidence of the anxiety he felt on her account, and sinking on his knees he prayed earnestly to One who, when earnestly asked, never fails to accord that which we demand, provided it be for our good. For some time the father remained in humble supplication for his darling child, and then with a more hopeful countenance he arose and prepared for rest. Our old friend, Patrick, accompanied the judge to his room. Even on this worthy the melancholy

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tidings which had brought grief to the judge and his daughter had produced a sad, though almost ludicrous effect. For in spite of his really feeling, and trying to appear grave as befitted the occasion, the merriment natural to his lighthearted nature was continually struggling to shew itself in defiance of his sense of propriety; and the sincere sympathy he felt for the sorrow of his young mistress and his good and kind master.

And now the house was still, and all slept save Florence, who until the near approach of morn sought in vain for "tired nature's sweet restorer." Little did she think, that one of two forms, now passing and repassing in front of their house, was that of Edwin. The two travellers had come from a long distance, and were much fatigued. To the solitary watchman on his midnight beat, their movements seemed, to say the least, suspicious. Both were armed, he noticed, and one was pointing out to the other the house of Judge Temple. In this life how often are actions, the most innocent and harmless, misconstrued. To the watchman these two men appeared as burglars, bent upon entering the Judge's house, while in reality they were peaceable men, and one was merely shewing the house to the other, so that he might be able to return therto in the morning with a message. To the relief of the policeman, they continued on their way, but he resolved to follow them, satisfied they were bent upon some mischief. He could not hear their conversation, for it was conducted in a low tone, and this fact increased the man's suspicion. At length, those he was following stopped opposite the door of Mr. Herbert's house, one of the wealthiest citizens of Albany. Now the watchman was sure the burglars were about to commence operations, he therefore went to procure assistance; for he felt that alone he was unequal to the task of encountering two armed men. When he returned with assistance, the two men were not to be seen; lights were moving through the house, in front of which he had left them. Thinking that robbery, and perhaps murder was taking place, the police made their way to the door, and commenced ringing violently. They soon learned who the two were, whose movements had caused such vain alarm. To their relief they were told that Mr. Herbert's son, whom everyone had believed dead, had returned in safety from the wars, and that he was accompanied by a man who had acted as his guide. The guardians of the law were given some refreshment, and thanked for their trouble, which had happily proved so unnecessary; they then departed but barely convinced that they had not been dreaming.

CHAPTER XII.

THE morning after the return of Edwin Herbert, Florence was so ill that she could scarcely leave her room, but not wishing to cause her father anxiety on her account, she dressed, and went about the house as usual. Scarcely had they partaken of their breakfast, for which Florence had displayed but slight

appetite, when Patrick announced the arrival of a person who wished to speak to Judge Temple in private. Patrick received permission to show the stranger to the study. Thither the Judge followed, after telling Florence he would soon return to her. Feeling, as he entered the study, not a little anxious as to the cause of a visit at such an unusual hour, he now saw before him a man of about forty years of age, dressed as a trapper; and requesting his visitor to be seated, Judge Temple enquired what was the business about which he desired to speak to him, Lightfoot replied:

"I suppose, sir, you are Judge Temple? If so, I have come from Capt. Herbert to tell you that although said to have been slain on the battle-field, he in reality made his escape from the Indians who had taken him prisoner, and upon reaching home found his father mourning for him. Thinking you would be glad to hear of his safe return, he sent me to tell this news." These glad tidings filled the heart of the affectionate father with happiness. Neither did he forget the gratitude due to the great Healer and Answerer of prayer, when breathed in humility and faith. Scarcely could he restrain his joy, and to the amazement of the scout, the old man excitedly walked up and down the room, exclaiming:

"Oh, you don't know how you gladden my heart by this happy intelligence; you have indeed changed my sorrow to joy. But I was forgetting,—you have not told me your name; do let me know it, that I may ever remember it with gratitude for the consolation you have imparted."

"My name is Lightfoot, sir, and I am a scout in the British service. I have travelled with Captain Herbert from Fort Edward, and we only arrived here last night."

"Oh!" continued the Judge, delightedly, "while I impart this joyful intelligence to all, will you, my worthy friend, pardon my absence, and if you will wait, I shall return immediately."

But Lightfoot, now that his message was delivered, felt himself in the way, and told Judge Temple he would now return to Capt. Herbert. Patrick, therefore, shewed the visitor to the door, wondering as he did so what kind of a man he was, for his strange dress had excited the Irishman's curiosity.

On returning to the breakfast room, the Judge found Florence seated pensively near the table. On perceiving her father's approach she strove to assume a cheerful manner, and, more from a desire of having something to say than anything else, she asked her father who the visitor was who had called so early.

"The visitor, Florence," returned the Judge, "is one who has come a long distance, in fact, he comes from Fort Edward, and he tells me that Edwin is supposed to have escaped into the woods, nay that he has escaped, for our visitor has been with him, since the date of the massacre."

As this joyous intelligence was heard by Florence, her complexion changed alternately to the deepest crimson, and then to the paleness of marble. In fact the good news

was so unexpected, after the grief she had experienced, that it almost overpowered her. And when by eager questioning she ascertained the whole truth from her father, to his alarm she suddenly swooned, and it was some time before he could bring her to herself. Even when she did revive she was so weak that they had to help her to her room where indisposition kept her for a time, notwithstanding her eager anxiety once more to assure herself, by the evidence of her own eyes, of the return of one she so fondly loved.

Our readers can well imagine the happiness of Florence and her lover, whose affection seemed intensified by the trials and anxieties of absence. Hours seemed as minutes to the fond girl, who had so lately believed him to be no more, the friend of her childhood, and the lover of her youth.

A few weeks after Edwin's return Mr. Herbert's house one evening was brilliantly illuminated, and from the stir among the domestics, it was evident some gaiety was approaching. Mr. Herbert was giving a grand ball to celebrate the safe arrival of his son, to which all the *élite* of Albany and its vicinity for many miles round were invited and gladly came to offer their congratulations on an event at once so happy and so unexpected. Dancing commences, and the ball is at its height. Every type of loveliness had here its representative. But among all the beauty so prodigally displayed none exceeded that of Florence. Her dress was white, and in exquisite taste, and displayed to perfection the contour of her beautiful figure. In her perfect black hair she wore a sprig of red jessamine, which contrasted well with her dark locks. Edwin also looked well and radiant with the joy which filled his heart.

Not many months after this Florence and Edwin were united, and in their new house, the happiness of our old friend the faithful

Patrick was not forgotten, and it was the pleasure of his life to minister to their comforts and wants.

Years after his marriage, Edwin received a letter from a friend of his who was fighting on the frontier, and among its contents was the following.

"One day a fine powerful-looking man, somewhat aged, was brought into our post mortally wounded, who repeatedly mentioned your name with his dying breath, and requested he might be buried near a certain ravine which he minutely described. On conveying his body to the place indicated, two skeletons were found just where Lightfoot (for such he called himself) wished to be buried. From their appearance it was evident they had lain there for years, exposed to the storms of winter and heat of summer. There we buried him. Before his death he requested that his rifle, the article he seemed most on earth to prize, might be sent to you, as he said he knew you would take care of it."

By this intelligence of the fate of the good and faithful Lightfoot Edwin was deeply moved, and when not long after he received the rifle, which at one time had done such good service in the scout's hands, in protecting them from the Indians, he placed it in a conspicuous position in his room, and often did it recall to him the memory of the faithful Lightfoot, and his strange life.

In 1775, when the American revolutionary war broke out, Edwin was found fighting under the flag of old England, and when the country passed from under British rule, Edwin's loyal feelings would not allow him to remain in the land of his birth. He and his family, with many others, entered Canadian territory, and his descendants at this time are no doubt to be found on the soil of the New Dominion of Canada.

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MY VISIT TO FAIRVIEW VILLA.

"Love! Pshaw! I don't believe in it, and I really think I shall live and die an old maid, lest I should be wooed and married for my money. Men are such selfish, grasping, egoistical creatures!"

Such was the uncompromising judgment I heard pronounced on my sex as I entered the pleasant shady drawing-room of my friend, Stephen Merton, in compliance with a pressing invitation lately received, to spend a few weeks of the hot, dusty summer months at his pleasant residence, Fairview Villa, situated on the beautiful Saint Foy Road, some short distance from picturesque old Quebec.

The moment of my arrival was rather unpropitious, and I think I would have retreated had not my hostess caught sight of my rather embarrassed countenance. Instantly rising, she came forward and kindly welcomed me, introducing me afterwards to her two daughters, Fanny and Charlotte Merton, her niece, Miss Gray, and a young lady guest, Miss Otway.

"Hem!" thought I, when fairly seated, and replying with tolerable composure to the liberally gray small talk addressed me on all sides: "Which of these fair ladies has just proclaimed so unequivocally her contempt for mankind?" and my glance here travelled round the fair circle. "Oh, that is the one," I pronounced, as my gaze rested on Miss Geraldine Otway, who stood, haughtily erect beside the mantelpiece, twisting a piece of honey-suckle round her taper fingers. The scorn was yet lingering in the dark eyes that met mine so fearlessly—in the rosy lip so contemptuously curved, and a yet more femininely beautiful being I had rarely met. Features of childish delicacy, a varying, transparent complexion, and a figure of the most fragile, though graceful proportions, were hers; all forming a striking contrast to the words and manner of this determined hater of mankind.

"Pray, Mr. Saville, did you overhear any part of the discussion we were engaged in when you opportunely entered to prevent its animation degenerating into animosity?" enquired Miss Gray, with a mischievous glance towards Miss Otway.

"Only the concluding sentences," I replied.

"If Mr. Saville wishes, I am ready to repeat what I have already said, and to defend it," exclaimed the lovely occupant of the hearth-rug, nibbling with superb indifference at the spray of honey-suckle in her hand.

"No, Miss Otway," I rejoined with a low bow, "that would be unnecessary, for I acknowledge the justice of your remarks. More than that, I will say you were not half severe enough."

I had flattered myself that my ironical acquiescence in her stern views would have slightly disconcerted this fair Amazon with the tender bloom of eighteen summers still fresh on her cheek, but so far from that, she merely averted her long fringed azure eyes, contemptuously from me, as if judging me unworthy of further notice.

"Why, Mr. Saville," interposed little Charlotte Merton, "you should blush for subscribing so unreservedly to such a sweeping, odious accusation against your sex!"

"I beg pardon, Miss Merton, but since you take me up so seriously, I must say that I assent only in part to Miss Otway's opinions."

"And pray what part does Mr. Saville judge fit to dispute?" questioned my fair enemy, pursuing her fragrant repast without deigning to cast a glance in my direction.

The overwhelming contempt for my humble self and judgment, conveyed in the clear cold tones and averted eyes, was something really wonderful in its way, and would have utterly annihilated a more sensitive individual than myself. I contrived, however, with tolerable composure, to rejoin:

"As to the selfishness and rapacity of men, we will leave it an open question; but with regard to Miss Otway's intention of living and dying in single blessedness, holding as she does, so poor an opinion of our sex, I highly applaud her wisdom."

"Oh!" thought I, inwardly elated, "what a magnificent thrust! She'll scarcely get over it!"

Slowly she brought her full clear eyes to bear on mine, and having steadily stared at my hapless countenance a full moment, quietly said:

"It is barely possible I may yet be induced to change my present opinion of the lords of creation for a more favourable one; to commit the egregious folly of trusting in them; but I do not think," and here she came to a pause expressive of the most unutterable scorn; "I do not think that Mr. Saville, or any person at all resembling him, will be the one who shall succeed in making me do so."

I was vanquished, for I could not descend to vulgar retort and tell her she might rest

assured that Mr. Saville would never seek her capricious favour, so making her a low bow I retired from the lists, intercepting as I did so a deprecating look from dove-eyed Fanny Merton towards Miss Otway, which that young lady answered by a slight toss of her graceful head. My gentle hostess here compassionately hastened to my assistance, and became suddenly interested in the health of my married sister and her olive branches, till the entrance of Mr. Merton, his two sons, and a couple of gentlemen guests, completely restored my equanimity.

Smarting as I still was under the unsparing onslaught Miss Otway had just made on me, I found my gaze involuntarily following and I fear admiring her every movement, so full of careless grace, of easy elegance. Of course she was surrounded, flattered, courted, for she was an heiress as well as a beauty, not to speak of her being a matchless and most capricious coquette. How bewitchingly she would smile one moment on the suitor from whom she would scornfully turn the next!—how she would overwhelm with contemptuous raillery this hour the unlucky being to whose whispered flatteries she had perhaps silently listened a short time before!

Beautiful, wonderfully beautiful she was, and changeable in her loveliness as an April day; now all smiles, sparkling epigram and repartee, then full of quiet, graceful dignity, a creature formed surely to bewilder, fascinate, utterly bewitch a man, do anything but make him happy. Such were my reflections, despite all efforts to the contrary, as I sat beside pretty, gentle Miss Merton, vainly endeavouring to concentrate my attention on herself. My folly, however, went no farther and I never joined the group paying Miss Otway such assiduous court. I felt instinctively that my nature was capable of conceiving a deep and lasting attachment, one which, if unhappy, would cloud a great part perhaps of my future life, and I knew that Geraldine Otway was one formed to inspire such a feeling, and after winning her aim, to laugh at the sufferings of her victim. Warned in time, I resolved to be prudent, and to keep without the charmed circle surrounding this modern Circe.

After the lapse of a few days, during the course of which we had barely exchanged a few words of commonplace civility, she seemed to become gradually aware of my existence, and then came my fiery ordeal. When she would ask with her, bewildering smile, "Mr. Saville, please turn my music for me?" how could I say no, and then, when I would make a feeble effort to get away from her side, from the witchery of her sparkling eyes, and she would softly say, "What, tired so soon?" I would struggle like a bird in the grasp of the fowler, and for the time submit, I began to fear it was my destiny to love this beautiful, wayward syren, and well I knew what my reward would be if I weakly allowed myself to do so. I never deceived myself by indulging any illusory hopes. I knew that I was passably good-looking, young, and not a

dunce. My family was as good as her own. My income, though likely to appear small in the eyes of an heiress, was a comfortable one but these advantages never induced me to hope even for one moment that I would have any chance with her. I knew that she had spent a winter in Quebec and another in Montreal, during both of which she had been a reigning *belle*, had discarded men far superior to myself in wealth and position, and would probably yield up her freedom only to some great magnet whose social standing would elevate him, at least in her estimation, above the greater part of his fellow-men.

Life would have been very pleasant to me during my visit at Fairview. Villa had it not been for the constant struggle between judgment and inclination. Could I have blindly yielded myself up to her fascinations, living only for the present, careless—oblivious of the future, all would have been sunshine; but I knew that an awakening from the intoxicating trance, bringing with it an hour of reckoning for me, not for her, would come, when she would say "good-bye for ever," and go on her way careless and smiling, leaving me to the misery of shattered hopes and an aching heart. I repeated inwardly, over and over again, that it should never come to this—that I would turn a deaf ear to her soft words, be married to her wiles. We shall see with what success.

Pic-nics, boating and riding parties; walks by moonlight, sunlight, starlight; croquet on the lawn; billiards in the parlour; music in the drawing-room, succeeded each other with bewildering rapidity, and through all, Geraldine Otway shone, and glittered, and queened it, till I sometimes feared my only chance of safety lay in instant flight. Prudence whispered it, would be my surest protection, but weak will found many excuses for avoiding the step. My sudden departure might offend Mrs. Merton; I wanted change of air; I was conscious of danger, and therefore able to take care of myself, and—in short, I stayed.

Pic-nics were a favourite pastime with us, and we often resorted to the beautiful woods that lay about a mile from Fairview Villa, and spent a pleasant time with green foliage and sunbeams overhead, and soft moss and wild flowers beneath our feet.

On one occasion that our wandering had extended into the green depths of the wood farther than usual, a sudden and violent rain-storm set in. I happened to be somewhat behind my companions, intent on gathering a bouquet of wild flowers for Charlotte Merton, a duty she had laughingly charged me with, when the deluge came down, and finding myself in a comparatively open clearing, where my choice summer suit was receiving more than a fair share of the shower, I quickened my steps to a run. On reaching a dense part of the wood I slackened my pace, and casting a glance of satisfaction at the thick roof of verdure overhead, suddenly perceived Miss Otway standing drenched and dragged (no other word for it, dear reader) under the shelter of a huge maple.

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"Another vivid flash and a look of terror crept over her face."

(*My Visit to Fairview Villa*, p. 43.)

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"Why, you are all wet, Miss Otway," I hastily said. "And alone, too!"

"Yes, that stupid Willy Merton worried me into standing here whilst he should go back to the carriages in search of an umbrella and shawls," was her petulant answer. "I do not think I will wait, though. I will try a race through the shower."

I held up my finger warningly as the rain suddenly poured down with renewed violence, whilst a vivid flash of lightning rent the sky, and was succeeded by a sullen peal of thunder.

She turned pale as death, murmuring:

"I do not fear many things, but I certainly stand in awe of lightning and thunder."

What was to be done? The rain pouring down with added force was penetrating the thick foliage, literally drenching my delicate companion. After a moment I removed my light over-coat and, with considerable hesitation, asked might I wrap it around her. She was generally so haughty and independent I made the offer timidly, fearing perhaps a sharp rebuff, but instead, she gratefully thanked me, and nestled her little cheek inside the collar with a child-like satisfaction at the additional shelter it afforded. Wrenching off the little dainty fabric of tulle and rosebuds that had done duty as a bonnet a few minutes before, but which was now a shapless, gaudy pulp, she flung it away, saying:

"Now, I have an excuse for getting a new one to-morrow. It shall be illusion, trimmed with honeysuckle."

"But you must not let the rain pour down on your uncovered head in this way," I remonstrated.

"Oh, it will do no harm. There are no false tresses embellishing it."

How very lovely she was! Disordered, drenched, still the face looked out so calmly beautiful from amid the shining wet masses of hair on either side. I felt the spell of her rare loveliness stealing over me, and I knew I must strengthen myself against its dangerous influence, doubly insidious in the soft, feminine mood that ruled her at the moment.

Another vivid flash with accompanying sullen rumble, and again the colour left her cheek, and a look of terror crept over her face.

"What are we to do?" she piteously asked, turning to me.

She was so touching, so winning in her girlish tremors and helplessness that a wild impulse to tell her there and then how loveable, how fascinating she was, took possession of me, and afraid of myself, of my own want of self-control, I stood silent at her side. Another flash, another peal, and she convulsively clutched my arm, bowing her head on it to shut out the lightning from her sight. She was trembling in every limb, her very lips white with terror, and I, weak fool, was as unnerved as herself, though from a very different cause. Ah, my fears, my presentiments had all pointed to the truth, and I had learned to love her in spite of prudence, judgment, and common sense. Yes, I had fallen into the snare I had so firmly resolved on avoiding,

but she, at least, should never know my folly; never have an opportunity of curling her lip in scorn at my audacity—of trampling on feeling—that to me, alas! were only too earnest. Was I not tried—tried almost beyond my strength with her clinging, trembling and helpless to my arm in the recesses of that dim wood? Surely I would betray myself. Ability to act or speak with outward calmness was fast deserting me. Again another terrible flash. The very elements were leagued against me. Closer she clung, whispering:

"Lawrence, Mr. Saville, I shall die with terror."

The sound of my Christian name, which seemed to have escaped her lips involuntarily, the close, but soft pressure of her little fingers as they closed so imploringly on my arm, the graceful head bowed almost on my shoulder, all combined to rout completely my presence of mind—the calmness so necessary to me then; and I felt that unless I made a mighty and immediate effort, my doom was sealed.

"Miss Otway," I quietly said, "there is really no danger. Pray be calm, and allow me to seat you here, under the tree, where you will be more sheltered from the rain."

Whether owing to the struggle going on within me, my voice had assumed a degree of coldness I had not intended it should, or that the words in themselves, containing a sort of implied wish to rid myself of the duty of supporting her, incensed her proud spirit, she instantly raised her head from my arm, and with the look and bearing of an offended queen, flung my coat from her and walked forth in the midst of the deluge coming down still with undiminished violence.

"Miss Otway," I besought, I urged, "for heaven's sake wait a few moments longer. This heavy rain will soon be over!"

She made no reply beyond slightly contracting her dark eyebrows, and pursued her course. It was distressing beyond measure to see that delicate frail creature exposed to such a storm, and I renewed my entreaties for her to return to the shelter of the wood, but received no reply, nothing but contemptuous silence. Again a vivid flash of lightning, a crashing peal of thunder overhead. "Ah, poor girl, she will stop now," thought I. But I was mistaken. Her indomitable pride triumphed over every feeling, and though her cheek became if possible of a still more deathly whiteness, she steadily kept on her way. I came closer to her, proffering my arm, my coat, which were both mutely but disdainfully rejected. Thus, I following her in an ignominious, valet style of companionship, we plashed on through rain and mire till we at length reached our party, the men of which had constructed a temporary shelter for the ladies by drawing the carriages together.

"Why, you are in a shocking plight, Miss Otway. I hope friend Saville has taken good care of you," said Mr. Merton.

"Oh yes," she rejoined with stinging sarcasm; "he is such a very prudent young gentleman."

"Come, Geraldine, don't be cross because

your pretty bonnet is among the things that were," interrupted Miss Merton, who always kindly came to my rescue.

"But did you not meet Willy and the shawls?" questioned our host. "He set off some time ago with a sufficient quantity to construct a wigwam if you had desired it, not to mention two umbrellas and a parasol."

"We did not meet him, Mr. Merton. I suppose he has been seeking for a short cut through the wood, which instead has proved a long one."

"Geraldine, quick, step into the carriage. We have plenty of place for you," called out Miss Gray.

"Yes, if you are not afraid of getting your dresses wet or spoiled, or of my fatiguing you otherwise," she replied, darting another withering look towards my hapless self.

"What an unlucky fellow I am," I mournfully thought when, fairly started some time later on our homeward route, I wondered over the events of the day. "I have made myself fairly odious to her; and heavens! what a fire-brand she is!" But, alas, I vainly sought to fortify myself by the latter uncharitable reflection, and I was no sooner in my own room, whither I had instantly retired on arriving at the house, to change my wet clothes, than I found myself kissing like a verdant school boy the silk lining of my coat collar against which her soft cheek had so prettily nestled a short while ago.

"Fool! idiot! mad-man!" I groaned, as the full meaning of this act of folly rose suddenly upon me, revealing that love for this peerless creature had indeed, spite of all my resolutions and efforts, crept into my heart. "Ah! I can do now is to hide my madness from every eye, but from hers above all others. She hates, scorns me now, but, so help me heavens, she shall never laugh at me!"

On entering the drawing-room, there was Miss Otway in a fresh, delicate-tinted robe, showing no signs of the late great fatigue and exposure she had undergone beyond a brighter flush on her cheek and a greater brilliancy in her dark eyes. She never noticed me all the evening beyond launching at my devoted head, on one or two occasions, some sarcasms as cutting as they were wholly unprovoked, and from which I sought refuge in the society of Miss Merton. The companionship of the latter really pretty, amiable girl was always agreeable to me, principally for two reasons. First, she was quite in love, I well knew, with the gallant Captain Graham, of the —th, a handsome young officer who had lately joined our party, (and who by the way was hopelessly in love himself with Miss Otway) so I saw no risk of my attentions being misinterpreted; secondly, she was an intimate, or as young ladies call it, a bosom friend of the wilful mistress of my heart, and often chose her for the theme of our long chats together, recounting so many instances of the generosity, kindness and better nature of the latter that my chains after each such dangerous dialogue were more closely riveted than if I had been in company with Miss Otway herself. The

conduct of that young lady continued the same for a few days as it had been on the evening of the luckless pic-nic, I, all the time, even whilst smarting under her petulant injustice, finding a gloomy satisfaction in the thought that my secret was safe. Then again her mood changed, and she became friendly and conciliating even to the point of making advances which I certainly did not meet more than half way, even if I went that far.

