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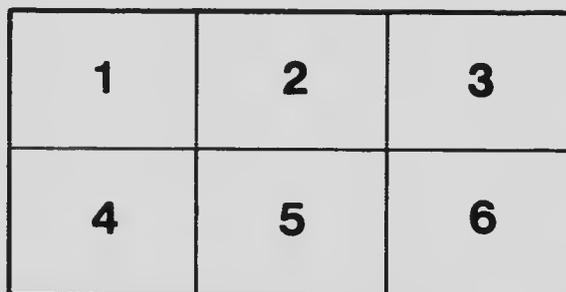
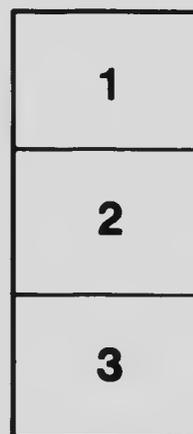
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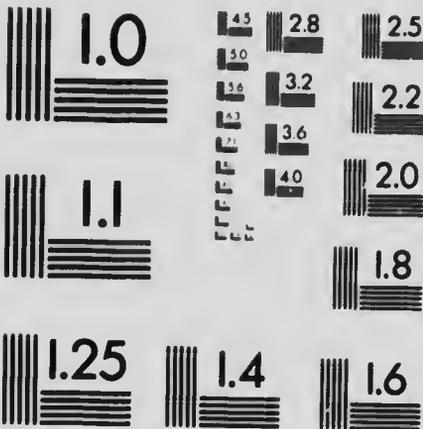
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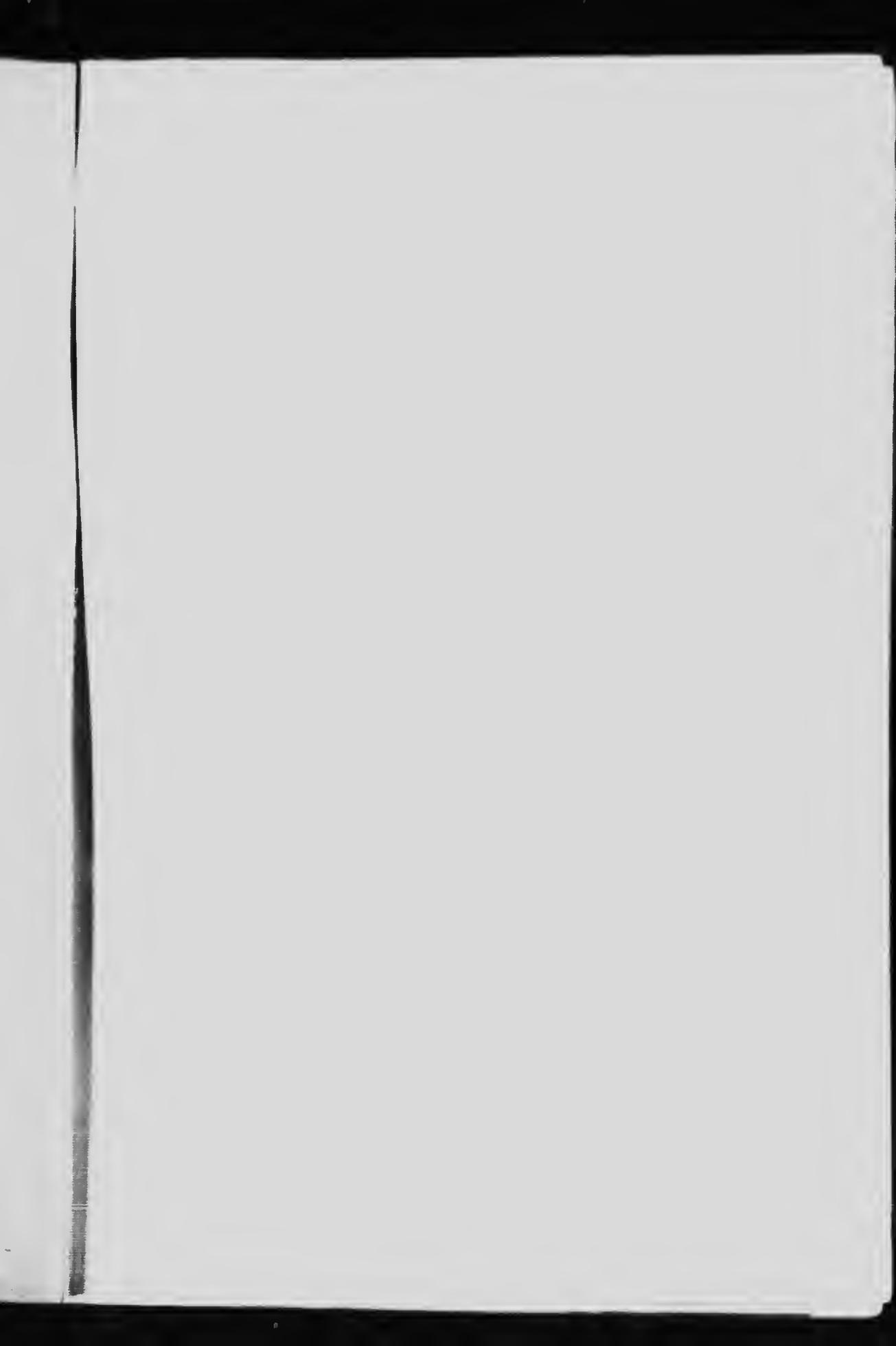


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Love Thrives in War





Love Thrives in War

*A Romance of the Frontier
in 1812*

By

Mary Catherine Crowley

Author of "A Daughter of New France" and "The Heroine
of the Strait"

Illustrated by

Clyde O. De Land

Toronto

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1903

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Preface

THE historical personages more or less famous who are portrayed in this romance are limned from old portraits and the descriptions of their contemporaries. The hero and heroine are composite sketches and represent distinguishing traits of prominent families of the Canada frontier at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The young Scotch Highlander is not to be confounded with another Captain Muir, named among General Proctor's subalterns.

If the incidents of Indian adventure recorded in these pages seem wild or improbable to the reader whose environment is remote from such scenes, they were only too real on the shores of the Detroit River and in the Maumee Valley, less than a hundred years ago. The instances of feminine courage are drawn from the experience of one heroic woman. The author has been brought into close touch with the customs and local characters of the time, and sympathy with its spirit through the free access she has had to the manuscript letters, diaries, public and genealogical documents in the rare and extensive library of Mr. Clarence M. Burton; also, through

reference to many memoirs, the army and naval reports, and standard biographies that relate to the War of 1812, to Farmer's History, Ross and Catlin's "Landmarks," and Mrs. Hamlin's "Legends of Detroit."