One beautiful afternoon that several of us had gone on an exploring expedition on horseback to some fine view in the neighbourhood, I found myself by her side with Capt. Graham as we were turning our horse's heads homewards. Suddenly she discovered that she had forgotten her lace handkerchief, and hoped that Captain Graham would have gallantry enough to go for it. The directions, to say the least, were rather vague, and the accomplished son of Mars departed on his mission, smiles on his lips and weary disgust in his heart. Turning towards me she said with her softest smile:

"Spur up, Mr. Saville. We can ride two abreast here."

Ah! merciless coquette! arch traitress! she was determined on leading me into a confession. How could I resist her? Would that she had been a serf—a peasant girl, anything that I might have hoped to have room for my own, but instead she was the petted heiress, the merciless flirt, and I a miserable captive with nothing to console me under the weight of my chains save the certainty that none knew I wore them. Very calmly I accepted her invitation to ride beside her, and we journeyed on, the golden sunlight quivering through the green branches overhead, the soft summer winds caressing our foreheads, and yet our talk was as dull and prosaic as if we had been a couple of elderly respectable people with the cares of the state, or of a family, on our shoulders. Suddenly she turned full towards me, saying with a charming smile:

"Now for a race, Mr. Saville. If you win, you may name your reward."

With a look of laughing defiance that wonderfully heightened her exquisite beauty, she glanced archly at me and then set off at full speed. Easily I could have overtaken her and she must have known that well, for few horses excelled in speed my own good steed kindly accommodated with a comfortable stall in the stables at Fairview Villa, but I had no intention of jeopardizing my secret which this girl seemed bent on wringing from me, and at a very moderate rate of speed I followed in her wake. After a time she looked sharply round, and either angered by the slowness of my pace, or by my preoccupied look, she struck her spirited little mare angrily across the ears, and the latter catching the fiery mood of her mistress, gave a bound forward and set off at break-neck speed. Anxious beyond measure, I spurred forward, dreading every moment some accident to the frail girlish creature I saw flying before me through the interstices of the wood with such reckless disregard of

caution when it showed her her own petulant injustice, finding a gloomy satisfaction in the thought that my secret was safe. Then again her mood changed, and she became friendly and conciliating even to the point of making advances which I certainly did not meet more than half way, even if I went that far.

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With the day w Gray woods, in of refresh tion the instead of Merton qu of the war materiel of into the ca fore hand, rest of our came round

caution. Now, had I not firmly determined when commencing this humble recital, that it should possess the merit of being at least veracious, even at the expense of dullness, I should here enliven it by a rapid, brilliant account of some deadly peril which would suddenly menace Miss Otway, say for instance, her horse rearing on the brink of a precipice, from which strait she would be delivered entirely by my strength of arm and presence of mind; but resisting manfully the temptation, doubly strong in the present case, as I feel convinced I could make a graphic, indeed splendid sketch of the thing, I will honestly confess that she at length drew rein, safe though flushed and panting, at Fairview Villa.

I hastily dismounted so as to assist her to alight, but without waiting for my help, she sprang to the ground at the risk of a sprained ankle if not of more serious injury, and as I pressed towards her, uttered the one word, "Laggard!" with a look and voice of indignant contempt, striking at the same time her horse another light but angry blow over its neck. From her expression as she swept by me, I knew she would much rather have applied the whip to my own shoulders, but had she done so, I would not only have borne it, but spaniel-like have caressed the hand that struck me, for alas! my desperate struggles were but rivetting my chains the more securely, and I felt I was beginning to love Geraldine Otway with a love almost terrible in its intensity. Surely, surely, I was foolish—mad—to remain longer exposed to the fascinations of this temptress. I must leave without delay, leave before yielding to the impulse of some moment of passion, I should utter words of love which would be answered by smiles of ridicule; before laying bare feelings too sacred and secret to be made the jest of a hollow-hearted coquette and her friends.

How she persecuted, lashed, taunted me that evening! More than once I retorted, sharply if not rudely, for my own character was beginning to suffer from the peculiar irritation engendered by mental suffering. Really this girl was trying me in every way beyond my strength! On my pillow, that night, I made up my mind that the next day should be my last at Fairview Villa and that I should tear myself away from the fascinations of this Eden, the memories of which would embitter many a long hour in the dreary future.

With the sunshine of the following morning, Miss Otway's smiles had returned, and as the day was bright but pleasantly cool, Miss Gray proposed a botanizing excursion to the woods, indignantly protesting against baskets of refreshments which would give our expedition the air of a vulgar, every day picnic, instead of a scientific exploration. "Papa" Merton quietly smiled at this, and in despite of the warning, some hampers containing the *matériel* of a very dainty lunch, were slipped into the carriage, proving I may as well say before hand, as welcome to Miss Gray as to the rest of our hungry party when luncheon hour came round.

The members of the coming expedition were already standing in groups on the verandah when I joined them, and Miss Otway, radiant in fresh loveliness, and in the coolest and most becoming of morning toilettes, was standing chatting to Miss Gray who, armed with a basket and some tiny garden implement for transplanting; looked as if she intended business.

"Who knows anything about plants, their classes, orders and genera?" inquired Miss Otway.

As she fixed her eyes on me at the conclusion of the sentence, I muttered something about having forgotten Botany since I had left college. The other gentlemen of the party murmured a similar confession.

"Well, as I do not intend that Miss Gray, who is really well versed in it, shall have all the glory of the expedition to herself, I propose we make it a sort of generally scientific thing. Each member shall pursue the study for which he or she has most aptitude, be it geology, mineralogy, botany, so that all may return learned-looking and triumphant. What do you think Mr. Saville?"

"I have forgotten them all," I pleaded. A general and significant cough of acquiescence, each on his own count, again ran round the gentlemen of the circle, when Miss Otway reported:

"I see Mr. Saville is bent on demoralizing our scientific forces, so to punish his indolence and keep him out of mischief, I shall condemn him to hold my specimens. He will at least be able to do that."

Thus enlisted in her train, and only too happy, if the truth be told, for the circumstance, I approached her side, inwardly thinking that as it was my last day (for her smiles and charms had but strengthened my resolve of leaving her) I might take one more sip of the intoxicating happiness I found in her society ere I renounced it for ever.

Started on our way, she turned to me, saying, "Now, every little weed or wild flower you see, gather it so that in such a number we may chance on getting some verdant treasure with which to astonish and delight the real botanists of the party."

Oh, what a walk that was! Loitering among sunshine and flowers—stooping sometimes to gather some plant or fern.

"It is fortunate for me," thought I, "that this is the last day of temptation, or otherwise I should surely make a fool of myself."

"Come, show me the fruits or rather flowers of your industry, Mr. Saville. What! common clover—dandelion—catnip—why, what are you thinking of? If this is a specimen of your abilities, I fear I will never be able to teach you even the little botany I know myself."

I looked steadily, earnestly at her as she stood beside me, smiling up in my face, and then, suddenly said, it seemed in spite of myself:

"You have taught me one lesson too many already—one which I only hope I may be able to speedily forget."

I was unprepared for the crimson tide that so abruptly rushed to her face, flushing even the tiny shell-shaped ears showing so daintily from under her little hat, and I was equally unprepared for the suddenness with which her eyes, abashed and half-frightened-looking, sought the ground. A long silence followed, I inwardly ruminating on my rashness and resolving on more circumspection; when at length raising her eyes, but still looking away from me, she hesitatingly said in a low tone, very unlike her usual clear ringing accents,

"Explain your words, Mr. Saville."

Ah, Syren! She had brought me to the very verge of a declaration—another moment and I would have been at her feet, almost kissing the hem of her garments, but summoning all my self-command, my manhood's pride to my aid, I replied with a tone of gay politeness that cost me a mighty effort, for I had to bite my lip till the blood almost started.

"You have taught me, Miss Otway, how charming, how irresistible a pretty woman can render herself."

Her face flushed again, but this time angrily and proudly.

"Good!" thought I, finding even in the midst of my own secret suffering, a satisfaction in the pang I had just inflicted on her vanity.

"Diamond cut diamond, wily coquette! You have robbed me of happiness and hope, but not of self-respect. You shall have one scalp the less to hang on to your girdle of feminine triumphs."

Another pause, during which I assiduously commenced gathering another handful of the first weeds that came within reach, to replace the former specimens which she had thrown away. As usual, she first broke silence by carelessly asking,

"Are you going to row for Mrs. Merton's silver arrow in the boat race coming off this week?"

"I won't be here, Miss Otway. I am obliged to leave."

"Yes—when?" she calmly asked, as she carefully shook off a little insect resting on a pretty fern, forming part of her collection.

"To-morrow," was my brief rejoinder.

If I had unconsciously calculated on the sudden announcement of my approaching departure producing any impression on her flinty heart, I had good cause to feel woefully disappointed. There was no regret, no emotion exhibited, not even as much interest as she displayed in getting rid of the tiny beetle on which her eyes were fixed. Chatting freely on different topics, expressing much interest in the forthcoming race in which Captain Graham was to ply an oar, accompanied by a carelessly polite regret that I should miss it, as well as a moonlight drive and some other pleasures in contemplation, we hastened our steps and soon rejoined the party, finding Miss Gray severely lecturing some of its members on the nature of the botanical collections they had made.

"The charity-school children might have known better than to have gathered such

trash," she indignantly exclaimed, tossing aside bundles of what she sarcastically suggested might be useful to the cook at Fairview Villa as "greens." Lunch was immediately produced, however, and in the welcome prospect thus afforded to all, Miss Gray's denunciations were borne with considerable philosophy. Our return home was very cheerful, the mineralogists of the party amusing themselves by firing their specimens at each other, or at a given mark.

Miss Otway was in excellent spirits, brilliant, witty, playful, a strong contrast to my own self, wrapped up in moody taciturnity, brooding over the woful thought that on the morrow I should be far away from the enchantress who, despite prudence, reticence, resolve, had called to life so strong a passion in my aching heart.

After our return the ladies sought their rooms to dress for dinner. She (what other woman than Geraldine Otway did I give a thought to now) came down soon in one of the light, transparent, soft-tinted toilets that became her delicate beauty so well, and looking so childishly lighthearted as she fondled and teased a pretty King Charles given her by Captain Graham, that I was divided between a wish to strangle the dog on one hand, and on the other to curse the day on which I had first met its radiant mistress. After a time Mr. Merton came in with some papers and letters, one of which he handed to Miss Otway. She opened it and then retired into the embrasure of the window to read it at her leisure behind the lace curtains. Restless and wretched, I strolled out on the lawn. Capt. Graham accosted me—I turned shortly from him. Then Miss Merton, but for once she failed to please. Next I encountered my hostess to whom I had not as yet spoken of my intended departure, but I wanted energy to meet and resist the kind entreaties which I knew would be forthcoming to induce me to change my intention.

After a listless half hour I re-entered the drawing-room, like the moth returning to the flame that had already singed my heart, I suppose I must say, instead of wings. No one was there except Miss Otway, who was still standing near the window, looking absently from it, and mechanically twisting and creasing the corners of the envelope she held in her hand. Approaching her, I made some slightly common-place remark which she as indifferently answered, and then suddenly, without word or warning, she burst into tears. Grieved, shocked, I ventured to hope that Miss Otway had received no painful news from her correspondents.

Springing to her feet, she exclaimed:

"Dolt! Don't you know that nine times out of ten a woman cries without cause?"

Ere I could recover from my astonishment, she was gone, whilst I remained rooted dumbly to the spot, not so much by the unprovoked epithet flung at my head with such a wrathful glance, as by the wondering surmise of what had I done to offend her, to call forth such an exhibition of anger.

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What a termagant she was, and yet what would I not have given for the privilege of taking that termagant to my heart for life.

I saw no more of her till evening, when returning from a short stroll with my host, in which I had declared my resolve of starting, notwithstanding his hospitable entreaties, the following morning, I noted Geraldine's slight figure step forth on the verandah. Anxious for a kindly farewell word, for I knew my departure would take place the following morning ere she should have left her couch, I broke off a sprig of ivy twining round one of the pillars of the porch, and approached her.

"May I offer this as a species of olive branch, Miss Otway? I leave to-morrow."

"But we have not quarrelled," she coldly said, drawing back from me.

"Because I would not quarrel with you," I retorted, with considerable bitterness, for the thought of all she was making me suffer in the present, as well as what I would suffer in the future, awoke angry feelings within me. "Provocation on your part was certainly not wanting. Accept, however, my token, and our parting will at least be friendly. Ignorant as I am of botany, I know this leaf signifies friendship. Pray take it?"

"Why should I?" she asked. "It would be even more utterly worthless than the vegetable phenomena which Miss Gray suggested this morning might answer for greens," and with a scornful look she flung my offering away and turned back into the house. Ah, she had had the best of our singular duel, and she was still heart-free, unfettered, able to heap scorn on me which burned like fire into my very soul. Cruel, merciless flirt! Why had destiny ever permitted us to meet?

But we learn to dissemble through life, and as I sauntered round the grounds later that evening, for the glorious beauty of the moonlight tempted us all into the open air, no one would have suspected from my calm cheerful look and easy playful retorts to friendly witticisms, that I had already entered on what I feared would be to me a life-long, absorbing sorrow. Still I yearned for solitude, for quiet, and on seeing Miss Merton step forth from the library on the lawn, I quietly fell back into the shade of the trees to avoid her. My heart was too sore for even her gentle companionship then; and as soon as chance favoured me, I stole up into the room she had just left. It was as I expected, quite deserted, and lit only by the arrowy beams of moonlight that streamed through the half-drawn curtains. It was a welcome haven, and peering about through the semi-obscurity, I saw a small sofa, deep in shadow, on which I seated myself, and which probably had just been vacated by Miss Merton, for her handkerchief, recognizable by her favourite perfume, Mignonette, lay yet upon it. I took it up and inhaled the fragrance its folds gave forth, thinking all the while how feminine was the gentle owner, how different to the mocking Circe on whom I had so idly lavished the treasured love of an honest heart.

Suddenly a light figure entered from the garden and approached my obscure sofa. "Ah! here comes Miss Merton," I thought. "I will give her a surprise."

But the figure quietly seated itself beside me, saying, "I have kept you waiting, Fanny, dear; but I could not get away from that tiresome Graham before," and the speaker was not Fanny Merton but Geraldine Otway.

And now had I not so exactly and fearlessly told the plain truth up to this present moment, I should feel tempted here to depart from it, and slur over matters a little, for instead of instantly rising, and saying as any honourable, high principled man would have done, "Miss Otway, it is Lawrence Saville, not Miss Merton," I treacherously and silently retained my seat, still keeping the handkerchief to my face.

"I promised you, dear friend, to tell you what I was crying for before I should go to bed to-night," she said in a low, sweet tone, which, alas! was almost unknown to me, so rarely had she employed it in my presence.

"It was not the letter as you thought. No, it is because that wretch, Saville, who does not care one farthing for me, is going away to-morrow, and, God help me, Fanny! I dearly love him."

Here a little soft arm stole round my neck, and with a gasping sob she laid her head upon my breast.

Suddenly, involuntarily, I pressed her to my heart with a rapture beyond the power of words to express. Whether the fervour of my embrace awoke her suspicions; or, that her soft cheek had come in contact with my rough bearded one, she suddenly sprang from my side, and in a voice thrilling in its agonized shame and terror, gasped forth,

"For God's sake, who are you?"

In a moment I was at her feet, telling I was one who loved as no man had ever loved her yet, loved her in silence, in hopeless despair, almost from the moment we had first met.

"What! Lawrence Saville?" she whispered.

I renewed my prayers, my vows; but she recoiled from me in horror.

"False, cruel, treacherous!" she faltered. "How dare you allow me to betray myself thus?"

Almost forgetting in my sympathy with the terrible humiliation of that proud though noble nature, my own boundless joy to know myself beloved by her, I still knelt at her feet, imploring her to forgive—to listen to me.

"Begone from my sight, for ever," she passionately exclaimed.

"I believe not in this story of your new-found love, and even if it be true, I shall go down unwedded to my grave before you shall ever place a ring on my finger."

At this moment the door opened, and Mrs. Merton, bearing a waxen taper, entered. Her look of offended amazement on seeing Miss Otway's terrible agitation, and me kneeling at her feet, was indescribable.

"What is it?" she asked. "Tell me, Geraldine, at once."

"He, that man has insulted me," she

answered, with death-pale face and glittering eyes.

My hostess turned majestically towards me, and I rose to my feet.

"How dare you, sir," she angrily questioned. "How dare you insult a young lady under my protection—under my roof. It is fortunate that you intend leaving without delay, or I should be under the necessity of saying to you—go. Mr. Saville, I have been terribly deceived in you. You are one of the very last I would have suspected capable of such conduct!"

I listened in silence to all this, for a firm resolution was taken by me in that moment to never give to man or woman explanation of the present scene; and if she chose to leave me open to obloquy and blame, was it not a cheap price to pay for the knowledge that the priceless treasure of her love was mine?

"Leave me, sir, and never let me see you again under my roof," continued Mrs. Merton, waving me imperiously from the room, whilst Miss Otway, turning to still more marble whiteness, leaned against her for support.

Resolving to make my preparations for departure without delay, I proceeded to my own room, but ere I had been long there, a slight tap sounded at my door, and opening it, I found it was Captain Graham.

"Mr. Saville," he said, "we are both men of the world, so a few words will suffice. I happened to be in the hall when Miss Otway made her indignant complaint to Mrs. Merton that you had insulted her. Though having no legal right to defend that young lady, she is very dear to me, and without waiting for further formalities, I ask at your hands reparation for the insult she alleges having received from you?"

"At your own time and hour, Captain Graham," I stiffly replied.

"Well, if I mistake not, you intend leaving for town early to-morrow, and I will run down the day after. We can then settle everything, as well as invent a cause for our quarrel, for the young lady's name must not be mixed up in it."

I handed him my card with place of residence on it, inwardly thinking he was a manly and spirited, if not successful wooer, and with a formal interchange of bows, we parted.

Then I sat down to think for my brain was almost giddy. I who had never yet been engaged in a duel, even as a second, was now pledged to one with an adversary who was a practical hand; then again, I, a most peaceful, unoffending man by disposition, found myself lying under the grave charge of having grossly insulted a young lady in a house where I was a guest. But what mattered it all? I was beloved by her whom I had so blindly worshipped in secret, and even though she might never consent to look on me again (a thing possible with that wayward, proud spirit) the blissful consciousness that her love was mine, was amply worth all I had suffered or might suffer.

When my parting arrangements were completed, I sat down and wrote to Geraldine Ot-

way a letter such as a man on the brink of parting from life might write to her who was the chief link that bound him to it. There was no mocking smile, to dread now, no scornful taunt to fear; and I poured out my whole soul in the letter I was writing. All was earnest between her and I now. I told her, my proud, beautiful darling, how, from the first, I had struggled against loving her, how when affection for her, despite my efforts, had crept into my heart, I had striven to tear it thence, never daring to dream it could be returned, but had been foiled, worsted in the combat, succeeding only in hiding my secret, and finding the only sure means of doing that—flight. I went over it all; my struggle with self in the wood the day of the storm; during our ride; our botanical excursion; and then, when my letter was finished, I sealed, pressed it to my lips for her sake, and rose to my feet.

Day was dawning cold and chill; and I resolved to hasten down to the stables and get out my horse myself, but the bridle was not to be found, and the servants were still in bed. Action was necessary to me, and finding the keen sharp air of early morning welcome to my hot cheek and temples, I decided on a stroll down the road. On my return I saw a sleepy stable boy lounging near the gate, and I gave him the requisite directions. Whilst he was attending to them, I scribbled a line to my host containing farewell thanks and excuses for my early departure, mentioning I should send for my luggage the ensuing day. This note I left on the hall table, then with one long yearning look towards the closely curtained window of Miss Otway's room, one wild agonized wish that we might yet meet again, were it only for a moment, I descended the stairs and took my solitary way.

It was hard, too, loving and loved, to part thus, but earth gives only a certain portion of happiness to each of her children, and I had had probably my share, surely an ample one, when leaning her head on my breast she had avowed her love. Would she ever relent later? Well, it did not matter much, for though no coward, I was also no shot, Graham a sure one, so in all probability, my heart so restless and full of throbbing emotions now, would soon be quiet enough. Suddenly, who should confront me emerging from a side alley but Miss Otway herself. Despite the great agitation of the moment, I noticed she looked very ill, and her eyes were swollen as if with weeping.

Almost as much embarrassed as herself, I was silent for a moment and then entreatingly said:

"Miss Otway, dare I hope that your hand will touch mine in friendly greeting before we part? I am leaving now."

"Ah, so you and that tiresome Captain Graham are really running to town to have a quiet shot at each other. What redoubtable Don Quixotes you both are!"

This was said with a very wretched attempt at her usual careless sarcasm, and then suddenly bursting into tears, she covered her face with her hands, whispering:

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"Forgive me, Lawrence, forgive me! Your noble letter (I have already stolen and mean to always keep it) has softened at last my icy, selfish heart, and I can bring myself not only to confess my follies, but also to plead for your pardon."

My darling! Surely the rapture of that moment was worth a life's ransom! Then we walked to a garden seat near us, and with the soft twittering of birds overheard and the glorious hues of sunrise rolling up in the east, bringing morning's pure fragrant-breath to us, she entered on her short tale. I have never witnessed a summer sunrise since that memorable morning without recalling with gratitude to the Giver of all Good the happiness its soft dawning once brought me.

"Well, Lawrence, for so I will henceforth call you," she faltered, her charming colour and frequent pauses betraying an agitation that rendered her so feminine, so doubly dear to me, "after you left us last night, I went at once to my room, and throwing myself on a sofa, sobbed and raved alternately at myself and you, till I was almost exhausted. It was so inexpressibly mortifying to have betrayed myself so utterly to you, who had always recoiled from my advances; as to your avowal of love, I looked on it as a fiction, invented at the moment to meet that which I had so openly declared for yourself. After a time reason regained some little sway, and then Mrs. Merton knocked at my door and entered, full of wrath against you and compassion for myself. Oh, Lawrence, it was decreed that you should be an instrument in cruelly humbling my overweening pride, for there, sitting at her feet, my burning face bowed on her motherly lap, I had to do you justice and tell my tale clearly and plainly. Once finished she gently stroked my head and said: "Noble young man, how generously he bore for your sake unmerited obloquy and reproach!" Whilst Mrs. Merton was yet speaking, her quick ear caught the sound of cautious footsteps in the passage. She carefully peered out and saw Capt. Graham enter your room. The circumstance was unusual, for all the household had retired to rest, and divining some mischief, she lay in wait for him, and on his return pounced on and dragged him into the small sitting-room where we often sew and chat on rainy mornings. When smilingly but abruptly interrogated as to his business with yourself, he hesitated and stammered, upon which Mrs. Merton, who immediately began to suspect the true state of things, subjected him to a most searching cross-examination. He was yet blundering through a confused, equivocating reply, through which, however, a portion of truth penetrated, when she called my trembling self in. Again, Lawrence, you were avenged for all I had made you suffer, as I stammered forth a declaration that not only were you entirely guiltless of having insulted me in any manner, but that, I know not how it came out, you were anything but an object of dislike to me. I found some consolation for my own overwhelming mortification in the knowledge of the pang I inflicted at the same time

on my luckless admirer whose officiousness had rendered the explanation necessary.