"THE SPARROW'S PERCH UNDER THE EAVES,"

April the second, nineteen hundred and three.

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Love Thrives in War

CHAPTER FIRST

THE BAKER'S PIPE

ON the eleventh of June, 1805, the morning sun, the fabled Red Swan of the Ottawas, having preened his gleaming pinions behind the white mists of the Lake of Ste. Claire, soared above them and, on wings of gold, began his course through the cloudless skies that looked down upon the waters of the Strait and on the bark-roofed town of Detroit, already more than a century old.

A long ray of light fell across one of the houses of the narrow street along the bluff, and a sturdy urchin at play on the gallery, feigning to catch up the sunbeam, called into the hearth-room at the left of the doorway, —

“Look, mother! Look, Laurente! The Red Swan has left a feather for us!”

He was an engaging little lad, who had seen the ice break up in the river and the prairie grow green four times since his baby gaze first beheld Nature in her loveliness.

A handsome young woman who moved about in the room paid no heed to his gleeful shout, but above the green barrier of the half-door, as in the frame of a picture, appeared a piquant face partly shaded by a mass of light-brown curls, and a pair of pleasant gray eyes glanced out at the boy.

"Yes, my merry 'bon ami,'" cried the gay voice of the girl, who was perhaps seven years his senior; "and the Red Swan's feather means good luck for your mother's holiday."

"Laurente, Laurente, give me a kiss," begged the youthful lover, making a dash toward the door. Before he reached it, however, the smiling, dimpled face vanished, and a mocking laugh, musical as the rippling stream of the Savoyard, greeted his discomfiture.

In the interior of the house all was commotion. A Pani slave, Ursule, bustled to and from the outer kitchen, busied in packing into two saddle-bags provisions for a day's journey, together with such delicacies as a pair of plump, dressed pullets, a great block of maple sugar, a loaf of fresh-baked wheaten bread wrapped in fine napery, — tokens of neighborly remembrance to be offered to the hostess who would make the traveller welcome at Frenchtown before the sun sank to the west.

"All is now prepared, madam," announced Ursule.

"Oh, wait — wait a moment," pleaded Laurente, as she ran through the kitchen and out into the garden beyond. Returning presently with a branch of fragrant cherry blossoms, she laid it on top of the goodly store.

"There! This will make a bouquet for you, Cousin Adelaide, when you set out your solitary dinner upon some tree-stump in the woods," she declared. "It is meant, I think, that we should have not only daily bread but something pretty as well upon which the eyes may feast."

"Chut, chut! Why litter the bags with trash? The bough will wither long before I halt to dine," replied Dame Adelaide Brush, as she slipped over her head a short riding skirt and fastened it at the waist.

The girl's smile faded, and with a scarcely audible sigh she stretched forth a hand to take back her childish gift.

The sigh, faint as it was, smote upon the heart of the hurried Dame Adelaide.

"Let the branch stay," she protested with a sudden change of mood. "You are a good little friend, Laurente; and, wilted though the blooms may be, they will remind me of your kind helpfulness. My bonnet, child; now my cloak."

Laurente brought both, and stood by admiringly while the lady adjusted her headgear and mantle before the round mirror that ornamented the wall-space between the windows of the seldom-used parlor.

"Now I believe I am ready and have forgotten nothing," said Madam Brush, stepping out on the gallery. "Oh, yes, the baby!"

But Ursule had been mindful of this important appendage. Having set the luggage outside, she had turned back into the house, whence she now

came forth carrying a blinking infant, capped and swathed, and marvellously good-natured over having been taken up unceremoniously from the birch-bark cradle.

At the same moment, Wealthy, a grizzled negro, led two horses around from the yard.

"Mornin', missus; de sun do shine like as if de Lord was fillin' de earth full up with jewels, dis day," he said, as he doffed his wide-brimmed straw hat and gave a twitch to the bridle of La Folie, the sorrel mare. "We had ought to make good speed on de road."

"Yes, Wealthy, if all goes well, we shall reach Colonel Navarre's farm before dark," assented the mistress; "but make haste, it is time we were off."

The old man bestirred himself, and swung the saddle-bags into place.

Madam Brush, bending down, kissed her little son, who stood wonderingly by.

"Are you going to be away a great while, mother," he queried, surprised at this rare demonstration.

"No, no, I shall be back to-morrow," she answered, half ashamed of a display of affection unusual at the period. "Laurent, are you sure you are not afraid to stay with Ursule and the boy? I would not go at all if you were not here; and yet, faithful as the Pani is, I am laying upon you almost too great a charge for a girl still far from her teens."

"Do not worry, Cousin Adelaide, I will play the sportive little mother to Edmond, and you will be home again so soon," laughed Laurent, tossing back her curls.

Wealthy held the stirrup for his mistress and, having assisted her to mount La Folie, comfortably disposed the baby before her in a basket attached to the pommel of the saddle. This being done, he flung himself upon the white plough-horse, Pale-face, glanced once more at the brace of pistols in the holster, and patted his squirrel-skin bullet-pouch.

Then Dame Adelaide, wife of Elijah Brush, Esquire, waving a hand to the group on the gallery, rode down the street, followed by her attendant.

When she had gone some rods, however, she looked back. Laurente and the little lad still watched her; the house, strongly built of hewn logs, clapboarded on the north, and with a steep sloping roof, presented a scene of rude comfort with the sunlight streaming in at the open door. A scene that would remain forever impressed upon the memory of this pioneer woman who now turned from it to pursue her way. How little did Madam Brush think she would never see this comfortable home again!

The journey she had undertaken was one of duty as well as of pleasure. Her cousin, John Askin, who had married Monique, the daughter of François Navarre, was rejoicing in the advent of a son and heir. The projected visit of congratulation had been given up when, a week since, Elijah Brush departed upon a surveying expedition into the wilderness. Then helpful young Laurente MacIntosh came from over the river to spend the day, and volunteered to remain with Ursule during the absence of her hostess, who intended to be away but one night. And the neighbors, on either side, were only a stone's throw distant.

Life here on the river bank had been strenuous but safe for several years. Surrounded by a stout palisade, the settlement was considered secure against attack either from the Indians or the English ; and, with savages and redcoats, the inhabitants were now at peace. What *could* happen within the next twenty-four hours, other than the usual round of dull monotony? True, the arrival of the governor appointed for the newly formed territory of Michigan was daily expected. But, were his ship near, would it not be already reported from Lake Erie by Indian runners or *coureurs-de-bois*?

Madam Brush had no premonition of all that was to transpire within a short interval, as the sorrel mare ambled on through the town. Now the traveller passed the former headquarters of the British commandant, called the King's Palace, noticeable as being the only two-story house in the province ; now, the mansion of Joseph Campeau, the richest man of the place ; now the church of Ste. Anne with its two towers, each surmounted by a gilded cross which glittered in the sunshine.

Anon, she came to the officers' quarters, the hospital and guardhouse, the citadel of Fort Lernoult, built by the British during the Revolution, on the site of old Fort Pontchartrain. Upon yonder flag-staff the Stars and Stripes had first been raised in the Northwest. There to-day the glorious banner floated grandly in the soft summer breeze, but the eyes of Madam Brush kindled with no enthusiasm as she beheld it.

Instead, she averted her glance, and sighed as she

gazed across to the green banks beyond the river, where white manors and farmhouses stood out against a background of woods, and blooming orchards, and tilled fields. A mile above, on that beautiful Canadian shore, lay Strebane, the home of her girlhood, the home she had left, to marry, in defiance of the will of her father, Elijah Brush, the young American who had won her heart. The lands on the northern boundary of the Strait now belonged to the United States, and the new nation and Great Britain were on terms of friendship. But old John Askin and his son-in-law were ever at variance, and in the heart of Adelaide waged a war between family traditions and love of kindred, and loyalty to the husband of her choice.

Some such reflections distracted the mind of the proud matron as she rode on into the shadow of the blockhouse above the entrance to the town.

"Tenez! Halt!" cried a rasping voice.

Coming to herself with a start, she involuntarily drew rein, to find a soldier in buckskins with musket levelled to obstruct her progress.

"Jean Cécire, what is the meaning of this?" haughtily demanded Madam Brush.

"It mean I am 'le garde ici,' and no one goes out, — no, not even a stray poulet, or a peeg, wizout my pairmission," rejoined Jean, pointing his weapon ominously at La Folie.

By this, the white plough-horse had galloped up, bringing Wealthy to the assistance of the lady.

"For de Lord, may de Red Dwarf take you, Jean Cécire," he called angrily; "you ain't got no manner

o' right to procrastinate 'questrians from goin' in and out dese times."

"Tonnerre! Silence, you coquin nègre!" commanded Cécire, shifting the gun to cover the servant. "Ze garde have one right to demand where ze dame faire voyage, and why?"

The black concluded there was but one answer to this imperative inquiry, reinforced as it was by the shining gun-barrel. He leaned forward, and the next moment revealed one of the big pistols firmly grasped in his right hand.

Madam Brush screamed.

"Put up your weapon, Wealthy," she ordered, and then, turning to the sentry, continued in a conciliatory tone.

"Monsieur Cécire, although the chief authority of the town may be vested in the commandant at the fort until the arrival of the new governor, I take it you exceed your instructions by delaying me. Nevertheless, any one may know the object of my journey. I am going down to Frenchtown to visit the family of Colonel Navarre."

Satisfied with his show of importance, and vain-glorious as a fighting cock, yet uneasily conscious that he had blundered, Jean strutted to the side of the road, shouldered his musket, and with a gesture of command, shouted, —

"Avance donc, avance!"

La Folie needed no second bidding. At a word from her rider, she sprang through the gateway and kept a good pace across the garrison fields, while Pale-face willingly followed close behind.

Crossing the willow and sycamore bordered stream of the Savoyard, formerly known as the Rigolet des Hurons, the road, fairly good at this season, continued on by the margin of the Strait, past the old seigneurial manor of the Chevalier de Cadillac where now lived young Lewis Cass and his bride; the Spring Wells; the relics of the Pottawottomic village; the Godefroy and Labadie farms with their Normandy pear-trees and fields of sprouting grain; the house of Debendon the Indian agent. Thereafter, leading through the ford of a broad creek, keeping the bright flood of river and lake ever in view, it skirted the edge of the forest of birch, and pine, and maple for thirty miles.

It was a joy to be abroad on this fair June day. The leafy arches of the great trees, the breeze from the water, tempered the heat of the sun; the woods were fragrant with the breath of wild-flowers, and the way was bordered with a tangle of vines.

The baby, from his point of vantage in the basket, cooed in friendly fashion at the nodding foliage, and, now and again, cried out with delight at a bird as it sang liltingly from a twig, or a squirrel that crossed their path. But the mother would only rest during the time of the mid-day meal. Accordingly, it still lacked two hours of twilight when the party entered the lovely valley of the River Raisin, in the heart of which lay the hospitable Navarre homestead.

With the visit of Madam Brush, agreeable as it was, this narrative has nothing to do, nor yet with the details of the journey homeward on the following day. There was again the ride over the Indian trail,

now varied, it is true, by a meeting with a band of red men; but they were friendly, and passed with nods of greeting. Not until the traveller reached the point on the river road opposite to the Huron Mission did she begin to experience a vague sense of some unusual happening.

"Wealthy," she asked as she drew in La Folie sharply, and awaited the coming up of the old retainer, "is it not strange that all the houses down here at the Spring Wells are deserted?"

The negro took off his great hat and scratched his gray poll. The action seemed to stimulate his wits, for presently, putting on his headgear once more, he said with a wide grin, —

"'Spects I knows what it is, missus, — 'spects de new governor am come, sure 'nough, an' all creation am gone up to call on him. 'Spects, missus, we's missed de grand doin's."

His mistress urged her horse to greater speed. Perhaps her husband, getting word of the governor's expected arrival, had returned from the northern woods. He would not be uneasy at her absence, yet she would fain be at home.

Within half an hour the riders reached the point whence could be obtained the first view of the blockhouse above the town gate. But —

"Wealthy, *where is* the blockhouse?" cried Dame Adelaide.

Cantering up, Wealthy rubbed his eyes, dumbfounded. "'Clare to goodness, missus! Am dis ole nigger sleepin', or am de fort clean gone?" he exclaimed at last.