"This hard task over, Mrs. Merton brought me back to my room, and insisted on my lying down, as all danger of a duel between yourself and Captain Graham was now over. But I could not rest. I still feared some rashness on your part, some treachery on his, and I resolved to have an explanation with yourself in the morning before you should leave, a coldly polite one, of course, containing a final farewell, something very different to this; so that anything like mischief should be entirely precluded. Worn out with watching, I fell into a doze on the sofa, a little before day-break.

"Awoke by the sound of a door closing, I sprang to the window, and saw you leaving the house. Oh, in that moment, Lawrence, I first realized how dear you were to me, and, trembling with anxiety, I hurried in the direction of your room, the door of which was open, to gather, if possible, some indication of where or for what you had gone so early. This letter (my darling pressed it to her lips as she spoke) was lying on the table. It was addressed to me, and, breaking the seal, I read it. Need I say its generous devotion touched me even to the inmost core of my wayward heart; need I tell you I sobbed and cried over it, fearing you had left me for ever. Ah, my selfish pride was utterly and completely subdued! Suddenly I heard the front gate unclose, and looking out, saw you enter the grounds. No time for delay, for hesitation now, and with a beating heart I hastened down the side staircase. A few moments of irresolution, a last short, sharp struggle with myself, as I saw you hastening away, and the end is told."

It was my turn now, and at the risk of being tedious, I went over all that I had previously said in my letter, and she listened in blushing, quiet happiness. After a long, blissful hour together, my promised wife left me to dress for breakfast, and I, still almost unable to believe in my unhoped for happiness, sat on, listening in a sort of dream-like rapture to the pleasant sounds of morning.

A more prosaic turn was given to my thoughts after a time by seeing Captain Graham coming leisurely down the walk. He certainly did not look so miserable as I expected, but the latent fierceness with which he occasionally decapitated some harmless flower that grew within reach of his tiny cane proved his thoughts were not of a very pleasant character. Scarcely decided how to meet him, I silently waited his approach, but as soon as he saw me, he languidly said:

"Aw! Good morning, Saville. I'm deuced glad there's no necessity for that little affair between us coming off. 'Tis really as unpleasant to shoot at a fellow as to be shot at. Must say I was never in my life so taken aback, indeed, I may say stunned, as when Geraldine, hem! Miss Otway, I should say, informed me in one breath that I was an officious noodle, whom she hated as much as she liked yourself. You are a deuced sly

fellow, Saville! Thought all along you were in love with that pretty little Merton girl."

"So I might have been at one time, only her affections were otherwise engaged." I answered, anxious to give my blue eyed friend a "lift."

"Really! To that big shouldered Chester, I suppose. Some women are so fond of giants. Yet no, she'd often cut him confoundedly short when he'd go up to talk to her. Perhaps it is that clever Canadian party who came from town last week, and wrote smart verses in French about her eyes and golden tresses. Wonder if he meant that Japanese switch, as the ladies call it, which she coils round her head?"

"The fact is, Captain Graham, Miss Merton never made me her confidant, but I have a considerable amount of sharpness, hem! where I am not concerned myself," I suddenly added, remembering my own late inveterate blindness in a case somewhat analogous, "and I have only to say that you are no coxcomb."

The significant emphasis, and significant look I favoured my companion with here must have been very eloquent indeed, for all at once opening his sleepy blue eyes very wide, his cheek slightly flushing at the same time, he said:

"You don't mean to say that I'm the favoured man?"

I smiled, but maintained a prudent silence. "Well, I never dreamed of such a thing. I was so taken up with that shrewish, hem! with Miss Otway, I mean. But, say, hadn't you better try to look a little more like a man going to breakfast, and a little less like Speke, Livingston, or any of those other great travelers?"

Thanking him for the really serviceable hint, for my actual equipment was certainly not a proper breakfast costume where ladies were expected to be present, my beard, owing to mental agitation, having remained unshorn, whilst my portmanteau lay prostrate on the ground a few paces from me, I left him, inwardly hoping that the saying about hearts being easily caught at a rebound, might hold good in his case and that of my fair ally.

Later it really did, and Fanny Merton, long since Mrs. Captain Graham, is still an intimate friend of Geraldine Saville, my well-loved wife.

In justice to the latter I must say before closing this short episode of my life, that Miss Otway showed me more temper and waywardness during the short period I knew her, than Mrs. Saville has done in the course of the sixteen years that have elapsed since we joined our destinies together, a step, I may safely aver, neither of us have ever once regretted.

[THE END.]

ASHLEIGH MANOR.

LAST autumn I received a letter from Sir Guy Beverly, an old friend of mine, informing me that by the death of a relative he had become the possessor of Ashleigh Manor, in Essex, and as he had learned that the shooting there was excellent, and the season just beginning, he had invited a few friends to meet him on the 20th, and requested me to be one of the number.

I accepted the invitation, and at the appointed time arrived at Ashleigh Manor.

It was an ancient building, a rambling sort of mansion of dark grey stone, with latticed, ivied windows, and was surrounded by beautiful quaint old gardens, but the building and grounds surrounding it bore a lonely, deserted appearance, which struck me forcibly as in the fading sunlight I approached the old manor house.

The party of gentlemen who met at Ashleigh Manor to enjoy a few days' shooting consisted of five persons including our host, Squire Glynne, of Glynne Hall, Lord Anchester, and Harry Damer—a young officer whom I had frequently met in London—and myself. The third day after our arrival at the manor house we were obliged, much to our disappointment, to remain indoors, as it was raining heavily. During the morning Sir Guy proposed that we should visit the picture gallery. We readily acquiesced, and followed him to the long, oak-panelled hall, whose walls were covered with portraits of the ancient family of the Ashleighs.

"By Jove, that is a handsome dame!" exclaimed Squire Glynne, who was standing with me at one end of the apartment.

I turned towards the portrait which he was examining. It was a fair, oval face, with delicate features and queenly brow, from which the hair was put back and crowned with jewels. A face upon which, as you gazed, you might involuntarily exclaim as Squire Glynne did, "How handsome!" but no softer feeling was likely to creep into the heart of the beholder. The haughty curl of the short, upper lip, and the cold expression of the eyes which looked so proudly from the canvas forbade it. I said as much to the Squire and he agreed with me. Just at that moment Captain Damer came up.

"What ancient dame have you lost your heart to, Jernam?" he laughingly asked me. "There is a little girl at the other end of the hall who would be perfection were it not for her outlandish toilet. Fancy our belles of the present day rigged out in that manner!"

He drew near and looked at the portrait. "Good Heavens!" we heard him exclaim in a low voice of suppressed emotion, "it is she!"

Turning towards him in surprise at his words and manner, I perceived he was staring at the picture with a startled look, and an expression of perplexity on his handsome face.

"What is it, Harry? What is the matter?" I eagerly inquired.

He did not answer, but on being again asked by Squire Glynne what had caused his agitation, he made some evasive reply about its resembling some one, and as we saw he did not wish to be questioned further, the subject was dropped. A few minutes later, however, when I happened to be alone, Squire Glynne having been called by Sir Guy Beverly and Lord Anchester to give his opinion about a painting hanging at the other end of the hall, Damer came up to me.

"You know me, Jernam," he said earnestly, "and, therefore, will not set me down as a madman, or foolishly hint that I must have taken too much wine, when I relate to you a very strange circumstance which occurred to me yesterday. After dinner," he continued, "as we seated ourselves on an old-fashioned couch near us, I found I had left my cigar-case in my room. I ran up stairs for it. My apartment is in the west wing, and there is a narrow passage leading to it from the great hall. I reached my room, secured the case, and was crossing the wide hall on my return, when I heard a door open gently, and looking in the direction from whence the sound proceeded, I saw a lady come out of one of the rooms. She advanced towards me down the corridor, and then stood in a listening attitude. She did not seem to notice me, while I remained as if rooted to the spot gazing at her. She advanced, as I have said, half-way down the corridor and then stood there with her head bent forward as if listening for some sound.

"An awful dread came over me, my heart seemed to cease beating, and the blood in my veins felt as if it were turning to ice. How I managed to reach the stairs and again join the party below is a mystery to me. I am not superstitious, I have never believed in the supernatural, but, Jernam, I could not account for the unexpected appearance of the quaintly-attired, handsome, stately-looking lady I saw in the corridor. You witnessed my agitation just now on beholding that portrait over there, come, Jernam, let us look at it again."

I followed him to the painting to which Squire Glynne had called my attention.

"That is the portrait, Jernam, of the lady I saw. That is the face so fair and proud in its cold beauty which I gazed upon yesterday evening in the hall above us, and, as she is painted there, there were jewels in her hair and on the bosom of her quaint, shining dress."

It was a singular story, very singular, and the strange circumstance had made, I could see, a deep impression upon my friend. He was, like myself, very sceptical in all things relating to the supernatural, but the mysterious incident he had related I could in no way account for, and I did not for a moment doubt that it had, as he fully believed, really occurred. Can it be possible, I thought, that this old Manor-House is haunted! I glanced around the walls from which so many pictured faces looked down. There, from an antique frame, a gay cavalier with a smile upon his handsome face looked out; beside him an ugly old dowager in a hideous yellow turban scowled down upon me; opposite her was a fine brave-looking old soldier and a little girl in her bright innocent loveliness, and then again there was a grave Bishop in his stately robes and below him a dark brilliant beauty wooed and won no doubt in some foreign land and brought to the old Manor-House by the tall solemn-looking man beside her. And now these silent pictures were all that remained of those who years ago had lived, suffered, loved and died within the walls of the ancient Manor. I remembered Damer's story; can it be possible, I thought, that some of these still in spirit wander among the dark lonely corridors and gloomy rooms which they once occupied and where the scenes in their past life were enacted.

Some days went by and pleasant ones they were too. Harry Damer seemed to have forgotten the stately dame of the picture gallery which had so mysteriously appeared to him, or at least he did not again mention the strange circumstance but was one of the jolliest among us. It was our last night at Ashleigh Manor, for on the morrow we intended again turning our faces homeward. It was after eleven o'clock when we retired to our apartments. I had been in bed about half an hour but had not slept when suddenly, in the stillness which reigned through the house, a wild agonising cry arose in the corridor and some one ran quickly past my door; then there appeared a great commotion and the sound of hurrying footsteps in the hall. I sprang from my bed and snatching a small revolver which I had laid on a table near me, hurried out into the passage expecting to find that burglars had entered the mansion and a murder perhaps had been committed. There was a light burning dimly in the corridor, but to my amazement it was empty. Just at that moment a door near me opened and Sir Guy made his appearance and the next instant Lord Anchester issued from his apartment on the other side of the corridor.

"Great Heavens, Jernam! what is it?"

exclaimed Sir Guy in a low hurried tone as he came up to me.

"God knows," I replied. Can burglars have got into the house? there seemed to be several people out there."

"The cry sounded like a woman's voice," said Lord Anchester who had joined us, alarm plainly visible in his pale face, and carrying like myself a revolver.

"A woman's voice," repeated Sir Guy, and a look of horror came into his face. "Do you think it was the cry of a woman, Jernam?"

I told him I had thought so and as I spoke a vague feeling of awe, which I had never before or since experienced, crept into my heart.

"Here comes Glynne! the row has wakened him also!" Lord Anchester exclaimed as that gentleman, carrying a light, came out of his room at the end of the corridor and advanced hurriedly towards us.

He was unlike ourselves fully dressed. As he drew near I knew that something dreadful had occurred from the expression of his face which was of an ashen hue, and the lamp in his hand actually shook from the trembling of his frame. I was alarmed by his appearance. Taking the lamp from his hand I led him back into my room and made him drink some brandy which I had in a pocket flask. When he had recovered a little Sir Guy asked if he had seen any one.

"Yes, Guy, but it was not a human being," was the startling reply as he shuddered visibly and pressed his hand over his eyes as if to shut out some painful vision.

I instantly thought of Damer and noticed that he was the only one of the party absent. I made the remark, saying I would go and see if he was all right. Lord Anchester accompanied me to his apartment, which was, as has been stated, in the west wing of the building at some little distance from the rooms we occupied. He had not been disturbed but was sleeping soundly when aroused by us. On hearing what had occurred he hastily dressed himself and returned with us to my chamber. Sleep for that night was effectually banished, and as we did not care again to separate we presently went down to the parlour which we had so lately vacated.

It was not with the most cheerful feelings that we descended the staircase and crossed the spacious dismal hall below. At that silent hour of the night the parlour looked particularly gloomy with its dark oak-panelled walls, faded hangings and old-fashioned furniture. After lighting up the room and replenishing the fire to make the apartment look as cheerful as possible, we asked Squire Glynne if he would now tell us what it was he had seen which alarmed him so terribly.

"You have also been startled," he replied, "and alarmed by something. What it was I don't know, but I will relate what I heard and saw."

"As soon as I retired to my room I sat down to write a letter which I wished to post in the morning. I had been writing for about half an hour when in the dead silence that

pervaded the house I distinctly heard out in the corridor a sudden awful cry of agony. I dropped my pen and started from my seat intending to rush out and see what could be the matter, but as I turned round towards the door which was behind me and which I am positive I closed when I entered the chamber, it was to my astonishment wide open. I heard in the passage the sound of light flying footsteps coming towards my door. Will you believe me, my friends, when I tell you that the figure of a lady came quickly into the room and stopped beside the toilet table. She wore an amber-coloured silk made in the fashion of the last century and lace and jewels adorned her stately form; the face was young and handsome, but oh! it was a wild fearful kind of beauty which made my blood freeze as I gazed upon her. She raised before her eyes a small jewelled dagger darkly stained with blood, a low awful hollow laugh came from the pale lips and then seizing a curious antique-looking silver goblet from the table, which I had never seen there, she drained its contents and immediately afterwards sank as it were noiselessly through the floor. Quicker than I can relate it this scene passed before my terrified gaze and in horror I hurried from the chamber.

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord Anchester as he helped himself to a glass of wine which stood on the table, "What was it, Glynné?"

"No creature of this earth—of that I am convinced," he replied seriously. "Once before I saw her face. It is in an old picture in the portrait gallery." I looked towards Damer and his eyes met mine significantly.

"I mean that one, Damer," Squire Glynné continued turning to him, "which startled you so. Was it because you had also seen her?"

"It was. I have beheld the figure you speak of, and mentioned the circumstance to Jernam."

"Bless my soul, but this is a frightful old place!" the Squire exclaimed. "What was it that aroused you?" he asked. "Did you hear that awful cry?"

We told him we had. Lord Anchester and Sir Guy said it had awakened them, and, like myself, they had heard hurried footsteps coming up the stairs, and the sound as if several persons were running to and fro in the corridor.

"Then it is really a fact that this old Manor House is haunted," said Sir Guy gravely, as he leant back in his seat and gazed thoughtfully around the room. "I would not credit the story I heard of its being so. It seemed too absurd to believe in the existence of ghosts, but after the events of to-night, which have so shaken the nerves of us five strong men, who know not what fear is—unless indeed," he added, "it comes to us in the shape of the supernatural—I must confess I cannot help believing that this ancient place is haunted by beings from the other world."

"Then you have heard some ghost story connected with it," I remarked.

"Yes, the late owner of Ashleigh did not live here on that account. For many years

the house was left to the care of a few servants, who occupy the east wing, which is almost separate from the main building. As they have lived here for a long time I will question them in the morning and see what they have to say about the old dwelling."

It was with feelings of the greatest relief and satisfaction that we saw the morning light, for with the daylight came a feeling of security, and once more we retired to our apartments to try and snatch a few hours' sleep.

The next morning while at breakfast Sir Guy asked one of the servants whether they had been disturbed by any noise during the night.

"No, Sir Guy," the man answered, "we heard nothing in our part of the house." A strange expression came into his face. "What was it disturbed you, sir?" he curiously inquired.

"I don't know; I can't make out what the singular noise we heard could be," our host replied.

"Oh! Sir Guy, there are strange sights and sounds heard in this old building," said the servant mysteriously.

"What do you mean, Harris?" asked Sir Guy.

"You, sir, and these gentlemen perhaps," and he glanced around the table, "won't believe me, but it is true, Sir Guy, that this old Manor House is haunted."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Lord Anchester, dropping his knife and fork as he leant back in his chair and gazed inquiringly at the old servant.

"Yes, gentlemen," Harris replied seriously, "there is a beautiful lady so proud-looking and dressed so grand and queer that walks in the corridor up-stairs and haunts the blue chamber which you have, sir," and he looked towards Squire Glynné, "and there is the awfulest shriek that ever you heard, sounds sometimes in the dead of night through this part of the dwelling. I never saw the picture lady as she is called, because there is an old picture just like her in the picture gallery, but the housekeeper has, and the late Lord Ashleigh's father saw her too one night in the blue chamber. He never slept another night in the house, and on his death-bed he made his son promise not to occupy Ashleigh. And my wife's grandmother, who was lady's maid here many years ago, heard the bride's shriek, and saw her standing at the top of the staircase with the blood flowing from her bosom down her white dress."

"What bride?" inquired Sir Guy Beverly. "Is there any story connected with the ghostly visitants in the Ashleigh family?"

"Yes, Sir Guy, and a dreadful one it is too! I have heard my wife's grandmother tell it many a time, and she heard it from her mistress, who said it was an old legend in the Ashleigh family."

"What is it?" Sir Guy demanded. "Tell it to us, Harris."

"Well, sir, you see ever so long ago there lived here a Lord Edgar Ashleigh with his

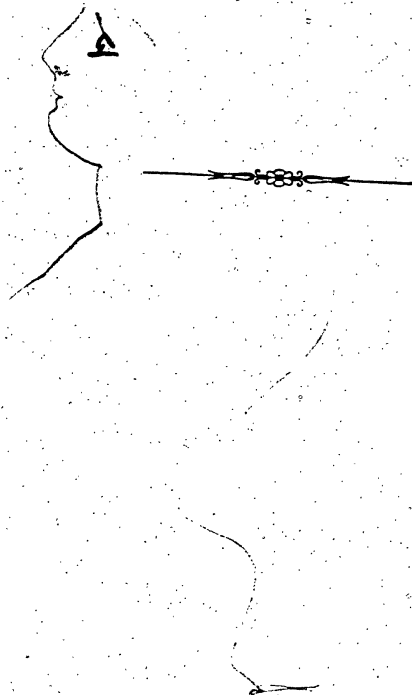
mother and cousin, Lady Millicent. She was a handsome lady, as you can see by her picture, which hangs in the gallery, but dreadfully passionate and haughty. She loved Lord Edgar, but he did not return her love, neither did his mother wish him to marry his cousin, for there was insanity in her family, and she had already exhibited slight traces of it. Lord Edgar went to travel on the Continent, and after being absent some weeks brought home from Italy a lovely young bride to Ashleigh Manor. The night after their arrival, as young Lady Ashleigh was retiring to her apartment she was met at the head of the staircase by Lady Millicent, who had been watching for her, and stabbed her to the heart. She gave one piercing cry of agony which rang through the house, bringing her husband and the other inmates in terror to the spot. They found her lying lifeless in the corridor. Lady Millicent after, in a sudden fit of in-

sanity, committing the dreadful deed, went quickly back to her room, the blue chamber, where, with the bloody dagger still clenched in her hand, she was found quite dead, having taken some deadly poison that caused instant death."

It was with intense interest that we listened to his history. The mysterious events of the preceding night were thus accounted for, and our sceptical doubts of supernatural things greatly shaken. We were obliged to acknowledge that it was possible such things could be.

A few hours after we looked our last on the ivied walls of the old grey Manor House, where in the silent hours of the night the spirits of the unhappy maniac and murdered bride still visit the scene of the dreadful tragedy which took place so long ago within its ancient walls.

THE END.



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THE PEACE-KILLER;

OR,

THE MASSACRE OF LACHINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR.

In the summer of 1687, in the Fort of Catarqui, which then stood on the site of the present city of Kingston, a council of war was convened to deliberate on the campaign about to be opened against the Iroquois, the inveterate enemies and incessant disturbers of the colony of New France.

The President of the Council was the Marquis de Denonville, Governor-General of the Province. He was a man somewhat beyond middle age; and his countenance, although it wore an anxious and a care-worn look, was characterised by an expression of mildness rather than of severity. As a soldier, he had shown himself on the battle-fields of Europe a man of approved bravery; and the polish and suavity of his manners had won for him a reputation which was envied even by the accomplished noblemen who contributed to the lustre of the Court of "Le Grand Monarque." But, like some other colonial governors, both before and since his time, he knew little of the internal affairs of the nation over which he had come to rule; and that little imperfectly. In the art of government, he was a man of speculation rather than action. He could form excellent precepts concerning the duties of a colonial ruler, and the reciprocal obligations of the people; but was slow in putting his theories into operation. He knew neither the time to make concessions, nor the time to act with vigour. He lacked the moral nerve and steadiness to hold, in equal poise, the scales of justice between the hostile Iroquois and his royal master. From this cause his Indian policy resulted in the most terrible catastrophe to be found recorded in the eventful annals of "La Nouvelle France."

M. de Callières, a veteran who, for nearly a quarter of a century, had upheld the military renown of France on the battle-fields of Europe, occupied a seat beside the Marquis de Denonville. In the colony, at the time of which we write, there was no officer who

possessed the military experience or the military ability of M. de Callières. But recently, he had been stationed on St. Helen's Island, opposite Montreal, forming a corps to operate against the Iroquois. And now he was awaiting, with impatience, the opening of a campaign, in which, had he been the leader, the colonists might have broken into fragments the entire Iroquois confederation. There also took part in the deliberations of the council the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, who had seen some hard fighting in Flanders, and had lately brought from France to Canada a reinforcement of eight hundred men. The other members of the council were Lavaltrie, Berthier, Grandville, and Longueuil, the chiefs of four battalions of Canadian militia, who, after having been organized on St. Helen's Island, had made their way in four hundred canoes to the Fort of Catarqui.

The plan of the campaign was simple;—to cross Lake Ontario and, after disembarking on its south shore, to attack and destroy in detail each of the cantons of the Five Nations of the Iroquois confederation.

The council were about to rise, when a loud tumult outside, and the sound of Indian voices, vociferating at their highest and angriest pitch, made every member spring to his feet, and place his hand upon his sword-hilt. In a few moments the cause of the uproar was made apparent. A number of Abenakis Indians, in the service of the Marquis de Denonville, dragged into the council-room another Indian, whom they had overpowered and made prisoner. By order of the Governor, they released the captive, who rose to his feet, and paying no attention to the blood which trickled down his left arm from a wound on his shoulder, cast upon the officers a look of indifference, and upon the chief of the Abenakis Indians, a glance of hatred and contempt. The prisoner, who was attired in the costume of the Hurons, was a young man, and almost six feet in stature. He might have stood for a sculptor as the type of an athlete of the forest. His chest was of

more than ordinary amplitude; the muscles of his shoulders and arms stood out like whip-cords; while his flanks and limbs, lithe, rather than full, betokened a swift and enduring runner. But it was his face that attracted, most of all, the attention of the Governor and his officers. The forehead, contrary to the general rule amongst the native races, was high and square rather than low and wide. It protruded over a pair of small dark eyes, never at rest, but perpetually glancing from face to face, and from object to object. The nose and mouth bore slight resemblance to those features amongst his own or any other Indian tribe; the former being well defined and prominent, the latter small, and its thin lips almost always compressed. Altogether, it was a face that denoted mental power, rare cunning, the faculty of rapid observation, and an obstinacy and tenacity of purpose not to be baffled or set aside.