Of the palisade, the barracks, the storehouses, the prison, not a vestige was standing, but the air was heavy with smoke and the odor of charred timber.

"A woful fire it must have been," ejaculated the lady.

Now La Folie was fairly running along the cinder-buried road, and the baby began to shriek. The mother bent to quiet him, and then once more looked up.

"My God, my God!" she faltered with a despairing sob.

Almost simultaneously the voice of the slave rose in a sorrowing wail, —

"In de desolation ob abomination de Lord hab visited His people!"

Before them lay indeed an awful spectacle of devastation. Where was now the strong little town of Detroit from which they had ridden out but yesterday morning? Its quaint dwellings, built of squared logs; its long roofs, pierced by dormer windows and crossed with ladders for use in case of emergency; its narrow streets sixteen feet wide; its Norman and Indian relics; the old furniture, valuable only for association with the past; decrees, deeds, letters, and documents, — all had been swept out of existence by a great conflagration. Only one blackened house remained. But where were the people? Had they too perished?

"My child! Laurente!" cried Madam Brush in an agony of suspense.

Beside herself with anxiety, she sprang from her horse, snatched the baby from its basket-nest, and

hastened on afoot. Every landmark was gone, even the solitary house being changed beyond recognition. Her home had been at the eastern end of the village, on the plot next to the "chemin de ronde."

But what is this approaching through the smoke, a spectre risen from the cemetery to stalk among the ruins of the church where prayer will never more be said for the repose of the faithful departed?

The terror of Madam Brush was augmented by no such dread. She knew the tall sepulchral figure to be Le Père Gabriel Richard, the priest of Ste. Anne's.

"Monsieur Richard," she called, pressing forward and almost sinking at his feet.

He stretched forth a hand to save her from falling, and peered into her face, for his eyes were so inflamed by smoke that he could scarce see.

"Monsieur Richard, — what of my boy?"

"Ah, it is Dame Adelaide. Take courage, daughter, no lives are lost, thank God. Your child is safe and unharmed."

"Where is he?" she strove to frame the question, but the words refused to come.

Father Gabriel understood, however.

"A few of the townspeople have gathered on the King's Domain, and are already building rude cabins there," he said. "You will find the boy among them, together with Ursule and the little MacIntosh girl. The greater number of the inhabitants sought refuge either with their friends on the côte du nord-est or across the river."

Dame Adelaide did not wait to hear more, but

sped on, while Wealthy came after, leading the horses. For he had also dismounted, since it became not a slave to ride when his mistress walked.

Arrived at the common, which had been just outside of the eastern palisade, a curious scene met the eyes of the returned traveller. Men who had owned the best residences in the town were busied in erecting arbor-like lodges, using the boughs of forest trees, after the manner of their Indian neighbors of the wilds. Women, never seen abroad save in well-ordered attire, ran hither and thither, dishevelled of appearance, endeavoring to cook a meal for their families amid the ashes of their homes, or striving to quiet their crying children. The majority of the Pani servants had fled to the woods.

Ensnconced upon a pile of quilts and pillows, Madam Brush found her little Edmond in the care of Laurente. As a precaution against the coolness of the late afternoon, the girl had wrapped a coverlet about him, and together they contentedly awaited the return of Ursule, who, from a glowing heap of cinders near by, was raking out several roasted potatoes.

"Mother! mother!" shouted the boy, starting up, and running to the dazed newcomer.

"Cousin Adelaide," exclaimed Laurente, also springing to her feet, and snatching the baby.

The other women crowded around, all eager to tell how, on the day before, the town baker, while hitching a pony in his barn, knocked the ashes from his pipe, and the embers, falling upon a wisp of hay, set fire to it, and started the great conflagration. Each having given her version of the tale, they went back

to their occupations. There was much to be done to secure a shelter; during the previous night they had none.

When they were gone, Madam Brush turned to Laurente with the query she had with difficulty repressed up to this point.

"But, Laurente," she said, "when our neighbors sought refuge across the river, why did you not go with them? Why did you not take Edmond to my father's house, and then return to your own home?"

It was a simple question, yet the effect upon the child was singular.

Laurente drew herself up to her full height, a wave of emotion swept over her, a red glow burned in her cheeks, and her eyes shone.

"Why did I not?" she repeated passionately. "Why? Because the boy is an American, and I have heard his father, Mr. Brush, say he would accept no favors from the British."

Had the earth yawned under Dame Adelaide's feet, she could not have been more amazed. The audacity of the answer aroused in her breast a fierce anger which gathered fuel from her recent anxiety.

"What is that you say, malapert, — you who are British yourself?" she broke out, seizing the little maid by the arm, "you would have it that my own father's house is not the proper asylum for my son?"

Thereat the firm hand of Madam Brush beat about Laurente's tangled curls, and Laurente's pretty ears began to tingle.

Indignant and defiant, the girl confronted the irate dame.

"Cousin Adelaide, how dare you!" she cried. "I will stay with you no longer."

With this vehement outburst she turned and fled toward the King's wharf, or rather the place where the wharf, called to the last by the King's name, had been.

Here no doubt she would find a boatman to take her across the river. Yesterday, her father, Angus MacIntosh, had sent a messenger to bring her home; but she had declined to return, alleging as excuse that she must remain to assist those who had lost their all in the fire.

"Ah, now indeed I will go!" she ejaculated breathlessly. "One would think Cousin Adelaide was the Mother Country herself; and she boxed my ears just as Great Britain tried to cuff her colonies into order. A fine wife she for an American! I know somebody who would make a better one. Heigh-ho, I wish I had been born on the north shore of the Strait."

It was six o'clock in the evening. Down toward Lake Erie the Red Swan was sinking to his rest upon the waters. The bluff along the river, yesterday so green, was covered with ashes and débris. The orchards, yesterday so fragrant, had disappeared with the houses, save for a seared tree here and there. Only the opposite shore was the same as it had been. The aspect of the river was changed. Usually at this hour it was the great pleasure highway whereon the townfolk sallied in their pirogues, the elders bound upon social visits to the côtes, the

young men and maids upon canoe rides which were often the beginning of life voyages. Now, what a contrast! There were no promenaders on the terraced bank, and the Strait seemed a vast solitude.

But was it so? Laurente could scarce believe her eyes, yet surely there, unheralded, but steadily beating up against the current, was a ship with sails.

Almost at the same moment that she beheld it, several men who had come to draw water from the river observed it too.