As soon as the council had recovered from their surprise, the President inquired of the leader of the Abenakis the circumstances under which the prisoner had been captured, and the nation to which he belonged. The personage addressed, who was the chief of the tribe of the Abenakis, advanced close to the captive. He was beyond middle age, about the medium height, with the thews and sinews of a giant. He was evidently the equal of the prisoner in strength, but not in agility. His low forehead, over which the hair grew almost to the eye-brows, a deep scar on his left cheek, and an enormously wide mouth, at once savage and sensual in its expression, combined to give to his countenance a stamp of ferocity in perfect keeping with the character of the man himself. He was known as the "Serpent," and a rude representation of that reptile, tattooed on the upper part of his chest, added to the repulsiveness of his aspect. He and the prisoner kept glaring at each other with looks of intense hatred, and it did not escape the observation of such of the council as were acquainted with Indian manners, that the memory of some by-gone feud was still nourished in the bosoms of these two children of the forest.

In a voice husky from excitement and passion, the Serpent proceeded to inform the President and Council, that the prisoner had been discovered lurking in a clump of brushwood on the edge of the lake; that he must have reached his hiding-place by water; that he had made a desperate resistance, and had killed one of the Abenakis, and wounded two others, before he was overpowered. Finally, that he was an Iroquois spy, attired in the costume of the friendly nation of the Hurons.

At this last assertion the self-command of the captive gave way, and he exclaimed in a voice quivering with rage:

"Dog of an Abenakis, you lie! The coward sees his enemy a hundred miles away. It is thus you see an Iroquois in a Huron."

The Serpent ground his teeth, but made no reply.

The Marquis, surprised at this outburst, and

at the captive's acquaintance with the French tongue, asked him why he had repaired to the fort in such a covert manner, and if it were true that he belonged to the Iroquois confederation.

"What answer does the White Chief expect from me?" replied the captive. "The White Chief knows the Serpent, but not me; and he will not believe a stranger when his friend has spoken."

"The prisoner speaks truth," shouted out the Serpent. "The White Chief is mad if he believes an Iroquois."

The prisoner's features relaxed into a grim smile;

"Ask the Serpent," said he, addressing the Marquis, "if it were an Iroquois or a Huron hatchet that left that mark upon his cheek, as he turned his head to look behind him while he fled. But that was ten years ago; and the Serpent may have forgotten the time, the place and the man who wounded him. I shall tell him all three. The time was when, in the absence of our braves, he made war upon our women and our children. The place was our village, at Michilimackinac. The man who wounded him as he fled, was none other than myself. Look at his scar; it is a brave man's brand upon the face of a coward." As he finished, the captive warrior raised himself to his full height; a triumphant smile passed over his features, and he shook his clenched hand at the Serpent, in a manner at once menacing and defiant.

The Serpent could bear the taunts of his adversary no longer. Snatching his tomahawk from his belt, he was in the act of springing upon his unarmed enemy, when a young officer who had sauntered into the Council-room, along with the crowd, and who had been watching attentively the motions of the Serpent, flung himself in front of the savage, and, quick as lightning, wrenched the uplifted weapon from his hand. The baffled Indian looked, for a moment, as if he would have rushed upon the officer; but there was something in the young man's air and attitude which warned him to desist. The captive, for a few moments, kept his keen black eyes riveted on the face of his preserver; and then, folding his arms across his chest, muttered a few words in the Huron dialect, which it was well for the young officer's chances of military promotion, the Marquis of Denonville did not understand.

The Marquis addressed the officer, who had so opportunely prevented the commission of a deed of bloodshed in presence of the representative of the King of France—"M. Henri de Belmont, the Governor of New France thanks you for your bravery and presence of mind. It shall not be forgotten."

The veteran, M. de Callières, who never lost an opportunity of encouraging a younger officer, or saying a word for the colonists, added—"Yes, M. le Marquis, it was certainly a brave action. But I am sure Lieutenant de Belmont will show himself, before the campaign is over, to be capable of performing even braver acts. You require men born in the colony to

cope with the Indians. These men possess the natural bravery of the French race, combined with a thorough knowledge of the ways of the savage races; and thus their services are invaluable."

Lieut. de Belmont, who was so much confused that he could scarcely muster the few words necessary for the purpose of thanking the Marquis, and M. de Callières, managed to find an opportunity of speedily withdrawing himself from the Council.

"It is near time," said the Marquis, "that this affair should be brought to a termination. Let us again ask the prisoner why he was found in the vicinity of the Fort of Cataragui; and why, if his intent were friendly, he chose to make his appearance in this suspicious and stealthy fashion. What say you, M. de Callières? You know these people better than most of us?"

"M. le Marquis," replied the veteran, "this prisoner I take to be a Huron, and not an Iroquois. The Hurons, moreover, are our friends, and I suspect that the errand of the prisoner was to avenge some private grudge entertained against some one in or about the Fort. I think his object was to be revenged upon the Serpent. But no matter what cause brought him here, he is a brave fellow, and if he were civilized and drilled, would turn out an excellent soldier."

"But," queried the Marquis, "I fail to understand why, if he cherished a just cause of complaint against the Serpent, or any one else, he should not come openly to me and solicit justice. The King, my master, has enjoined on me the duty of protecting equally the friendly Indians with our own colonists."

"No doubt, M. le Marquis," replied M. de Callières. "But I feel constrained to inform the Marquis that an Indian—not this one alone, but all of them—will never suffer another to avenge his quarrel, if there is one chance in a hundred that he can do so himself. He believes there is infinitely more glory in obtaining his object by force, or by cunning, than in asking it openly, and having his request granted. But, if M. le Marquis wish it, I shall put one or two questions to the prisoner."

The Marquis gave consent, and the prisoner, who showed by his countenance that he understood the conversation, turned round and bent his eyes on M. de Callières. The veteran, fully aware of the advantages of speaking in the figurative style of the children of the forest, addressed the prisoner:

"Has the game grown scarce in the forests of the Great Lake, that the Huron descends a twelve days' journey to beg the fragments left at the feasts of the Abenakis? Have his young men been slain, and his women carried away in bondage, that the Huron has no more flesh nor corn in his villages? Or does he love the Serpent so much that he crawls when amongst his friends, and fears to come to them walking like a warrior, upright and on his feet?"

The prisoner, at the finish of the last sentence, gave a start. Then, looking keenly at

every member of the Council in succession, and having satisfied himself that the Serpent was within hearing, he addressed himself to the Marquis:

"You are the great white chief; you are the man of peace. He who has spoken, is a great warrior, but he has less power than you. Among my white brothers, the man of peace is greatest; among us the man of war. I would rather speak to the war chief; but the man of peace might be offended. Tell me to whom I ought to speak, for I am a stranger to your customs."

The Marquis de Denonville, who evidently disliked being addressed in no other capacity than as the "Man of Peace," and who was puzzled to know whether the Huron had sinned through ignorance, or had verged upon wilful satire, bade his interrogator, in a peevish tone, to address himself to M. de Callières. The veteran, between whom and M. de Vaudreuil there had passed something like a smile during the Huron's remarks, instantly compressed his features into model military seriousness, and directed the plain-speaking prisoner to proceed.

The Huron obeyed. "The war chief," he said, "has asked me if we have no game in the forests of the Lake which takes its name from the name of our people; and if we have come to beg the leavings of the Abenakis. Let the war-chief enquire of his hunters, who smoked with us, in our wigwams, the pipe of peace, when the moon that is now wasting away, was then but three days old. Who gave to the hunters of the white chief four hundred of the skins of the beaver; and two hundred of the skins of the deer? Who was it refused these skins to the hunters of the great English chief, who offered a hundred guns in exchange, and gave them to the hunters of the French war-chief for thirty? Who filled the canoes of your young men with corn and dried flesh, that they might feast night and day on their journey? My people did these things. But the memory of the chiefs of the pale-faces is full of holes. The good acts of the red-man pass through; his bad ones remain for the age of a grand-father. Our young men have not been slain, nor our women-made captives. We have warriors enough to sweep the Abenakis into the waters, with as much ease as our boys, in the time of autumn, sweep the flies with pine branches from our wigwams. The Abenakis are flies. They cannot slay; they can only feed on what has been slain by others."

The Abenakis, who filled the room, began to utter loud threats.

M. de Callières, in order to prevent a storm, which he saw was gathering, endeavoured to drive the Huron from his irritating topic, and asked:

"Is he a chief of the nation of the Hurons who speaks? Or do we hear the voice of a fox inside the skin of the bear?"

"Ask the Serpent," replied the Huron; "he hides; I cannot even hear his hiss."

"Catspaw of the Iroquois," exclaimed the Serpent, suddenly coming forward from an

angle of the room, whither he had slunk after being disarmed by Lieut. de Belmont. "Cats-paw of the Iroquois," he repeated, "before another sun goes down, the Serpent will sting thee to death."

The Huron answered by a contemptuous smile.

The Marquis, perplexed and annoyed by his reticence, asked him to answer in a straightforward manner why, if a friend of the French, he did not come openly to the Fort, instead of lurking in its vicinity, and incurring the suspicion of being a spy.

The Huron made reply:

"The hunter kills the snake without warning. So with me and the Serpent of the Abenakis."

The Marquis de Denonville, annoyed and perplexed at the equivocation of the prisoner, inquired of the council how the matter should be settled.

The veteran, de Callières, proposed that he should at once be liberated, and sent on his way home, escorted for three or four leagues, by some of the soldiers, in order to protect him from the Serpent; from whom, it was evident, the Huron would receive no mercy. The old soldier gave it as his opinion that the captive was a man of influence amongst the Hurons, as any one who was acquainted with the Indians might perceive. The man's taciturnity was nothing remarkable. His scheme, whatever it was, had miscarried; and hence his silence respecting both himself and his visit.

The Serpent suddenly advanced. "The spy," he vociferated, "must not go free. He belongs to me, the Chief of the Abenakis. He killed one of my people; we must kill him in return. This has been the custom of our tribe long before our friends, the French, came here to visit us. I have three hundred and fifty warriors; they bring you food; they bring you furs; they paddle your canoes; they show you the hiding-places of your enemies; they fight for you. Set this spy free, and by sunrise to-morrow, I and my people leave you for ever. We are your right hand. If we leave you, the Iroquois will eat you up. If we go hence, they will roof their wigwams with the scalps of your people. Give me my prisoner, or bend your necks to the hatchets of the Iroquois."

The Marquis and every member of the council were equally exasperated and disgusted with the insolent threats of the Chief of the Abenakis. The only person in the room who seemed to be indifferent, was the Huron himself.

"Prisoner," said the Marquis, speaking in a high and somewhat excited tone, "tell us who you are; explain to us what brought you hither, and this boaster, who dares to hold out threats to the representative of France and the gentlemen who command the French army in Canada, shall see you set at liberty this instant."

The council signified in an emphatic manner their hearty concurrence in the sentiments of the Marquis.

"Speak out," exclaimed M. de Callières. "Tell us what you have been asked, and by to-morrow I will have you dressed in a Christian uniform, and enrolled in my own regiment as a grenadier."

The Huron's features were lit up by a passing smile; but lapsing next moment into their ordinary grave expression, he quietly said:

"The Huron is grateful to the Chiefs of the white warriors. But the eagle never craves mercy from the carrion-crow. The Huron will not move the little finger of his left hand to preserve his life from the Serpent."

The council were deeply disappointed. The prisoner had refused to save himself. The blame rested on him alone, and on his obstinate refusal of all explanation.

He was hurried out of the council-room by the Serpent and his warriors; but not before the Marquis, at the suggestion of M. de Callières, had ordered a guard of soldiers to accompany him, in order to protect him from the fury of the relatives of the Abenakis warrior he had slain while fighting against capture.

But there was no man in Fort Catarauqui, save the Serpent, who knew that the captive was the great Huron chieftain, Rondiarak, better known in the annals of the colony as "The Rat," and styled by one of the native historians, "The Machiavel of the Wilderness."

CHAPTER II.

THE MESS-ROOM.

On the evening of the day of the Council of War, mentioned in our last chapter, a party of officers were assembled at supper in one of the casemates of the Fort of Catarauqui. The place of honour was assigned to M. de Callières, and none could fill it better. He was a perfect type of the French gentleman and officer; kindly and courteous to his juniors; affable with his equals, and regarded by his soldiers as a father. At his right sat the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, who first won a soldier's reputation at the siege of Valenciennes; and some of whose descendants governed with credit the colony for which their ancestor had come to do battle. There sat also round the table Lavaltrie, Berthier, Grandville and Longueuil, each the chief of a battalion of Provincial troops—officers whose names are immortalized in the nomenclature of localities with which we are all familiar. Lieut. de Belmont, too, had his place at the table, and opposite him sat a Lieut. Vruze, who acted as a sort of military secretary to the Marquis de Denonville. Next to Vruze sat one of the best known men about the fort; he was quarter-master. His name, as entered on the military pay-sheet, was Jacques Tambour; but those of the officers with whom he was on familiar terms were fully aware that this was not his real patronymic; and that as far as regarded birth and education he was their equal. He was a general favourite, and was known to have but two open enemies in the fort—and these were the Lieut. Vruze, of whom we have already spoken, and the Serpent, the chief of the

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Abenaquis. According to the common report, one reason why Tambour was hated by the lieutenant was that, under the régime of the predecessor of the Marquis de Denonville, he had refused to become associated with Vruze in a dishonest transaction in peltries. The reason for the hatred of the Serpent will appear in the course of the narrative.

Lieut. de Belmont, who was the youngest officer in the company at table, felt less at his ease than on any previous occasion in the mess-room. He knew that his action, which had saved the life of the Huron captive, had been the theme of conversation among his brother officers; and that the words of commendation spoken by the Marquis had been repeated from mouth to mouth. Still, with that predominant sense of modesty which is nearly always the characteristic and accompaniment of merit, he shrunk from taking his usual part in the conversation, lest the events of the previous period of the day should be made the topic of the table.

The quick eye of M. de Callières detected that the young man was more than usually reserved. The veteran at once divined the cause, and in order to restore de Belmont to himself and the company, commenced an attack on the rampart behind which this false shame of the young officer had entrenched itself.

"Lieutenant de Belmont," said the veteran, "you performed to-day a well-timed and praiseworthy act. But you had better be careful how you signalize yourself in future; for your friends would much rather you should win no praise than you should become stricken with dumbness."

A general laugh followed this attack; but it was the laugh of cordiality and good-nature, not of spleen or ridicule.

"M. de Callières," responded Lieut. de Belmont, "if I seem to be somewhat silent to-night, it is because I feel that there was nothing in my action to-day that deserved any special commendation. I happened, by accident, to follow the crowd of Abenaquis who were conveying the prisoner into the Council-room. I overheard the Serpent informing some of his companions, in the Abenaquis tongue, that, in order to show his independence of the French, he was determined to kill the prisoner in presence of the Governor himself. And fearing that the course the Marquis was sure, in that event, to pursue, would have the effect of detaching the Abenaquis from us on the eve of our expedition, I resolved to keep watch over every movement of the Serpent. But I am quite certain that any other officer in the fort, had he been in my position, would have done precisely the same thing; and would have regarded it as I do, that is to say, in the light of a very insignificant and ordinary affair."

"Well spoken," remarked the Chevalier de Vaudreuil. "It is just such attention to the circumstances by which he is surrounded, such presence of mind and such promptitude in action, that makes the successful soldier."

"M. de Callières and M. de Vaudreuil speak, of course, with authority," observed Lieut. Vruze. "But Lieut. de Belmont and three or four other officers, now present, have the advantage of us who were born in Europe, and accustomed to fight against civilized men. These gentlemen have always been associated with the savages, and know their habits better than a European soldier could ever hope to know them. It would be a great service to the War Administration in France if Lieut. de Belmont or some of his colonial confrères would publish a book on Indian tactics."

These words were uttered in a deliberate and sneering tone, to which the scowling expression on the speaker's face lent an additional bitterness of emphasis.

Lieut. de Belmont, and Captains Lavaltrie and Berthier at once sprang to their feet. But a word from M. de Callières caused them at once to resume their seats.

"Lieut. Vruze," said the veteran, speaking in a slow and measured voice, "may find it convenient to sneer at Canadian-born soldiers and at Indian tactics. But had a Canadian-born soldier been where an acquaintance of mine happened at one time to find himself—that is to say, in the trenches before Namur,—he would not have turned his back upon a *sortie* of the enemy, as this acquaintance of mine did; nor would his tactics have led him to the rear of the baggage-waggons before he halted."

Lieut. Vruze turned pale but made no reply. He was well aware that de Callières knew his history; and that silence was the best safeguard.

"I am sorry," continued the veteran, "that anything unpleasant should occur where I preside. But I would advise Lieut. Vruze to be less satirical in future.

"M. de Callières," said Lieut. Vruze, who had by this time recovered his self-command, "will permit me to say that it is only amongst those who have seen little of the world outside of camp, that humour is mistaken for satire. I, for one, do not grudge Lieut. de Belmont all the honour he can make out of the incident of to-day. And he will allow me to add the hope that it will give him additional recommendation in the eyes of Mdle. Julie de Châtelet."

Here de Belmont interposed. "I will not permit Lieut. Vruze," exclaimed the young man in a voice of anger, "to drag the name of Julie de Châtelet into any conversation in which he takes part, and of which I may be a listener. The Lieutenant has always enjoyed a reputation for prudence. Let him take care lest wine and the memory of disappointment together, may not prove too strong for that useful and enviable faculty."

Lieut. Vruze paused for a few moments, and replied in the coolest and most provoking tone he could assume, "Why should Lieut. de Belmont concern himself about Mdle. Julie de Châtelet? He knows no more about her than I do. In fact, who is there in this Fort, that knows anything whatever about her parentage, or whether she has the right to prefix to her

surname the two letters which designate nobility. We are all aware that she is the ward of M. de Callières, but that gentleman is not bound to furnish us with a table of her genealogical descent. He might, however—

"Stop, sir, stop, on the instant," roared out M. de Callières from the head of the board, unable any longer, in spite of his habitual self-command, to listen unmoved to the cowardly innuendoes of Vruze.

The veteran's face was almost livid with passion. His blood was fairly up; and Vruze, unable to endure the fiery earnestness of his gaze, fixed his eyes on some imaginary object on the wall opposite where he sat. Young de Belmont was chafing with rage, and kept glaring on Vruze as a wild animal glares on its prey, before it makes the spring.

De Callières spoke. "I have no intention," he said, "to gratify the ignorant curiosity which Lieut. Vruze has so maliciously expressed. But there are others here who may expect an explanation of the position in which I stand to Mlle. Julie de Châtelet; and it is to them, and not to Lieut. Vruze that I must be understood to address myself. The lady is of noble birth, by both her parents. Her paternal grandfather, who was a nobleman, and descended from the best stock in Brittany, offended Cardinal Richelieu, had his estates confiscated, was imprisoned in the Bastille, and died there of a broken heart. He had but one son. This son, after his father's death, managed to scrape together from the wreck of his fortune, a pittance on which he thought he might venture to marry. His wife died a few months after giving birth to a daughter. M. de Châtelet, now a widower, in order to escape from the sorrow that bowed him down, rushed into military life. He and I were brother officers in the same regiment. He made me his confidant in everything; and it was a request of his, often repeated, that in case he should die before me, I should act as the guardian of his child. The day we assaulted and carried Valenciennes, he and the chevalier de Vaudreuil, who now listens to me, mounted the breach almost together. But less fortunate than the chevalier, M. de Châtelet paid for glory with his life. As we were lifting him from under a heap of slain, he spoke but once—the words were addressed to me, and they were: "Be a father to my Julie." I have endeavoured to fulfil the dying request of my old friend and comrade-in-arms. I brought the girl with me when I embarked with my regiment from France for Canada. She has been to me more than a daughter; and, as I have no relatives, all the tenderness which is left in an old soldier is centred in the child of the friend of other days. And now, gentlemen, you have, in brief, the history of Julie de Châtelet."

"And if," said the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, regarding Vruze with a look of scorn, "there should remain any man in Canada, or for that part, even in France, who dare to doubt the word of de Callières, I can add my testimony to the accuracy of what he has stated. And I could say what his modesty left unsaid, that had it

not been for his self-sacrificing devotion to the dying request of his friend, the same M. de Callières, to-day might be—

"Stop, stop, M. le Chevalier," interposed the veteran. "Let us change the subject."

At this moment there came a knocking at the door; an orderly entered, and announced that the Marquis desired to see M. de Callières and Lieut. Vruze. The veteran installed the Chevalier in the seat of honour, and preceded by Lieut. Vruze, left the mess-room.

"Gentlemen," said Monsieur Jacques Tamboir, who planted himself in the seat of Vruze after the door had closed upon that personage, "The events of this evening have converted me to a belief in the transmigration of souls."

"It is not hard to convert you to anything," Monsieur Jacques, replied the Chevalier de Vaudreuil. "But how have you come to adopt this new creed?"

"Very easily and rationally too," answered Monsieur Jacques, helping himself to a glass of wine. "We are informed by the best historians—that is to say, by men who never saw the countries they describe, and who generally manage to live a thousand years or so after the events happened which they undertake to narrate,—that the Egyptians, in order to prevent themselves from getting merry at their feasts, were accustomed to place a skeleton in their chambers of entertainment. Now, I am convinced, by a process of reasoning which it would take me too long to explain, that the soul—or, more correctly speaking, in his case—the animating principle of Lieut. Vruze, was ensconced, before death, in the unglazed skeleton that ever grinned at an Egyptian banquet."

A loud burst of laughter followed this talk, and the more so, because the person again whom it was directed, besides being one of the most unprepossessing, was also one of the vainest men in the Fort.