"It is the ship from Niagara," they shouted.

The news spread; a small group of people, animated by curiosity, in a dispirited fashion, gathered at the waterside, and a squad of soldiers marched down from the common where they were encamped.

Half an hour later the ship came up to the site of the landing and the passengers were brought ashore from canoes.

Pressing to the fore of the spectators, Laurente saw that the chief among the strangers was a man of medium height, somewhat corpulent, with a ruddy complexion and a handsome head crowned with abundant hair just turning to silver, — a man past the prime of life, but still showing much of soldierly vigor. Of commanding presence, he had the air of a martinet, and even in this brief moment the girl noted the precision of his dress. One might almost think he had been moulded into his gold-laced uniform and the fine cavalry boots of English leather that he had thought proper to don.

Down to meet him strode arrogantly a tall, loose-jointed, sallow-skinned man whose claw-hammer

coat was set off by brass buttons and a buff waist-coat. The latter, gaping open, showed a shirt-front adorned with a mass of cambric frills that, together with the broad ruffles at his wrist, were by no means fresh; a red necktie added a touch of brightness to his attire, and his trousers hung in folds to his feet, meeting a pair of stout shoes.

He was Augustus Woodward, the new chief-justice, who had arrived over-land the day before, having been chosen by President Jefferson to act with the governor and two subordinates as the representatives of the civil authority of the United States in the territory.

In response to the half-hearted cheers of the little throng on the beach, the newly landed commandant doffed his three-cornered military hat, while he accepted with amiable condescension the greetings of the judge, and of Mr. Cass and Le Père Richard, in behalf of the townspeople.

Then, with the short, brisk step of the officer on parade, he advanced up the ash-strewn bank, followed by the other gentlemen of his party, all of whom wore the dress of civilians.

Thus did General William Hull, sent from Washington to be the first governor of Michigan, enter upon his office. Instead of acclamations for the brave soldier who, at the head of his columns, had followed Mad Anthony Wayne over the ramparts of Stony Point, he met with scarce a welcome. Instead of a prosperous, rapidly growing town as the seat of his government, he found but a heap of ashes in the wilderness.

The men who accompanied him exchanged dubious glances as they contemplated the panorama before them. But their leader, whatever the bitterness of his feelings, opposed a bold front to his disappointment.

Haughtily raising his head, he proceeded with martial rigidity, his escort making as cheery a clamor with fife and drum as might be, until they had conducted him to the one house left standing after the fire.

When the paltry pageant had passed, Laurente, the little Canadian girl, coming to herself, looked about in dismay. The dusk was beginning to fall, and still she had found no boatman to ferry her across the river. Pride counselled her not to return to any of the women who had witnessed the indignity put upon her by Madam Brush. Nevertheless, what else was to be done?

Well, she would not yet relinquish the hope of achieving her object. An abandoned canoe might be lying on the beach, and if perchance there should be a paddle left in it, she would take possession of both and send them back the next day.

She hurried along the strand. Alas, there was no boat, but in the twilight she almost ran into the arms of a stalwart youth who was striding rapidly in the opposite direction.

"Laurente!" he exclaimed in surprise. "Why, what are you doing here?"

The child dashed away her tears and smiled up at him.

"I was seeking a canoe," she explained.

"You were going to set out alone upon the Strait!" he cried. "Ma foi, you have more boldness than wisdom, little sweetheart."

The clasp of his strong hands was reassuring.

"O Pierre, — Pierre Labadie," she stammered, clinging to him with confidence, "take me home."

"To be sure I will," answered the young fellow, readily. "My pirogue is yonder in the cove. Come, among these still smoking ruins it will be easy enough to light a brand to guide us. But do not be frightened, the evening will not be darker, for, see, the moon is rising."

CHAPTER SECOND

A BAL PARÉ

SIX years had passed since the Great Fire that swept away the Seigneur de Cadillac's village of the Strait, since the arrival of General Hull as governor of Michigan, since the afternoon when Madam Adelaide Brush soundly rated the spirited child Laurente MacIntosh, and punished her little shell-like ears for the heed they had given to the gossip of her elders.

It was the last day of November. The long winter had already set in; the prairies were wide snow-fields; the river was a broad road of ice.

On its northern margin another settlement had arisen upon the ruins of the old; and the new Detroit was a pioneer American town. Amid the collision of nations, the tide of revolution, the French-Canadian habitant had lost a country to love and by which to be loved in return. British soldiers and traders, and Yankee settlers from east of the Alleghanies, had alike married among the charming creole demoiselles, however; and occasionally a well-to-do young Frenchman, wooing with Gallic ardor, had won for his bride a fair daughter of the strangers. Thus several families of the old Norman stock, with their numerous branches, still retained an influence in the community.

On this evening of the festival of St. Andrew, the ancient national holiday of Scotland, all the best society, both of the Canadian and northern shores, were bidden to a fête at the hospitable home of Angus MacIntosh, — a "bal paré" in honor of the birthday of Laurette, the youngest daughter of the house.

Every season as it came, like an Indian luck spirit, had brought some gift to Laurette. Each spring had given to her eyes a deeper gray, like the color the river shows as one gazes into its limpid depths when the ice has broken up and the waters leap with gladness. Each summer had attuned her voice to the songs of the birds, her laughter to the music of the breeze in the forest or the rippling of the stream of the Savoyard. The autumns added a softer sheen to her nut-brown hair; while old Winter, with a grandsire's privilege, had unfailingly left ruddy kisses on her dimpled cheeks. Under the fostering care of all, she had grown straight and tall, shapely of form and supple of limb, a comely and happy-hearted demoiselle. So thought Wealthy, the old negro who had come across the river to act as fiddler-in-chief for the dancing that was to succeed the gala feast. So would soon think many a guest and admiring gallant.

"Now, Wealthy," enjoined the girl, "make your music caper its merriest, and you shall have, not only the Spanish dollar and the supper my father has promised you, but a negus fit for the King himself. And, moreover, a cake as thickly strewn with plums and spices as the beach is with pebbles. For such

a one I have taken from the pantry shelf and hidden away for you."

"Bless you, Sugar Honey, you're as sweet as de mos' d'lectious morsel dat eber was, so you is, — all white an' purty to look at as de snow on de prairie, an' with a heart jest filled with nice tings dat leave a good taste behind dem. You're for all de world like a gran' St. Andrew's Cake your own self, Lady Sweetness."

Laurente laughed gayly.

"For that fine saying you deserve two cakes! I'll tell Martine, the cook, to remember you at the next baking," she cried, pirouetting before him, and then romping the length of the room as she hummed the air of a gavotte.

The old darkey rolled his eyes, and displayed two rows of glittering teeth which showed gaps here and there, like the ranks of Jean Cécire's soldiers, but were still capable of valiant trencher-duty. The talk of the supper and the confections not only made his mouth water, but aroused his fancy, and he saw the sprightly demoiselle as the spirit that presides over gala cheer.

Springing upon the table, with a flourish of his bow, he gave the word to the violin, and the music was off down the room after Laurente. Now it slackened a bar to give her time to take breath, now it chased her back again, and anon led her over the shining oaken path once more. Now it set the still merrier pace of a "gigue."

The girl danced with a charming grace and abandon. The floating lights in the hanging lamps of bear's

oil flared up as if to see, and shed a radiance on the polished floor. The candles in the silver sconces on the walls cast bright rays about her. They touched her tightly coiled and powdered hair, her slender throat and round arms, and lost themselves in a hundred lustrous reflections amid the sheen of her gown of white sarsenet, made from a bolt of silk that had been ordered from London by her father to please his women folk.

"Faster," urged the music, "faster!" and the dancing sprite obeyed.

Wealthy watched her, enthralled, while with many nods of his hoary head, jerks of the shoulders, and tapping foot, he marked the rhythm of the melody. To him, she was as one of the *Napæa*, the joyous nymphs of the wilds, companions of the fawns and birds of the forest and prairie. Of a sudden, however, his bow faltered, and a half-startled expression crept over his ebony countenance.

The halting of the tune caused Laurente, whose laughing eyes had been fixed upon his grotesque figure, to turn her head and follow his gaze. There upon the threshold stood a tall imposing man about sixty years of age, and of fine physique and bearing. His reddish brown hair and beard were plentifully sprinkled with gray. But the fresh color of perfect health and an outdoor life glowed in his handsome face, which, lacking the high cheek-bones and prominent jaw of the mixed race of the Scottish border, was unmistakably Celtic.

"By de Red Dwarf, de young mam'selle is de purfect picture ob de ole massa when he puckers up

his lips like dat to keep from smilin', an' his eyes laugh right out 'n spite o' him," chuckled Wealthy to his fiddle, the beloved recipient of the confidences of his lonely African nature.

Of a truth, any one might have surmised at a glance the relationship between the commanding Scotch Highlander and the girl so exuberantly merry and light-hearted.

"Oh, father," she cried, breaking off from her dance, and with a long slide coming up to him, "I have had such a grand 'gigue à deux.'"

"Faith, my lassie, you must have had an invisible prince for a partner then," answered Angus MacIntosh, as he slipped an arm caressingly around the waist of his young daughter.

"Invisible, but not unheard, for the music and I have been dancing together," explained the girl, wheeling about and catching at both his hands. "Come, be my gallant, and practise the steps with me."

"Tush, moppet, you know it is not three weeks since I was laid up with the gout. Besides, lively as are these French airs, they fail to set my senses leaping. Were it a good Scotch tune now, put to the measure of a strathspey —"

"And what is a 'gigue à deux' but a strathspey translated into French?" argued Laurente, with teasing perverseness.

"That a chiele o' mine should not know better! Why did I ever marry a Canadian demoiselle?" exclaimed MacIntosh, in mock distress.

"You should not regret that I am half French,

but rather that you have been negligent of my education," protested the artful minx, audaciously. "Teach me the steps as they were danced at Holyrood House in the old days?"

"Humph! At Holyrood they had many French gavottes; but, ah, in the Highlands were brave merry-makings. The strathspey is danced to the tune of 'Tibby Fowier o' the Glen,' we will say —"

Pursing his lips, the genial gentleman whistled a stave of the old air, and executed the steps with spirit.

"Bravo!" applauded Laurente. "Now I'll venture."

"There you have it. No, mark the time more smartly," cautioned the MacIntosh, exemplifying his teaching with a lightness of foot that defied his ancient enemy.

For some moments father and daughter danced together, old Wealthy striking in with a fragment of the melody, which he had quickly caught. At last Laurente paused, laughing; whereat the laird whirled agilely about, snapped his fingers above his head, and came to a stop also.

"Now, sir, how goes the reel?" she presently inquired.

"The reel has a more canty measure," he replied, falling into the snare. "Wealthy, you know 'The Scolding Wives of Abertarf'?"

"Dis yere fiddle's de onliest sweetheart ole Wealthy eber had, an' he ain't 'quainted wid no scolding wife," deprecated the black.

MacIntosh smiled.

"Woman is a violin the sweetness of whose tone depends upon the player," he said. "I'll give you a tune merry enough to put the veriest shrew to rout."

Seizing the fiddle, he drew the bow across the strings. Wealthy soon found his feet shuffling; he swayed from side to side, and took fantastic steps in a corner.

Laurente danced to the rollicking strains until MacIntosh, returning to the slave his cherished instrument, joined her again. Their merriment was at its height when both suddenly became aware that a young man whose alert manner, dark hair and eyes, and mobile face proclaimed him of French-Canadian origin, had entered the room and was waiting to pay his respects to the girl-hostess.

"Ha-ha-ha," cried MacIntosh, coming to a pause, "you have caught me in the act, Pierre. But this lass is to blame for making pretence of not knowing the Scotch dances."

Laurente flashed him a roguish glance, and, with a hand at each side of her narrow skirts, dropped a gracious courtesy to the guest, who in turn bowed low.

"Monsieur Descomptes-Labadie, you are heartily welcome," she said with formal grace.

"Mademoiselle," he asked as his host turned aside, "may I claim from you the first dance of the ball?"

Laurente shrugged her shoulders.

"You are slow, monsieur," she replied nonchalantly; "Captain Hull, the governor's son, engaged it a week ago."

"Then I shall have the pavanne?"

"The pavanne is promised to Captain Muir, and the allemande to Aleck Maccomb."

"Laurente, you know I have been absent at Frenchtown. Since you have given away all your dances, I will take my leave," he said stiffly.

"Chut, Sir Tinder-box, are there not still the passepied and the waltz?"

"You saved the best for me?" he inquired, appeased.

"And see how ill I am requited," she remarked to the fan of white ortolan's feathers that she waved idly to and fro.