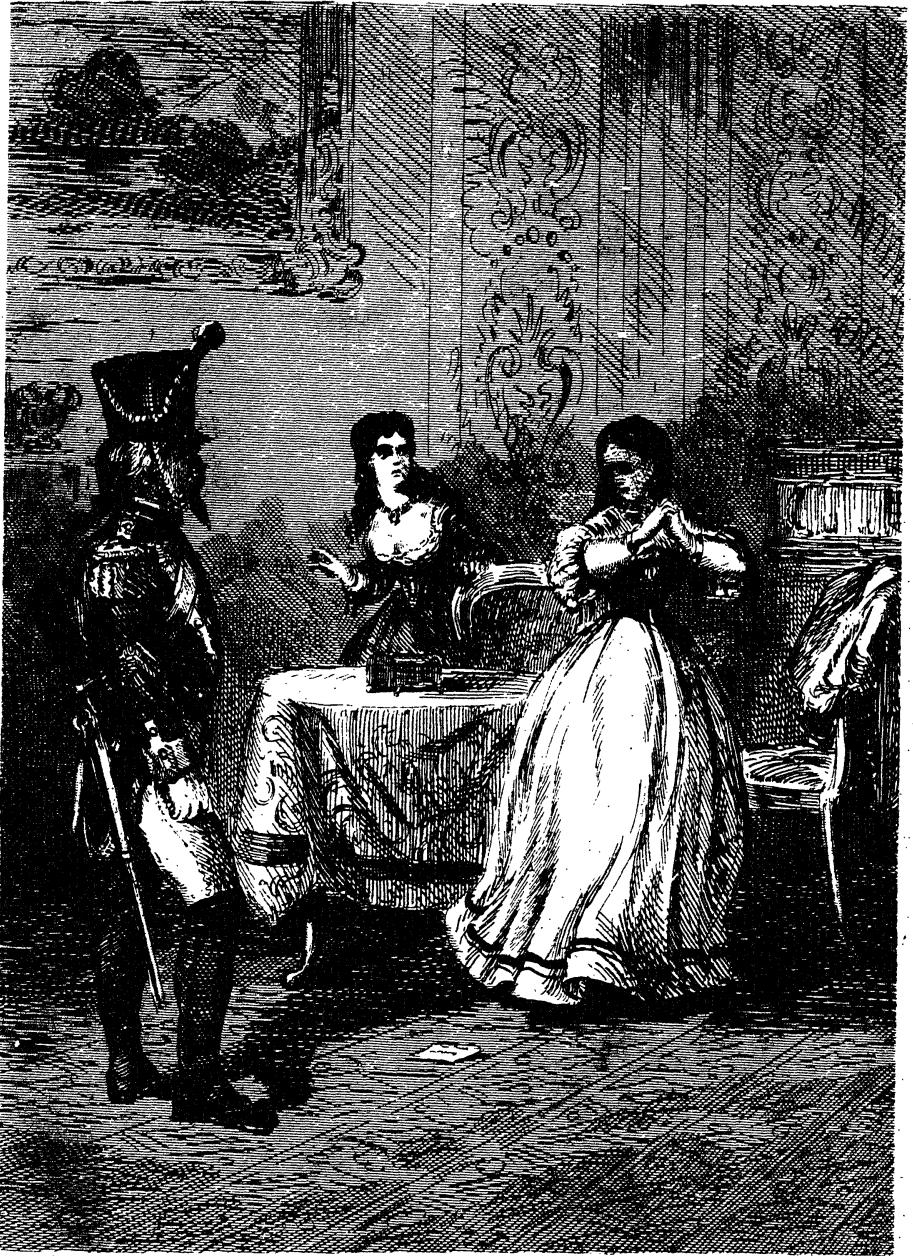
"I should like very much to know," observed Captain Lavaltrie, who wished to change the current of the conversation, "what is the intention of the Marquis de Denonville regarding the deputation of Iroquois Chil who came to the Fort a few days ago, for the purpose of arranging the preliminaries of peace."

"The conduct of the Governor," said when Berthier, "is scarcely a fit subject for our criticism; but it seems to me that it is a strange course to detain the men in the Fort, nearly a week, without letting them know whether they are to have peace or war."

"Perhaps," remarked Capt. Grandvignon, "the terms brought by the Iroquois Chief, as were such as required a good deal of time, and deliberation on the part of M. le Marquis if he

"I do not understand it in that light upon the marked Captain Longueuil. "The Governor has had time to make up his mind they with a campaign against the Iroquois. Their exerting is arranged, and as far as preparas on his concerned, we could start to-morrow came up to This being the case, I cannot see why, instead Iroquois chieftans should not be brought round to have an answer, in one shape or other."

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"Isanta let it fall on the floor, uttering a scream!"

(*The Peace-Killer*, p. 65.)

body for even addressing me, had the latter not run away."

"But tell me, Isanta, do you not love Monsieur Tambour for all these services?"

"Monsieur Tambour says that he wants no other return for these services than that I should smile upon him. I want you now to tell me if you love Lieut. de Belmont."

At this question, which dropped upon her like a bomb-shell, Julie de Châtelet turned alternately pale and red. She cast upon her companion a look of peculiar significance, and replied in an agitated voice:

"That is a question, Isanta, which I have never as yet asked myself—a question which it would take me a long time to answer."

"If I were Julie de Châtelet," said Isanta, speaking in a serious tone, "and loved Lieut. de Belmont, I would not let the secret eat up my heart; but I would tell it to Isanta."

Julie de Châtelet, who knew too well the open and guileless nature of her companion to take offence at what she said, but wishing, at the same time, to give the subject a different turn, inquired, with a smile,

"If you would be thus frank, Isanta, I want you to tell me if you would act in the same manner in the case of yourself and Monsieur Tambour."

"Julie de Châtelet," replied the Huron maiden, "I could not tell you that I loved him; because it would not be true."

"Has he ever told you he loved you?"

"M. Tambour has told me so several times."

"And what did you say in reply, Isanta?"

"Nothing; because I thought it would pain him; and I remembered what I had been taught,—never to cause pain to others."

Here a quick, low knocking was heard at the door; and the next moment, Monsieur Tambour, making such a bow as showed that all his life had not been spent in camps, advanced into the room.

"You have arrived at an opportune moment, Monsieur Tambour," said Julie. "We have been very anxious to know what was the cause of the tumult amongst the Abenakis this morning. Can you gratify our curiosity?"

"It will give me pleasure to do so," replied Monsieur Tambour. "The uproar was occasioned by the prisoner, who was captured by the Serpent, having successfully run the gauntlet of the Abenakis. By my patron Saint, I vow, ladies, that a more gallant man than the prisoner I never saw either in Europe or America. He not only escaped, but killed the best runner amongst the Abenakis; and what I liked better than all, he came near giving the finishing blow to that rascally Serpent."

"Who was the prisoner, Monsieur Tambour?" asked Isanta, deeply interested.

"He says he is of the nation of the Hurons," replied M. Tambour.

"Of the nation of the Hurons!" exclaimed Isanta, in a voice quivering with emotion. "Then I shall go at once and see him; for he is one of my own people, and perhaps can tell me of the fate of my brother."

"I have been charged by the prisoner," said M. Tambour, "to execute a commission for

him. He enquired of me if there were a Huron maiden in the Fort. I answered that I knew one who was the handsomest Indian girl that ever was born (here the gallant Tambour cast a glance of admiration on Isanta) and that I would rather bear her a message that would please her, than carry from headquarters my own commission as Colonel in the Guards of King Louis of France." As he said these words, the frank and expressive countenance of Tambour was witness that they were spoken out of the fullness of the heart.

"What message, M. Tambour, did the Huron prisoner charge you to carry to me?" said Isanta, in a manner at once anxious and impatient. "Tell me the message first, and I can listen to your fine sayings afterwards."

"I perceive," said Tambour, with a look of disappointment, "that you care more for the message than for him who brings it. But I cannot blame you, Isanta; it is but natural that you should feel more interest in one of your own people than in a foreigner. Here, however, is the message." With these words, Tambour drew forth from a pocket inside his coat breast, a little roll of birch bark folded, and handed it to the maiden.

"Isanta opened it quickly, glanced at it intently for a few seconds, then let it fall on the floor, uttering a scream, "The prisoner is my brother—the great Huron chieftain, Kondirarak!"

Tambour picked up the little bark missive, and saw traced upon it, inside a circle which was evidently intended to represent a necklace, the figure of a RAT.

"Explain this mystery to me, M. Tambour," exclaimed Julie de Châtelet, who was both surprised and alarmed.

"Not now, not now," replied the Huron maiden in a hurried and excited tone. "Come with me," she said to Tambour, taking hold of him by the arm.

"Isanta, Isanta," entreated Julie, "wait until M. de Callières arrives. He may be able to save your brother."

"I cannot wait another moment," replied Isanta; "ten years have I longed for this, and I cannot disobey the voice of my own people."

With these words she left the room, half dragging Tambour along with her; and to his temporary chagrin, leaving him no opportunity of excusing himself to Julie de Châtelet for the abruptness of his departure.

CHAPTER V.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

AFTER leaving the fort, Isanta, accompanied by Tambour, and without speaking a word to her companion, made her way straight to the camp of the Abenakis. It was situated amid a clump of trees, outside that part of the palisading of the fort which faced upon the lake. Tambour could scarcely keep up with his companion, so rapidly she glided through the brushwood and fallen timber that extended from outside the fort to the encampment of the Abenakis. He questioned her several

times as to the object of her journey, but had to be content with the brief and invariable reply, "To save my brother."

In a short time Isanta and Tambour entered the encampment. The former was immediately surrounded by a group of the Indian women, with whom she was a great favourite. Tambour, on his part, had attracted a number of braves. They all knew him; and regarded him, on account of one avocation in which he excelled, as the greatest "medicine man" among the French. Some of them had had practical experience of his skill in surgery, which was looked upon as nothing less than a miraculous accomplishment. But although the Abenakis were a good deal startled by the appearance amongst them of Tambour and Isanta, they manifested no outward signs of surprise; but, with the stoicism of their race, awaited with indifference an explanation of the visit.

The Huron maiden was the first to speak. "Show me," she said, "the wigwam of the Serpent."

The Indians, this time, looked at each other in surprise. But none present were so much taken aback as Tambour. He could scarcely credit his ears, and with a look of unfeigned astonishment he asked:

"Have you come here for no other purpose than to see the Serpent?"

"I have come here," she replied in a low voice, "to save my brother."

"I am afraid, Isanta, you have come upon a useless errand."

"If M. Tambour is afraid, there is still time for him to return back."

"Afraid of whom, or what?" replied Tambour, his blood rising. "If it would gratify you, Isanta, to have this rascally Serpent slain, I will challenge him before we leave this camp; I will lay him dead before your face, although I may be torn to pieces by the Abenakis the next instant."

"I am afraid you will spoil everything by your violence," said the girl. "But promise me now to restrain yourself, and thus aid me to save my brother, or I will return back, and his head will be on your head."

"I will promise," said Tambour, "but I hope the Serpent will not provoke me too far."

"I want one of you, my sisters," said Isanta, addressing herself to the women around her, "to bring me to the wigwam of the Serpent."

A young and good-looking squaw volunteered to lead the way. In a few moments more, Isanta and her companion stood within the wigwam of the Chief of the Abenakis.

That personage was sitting on the floor of his wigwam, engaged in the congenial occupation of sharpening his tomahawk. Raising his head slowly, he stared fiercely upon his visitors; then giving a loud whistle, several armed Abenakis glided into the wigwam.

The Serpent then spoke. "Why," inquired he, "has the sister of The Rat, and why has Tambour, who is my enemy, come into the wigwam of the Serpent?"

"Why do you call me the sister of The Rat?" inquired Isanta. "Did you not send one of your tribe to tell me that my brother had been taken by the Iroquois, and put to death?"

"I sent one of my tribe yesterday to tell you so," said the Serpent, assuming his coolest manner. "But why does the sister of The Rat complain? If her brother was not dead yesterday, he will be dead to-morrow."

"And so the great Chief of the Abenakis thinks it no shame to lie to a woman?"

"No, nor to a man. It is the wise man who lies; it is the fool who tells the truth."

"But why did the Serpent tell this lie?"

"He was afraid that you might hear my prisoner was your brother, and so beg him off from the Governor. But now it is too late."

"And why is it too late? The Governor has more power than the Serpent, and can set the Rat free this moment. The Governor is humane; but the Serpent never showed mercy."

"I tell the sister of the Huron chief it is too late to save her brother. For this morning he killed Deerfoot, the best runner in our tribe. The Governor heard of his death with anger, for he was about to send him away at the setting of the sun, to-day, to spy upon the Iroquois. And an hour has not passed since the Governor said to M. de Callières, who asked for his life, that he should be given over to me."

Isanta, who felt a shudder pass through her at this intelligence, inquired:

"Who told this tale to the Serpent?"

"One who knows; one who says you hate him, and that therefore he will be glad to see you suffer through the death of your brother."

"Were you told this tale by Lieut. Vruze?"

"You know my mind before I speak it. Lieut. Vruze, the friend of the Serpent, told him this just before you came."

"A pair of loving friends indeed," observed Tambour, "Satan and his eldest son."

"Hush," said Isanta, in a low voice, "if you speak you will spoil all."

"And now," said the Serpent, "who told Isanta that it was her brother who was captured yesterday?"

Before the Huron maiden could respond, Tambour answered defiantly:

"I told her!"

"And why should the white-man meddle with these things?" demanded the Serpent in a voice of anger. "Have his own women discarded him, that he should wish to mate with a daughter of the forest?"

The Frenchman's blood boiled, as he roared out, in a voice of thunder:

"The white-man's choice is free. But the choice of the Serpent is not free. The Serpent has no wife, for the women of his tribe would not mate with one who can only show them the scalps of the squaws and children of the Huron."

The Serpent covered at the tones and the fierce look of Tambour; and his keen eye did not fail to notice that the latter had his sword half out of the hilt, as if prepared for any

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emergency. In common, too, with the rest of the Abenakis, the Serpent regarded Tambour with a species of awe. He knew, moreover, that the Frenchman was an accomplished master of his weapons; and remembered that on a late occasion when persecuting Isanta with his attentions, Tambour, having disarmed him of his tomahawk, would have run him through the body had he not taken to flight.

After a pause of a few moments, the Serpent said:

"I ask the sister of the Huron again, why she comes to the wigwam of the chief of the Abenakis?"

"To save the life of her brother."

"She has come to ask a great gift. But the Serpent can save him; though the Governor, without the consent of the Serpent, cannot save him."

"The Governor is no Abenakis; he is merciful."

"He is not foolish. He wants the Abenakis, if there were five times more of them than there are, to fight the Iroquois. If he sets your brother free, against my will, I and my people will not help him to fight the Iroquois. But if I say to the Governor—I forgive the prisoner the lives of my two warriors; I forgive him the blow he struck me on the breast with the tomahawk this morning, then he will go free and join his own people."

"And what ransom will the chief of the Abenakis take for the life of my brother?" demanded the Huron maiden.

"What ransom will his sister give?"

"Hear me," suddenly interposed Tambour, before the girl had time to reply. "Serpent," said he, determining to adopt a tone of conciliation, "you are a great chief; the Iroquois tremble at your name; your fame has travelled from the great waters of the sea to the setting of the Sun. But you want the garments of a white warrior, in order to appear more terrible to your enemies. You and I are about the same height. I have garments which were never worn but once, and that was in the presence of our great father, the King of France. They are beautiful; they are covered with golden embroidery; they would make you look like the biggest chief of the white warriors; they would blind the eyes of your foes; they would delight the eyes of your friends; they would make the woman that hated you yesterday, admire you to-day. These garments I will give you, if you consent to set the Huron chieftain free. I will give you, also, a sword, with a silver handle; a beautiful belt to gird the sword round your body; two pistols for your belt; and a hundred shining crowns. I will show you, too, the "medicine" which causes the hair to curl; and with this medicine you will be the handsomest chief among all the chiefs in Canada. Now, Serpent, be wise. Take these things from me. Other chiefs would give their right hands for them; but I would offer them to no other save you. Consent to set this man free; and you will have all these presents before the time of sunset."

The Serpent replied, "does the companion of the Huron girl speak truth, when he says he will give me the "medicine for the hair?"

Tambour, overjoyed at the idea that his ransom was about to be accepted, responded, "I speak the truth, Serpent; it shall be yours."

"And what has the sister of the Huron chief to offer?" inquired the Abenakis.

"All that I have," replied Isanta, with passionate earnestness. "M. de Callières has given a thousand crowns against my wedding-day. These are yours. You have seen and admired the two golden bracelets which Julie de Châtelet used to wear; they are made in the form of your emblem, the Serpent; they were given to me, but they are yours. You often coveted the black horse which M. de Callières rides. I will ask him for it: he will not refuse me. That also will be yours; besides, Julie de Châtelet, for my sake, will bestow upon you even more valuable gifts than I have named. And now, Serpent, prove you have the big heart of a warrior. Say you will take the offered ransom."

The Serpent's eyes twinkled with a satanic gleam, as he held up a knife, and enquired,

"Do you know, sister of the Huron, what I have been doing with this knife?"

The girl trembled as she replied, "doubtless to do battle with the Iroquois. The Serpent is a wise warrior, and is careful about his weapons."

"It is not to fight the Iroquois; it is to shred the flesh of your brother when I and my braves shall have tied him to the stake, to-morrow," replied the Abenakis, with a diabolical malignity in his face sickening to witness.

The Huron maiden was stricken speechless with horror.

"Monster!" exclaimed Tambour, unsheathing his sword, and making a rapid pass at the Abenakis, who avoided it by throwing himself flat on the ground, while, at the same instant, his warriors, with uplifted tomahawks, rushed between their chief and the exasperated Frenchman.

The Huron maiden caught the sword-arm of her companion, and half forced him to sheathe it.

By this time the Serpent, with an alarmed expression of countenance, rose to his feet.

"Miscreant!" shouted Tambour, shaking his fist at the Abenakis, "I am sorry I missed driving my sword through your coward's carcass. But send your warriors and this girl aside, or tell them to remain quiet, and you and I will fight it out here. I will give you this advantage, in order to make you fight—I will agree that if I kill you, your warriors will be at liberty to kill me the next moment."

"The Serpent only fights when it suits him," replied the Chief. "He will not now fight with the "great medicine man" of the French."

Tambour was about to reply, when he was interrupted by Isanta, who addressed the Chief in a tone of pitiful entreaty.

"Surely the Serpent will take the ransoms? Surely he will not refuse a woman?"

The Abenakis replied: "At mid-day tomorrow we will try the courage of the Huron Chief. First, we will pierce him with blazing splinters; then we will wrench out the nails of his hands and feet with pincers; then—"

"Stop, stop!" cried the girl in agony. "I will make any sacrifice you wish. Tell me what you want me to do."

"If you wish me to save the Chief of the Hurons, you must be my wife."

The girl remained silent for a moment; but Tambour groaned out aloud.

"What does the sister of the Huron say?" inquired the Serpent.

The maiden turned to her companion for a moment, as if to ask for advice. But seeing that the brave man was struggling with emotions of which she knew herself to be the cause, she merely said to him in a low and despairing voice: "I cannot ask you for advice; to do so would be cruel."

Tambour caught her meaning, and answered sadly: "Follow nature, Isanta; what nature bids you to do is right."

"I am waiting for the answer of the girl," said the Serpent.

The answer was brief—"I will be your wife."

The Chief, with a fiendish leer upon his features, grunted out the one word—"Good."

Tambour cast upon his companion a look of unutterable sadness. Then he said sorrowfully: "Let us go."

And without exchanging a word, the Huron maiden and he threaded their way through the Abenakis encampment, and when they entered the precincts of the fort, parted from each other in silence.

CHAPTER VI.

MISCONCEPTIONS.

JULIE de Châtelet, after the abrupt departure of Isanta with Tambour, found herself in a state of deep perplexity. The tumult she had heard in the morning—the conversation she had held with her companion—the singular message brought by Tambour—the manifestation of the impulsive nature of the Huron maiden in the sudden resolve to see her brother—all these circumstances combined, led Julie into a labyrinth of unpleasant reflections, from which she could at present find no clue that might guide her to an outlet.

The more she pondered over the conversation she had held with Isanta, the more she felt herself drawn to the conclusion that the Huron maiden was about to fall, if she had not already fallen, in love with Lieut. de Belmont. It was true that Isanta had not made the admission in plain terms; but it was equally true that the interest she evinced in the young officer amounted to the same thing. Did not Julie recollect that Isanta had put to her the question:

"Do you love Lieut. de Belmont?"

She now blamed herself for answering the

interrogatory in language so equivocal; for had she replied in a different strain, had she acknowledged that she did love de Belmont, in that case the Huron maiden, following the unselfish promptings of her nature, might have ceased to dream any further on an object impossible of accomplishment. Not that Julie de Châtelet believed she and her companion could ever stand in the light of rivals, but, like most other women of strong and ardent natures, she disliked even the bare probability of partnership in matters of affection; she wanted to be absolute possessor or nothing. But there was another reason why Julie was concerned for the Indian maiden. It had been the hope of M. de Callières, and also the hope of his ward, that the girl, placed as she had been at a tender age, amid the influences of civilized life, would have had her Indian nature completely transformed—would have forgotten that she was a child of the forest, and would regard herself in all respects as a daughter of France. But this hope, at least in the opinion of Julie de Châtelet, had received, that very morning, its doom and death-blow. For Julie could not but ponder over the conduct, so strange and impulsive, of her young companion when she received the missive conveyed by Tambour. And the vehement language of Isanta when implored to await the coming of M. de Callières, still rang in her ears—"I cannot wait another moment: ten years have I longed for this, and I cannot disobey the voice of my own people."

In the midst of these unpleasant reflections, Lieut. de Belmont entered the room. She received him coldly, and asked, with something like displeasure in her tone and manner:

"To what am I indebted for such an early visit from Lieut. de Belmont?"

The young man regarded her with a look of surprise as he replied:

"Did you not hear a disturbance amongst the Abenakis Indians this morning?"

"That is now some hours old," she answered, "Besides, I have heard all about it. I must, however, return thanks to Lieut. de Belmont for the sacrifice he has made in neglecting his military duties in order to acquaint me with the circumstance that the brother of my dearest friend was compelled this morning to run the gauntlet of the Abenakis."

The young man felt the force of the sneer, but replied in a tone of conciliation:

"I can assure you that it is but a very short time ago—not over half an hour—that I knew the prisoner to be the brother of Isanta."

"When Lieut. de Belmont enters upon his first campaign, and if he happens to take prisoners, I hope, for his own sake, that he will not allow two full days to elapse without discovering the difference between an Indian chief and an ordinary Indian warrior."

"I am deeply indebted to Mdlle. de Châtelet for her good wishes," responded de Belmont, somewhat nettled. "I may inform her, however, that if it had not been for me, it is very probable the Huron chief would not be alive to-day. And further than this, if the

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man is a prisoner, he owes it first of all to his own obstinacy; for the Marquis de Denonville, on the day of the capture, offered to liberate him if he would disclose the object of his visit to the Fort, and tell his name and the nation to which he belonged. You will see, therefore, that when he refused to give to the Governor the personal explanation that would have set him at liberty, it is very unlikely that he should give it to me."

"Lieut. de Belmont would have made an excellent lawyer," observed Julie; dryly; "he possesses, in a high degree, the faculty of setting a case unfavourable to himself in the best possible light."

"I cannot see," retorted the young man, with warmth, "how the case is unfavourable to me. Mdlle. de Châtelet is somewhat unreasonable, and seems inclined, this time, at least, to form erroneous conclusions with respect to matters of which she must have been very imperfectly informed. All I can say is, that I am sorry, exceedingly sorry, for the prisoner. He is a brave man; and if it lay in my power, I would set him at liberty instantly."

"Solely for his merits as a brave man?" inquired Julie, seemingly bent on irritating her lover.

"I cannot understand your questions, Mdlle. de Châtelet," he replied, looking both vexed and puzzled.

"The thoughts of the approaching campaign have occupied M. de Belmont's mind, to the exclusion of his usual faculty of clearness of perception," said Julie. "But be this as it may, I have asked a question which a man, infinitely below M. de Belmont in mental acuteness, might answer without a moment's hesitation."