"When I can more clearly recognize my little friend of other days in the vision before me, I may gain courage to better express my gratitude," he apologized gayly.

"Would you truly take me for a great lady, if you did not know me for just Laurente MacIntosh," she queried with child-like simplicity.

"No lady of the court was ever half so beautiful! Yet why a demoiselle with hair the color of a hazelnut should hide its glint beneath a shower of powder, I cannot comprehend," Labadie averred.

Thinking he made a jest of her, she flushed with vexation, and a retort rose to her lips. But at the moment a diversion occurred.

The sound of sledges crunching the snow on the road, and the jingle of ponies' bells, caused Sandy the Scot, the laird's own man, to throw open the house-door. The glare of the lamps in the hall mingled with that of the torches waved by the slave boys

in attendance outside, casting fantastic shadows. Within the ring of light the guests descended from their carioles, and, leaving capuchin-cloaks and great-coats in charge of their servants, entered the ball-room. They were greeted with warm hospitality by Angus MacIntosh and his comely wife, who had been in her girlhood Archange St. Martin, the prettiest fillette of the Strait; and by their daughter, whose beauty was indeed of the Scottish type, but who inherited from her mother the graces and a share of the coquetry of the Canadian demoiselle.

The spacious parlor being thronged, Angus led the way to the room beyond the hall, where a long table was laid for the supper. Soon all were grouped around the board with the MacIntosh at its head.

There from the *côte du nord* were Governor and Madam Hull, and the clever lawyer Lewis Cass, a man of apparently great force of character, with a majestic head, and a square face which showed a large mole or wart near the chin. Opposite to him sat the rotund Judge May, and near by were "Debendon," well-proportioned and of fresh complexion, Judge Woodward, and Colonel Navarre of Frenchtown.

There, too, were Judge Whipple, dignified and erect, blue-eyed Tom Sheldon, kindly Judge Withereil, La Ferté, and Joseph Campeau, the richest man in the territory. Also Henry Hunt, black-haired and of an aquiline cast of features, the Chevalier de Chabert, Gabriel Godfroy, François Cicotte, Charles Moran, and others. The pleasant-voiced and rosy-checked man with smiling mouth, fine teeth, and

bright eyes whose lids drooped slightly, was Pierre Desnoyer, a Parisian aristocrat who, having escaped "La lanterne" in the days of the French Revolution, had learned the trade of the silversmith, and emigrated to America.

The wives of all these gentlemen were present as well, besides stately Madam Brush and her dare-devil Yankee husband, at whom old John Askin glared across the mahogany. From the Canadian side were the Messieurs and Dames Marentette and Maisenville, Drouillard, Berthelet, Baby, and many more.

Such was the company. A gathering of men still young or in the prime of life, well bred, and of gentle manners, notwithstanding the isolation of this frontier settlement. Several among them were keen of intellect; all were hardy, brave, and inured to dangers. The women were, with a few exceptions, French creole matrons and their daughters, notable housekeepers who possessed the light-heartedness of the old society of Montreal and Quebec.

The table was decked as befitted the state of a host but one removed from the title of Earl of Moy, though the earldom had been abolished by George of Hanover. The silver drinking-cups and flagons, bearing the family crest, were wreathed with garlands of holly whose scarlet berries contrasted well with the whiteness of the napery from Flanders.

As for the fare, there were generous roasts of beef, the famed wild turkey of the region, and the traditional Scotch haggis; with tarts and compôts for the sweet of tooth, and plenty of English rum and French "eau de vie."

Because of the presence of the women, and the dancing to follow, few drank deeply as yet, though the close of the evening was destined to find several of the guests under the table.

When the substantial part of the entertainment was over, John Askin, the wealthy trader prominent in local politics, got upon his feet and, lifting high his goblet, cried, as his glance roved over the company, —

“Friends, I toast the King.”

All rose, and the MacIntosh, passing his cup over a carafe of water that stood before him, repeated, —

“The King.”

There was a gleam of amusement in the eyes of the Americans, but in truth they preferred to honor a mythical Stuart king rather than the intolerant George III. upon his throne.

The toast was drunk in brimming beakers by all the men present; by each matron from a wine-glass into which a small quantity of the ambrosial punch was poured with a tiny ladle from the goblet of the gentleman at whose right hand she sat; by each demoiselle, who just touched with her red lips the cup of the gallant beside her.

Laurenté was placed at the foot of the table between Pierre Labadie and Captain Muir, with Aleck Macomb and well-favored Charles Larned beyond. Labadie, who had been one of those who noticed the ruse by which MacIntosh drank to “the King over the water,” glanced sharply at the girl to see if she would follow her father’s example.

When Muir offered her the pledge, however, she

did not sip of the fragrant negus, but, instead, kissed the crest of the MacIntosh graven on the side of the cup.

"The President of the United States," proposed the host, in compliment to his guests from the *côte du nord*.

This second toast was received with every appearance of good-will, but, as Laurente turned to Labadie, Muir leaned forward, his gaze full of stern inquiry.

The girl shot back at him a look that was a merry challenge, met the eager smile of Pierre with ingenuous candor, hesitated a moment, and then demurely kissed again the gleaming helmet of the MacIntosh coat-of-arms.

The captain breathed a sigh of relief, and leaned back in his chair; Pierre turned away his head in disappointment; but Laurente, still smiling, set down the goblet and began to wave her fan of ortolan's plumes.

At this point, Martine, the Pani slave-woman, entered from the kitchen, bearing aloft a magnificent confection which glittered with the snow-white sugar of the West Indies.

"The St. Andrew's Cake," cried the young hostess, clapping her hands.

Amid general acclaim, the "*pièce de résistance*" was displayed, and, having been cut by Madam MacIntosh, was passed around the company. Straightway, young and old were seeking the ring that had been baked in the cake, the ring that was to be the signet of royal authority for the finder.

"Quick, change with me, for there is a gleam of

gold in my portion," whispered Laurente, to pretty Abigail Hunt.

"No, no," objected Abigail, and raising her voice she joyously announced, —

"Laurente is Queen of the Hour, and I hasten to enroll myself her royal maid of honor."

In vain Miss MacIntosh protested. The ring was plainly in evidence; and the men, standing once more, half drew their swords in salute, while Governor Hull said in his pompous way, —

"It is fitting that the fair daughter of our host should be the Sovereign Lady of the Revels."