"I tell Mdlle. de Châtelet plainly, that if she speaks in riddles, I cannot be expected to answer them," said de Belmont, striving valiantly to keep down the irritation caused by the provoking speech and manner of Julie.

"Well, M. de Belmont, I will take the trouble, since you choose purposely to be dull of comprehension, to repeat my question at more length," said Julie, bending a searching look upon the young man. "You said if it were in your power you would set the Huron chief at liberty instantly. I ask you whether you would do this solely for his merits as a brave man, or on account of his sister, Isanta? Now, M. de Belmont, do you understand me this time?"

"With no difficulty at all," replied de Belmont, laughing outright. "Mdlle. de Châtelet is afflicted with jealousy."

"Sir, take care how you trifle with me," said Julie in a tone of indignation. "You must remember that I am not one on whom you may try the jibes and ridicule of the mess-room."

"Mdlle. Julie de Châtelet," retorted de Belmont, "the phrase 'jibes and ridicule of the mess-room' cannot apply to anything I have addressed to you at the present, or at any other time. I simply laughed at what I conceived to be an absurd fancy; and I think

still that you could not have meant your question to be answered seriously."

"It is no matter what Lieut. de Belmont may please to think with respect to that question. I have grounds, unknown to him, for regarding it in a serious light. He may answer it if he choose; but if he refuse to answer it, I must form my own conclusions, and act on them immediately."

"Has Mdlle. de Châtelet been listening to any slanders about me lately? For on no other supposition can I understand her present mood."

"I have never been in the habit of listening to any slanders concerning Lieut. de Belmont. His conduct is simply matter of concern for himself."

"No doubt, and he is able both to answer for it and to justify it. His own conscience is his judge, and it acquits him of having ever even imagined, much less carried into effect, anything which might bring him into discredit in his relations with Mdlle. de Châtelet."

"I was not far wrong when I told Lieut. de Belmont that he would make an excellent lawyer."

"If Mdlle. de Châtelet means to insinuate that I am guilty of equivocation," said de Belmont, unable any longer to bear up against her taunts, "then I shall be compelled to bid her good-day, and take my leave."

Julie cast at him a rapid glance of inquiry, and perceived by his looks that she had been carrying her sarcasm too far. After remaining silent for a moment, she said, carelessly,

"Lieut. de Belmont, I am happy to be able to congratulate you on your conquest—Isanta has fallen in love with you."

The young man, unable to perceive at the moment whether Julie was desirous of covering her retreat by turning the conversation into a humorous channel, as was her wont, or whether she was really serious, answered in a half-puzzled sort of manner.

"Who told you so?"

"I have it on good authority," said Julie."

"Then, if she has been pleased to fall in love with me, I am sorry for it. The fault, however, is none of mine."

"You hold the affections of a woman in little estimation, I perceive," replied Julie. "You have said enough to show that if you were told that any other woman were unfortunate enough to fall in love with you, your vanity would cause you to regard her conduct as a matter of course."

"All I can say is, that you judge me wrongfully," replied de Belmont, deeply mortified.

"Come now," said Mdlle. de Châtelet, with a peremptory tone, "confess that you have been playing a double game."

"I will confess nothing of the kind," said de Belmont, decisively.

"That is to say you are afraid to admit, now that you are brought to task for it, that, while you were trying to make me believe I was the object of your addresses, you were at the same time endeavouring to make a dupe of Isanta—pouring into her ear vows which you never intended to perform."

"I deny that I ever acted, in regard to Isanta, in the manner you have just stated," said de Belmont, the blood mounting to his face with the vehemence of his assertion. "I deny, furthermore, that I ever made love to her; or that I ever spoke to her in such a manner as might even suggest such a subject to her imagination. You have my denial. Now, I request you to give me your authority."

"You cannot have my authority."

"Then I ask you to say if you accept my denial."

"I shall answer that question at some future period; at the present time it is not convenient that I should do so."

"In plain terms, then, you do not choose to accept my most emphatic denial of the truth of the insinuations you have just made?" said de Belmont, in a voice trembling with excitement.

"I am not to be threatened, or coerced, sir," retorted Julie de Châtelet, drawing herself up to her full height, and speaking in a tone of pride and defiance. "Lieut. de Belmont may find other women credulous; but he will not persuade me to accept the statement of him or of any one else against the convictions forced upon me by the evidences of my own senses."

"Enough," said de Belmont, unable to restrain himself any longer, "I shall not waste words to combat the imaginings of jealousy. And now I shall bid Mdlle. de Châtelet good-day."

With these words the young man, in a state of high excitement, took his leave.

The moment after he departed, Julie de Châtelet, whom a temporary and wayward spirit of opposition had forced to fight against her own heart, and the nobler impulses of her nature, felt all her firmness instantly desert her, and pass away in a flood of passionate tears.

CHAPTER VII.

REFUSAL OF THE SACRIFICE—BATTLE FOR LIBERTY.

A short time after parting from Tambour, Isanta made her appearance at the door of the guard-room of the Fort, and asked to see the prisoner who had run the gauntlet that morning. As Julie and she were in the habit of visiting the prisoners on errands of mercy, she at once obtained admission. She was shown into a small square chamber, lighted only by a grating about ten feet from the ground. There was no furniture in the cell—nothing save the bare, rough logs which composed the walls; and nothing whereon to sleep, but a clay floor. Owing to a sudden change from the sunshine without, to the gloom within, the maiden was unable, for a few moments, to distinguish any object whatever. But before she had time to accustom her vision to the obscurity of the cell, to such a degree as to be able to discern in what part its occupant was concealed, an eye quicker than hers had discovered who she was—and scarcely had the name "Isanta" fallen upon her ears, than she and herself held fast in the arms of her bro-

ther. The separation of ten years was forgotten in the meeting of a moment; and the prisoner and his sister yielded themselves up passively to the sweet sovereignty of memory.

Isanta was the first to speak.

"Brother," she said, in a voice that trembled with emotion, "I have come to set you at liberty."

"Is my sister mad?" replied the captive. "She ought to know the nature of the Serpent."

"I am not mad. The Serpent promised me an hour ago, that he would give up his claim to your life."

"Do not trust him; when he spoke it was to lie."

"But this time he may tell the truth."

"Does the wolf change his heart as his teeth grow old? Does the Serpent learn truth as age comes upon him?"

"Could the wolf not be tempted to give up one prey for another?"

"He might; but when hunger came he would eat that other; or when anger came he would kill it. Thus it is with the Serpent."

"But some one must believe him; I will be that one. Let the future danger come; but let the present danger pass."

"What means Isanta? Has she bargained with him who stole in like a coward, when her brother and his warriors were away, and slew her kindred? Does she also forget that he carried herself away from her own people, and flung her amongst strangers?"

"I remembered all these things when I made the bargain. It was hard to make; it would not have been so hard to die. But I thought of you, and therefore I made it."

"Let me hear it."

"That you should go free; and that I should be his wife."

"Never!" shouted the Huron chief, in a voice hoarse with passion. "Sister of Kondiarak, it was mainly for your sake I came hither; but I would rather suffer a hundred deaths than see you mated with the Serpent. Let him do his best. He will draw not even a sigh from Kondiarak, if my sister promise never to be his wife. The life I hold, the lives of a hundred of my warriors, were not worth that sacrifice."

"Remember the pangs of such a death as the Serpent knows how to inflict; remember the welfare of your tribe; think of the battles you have won; think on the honours you have yet to win, but do not think of me. I am but a woman. My life is worthless to our people; but if yours be lost, theirs will follow. Live, and be even greater than you are. Amongst the Hurons there are more squaws than warriors. I am not missed living, nor will I be missed when I am dead. What if the Serpent kill me? I shall be the sooner out of his power. If you grieve for me, remember that you have had greater sorrow, and that if tears could call back the dead, the dead would not think kindly of those who shed them. You will marry; your wife will be more to you than your sister; she will fill up my place in your heart; she will be like the moon chasing

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away a black cloud. She will make you the father of great warriors like their father and like our father. But, if she have a daughter, let her be called "Isanta." Then, when her brothers ask her about her name, you can tell them of me. This is all I ask for becoming the wife of one whom I dislike above everything else that has life. Will you promise me this for my reward?"

"Isanta, you talk to the winds when you talk thus to me," replied the Huron, touched in heart, but not shaken in resolution. "You must not be the wife of the Abenakis dog. Sooner than this should happen, both of us must die here, in this prison. So promise me, no matter how I may fare, that you will not be his wife."

The girl felt, as her brother was speaking, that some dark resolve was forming itself in his mind. And she was the more convinced of it, when seizing both her hands in his, as in the grasp of a vice, he said with terrible emphasis, "Promise me before I let your hands fall."

She was compelled to promise, for she knew she dare not refuse.

"Tell me, Kondiarak, why you came here, and how it was you were captured," said Isanta, wishing, by change of the subject of her bargain with the Serpent, to divert the mood of her brother.

"I came here two nights ago to find you out," he replied. "I had five canoes and sixty warriors. I came on shore alone, and in the darkness went round the fort. I visited the camp of the Abenakis, and found out its weak points. I meant to attack it an hour before day-break. When I returned to my warriors, there was one said he had seen signs of beaver about half-an-hour's sail upwards of where our canoes were at rest. My warriors asked me to let them go after the beaver. They said they would return in time for the attack; I told them to go. I waited the whole of the night, and watched for them coming back. The hour before sunrise had come; but my warriors were still absent. When the sun appeared, I saw upon the lake, a mile away, a canoe, bottom downwards. I swam out to see if it were mine; but it was no canoe of our people. I swam again to the shore; and tired with watching and swimming, I fell asleep. I was attacked by twelve of the Abenakis. I killed one and wounded two. I would have fought on, but that the handle of my tomahawk broke; my knife, too, was gone; it was while stealing it that I was awoke by the Abenakis."

"The Abenakis are the allies of the French, my brother," said Isanta; "and if you had attacked and beat them, you would have made enemies of the French."

"I care not for that," replied the chief. "If the French had said I was their enemy I would have joined the Iroquois."

"Did you think I was with the French, or with the Abenakis," asked Isanta.

"With the French, for so their hunters told me a month ago in our town on the lake."

"But if you had slain the Abenakis, and angered their white friends, how could you have got me out of the hands of the French?"

"I would have asked you from the Governor; if I had been refused, I would have taken you while the French were away fighting against the Iroquois."

"I wish, my brother, I had been dead before the hunters of the French left here for our town on the lake," said Isanta mournfully.

"Why do you wish to be dead? You are too young to die," replied Kondiarak.

"Because, if I had been dead, you would not have been here under the power of the Serpent," said Isanta.

"If you assist me I shall baffle the Serpent. Have you, Isanta, the courage of our people?"

"If I had courage to offer to wed our enemy," said the girl proudly, "I have courage to save my brother in any other way. I have been many years amongst strangers, but still I am a sister of Kondiarak."

The Chief, delighted with the spirit of the girl, took her in his arms and kissed her.

"You know an elm tree that grows close by the edge of the lake, and about two miles from the fort?" the Huron inquired of his sister.

"I have sat under it a hundred times."

"Then go there to-night, about an hour after sunset: it was the place where my warriors appointed to meet me, after they had come from looking after the beaver. If you see no sign of friends, light five sticks; each stick will signify each of the five canoes. As soon as you have made the lights, put them out one by one. That is our signal. Wait for half-an-hour; then, if you get no answer to your signal, come back to me."

"I will do all this," said the girl resolutely. "But if your warriors answer my signal, what next?"

"Bring twelve of them with you. Steal unseen to that part of the palisade opposite the window of this cell. Let some of the warriors dig an opening under the palisade. Two of them can creep through; let them bring a coil of rope and a third tomahawk. Let one of them climb to the grating outside, and putting the tomahawk through, lower it down to me by means of the rope. I shall answer for the rest. But can you remember all these things, Isanta?"

"They are easy to remember. But is this all you wish me to do?"

"No. I have something more to say. You know the man who brought you the little roll of bark which told you I was here?"

"I know him. He is my friend."

"He is a brave man. He loves you and hates the Serpent. Before you go to the elm tree, see this man. Tell him all I have told you; and bring him with you to the lake. If my warriors answer your signal, then send this man to set fire to the huts of the Abenakis. That will divert them from prowling round, and allow my warriors to remain unobserved."

"But, my brother, if the French find out

that Tambour has done this harm to their allies, they will put him to death."

"They will not catch him. He will follow me. He will become one of ourselves."

"How do you know that?"

"Because he loves you, and where you go he will follow."

"Alas!" replied the girl sadly, "if he knew all he would not risk his life to serve me."

"And why not?" inquired the Chief abruptly. "There are none of the daughters of the pale faces who are more beautiful than Isanta."

"I cannot say now all I might wish to say. But I hope that Tambour will run no risk. It is a pity that a brave man should toil in vain."

"Isanta, you speak like a child. I am a judge of men; and I tell you there is no better nor braver man in this fort than Tambour. He does not wear the richest clothes. But would you prefer the poplar, with its silver coat, to the oak with its cloak of wrinkles? I will say no more now. Go on your errand, and be successful."

"But if I am not successful, what then?"

"Come back and tell me."

"What will you do, if I should fail? Remember nothing can save you from the vengeance of the Serpent."

"Even should you fail in this, I have two other ways to escape. But time is everything. So, for the present, farewell."

The chieftain embraced his sister once more, and the girl, with a light step and a resolute heart, left the cell, and began to prepare herself for her mission.

As darkness drew on, the cell was opened, and a soldier, armed with a musket, and bearing a lantern, entered, and stood with his back to the door. The Huron observed him narrowly, feeling, at the same time, a sense of disappointment, such as he had not experienced since his capture. He determined, however, to ascertain as much as he could from his guard, and asked him:

"Has the warrior of the French garrison come here to put the Huron to death?"

The soldier replied in a tone of astonishment—"A soldier of the French army does not kill unarmed men."

"Why, then, has he come here?"

"To guard you, so that you may not escape."

"There is no chance of escape here. I am unarmed and the walls are thick."

"True, but the Serpent told the Governor you have more cunning than a hundred men, and that it was best to send a French soldier to guard you."

"Why did not the Serpent come here himself?"

"There is no Indian allowed to enter the fort after sunset," replied the soldier.

"What time am I to be led out to die?"

"At sunrise, and I remain with you till then. But I do not like to be here keeping guard over a brave man. I would rather the Serpent were in your place, and that you were

"But why am I to be led out so early as sunrise? That is not the hour at which the Abenakis put their prisoners to death."

"The army starts against the Iroquois early to-morrow morning. That must be the reason why you have to die at sunrise."

"So be it, then. But when I have to die so early, it is time I should try to sleep." So saying, the prisoner lay down in the centre of the floor, with his face turned in the direction of the grating in the wall.

In a few minutes he began to snooze, and the sentry concluded he was fast asleep. But no slumber in reality had come over the senses of the wary Huron, who, unnoticed by his guard, had turned his feet towards the latter. As the hours drew on, the prisoner was rejoiced to see that the lantern was growing dimmer and dimmer, and that the sentinel, lulled into security by his peaceful demeanour, had sunk down in a sitting posture beside his light. Presently the Huron heard from his companion the sounds of unmistakable slumber; and, propelling himself along the ground, feet foremost, he suddenly rose on his haunches and sprang upon his guard. The soldier had no opportunity to cry out, before he found one hand of the Huron upon his throat, and the other pressed firmly over his mouth. To gag and bind the soldier was the work of but a few minutes. The prisoner next proceeded to secure the rifle; and this done he extinguished the lantern. The guard rolled himself over and over on the floor, expecting his death-blow every moment. But the Huron reassured him by telling him that he intended him no violence whatever.

At length, to his infinite relief, the prisoner beheld a bright red light flash up outside the grating of his cell. He knew that the hand of a friend had fired the huts of the Abenakis—he knew that relief was approaching; and he went and stood opposite the grating.

He had not long to wait. Soon his practised ear discerned the whispering of voices outside. In a few moments more a tomahawk, attached to a rope, came through the grating of the cell. The prisoner transferred the weapon to his belt, and seizing the sentry's gun, hoisted himself, by means of the rope, to the level of the grating. Words of encouragement greeted him from the outside, as he grasped hold of the centre bar of the grating and tried to shake it from its place. But to his disappointment the iron bar stood firm. He could have driven it out by a few blows of his tomahawk, but this would have alarmed the soldiers in the guard house, which was not more than twenty yards from the cell. In this emergency he bethought himself of the gun, and applying it as a lever dislodged the bar from its place. The gun, however, went off just as the bar fell outward, and the noise was at once heard in the guard-room. But the Huron was instantly through the grating, and almost as soon as the explosion had died away, his friends and himself had disappeared beneath the passage which the former had prepared beforehand under the palisade. The officer of the guard, that night, happened to

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be no other than Lieut. de Belmont. On hearing the report of the gun, he at once hurried toward the cell, suspecting that something was wrong inside. He found the sentry bound and gagged, and saw that the Huron had escaped. Without taking time to release the soldier from his bonds, de Belmont rushed outside, and cast a rapid survey in the direction of the palisade. He noticed that a passage had been newly made underneath it; and through this passage he instantly made his way, and followed in the direction in which he heard the crackling of the brushwood. The young man continued the chase until he came within sight of the lake. Here the noise suddenly ceased, and he stopped to listen. But ere he had regained his breath, four pair of strong arms pinioned him from behind, and he felt himself rapidly borne towards the water's edge. In a few moments more, he was in a canoe, the last of five, the heads of which were turned up Lake Ontario, the little vessels flying through the water and leaving the Fort of Cataragui far behind. He recognized three persons in the canoe; they were Kondiarak, Isanta, and Tambour.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE.

THE escape of the Huron prisoner, and the partial conflagration of the Abenaguis encampment, filled the Serpent and his tribe with the utmost indignation. On the other hand, the French were mystified and surprised at the disappearance of Lieut. de Belmont, Tambour, and Isanta. The first impression was that the two former had been slain, and that it was the Iroquois who had perpetrated the deed; and Lieut. Vruze took pains to have it circulated that the Serpent had been correct in his assertion that the captive had been an Iroquois spy.

But there were two persons in the fort who, perhaps, more than any others, were agitated by the events that had transpired during the night; and these were the Serpent and Julie de Châtelet. The former was infuriated that his prospective wife and his prisoner had both escaped; the latter, in deep chagrin, brooded over the last meeting she had had with her lover; and leaped to the conclusion that he had assisted the Huron to escape, for the sake of Isanta, and had accompanied her brother and herself to the native territory of the tribe. And then Julie blamed herself that she had not discovered the treachery of de Belmont sooner; but, on the other hand, she sought comfort in the grim consolation that the suspicions of his loyalty to herself, with which she had charged de Belmont, at their last interview, had now the strongest claims to her belief.

The Marquis de Denonville, though at first somewhat disconcerted by the news of the escape of the prisoner, whom he now believed to be an Iroquois spy, managed to conciliate the Serpent, and extorted a solemn promise that he should accompany the expedition. The Marquis delayed starting for a couple of

hours beyond the time originally decided upon, in order to allow an opportunity of searching the woods around the fort for traces of de Belmont, Tambour, and Isanta. But, on the return of those who had been engaged scouring the woods, and on hearing of their want of success, the Marquis gave orders to march to the army, who had been awaiting from an early hour in the morning the word of command. The troops received it with delight, and started on their march chanting the following

BATTLE SONG:

WELCOME to the bugle blast!
And the order, "Forward, fast!"
Greet it with a ringing cheer,
Swordsman, gunner, musketeer!
Forward-ward our flags are shaken;
"Forward, fast!" our homes are dear;
Leave to Heaven to guard the rear,
And our children, when they waken.

Fate may strike: who dares to die?
Hosts may come: who dares to fly?
Many a grave, by good right hand
Shall be dug, ere hostile band
'Mongst our homesteads shall have wan-
[dered];
Hail! then, to our chief's command,
"Forward, fast!" for Native Land,
For one Monarch 'neath one standard.

"Forward!" rings along the line,
Valour hails it as the sign
That our dreams, by day and night,
Victory shall read aright
When we break the foe asunder:
"Forward, fast!" through dark or bright
Glory's in the vanguard's sight,
Fame behind, with trump of thunder.

One heart throbs within our ranks,
From the centre to the flanks.
Roll the charge step from the drum,
It will sound, through years to come,
Telling how we bailed the order.
Let our deeds speak when we're dumb;
Echo back to Christendom,
Canada can guard her border!

The troops, after crossing Lake Ontario, disembarked at the Rivière des Sables, on the south bank, near the place where the Iroquois were known to be entrenched. The expedition was composed of the reinforcements the Chevalier de Vaudreuil had brought over from France; and these men, who had been disciplined anew by M. de Callières, on St. Helen's Island, were under the command respectively of that veteran and the Chevalier. The native Canadian militia, divided into four battalions, were commanded by Messrs. Lavaltrie, Berthier, Grandville and Longueuil. The day of their arrival at the Rivière des Sables, the little army of the Marquis was augmented by an additional force of six hundred men, brought from Detroit by Messrs. La Durantaye, Tonti and De Luth.

In order to reach the enemy, the French had to march through a tract of country,

which was interspersed with hills and marshes, and was in every way adapted for ambuscades. The progress was necessarily somewhat slow, for every precaution had to be put in operation, in order to prevent a surprise by the ever-watchful enemy. The troops, especially those from Europe, were great sufferers from the intense summer heat, and the insect pests of the forest. Still they never flagged, nor murmured; but toiled forward with the earnest hope that every marsh through which they plodded, and every hill they ascended, might bring them within sight of the enemy.

On the other hand, the Iroquois were well aware of the approach of the French; for one of the tribe captured by the latter, had managed to make his escape, and informed his brethren of the coming-up of the expedition.

At length, to their infinite satisfaction, the French came in sight of the village of the Tsonnonthouans, one of the five tribes that composed the Iroquois Confederation. The enemy, however, declined to accept battle; and having fired their village, at once retired further back into the forest. But their retreat was not of long duration; for they returned, and, unobserved by the French, posted themselves, to the number of three hundred strong, on a brook which ran between two wooded hills in front of their ruined town. At the same time, five hundred more of the Tsonnonthouans placed themselves in ambuscade in a morass, thick with reeds, at some distance from the brook. In this position the two ambuscades awaited the approach of the French, who having charged a smaller body of the enemy, purposely placed on the road leading to the village, this detachment of the Iroquois, as had been previously concerted with their brethren in ambuscade, took to flight. The vanguard of the French, in the eagerness of its pursuit, separated themselves from the main body, and neared the guarded brook. But the three hundred Iroquois lost their advantage, by reason of their impetuosity. Instead of allowing the French army to pass, then getting into its rear and driving it upon the second ambuscade in the morass, the Iroquois, treating the van as if it had been the whole force, and observing, at the same time, that it was chiefly composed of the Abenakis, sounded their war-whoop and opened a volley of musketry. Terrified by this fire from an unseen foe, the Abenakis fled; and the Iroquois at once sallied out in pursuit. But they were scarcely four hundred yards from their late place of concealment on the brook, when they were met by Lavaltrie, at the head of the Provincial militia, who were advancing at the quick step, the drums beating a charge. It was now the turn of the Iroquois to fly. Afraid to meet the gallant militia, whose prowess they had often experienced before, the enemy turned, and made for the marsh where the other ambuscade was posted. Here the panic of the fugitives seized upon the occupants of the marsh; and they all fled together, flinging away their arms as they ran.

The loss of the French was inconsiderable; while the Iroquois had to lament the death of

many gallant warriors, whose bodies, in spite of the efforts of the Marquis de Denonville and his officers, were carried away secretly at night, by the Abenakis, who made of them, according to their custom, a cannibal banquet.

The morning after the battle, the French took possession of the granaries of the Tsonnonthouans, and found stored therein, four hundred thousand bushels of maize. For ten days they ravaged the country, destroyed the standing crops and slaughtered the cattle, without having seen the face of an Iroquois. The whole population of the Tsonnonthouan Canton, terrified by the results of the battle, had fled the country, some of them having even passed into Virginia.

The Iroquois, as a whole people, were completely demoralized; and might have easily been conquered in detail. But the Marquis contented himself with taking formal possession of the country in the name of the King of France; and, contrary to the expectation of his officers and men, neglected to follow up his success; and ordered his troops to prepare for their return homeward.

The French army had again reached Rivière des Sables, and the sun was going down, when they had finished their preparations for recrossing Lake Ontario on the morrow. The officers had just posted the sentinels, when the report of a musket, close at hand, brought every man in camp to his feet. In a few minutes anxiety gave way to a feeling of painful curiosity, as the Serpent and a portion of his band were seen escorting two prisoners in the direction of the head-quarters of the Marquis. One of the prisoners was a whiteman; and he carried in his arms a female, whose head drooped upon his shoulder. Those who were close to the group could discern that blood was oozing from her mouth; and that she seemed either in a swoon or dying. She was recognized as Isanta; and he who carried her was Lieut. de Belmont.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COURT-MARTIAL.

IN the Council-room of the Fort a Court-Martial had assembled for the trial of Henri de Belmont, Lieutenant in the Colonial Forces of His Majesty the King of France. The president was the Marquis de Denonville, Commander-in-Chief of the French troops in Canada. The officers composing the Court were the Chevalier de Callières, the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, and Messrs. Grandville, Longueuil, Lavaltrie, Berthier, La Durantaye, Tonti and De Luth. To Lieut. Vruze was assigned the duty of marshalling the evidence against the prisoner.

The charges against de Belmont were:

1st. For having caused the destruction by fire, of divers of the habitations of the tribe of Indians known as the Abenakis, the friends and allies of the King of France.

2nd. For having treasonably aided and abetted the escape of a prisoner of the nation of the Iroquois, the enemies of the King—the said prisoner being in the King's custody, and

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being by the laws of war adjudged worthy of death as a spy.

To these charges Lieut. de Belmont replied with an absolute denial.

Lieut. Vruze performed the duty assigned to him with accurate and ingenious malice. First of all he asserted that the Indian prisoner, although he had stated he was a Huron, was in reality an Iroquois spy. Next, he argued that there must have been some secret understanding between the Indian and Lieut. de Belmont; and this was proved by the fact that the Lieutenant had followed him into the Council-room, and had prevented the Serpent from taking summary vengeance on him for unprovoked and desperate insult. De Belmont had several times openly expressed the opinion that the captive Iroquois should be liberated: and that his confinement would be a disgrace to the Marquis de Denonville. Then, on the night of the Indian's escape, the conduct of Lieut. de Belmont showed, no matter in what aspect it should be viewed, that he was the principal agent in effecting his liberation. How was it that, when the report of the gun was heard, and Lieut. de Belmont, who was the officer on guard, entered the cell of the prisoner and found the sentry gagged and bound, he failed to release the latter and ascertain from him the facts of the escape? How was it that Lieut. de Belmont disappeared from the fort immediately after the prisoner, and without having been perceived by any of the sentries? He could not have passed through the only way of exit and ingress, the water-gate, without having been observed; nor could he have gone over the palisades without being perceived by some, one of the crowd of soldiers who turned out immediately after firing the shot, fearing a midnight escalade by the Iroquois. How, then, did Lieut. de Belmont disappear so suddenly? The answer and the inference were alike at hand—he passed outside by means of the trench that had been carried under the palisade. Until the sun rose next morning, no one suspected the existence of that trench. How, then, came Lieut. de Belmont to know its position? Simply, because the Indian prisoner and he were acquainted with it beforehand, and had relied upon it as one of the most effective agencies for carrying out their conspiracy. But, blameworthy as was the conduct of Lieut. de Belmont inside the fort to bring about the liberation of the Indian prisoner, his conduct outside was infinitely more culpable still. In order to distract the attention of the Abenakis, while the Iroquois friends of the prisoner were prowling round the fort, Lieut. de Belmont, with his own hand, had set fire to the wigwams of the Abenakis as a preparatory step in the successful carrying out of the conspiracy. The loss of these people, the firm friends and allies of the French, had been immense; and had it not been for the masterly tact of the Marquis, and his unparalleled influence over the Abenakis, these people might have been converted into implacable enemies; and, by withholding their services, might

have jeopardized the success of the campaign. The court-martial might find it hard to imagine that an officer in the service of the King of France would descend to the infamous level of the incendiary. But, alas! it was only too true. The Chief of the Abenakis had seen Lieut. de Belmont apply the torch with his own hand. The court-martial might naturally wish to inquire what was the motive of Lieut. de Belmont for the shameful course he had pursued. The motive was an unworthy passion he entertained for the sister of the the prisoner, but who, according to the statement of the Serpent, was, in reality, not a Huron as she wished herself to be considered, but an Iroquois. This, however, was a question of morals rather than of discipline; still the court could not but feel that the man's conduct was more than ordinarily base, who, for the sake of gratifying the promptings of a sensual nature, could descend to enter into a treasonable conspiracy with an Iroquois spy—could feel no hesitation in devoting to destruction the wigwams of poor, confiding savages—could forsake such a woman as Julie de Châtelet, in order to deceive a woman such as Isanta.

"Stop!" cried out de Belmont, in a voice of passion; "Charge me with whatever other imaginary crimes you please, but when you accuse me of disloyalty to Julie de Châtelet, or deception towards Isanta, you charge me with offences which never had existence save in your own corrupt and malignant imagination. It is because Julie de Châtelet rejected your attentions with disdain, that you now seek to give her pain by discharging at me the envenomed arrows of your slander."

"I think Lieut. Vruze had better refrain from introducing extraneous matters into the accusation," said the Marquis de Denonville.

"If he drags in the name of my ward with the view of fastening upon her the faintest speck of obloquy, I will call Lieut. Vruze to a stern account of long standing," said M. de Callières, fiercely.

Lieut. Vruze turned pale, and faltered out—"I have not the slightest intention of offending M. de Callières. But he will remember I stated that this part of the case was a matter of morals rather than discipline."

"You had better leave the moral considerations alone," said the Chevalier de Vandreuil, "and confine yourself to questions of discipline."

Lieut. Vruze here left the court-room, and returned, accompanied by the Serpent and two other of the Chiefs of the Abenakis.

The Serpent stated boldly that he had seen de Belmont, with his own hands, setting fire to the wigwams.

The other two chiefs avowed that they had seen de Belmont come from underneath the palisade, and emerge into the forest; and that the Iroquois prisoner had followed after him. They also averred that they had seen de Belmont and the Iroquois, each on one side of Isanta, forcing her against her will to the water's edge, where there were assembled a

host of Iroquois warriors, and a large fleet of canoes.

Lieut. de Belmont addressed the court-martial briefly and fearlessly. He asserted his entire ignorance of every circumstance that preceded the escape of the prisoner. He met, with an indignant denial, the calumnious charge of having entered into a conspiracy with the captive for the purpose of obtaining possession of the girl, Isanta. De Belmont next narrated the events connected with his discovery of the Huron's escape, his pursuit of the fugitive, and his own seizure and forced embarkation. He then told the story of his voyage up the lake. On the first night, the Huron and his party disembarked and encamped on the shore: While they were asleep, de Belmont rose, and stealthily took possession of a canoe, intending to reach the fort. As he was about to start, Isanta made her appearance, and prayed him with tears in her eyes to take her along with him, as the fort was her home, and as she found she could not exist outside the society of Julie de Châtelet. He consented, although fully aware that his conduct would be liable to be misconstrued. The whole night long he rowed, but found, when daylight came, he was still some thirty miles absent from the fort. The sight of some Iroquois canoes on the lake induced him to abandon his own, and take to the woods on the south shore. He and his companion made for the Rivière des Sables, the base of the operations against the enemy, and at which place he thought he was sure of falling in with his comrades. The enemy were prowling through the woods in every direction, and it was many days before he and his companion could reach Rivière des Sables. It was while making their way to the camp that the Serpent and a party of the Abenakis came upon them. The Serpent advanced to seize hold of Isanta, asserting that she was his wife, according to promise, and threatening to carry her to his wigwam. De Belmont, as soon as the Chief of the Abenakis laid hands upon the girl, hurled him to the ground; when the Serpent, rising to his feet, snatched a gun from the hand of one of his followers, and levelled it at his assailant, but, suddenly changing his mind, turned round and discharged the weapon at Isanta, a portion of the contents lodging in the upper part of her chest. De Belmont solemnly warned the Marquis de Denonville, and the Council of War, from believing the assertion that the escaped prisoner was an Iroquois. He was a Huron, the leader of eight hundred warriors, the brother of Isanta, the enemy of the Serpent, whom he had come to Fort Catarqui to slay—and was known amongst the Indian tribes as Kondiarak, and amongst the colonists by the appellation of "The Rat."

The Marquis de Denonville was surprised, and the members of the Council looked at one another in astonishment; while a glance of suspicion and apprehension was exchanged between Lieut. Vruze and the Serpent.

Lieut. de Belmont," said the Marquis, "I

to know if you have sufficient grounds

for the assertion that the man in whose escape you are charged with having been concerned is not an Iroquois, but the Huron Chief, Kondiarak."

"I am certain of it," replied de Belmont. "And I request of the court, not so much as a matter of favour as a matter of justice, that before the court pronounce an opinion on my case, this Huron Chief may be summoned hither, to prove my innocence, and refute the lying testimony of the Serpent and the other two Abenakis chiefs. The Huron is the firm ally of the French, and will obey the request of our Governor."

The Marquis, after a brief consultation with the other members of the court, addressed de Belmont—

"In consideration of your previous services and character, the court has assented to your request to summon Kondiarak. But it is to be understood, however, that if the Huron chief fail to make his appearance on this day three weeks, the court will be compelled to form its judgment on the case as a whole, and on the evidence already submitted. In the meantime, Lieut. de Belmont, you will remain under arrest, pending the arrival of the witness you have selected.

The young man returned his thanks, and the court rose.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOLDING OF THE LILY.

On a couch, in the chamber of Julie de Châtelet, the Huron maiden, Isanta, lay dying. Beside her sat her white sister, pale and careworn, her eyes swollen with weeping. Now and then she would rise from her seat to moisten the parched lips of the dying girl, or to bathe her feverish temples, anticipating, with the quick and tender prescience of affection, the wants which the weak lips were powerless to utter. For a whole night and day, Julie de Châtelet had kept tearful vigil by the side of the dying maiden; she refused to take repose; she would not be one moment absent; and there she sat in that darkened chamber of suffering, the embodiment of the unselfish constancy of holy sorrow.

The evening was beginning to deepen; and the shadows to lengthen themselves more and more as they stole eastward, like trembling and timorous heralds of the twilight. Julie de Châtelet had been sitting for some minutes with her eyes fixed on a bright waif of sunlight, which, formed by the rays of the sun as they stole in through an aperture in the curtain of the chamber window, flickered on the wall above the bed of the dying girl. The watcher's gaze followed, as if by fascination, the shiftings of the luminous visitant; she called to mind the pictures she had seen of saints, with halos floating above their heads; a feeling, half of awe and half of reverence, took possession of her soul; and she began to think that what she witnessed was in some way an omen of the setting of the brief life-span of one who had been the light of the days of childhood, and the loving companion of her

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youth. By degrees, Julie saw the bright waif move farther and farther away as the sun grew lower in the heavens; and, as it finally disappeared, she uttered an involuntary exclamation of sorrow. The sound startled the Huron maiden out of one of her brief snatches of feverish and unrefreshing slumber.

"Julie," she murmured in a low and anxious voice, "tell me, is this morning?"

"No, my darling, it is evening—the sun is near its setting."

"Then go to rest, my sister. You must sleep—you must watch no more."

"I will not go to rest, Isanta; I feel no need of sleep, and I shall watch by you till the morning."

"Till the morning, my sister, till the morning? No, no, go to rest now. In the morning I shall be with my kindred—with those who love me."

"And do not I love you, dear Isanta?"

"Of all your race, my sister, you alone love me. I thought another loved me, but that was a dream. I am glad it is a dream."

"Hush, hush, Isanta," said Julie, soothingly, knowing the grief which was gnawing at the heart and memory of the Huron maiden, and wishing her to forget it. "Try to sleep, Isanta, and when you awake you will be stronger, and I shall sing to you the song you love so well, 'The King's Daughter.'"

"The chamber is growing dark, my Julie. Let in some light. Then I shall look out upon the western sky once more, and feel on my face the wind from the lake."

The window was opened, and the dying girl, raising herself painfully and slowly, with the assistance of her friend, looked long and earnestly toward the west, and then said in a low, faint voice:

"Julie, my sister, I must sing."

The girl looked up in astonishment, not unmixed with fear, and replied:

"My darling Isanta, you are too weak to sing. Let me place your head again on the pillow."

"No, no, my sister, not yet. My mother used to sing me to sleep with a song I could never remember until now. I have tried, when I was well, to think of the song that I might sing it for you, but it would never come for my wishing. Is it not strange, my Julie, that I should remember it now when I am dying?"

"It is strange, dear Isanta, but do not sing it now. Wait till after you have slept."

"My sister Julie, something tells me to sing. Listen, for it is the song of my mother. But tell me, is it not the wind which is going westward that is blowing?"

"It is the wind you say, dear Isanta; and it is chilly."

"But I do not feel it chilly; and so, to-night, it shall be my companion. Listen!"

The Huron maiden, in a low, sweet voice, rising and falling with a weird cadence, and the light of another land beaming from her large, dark eyes, sang as follows:

The leaves were green when the south wind came,
When he came again the leaves were red;

The autumn had kissed them with lips of flame,
And drunk their life-blood, and left them dead.
Then the south wind said: "Are ye tired so soon
Of the kisses which I on your ripe cheeks best?
But the grass, at least, has prized the boon."
He looked, but the grass bent toward the west.

Then I said "O south wind! I love thee well;"
"Too late, too late!" he said back to me;

"For no longer here in the woods I dwell,
And westward now must my journey be.
But if thou wilt come with me," he said,
"I'll lend thee my wings, and we both shall sweep
To the land of the sunset, where comes no shade,
Except where the beams of the full moon sleep."

"And what shall I see there, sweet south wind?"

"It is the Great Spirit alone who knows
All thou shalt see; but, within thy mind,
No thought in the golden dream-hour rose
But thou shalt see real in the Sunset Land,
Where the Red Man and Pale Face once kindred

For all are the same;" so, I gave him my hand,
Saying, "Sweet South Wind, I'll go west with
[thee, [thee.]

As the strains of the singer melted away, she fell back in the arms of Julie, and tried to utter a last word. But the white lips could no longer give articulate form to the loving promptings of her heart. For death had breathed upon her, and silence came after, like a seal. And thus, at the drooping of the day, "The Lily of the Forest" was folded by a Hand of Shadow, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SITUATION.

No sooner had the Marquis of Denonville retreated than the Iroquois, issuing from their hiding-places and forest fastnesses, desolated the whole frontier with fire and sword, and brought terror to every home and hearth throughout the colony. The tribes of the lake countries began to grow lukewarm in the cause of the French. The Hurons of Michilimackinac, instigated by their chief, Kondiarak, opened secret negotiations with the Iroquois, and took every occasion to manifest their indifference to French interests. This condition of affairs, conjoined with the fact that his army, after its return to Fort Catarqui, had been visited by a terrible epidemic, induced the Marquis de Denonville to abandon a second campaign which he had meditated against the Iroquois. These people, ever on the watch for an opportunity to strike, no sooner ascertained the state of affairs at headquarters, than they made a dash at the Fort of Frontenac, where they were beaten off with difficulty. Foiled in this attempt, they reappeared at the Fort of Chambly, and would have stormed it, had not the hardy colonists of the district hastened to the rescue with extraordinary speed and gallantry. The Iroquois, baffled in both these enterprises, made a descent on the island of Montreal, where they assaulted a block-house and strove to raise its palisades. They were defeated only after a long and doubtful struggle.

Harassed almost beyond endurance by the frequency of the attacks of the Iroquois, and unable, with the petty resources at his dispo-

sal, to protect a domain of such extent as New France, the Marquis de Denonville was glad enough to listen to overtures made by the Five Nations for the establishment of a truce. The Iroquois confederation sent a deputation to Canada, which was escorted part of the way by no fewer than twelve hundred warriors. The envoys informed the Marquis that the Five Nations were well aware of the almost defenceless condition of the Province; and that they were able, at any time, to burn the houses of the inhabitants, pillage the stores, destroy the crops and raze the forts. At the same time, however, the envoys stated that their countrymen were generous enemies, and would not press for all the advantages they had the right and power to demand.

The Marquis de Denonville replied that Colonel Dongan, the English Governor of New York, claimed the Iroquois as British subjects; and that as there was peace between England and France the Five Nations would be kept from carrying on hostilities.

The envoys responded that their confederation formed an independent power; that it had always resisted French as well as English supremacy; that the united Iroquois would act towards both just as they pleased, either as neutrals, as friends or as enemies. The envoys finished by the high-spirited declaration—"We have never been conquered either by the French or the English. We hold our country from God, and we acknowledge no other master."

A truce, favourable both to the French and their native allies, was eventually arranged by the Marquis, as a first step towards the conclusion of a lasting treaty of peace; and the Iroquois envoys took their way home to procure the accomplishment of this latter object.

But the hopes entertained of a treaty of peace between the French and the Iroquois, were doomed to disappointment. Kondiarak, the Rat, appeared on the scene, and his machinations defeated every prospect of a permanent amicable settlement, and eventually plunged the colony in blood and mourning. How his schemes were laid, and how they succeeded, will be made apparent, as our story proceeds towards its conclusion.

The Rat, after his escape from Catarqui, and his arrival at Michilimackinac, the home of his tribe, began to lay his plans against the Marquis de Denonville and the colony in general. The chieftain was especially incensed against the governor, upon whom he cast the blame of all his misadventures. Our old acquaintance, Tambour, who had been taken into the friendship and confidence of the Rat, endeavoured with all the skill and plausibility of which he was master, to show the Huron chieftain that his sufferings had been due altogether to his own obstinacy in refusing to disclose his rank and nation to the Marquis de Denonville. But the Rat was proof against all this reasoning. He argued that the Governor was unfit for his post, if he could not recognize at a glance, a Huron from an Iroquois; and maintained that the Marquis had been guilty, not only of gross injustice, but of an

unpardonable insult towards the whole Huron nation, in refusing to believe their chief's solemn assertion as against the lying statement of the Chief of the Abenakis. The disgrace of having been put in bonds, and the keen ignominy of being compelled to run the gauntlet, were to be attributed to the Governor's shameful partiality for the Serpent, and to some undeserved personal hatred he had entertained for the Rat. This hatred, the Rat argued, had doubtless been instilled, beforehand, into the mind of the Marquis by the chief of the Abenakis. The Huron chieftain, moreover, had firmly persuaded himself that the Marquis knew all along who he was; and that the ignorance of his identity was merely feigned in order to gratify the hatred of the Serpent, and to secure the services of the Abenakis during the war with the Iroquois. A combination of circumstances conspired to fan into a flame the resentment of the Huron leader. First, there was the failure of his attempt to capture or slay the chief of the Abenakis; then there was the burning humiliation of being handed over to his mortal enemy; and again, he was chagrined at the departure of Isanta and de Belmont, the latter of whom he wished to hold as a hostage, for the satisfying of certain onerous claims for compensation, which he intended to make on the Governor.

But bitter as had become the hostility of the Rat to the Marquis de Denonville and the colony at large, he was far too prudent to declare open war. No Indian chief of that period understood so well the advantages which civilization had placed in the hands of Europeans for hostile purposes. He was aware that the Red Men had the superiority in knowledge of the country, in rapidity of movement, and in suddenness of attack; but he was also aware that in the points in which the native races were deficient—such as steadiness under defeat, pertinacity of purpose, discipline and resources—the colonists were in all respects superior. He therefore made up his mind to work out his revenge by cunning, and if that failed, then by force, leaving the result to the chapter of accidents.

First of all he despatched secret envoys to the Iroquois to induce them to form an alliance with the Huron nation; at the same time informing them that he would keep up an outward show of friendship for the French; but the moment the latter should become engaged in war with the Iroquois, he would desert to the side of the Five Nations, and by this means they would be enabled, with their combined forces, to uproot the entire European colony in Canada.

The Rat was making preparations for his second move—namely, to visit the Marquis de Denonville and offer him the services of the Hurons if he would undertake another expedition against the Iroquois, meaning to involve the Governor in war, and then desert him—when a messenger from the Marquis arrived at Michilimackinac, inviting the chief to pay a friendly visit to Fort Catarqui. The Rat at once complied, as the invitation hap-

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pened to chime in with his own designs. He left the Huron canton the morning after the arrival of the messenger; and, escorted by five hundred warriors, commenced the voyage to Fort Catarqui.

CHAPTER XII.

HONOUR SAVED—"THE PEACE KILLED."

The last day of grace accorded to Lieut. de Belmont for the arrival of his witness had come. The young man sat disconsolate in the chamber in which he was confined, having entirely given up all hopes of the arrival of the Huron chieftain. He awaited his fate with the apathy of despair, for long and continuous meditation upon the misfortunes that had overtaken him, had rendered him indifferent to whatever fate the future might have in store. If, however, there was one regret which, more than another, was not to be beaten down, it was that, during the whole period of his confinement, he had not received from Julie de Châtelet one word of condolence or indeed the slightest indication that she was even aware that such a person as Henri de Belmont had ever existed.

The hour of noon—the hour appointed for the carrying out of the finding of the court-martial, came at last; and Henri de Belmont was escorted by a guard from his place of confinement to the open ground in front of the fort. The soldiers of the garrison were drawn up in a hollow square, facing inward, and inside of it the Marquis de Denonville and the officers of the court-martial had taken their places. The accused was conveyed inside the square, and stationed in the middle. He looked pale and careworn, but his bearing was that of a man who knew himself to be innocent. Such, too, was the firm belief of every soldier present; and even those who had tried him were half of the opinion that the evidence upon which they were forced to pronounce a judgment was not in every respect trustworthy. But still the stern and imperative necessities of military law had left them no other resource; and they had given to the accused the delay he desired—a delay, however, which, contrary to the general wish, had proved of no advantage to him who had sought it.

The Marquis de Denonville, in an agitated voice, commanded his military secretary, Lt. Vruze, to read the sentence of the court-martial.

Vruze, who, on coming forward and placing himself in front of the prisoner, had to encounter the scowl of every soldier present, proceeded to read aloud the sentence:—

"That Henri de Belmont be degraded from the rank of Lieutenant; that his sword be broken before his face, and his epaulettes be torn off by the Provost-Marshal; and that he himself be afterwards transported to France, there to serve as a convict in the Royal Gallies, during the pleasure of His Majesty King Louis."

The young man heard his sentence with composure, and, turning round, bowed to the

officers of the court-martial, and afterwards to the soldiers, who had received the reading of the document with every symptom of displeasure which discipline would allow them to manifest.

Just as the Provost-Marshal—who seemed exceedingly averse to the duty assigned him—was coming slowly forward, a loud shout, in the direction of the water-gate of the fort, made him pause, and caused the Marquis and his officers to turn, with anxious countenances, in the direction indicated.

In a few moments a band of Indians, headed by a tall and stately warrior, came rapidly into view, and the practised eye of M. de Callières at once recognized the costume.

"Who are these men?" asked the Marquis de Denonville.

"They are Hurons," replied the veteran in a voice of pleased excitement.

The words were heard by the soldiers, and a loud cheer of joy rang out through the forest.

At a signal from the Governor, the Chief of the Hurons was permitted to enter the hollow square, his warriors remaining outside.

The Rat strode up to the Marquis and said—

"The white chief has sent for the chief of the nation of the Hurons. He is come. I am Kondiarak. But what does the white chief want with his friend?"

The Marquis felt that the keen eye of the Huron was reading him through; he remembered how lately Kondiarak had stood before him in a different position, and the recollection of the fact discomposed him. He paused for a few moments and asked—

"Does Kondiarak know that young man?" pointing to de Belmont.

"I will answer," replied the Huron. "I saw that young warrior when the white chiefs were in Council; he kept back the Serpent from rushing upon me with his tomahawk. I saw the young warrior a second time; and then he pursued me to bring me back to death. I saw him a third time when my braves dragged him into a canoe. The first night of our voyage he escaped; then I saw no more of him. That is all I know of the young warrior."

The Marquis and his officers drew a sigh of relief; and the soldiers with difficulty refrained from bursting into a cheer; while de Belmont felt as if he were in a delightful dream.

"The Chief of the Hurons," said the Marquis, "may not wish to hear of these things, in which he was a sufferer by accident. His misfortune, however, I will cover over with gifts; so that it shall be buried forever in his memory."

"Speak on," said Kondiarak, "these things have passed out of my remembrance; a brave man can look back without anger, and forward without fear."

"The Huron chief speaks like a warrior," said the Marquis; "and now I know I shall not offend him if I ask him who it was that fired the wigwams of the Abenakis."

Kondiarak bent a searching look on his questioner, as he replied—

"Will the white chief promise me not to take revenge on him who did it?" asked Kondiarak.

"I promise," said the Marquis.

The Huron chieftain left the presence of the Governor, and held a short consultation with his warriors. He returned, accompanied by another chief; and the Governor and his officers remarked that as the two entered the hollow square, the Hurons on the outside advanced closer towards the soldiers, and that there was an uneasy expression on their features.

"This chief," said Kondiarak, "is next to me in power. He will speak the truth; his name is the "Brother of the Hurons."

The new comer made a low bow to the Marquis and his officers, in a style that gave them a favourable impression of his knowledge of European manners. Then in polished and unbroken French he said—

"I, formerly known as Jacques Tambour, Quarter-Master in the service of the King of France, now known as the "Brother of the Hurons" and second chief of that tribe, set fire to the wigwams of the Abenakis, to aid the escape of Kondiarak. I did so at the request of one for whom I would willingly lay down my life. The wigwam to which I first set fire belonged to the Serpent. But the damage I caused him was small in comparison with the loss which he and Lieut. Vruze together, in the time of M. de la Barre, the late Governor-General, caused to the King of France, when they sold three thousand beaver-skins to the English traders, and pretended that the canoes which were conveying them to this fort had been sunk by a storm."

The Marquis and his officers stood agape with astonishment—while the soldiers were equally with their superiors lost in complete wonderment. Lieut. Vruze was shaking in every limb, and his face was green with terror.

"Jacques Tambour, I pardon your offence," said the Marquis; "I am glad indeed that it assisted our friend and ally, Kondiarak, who, I deeply regret to say, was made the victim of a cruel accident."

Jacques Tambour made another profound bow; and expressed his gratitude to the Marquis.

Kondiarak now spoke. "I have answered the questions of the white chief," he said, "and now I hope he will answer me this question—where is the Serpent?"

"He left the Fort nearly a week ago, to hunt in the valley of the Ottawa," replied the Marquis.

"Pardon me, your Excellency," said Tambour, "for inquiring if he has compelled the girl, Isanta, to accompany him."

The Marquis bent upon Tambour a look full of meaning and sympathy, as he replied, in a low voice—"she is dead."

Kondiarak and Tambour looked at one another, and as if the same thought had passed

between them with the lightning rapidity of the interchange of a common sorrow, both uttered at the same moment the word "Dead."

Tears that he could not conceal, stole down the cheeks of the brave Tambour.

"Cheer up, my old comrade," said the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, "I had a lieutenant in my regiment killed in battle by the Iroquois, and, with the consent of the Marquis, I shall give you the vacancy."

"You have my consent at once, and my hope, also, that our old Quarter-Master will accept the offer," said the Marquis.

Tambour brushed his sleeve across his face and said—"A thousand thanks, gentlemen; but I cannot accept the offer. If she had been living it would be different; but now that she is dead, I will cast my lot with her kindred."

Kondiarak turned round and clasped his companion warmly by the hand.

The Marquis de Denonville called Lieut. de Belmont before him, and said:

"I am exceedingly happy to inform you that you are honourably discharged; and you may at once resume your military duties."

A loud cheer followed the announcement of the Governor, and de Belmont was led away by M. de Callières.

Almost at the same moment the report of a fire-arm was heard inside the Fort. A few moments after, Lieut. Vruze was discovered lying on the floor of his room, a corpse. He had stolen away unobserved, and had fallen by his own hand.

The same evening, the Marquis entertained Kondiarak and the other Huron chiefs at a splendid banquet; and took every means to obliterate the remembrance of the recent hardships inflicted on his visitor.

The banquet over, Kondiarak informed the Marquis that when the messenger of the latter reached Michilimackinac, he—the Huron chief—was preparing to visit the Governor for the purpose of offering his services to the French in prosecuting a second campaign against the Iroquois. And, since he had now arrived, he was ready, with his five hundred warriors, the picked men of the Huron nation, to join with the French troops, and march at once against the enemy.

The Marquis de Denonville expressed his utmost gratitude both for the friendly disposition of the Huron leader personally, and for the assistance which he tendered. But the time, he regretted to say, was inopportune, as a treaty with the Iroquois was now well advanced, and the deputies of that people were on their way to Canada to conclude it.

The Rat was bitterly disappointed at the information; but his habitual self-control permitted no sign of surprise, nor word of complaint to escape him. And, in the morning, the chief took his leave, loaded with presents by the Governor, and uttering professions of eternal fidelity; but, in heart, hating him with an implacable hatred.

On his way home, the Rat determined to seize the Iroquois deputies who were coming to Canada to conclude the peace. For this purpose he laid an ambuscade in the vicinity

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of Famine Cove, entrapped the entire deputation, massacred some, and made the others his prisoners.

The captives were brought before him, and he asked them, in the most courteous and kindly manner, whether they were journeying, and what was the object of their journey. He was informed that they were envoys, sent by the Iroquois nation, to conclude a peace with the Marquis de Denonville.

At this intelligence, the Rat expressed his utter surprise, informing his captives that it was the Marquis himself who told him of their journey, and had sent him forward for the express purpose of waylaying them. And to give them assurance of the truth of his statement, the Rat set his captives at liberty, retaining only one of their number to replace a Huron, who had been killed by the Iroquois, while resisting their assailants.

The Rat, rejoicing in the success of his artifice, and leaving the liberated deputies to return to their own nation, hastened homeward to Michilimackinac. On his arrival, he presented the Iroquois deputy, whom he had selected to replace the Huron, slain at the ambuscade, to M. Durantaye, the French officer at the trading post of Michilimackinac. M. Durantaye, who had not as yet been officially informed that a truce had been concluded with the Iroquois, condemned the deputy to death—as a spy. The victim appealed to the Rat for confirmation of his assertion; that, when captured, he was one of the envoys sent by the Iroquois to conclude a peace with the French.

The Rat, in reply to the appeal of the unfortunate prisoner, told him he must be mad to imagine that he had been an envoy, and that his story was false from beginning to end!

The deputy having been put to death as a spy, the Rat called upon an aged Iroquois, who had long been a prisoner amongst the Hurons; and, setting him at liberty, bade him return to his countrymen, and tell them that the French, while pretending to be anxious for peace, were secretly killing and making prisoner every Iroquois whom they could seduce by promises, or capture by treachery.

The old man obeyed, and, as his canoe disappeared on the horizon, the Rat, who had watched it from the time it pushed off, exclaimed in a voice of triumph, "I have killed the peace."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CATASTROPHE—THE LAST MEETING OF TWO ENEMIES.

THE outrage inflicted by the Rat on the Iroquois deputies, and which he managed to have attributed to the Marquis de Denonville, worked in the minds of that people like a secret and deadly leaven. And, added to this cause of resentment, there was the remembrance of the unwarrantable seizure, and transportation to France, of the chiefs who preceded, on a mission of peace, the envoys waylaid by Kondiarak; and whose deportation we noticed in the earlier portion of our narrative. True it was, that these chiefs, im-

mediately after their arrival in France, had been liberated by order of King Louis, and sent back to Canada. Still, the Iroquois never forgave the insult to their chiefs, and, through their chiefs, to their nation; and the recollection of it rankled in their bosoms with a virulence that refused to be assuaged or mollified.

But, during the winter of 1688 and the spring of 1689, a treacherous calm brooded over the Province; and the war-spirit of the implacable Iroquois seemed to have been buried with their hatchets. The breathing-spell of peace came to the harrassed colonists like the welcome sleep after the fiery fever. Yet, there were those who feared even while they rejoiced; and keen eyes, accustomed to read the dark diplomacy of the forest, fancied that they saw, in the wilderness south of the St. Lawrence, the weaving of a web, destined, on a sudden, to involve in its crimson folds the lives and the fortunes of the colonists.

The Marquis had been informed by men whom stern experience had taught to understand the Indian nature, that the Iroquois were preparing to descend on the province in a storm of massacre and desolation. But he neglected to give ear to these warnings. There was no outward sign that the Indians were about to move; and he refused to sound the alarm on the unsupported suspicion of distant danger. The calm, however, looked ominous; and the tranquillity of the Iroquois was a thing inexplicable. The Governor applied to the Jesuit missionaries for information as to the unwonted peacefulness of the Iroquois. The fathers, deceived by the skillful secrecy with which the Indians enveloped their proceedings, gave it as their belief that those who suspected them of evil designs, had been misinformed as to facts, or had given to unpleasant rumours an importance and a construction they did not deserve. And thus lulled in an infatuated security, the colony lay with its bosom bared to the knife of its bitterest enemies.

On the night of the 5th of August, amid a storm of hail and rain, fourteen hundred warriors of the Iroquois confederacy crossed Lake St. Louis. They landed, without having been seen or heard, at Lachine, the upper limit of the island of Montreal. Favoured by the elements and by the darkness, they moved rapidly and noiselessly to the points which had been marked out beforehand; and ere the sun rose next morning they had surrounded, in platoons, every dwelling within a circle of several leagues.

At a signal from their chief the Iroquois commenced their work of death. Breaking in through doors and windows, the savages dragged the sleepers from their beds and massacred them indiscriminately, old and young, men, women and children. Where the tomahawk could not cleave an entrance, the torch was applied; and the inmates, rushing out of their burning homes, were butchered on their own thresholds. The fury of the Iroquois was demoniac. Not content with the hideous license of an unsparing and unrestricted slaughter, they piled mental torture upon physical suffer-

ing, and forced parents to fling their own offspring into the flames. Up to within a short league of the city of Montreal, the country was littered with fire, and reeked with blood. Everything that could yield to the tomahawk or to the flames was swooped within the red radius of destruction. Two hundred human beings were burned alive; numbers were put to death after having been subjected to every torture which diabolical ingenuity could devise; and many were reserved for the torments of the stake and fagot in the land of the Iroquois.

While the work of death was at its height, the surge of massacre dashed up in vain against a stone-built dwelling which was situated near the banks of the St. Lawrence.

At length a warrior who stood head and shoulders above a band that he led, arrived in front of the dwelling. His quick eye saw at a glance that the fire kept up by the inmates upon their savage assailants, was so rapid and so well delivered, that it was telling visibly on the numbers and courage of the Indians. Retiring out of the line of the bullets, the newly arrived warrior stepped under the eaves of the building, and, clambering upon the shoulders of a companion, applied a lighted pine-torch to the roof. In a few minutes the flames spread everywhere, and soon the upper part of the building fell inward with a crash like thunder. The new mode of attack immediately proved its success, for the musketry fire from within began to slacken; and the agonizing shrieks of the inmates proclaimed to the exulting savages outside that Death, in its most appalling form, was laying hold of those whom they could not reach with their tomahawks.

By degrees, the cries within the doomed dwelling grew fainter and fainter; and the last shriek had just died away when, of a sudden, the door opened, and a young man, almost suffocated with smoke, and bearing a female form in his arms, staggered out into the darkness, and into the midst of enemies.

The warrior who had set fire to the building raised his tomahawk but did not strike. The next moment, half-a-dozen other Indians dragged the female from the young man's arms, while he himself, as he wore the dress of a superior officer, was at once pinioned from behind, and his life saved in order that he should be reserved for the torture.

A savage, more stalwart than his fellows, had obtained possession of the female, and his right hand was already grasping her dishevelled locks, while his right hand was drawing his scalping knife, when the keen eye of the warrior who had fired the mansion caught the gleam of a white necklace. He sprang forward on the instant, and, seizing the arm of the savage as his knife was descending, looked in the face of the struggling victim, and uttered the word "Isanta." In a faint and quavering voice she replied, "I was her sister," and then swooned away.

"Stand back, this girl belongs to me," said the warrior to the savage, who still held his intended victim by the hair.

"She is mine," responded the savage.
"I am Kondiarak," said the warrior. "Release the girl."

The savage did not dare to disobey; and, losing his hold of the girl, who was no other than Julie de Châtelet, slunk back among his companions.

Lifting the girl in his arms as if she had been a feather, Kondiarak, turning to some of the Indians, who, although impatient for the work of slaughter elsewhere, could not help for the moment looking on with wonder, said, "Bring hither the companion of this girl."

He was brought forward; Kondiarak recognized him as de Belmont.

"Come with me," said the Huron chief; and carrying the girl in his arms, he walked rapidly in the direction of the river.

As soon as he reached the bank, Kondiarak, stooping down, picked up a smouldering fire torch, which, having fanned into flame, he waved three times over his head. In a few moments a canoe, which had been stationed some distance from the shore, shot rapidly to the spot where the Huron chief was standing; and its occupant bounded quickly upon the strand.

"Brother of the Hurons," said Kondiarak—for it was none other than our old acquaintance, Tambour, who had sole charge of the canoe—"we have two friends here, whom I have saved. Let us help them to escape."

Tambour, with a rapid glance at the male companion of Kondiarak, rushed up and seized him warmly by the hand. But it was no time for words; and, motioning de Belmont to follow, Tambour assisted Kondiarak to place Julie on board the canoe. In less than five minutes after having embarked her two passengers, the little vessel, propelled by the vigorous arms of the Huron chief and Tambour, was fairly out of sight of the shore.

Having rested a few minutes to resuscitate the girl, and to deliberate on the course it was best to pursue, Kondiarak and his companion were about to strike the water with their paddles, and push up the river on their homeward voyage, when the trained ear of the chief caught the faint noise of distant splashing. Handing his paddle to Tambour, the Huron went to the stern of the canoe, and listened attentively in the direction whence the sound proceeded. Lowering his voice to a whisper he said to Tambour, "hand me a pistol."

The command was obeyed, and the Huron, waiting until the canoe, which was coming from the shore almost upon a line with his stern, had approached within about a dozen yards, discharged his pistol straight in the direction of the skiff.

The blaze lit up its occupants, and the quick eye of the Huron recognized them by the aid of the momentary flash.

"It is a canoe of the Abenakis," he cried. "I see the Serpent. Now, for revenge."

The Huron listened, and perceived by the sound of the paddles that the Abenakis canoe was heading down the river. He at once directed Tambour to let their canoe swing round, in order to pursue.

By this time Julie de Châtelet had returned to consciousness, and enquired in a faint voice where she was, and where they were conveying her."

De Belmont, although his heart misgave him, assured her that she was among friends, and was on her way to a place of safety.

Kondiarak directed de Belmont to cause the girl to lie down in the bottom of the canoe, and cover her with a couple of buffa o robes. The young man obeyed.

"And now, young warrior, you will remain in the bow and keep your eyes fastened on the Abenakis canoe, while my brother and I are at the paddles," said the Huron. "If we get alongside, he and I will leap aboard, kill the Serpent and afterwards take our chance; you will remain in the canoe, with the girl, and, no matter what happens to us two, you can bring her to a place of safety."

"I will stay with you to the last," said de Belmont. "I detest the Serpent as much as you do. The coward! He was in the stone house with us to-night, and two hours before it was fired, he skulked away by a door in the rear, loaded with plunder. He is worse than an Iroquois."

"You know him at last," drily observed Kondiarak. In the meantime the canoe of the Huron, urged by the vigorous arms of him and Tambour, went flying through the water; and, from time to time, de Belmont, from his post in the bow, reported that the skiff of the Abenakis was still in sight.

After about an hour's hard work at the paddles, the Huron who, at first, had trusted to the lightness of his canoe to overhaul the more heavily laden craft of his enemy, came to the conclusion merely to keep the Abenakis in sight until daybreak; for he saw it was useless to try to come up with them.

At length the East began to show the signs of dawn; and, by degrees, the stern, and afterwards the entire length of the enemies' canoe became visible, better than a quarter of a mile ahead. It carried five of the Abenakis.

At a signal from the Huron, de Belmont left his post of observation at the bow, and took Tambour's paddle, with which he managed to keep stroke with the unyielding and unwearied Huron.

Tambour went forward to the bow, raised his rifle, and, just as the Abenakis canoe rose on a swell, fired. A yell followed the report, and when the fresh morning breeze blew the smoke aside, there was one paddle less on board the canoe of the enemy.

Kondiarak, with a proud smile on his expressive countenance, looked towards Tambour and said "Brother of the Hurons, you have done well."

Tambour loaded the gun, and then relieved the Huron of his paddle. The chief went forward to the bows, and, leaning his rifle on the gunwale, aimed straight for the Indian who worked the hindmost paddle. A loud shriek of agony arose, and the next moment, the stricken Abenakis fell headlong into his grave beneath the waters.

Having loaded the rifle, the Huron advanced

and took the paddle from de Belmont; and the chief and Tambour, redoubling their energies, were gratified to find that they were gaining upon their enemies.

The Serpent, finding that he was losing distance, suddenly turned his canoe and headed for the South shore, with the intention, if he gained it, of escaping into the woods. But the Huron, who penetrated the design the instant its author attempted to put it in execution, put forth a tremendous effort, and got between his enemy and the shore. The Serpent, cut off from this means of escape, formed a desperate resolve. Bringing the head of his canoe on a line with the flow of the current, he made straight for the Lachine Rapids, intending to gain the City of Montreal; whither he knew his enemy would not care to follow him.

The Huron instantly comprehended the motives of the Serpent's resolve, and directed Tambour to sit down in the bow, and de Belmont to take a seat in the middle of the canoe; and bade Julie not to make a single movement as she valued her life. Taking the paddle in his own hands, Kondiarak headed his skiff for the rapids. It was a terrible venture, but the spectres of his kindred, slain in cold blood, and in treachery, by the hand of the Serpent,—and the memory, too, of Isanta urged him on with an impulse which set death, fear and prudence alike at defiance. And Tambour also partook of the Huron's hatred of the murderer of Isanta; and hesitated at no peril which presented the faintest prospect of revenge.

Under the eagle eye and iron hand of Kondiarak, the skiff sped through the thundering and precipitous waters with the buoyant velocity of a bird.

At the foot of the rapids, the Huron closed with the canoe of his enemy, and bounded aboard, tomahawk in hand. The Serpent sent his tomahawk at the Huron's head. The weapon missed; then uttering a yell of disappointed rage, the Abenakis chief, taking his knife between his teeth, leaped overboard, to swim to the shore, not over a quarter of a mile distant. Kondiarak, burying his tomahawk in the head of the Indian next him, also placed his knife between his teeth, and plunged into the river after the Serpent. The latter, looking behind, saw that Tambour and de Belmont had boarded his canoe, and overpowered the three remaining Abenakis. By this time, the Huron was close to him; and the Serpent, finding escape impossible, turned to bay.

"Dog and coward; I have you at last," roared the Huron as he closed with his mortal enemy. They both went down, locked in each other's grasp, and each brandishing his knife in his right hand.

Tambour and de Belmont rowed to the place where the chiefs disappeared, and which they could discern by the rising of the death bubbles. Anxiety was on their faces, for they supposed that both had perished. But it was not wholly so. One chief rose to the surface, and in his right hand was a knife which he wav-

ed triumphantly. It was Kondiarak. The only trace he bore of the fearful combat was a slight scratch on his left shoulder.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed the victorious chief, as he took his seat in the canoe. "I told my enemy, when I struck him with my tomahawk, after running the gauntlet—that is the second mark I have branded on the Serpent; the next time, Death and I will make the mark together. And I spoke the truth; I have made good my promise. Now I am satisfied."

Two hours after the combat, Kondiarak and Tambour were on their way to Michilimackinac; and Lieutenant de Belmont, and his betrothed, Julie de Châtelet, were safe in the mansion of M. de Callières in the city of Montreal.

Fifteen years had passed away, and the Iroquois Confederacy had been humbled under the vigorous governorship of M. de Frontenac.

It was late on the evening of the 5th of August, the anniversary of the "Year of the Massacre," as the terrible catastrophe at Lachine had been named in the Colonial Annals, when two men, attired after the manner of the Hurons, entered the mansion of Col. de Belmont in Montreal.

The Colonel, and his wife, Julie de Belmont, recognized them in a few moments, and welcomed them with the warmest tokens of friendship. The two men, who were still in the vigour of life, were Kondiarak and Tambour.

"We have come," said the Huron chieftain, "to see your little daughter, who is called Isanta."

"I wish her the goodness and the beauty of her namesake," said Tambour with deep earnestness, "but nothing more."

Julie de Belmont retired for a few moments, and led with her, by the hand, a beautiful dark-eyed little girl, on whose cheeks four summers had left their smiles and roses.

Tambour took a white necklace from his bosom, and handed it to his companion. Julie, as she saw it, uttered a cry of delight, and exclaimed—

"That was my sister Isanta's, and once saved my life."

"It saved you at Lachine," said the Huron Chief; "and it was all the reward I accepted for rescuing you and your husband. It has remained with my white brother ever since. But now we have come to give it to your daughter, who is called after my sister."

With these words the Chief placed the necklace on the child, and taking her in his arms kissed her; and Tambour did the same.

The next moment the men disappeared through the door. De Belmont, in the utmost astonishment, followed after them, in order to bring them back, and make them partake of his hospitality. But they would not be persuaded. Hurrying to the river, they sprang into a canoe; and, in a few moments more, Kondiarak, The Rat—the Machiavel of the Wilderness—and Tambour, his companion, passed for ever from the sight, but not from the memory of the colonists.

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