And now it became the task of her Majesty to choose a king to share her state. All eyes were upon Laurente; many a betrothal and marriage of Le Détroit dated from a festivity of this kind. What cavalier would she select?

Captain Muir's blond complexion flushed well-nigh as red as his coat; Pierre Labadie's sensitive dark face paled slightly.

Laurente glanced at neither one nor the other, and still hesitated.

"Make haste, lassie, you need not be at a loss, with a brave gallant on either side of you," called the laird. "Or, if you would look further, here is Lieutenant Snelling from over the river, and who can withstand the American soldier? Ha, ha!"

"I will choose the cavalier who is destined to become the most distinguished, sir," returned the girl, and, rising, she took from the chimney-shelf a small mirror whose surface was of jade, highly polished, the frame being a dull gold.

"Here is a looking-glass that my father has from India," she continued. "It is said to reflect what is to come. Since Abigail Hunt is assumed to have the second sight by inheritance, I propose that she shall read for us the foreshadowings of this glass of fate."

"Mistress Hunt," reiterated the guests, entering into the spirit of the moment.

"It will be but a pretence of clairvoyance on my part, even though my great-grandmother narrowly escaped being hanged as a witch in New England, more than a hundred years ago," declared Abigail, blushing.

Nevertheless, she might well have been painted as a beautiful sorceress, as, accepting the mirror from the hand of her companion, she smilingly bent over it.

Her exquisite face was of the Circassian type, the dark eyes being shielded by deep lids and long lashes; her abundant and glossy black hair fell in waves upon a broad, low brow, but the softness of this oriental beauty received character and strength from a firm Saxon mouth.

So thought Lieutenant Snelling, fascinated by a charm he had not expected to find upon the border of the wilderness. For Abigail Hunt had but lately come from Boston, where she had been educated; and she possessed the social culture that belonged to the select circles of the city of the Puritans, which shared with New York and Philadelphia the repute of being a centre of refinement.

"Fair Pythia, what do you see in the future for Pierre Labadie and me?" asked Captain Muir.

"Interpret for us, both the lights and the shadows," urged Labadie.

In reply, Abigail raised her laughing eyes to his. As she lowered them upon the mirror once more, however, she shuddered, and seemed to lose consciousness of the presence of those around her. She began to speak, but absently, as though talking in her sleep, —

"Listen all of you; here in the glass are shown strange things. I see two soldiers; to-night they are comrades, but there will soon be strife between them. I see enmity of neighbor against neighbor; I see a fierce contest. O God, I see a tomahawk and a malignant Indian face!"

Pale as death, she swayed blindly and would have fallen but for the outstretched arm of Lieutenant Snelling.

"And what of me, sweet soothsayer?" he hazarded in an eager aside.

At his voice she half came to her self, and then lapsed again into her singular trance.

"I see a sword that has lost its sheath; a forest of waving trees; a lonely fort beside a cataract, and Indian sachems coming to treat with a white chief," she murmured.

"Is that all?" he exclaimed, discomfited.

"I see a woman who loves the white chief."

"Picture her for me?" he urged with ill-suppressed earnestness.

"I do not know whether she is dark or fair," she said wearily, and awaking, glanced around the company as though surprised to find herself among them.

They did not hear the whispered question of the lieutenant nor her dazed answer, but in their ears rang the warning she had spoken.

"By my faith, the mirror shows the past, not the future," cried Angus MacIntosh, anxious to dispel the cloud that threatened to dim the brightness of the festivities, — "the uprising of the American colonies against the mother country and their separation from us. As for the tomahawk, it must be but a scratch upon the jade, for has not the hatchet been buried beneath the ashes of the council fire?"

"My father is right," said Laurente, painfully aware that she had blundered in suggesting the consultation of the mirror. "Still, since a queen should have a strong protector, I will select for king one who can both defend my cause with his sword, and plead for it in courts of law. I choose Mr. Lewis Cass."

Mr. Cass had paid small heed to what was going on, being engaged in relating to Madam Navarre an anecdote of General Washington. At the mention of his own name, he started to his feet and bowed to the demoiselle in abstracted fashion.

His wife laughed, and the company applauded.

"Your Majesty, my sword, and whatever forensic ability I possess, are ever at your service," he hastened to say.

"But, Miss MacIntosh, have *you* never asked of the magic mirror the secrets of the future?" demanded Governor Hull, with the amiable purpose of rallying the girl.

"Oh, your Excellency," she replied, picking up

the ball thus thrown to her, "once, indeed, I ventured to consult the glass, and then, like Abigail, I saw in it the face of an Indian."

This admission called forth a cry of dismay from the ladies.

"A sombre vision, truly! Did you recognize the portrait?" inquired Mr. Cass.

Laurente glanced down the long row of guests.

"Oh, yes, the features of the savage who looked out at me from the mirror were familiar enough," she answered lightly: "It was only the face of James Blue Jacket."

The gentlemen broke into a loud laugh; the women tittered.

"You are never at a loss for a sally, my girl," averred MacIntosh, joining in the mirth. "He who fears no fiercer Indian foe than James Blue Jacket may rest with an easy head upon his pillow. The music is tuning up, Madam Hull; may I have the honor of your hand for the contra-dance? Come, gentlemen, sue for your partners, and step merrily to the tune of 'The Flowers o' Edinburgh.'"

The ball was soon at its height, the matrons joining in the frolic. Old beaux of threescore vied with the youths for the smiles of lively belles; and quaint dances of the time of Louis the Fourteenth, long forgotten in France, shared the popular favor with the Minuet, the Sir Roger de Coverley, and the Highland Fling.

The lights shone down upon the scarlet uniforms of the British officers, the gold epaulettes of Governor Hull and his staff, the green and ruby-colored coats,

vests of buff or peach-color, and silver-buckled shoes of the civilians, the shimmering attire of dames and demoiselles. And, as the strains of the violin waxed louder, the gossip was whispered about that Isidore Chesne had sold the whole of Grosse Île for the two satin gowns displayed by his wife and daughter, in order that madame and mademoiselle might be the best dressed women of Le Détroit.

As the mirth went on, now and again upon the pane of one and another of the uncurtained windows was cast the shadow of two hands, as some painted savage blinked at the lamps that revealed the splendor of the white man's festivities. But if the revellers chanced to note the grotesque picture, they only laughed at it, or, turning away with indifference, continued their dancing.

Several of the guests also crowded the doorways of the ball-room as on-lookers, and behind these ere long rose the head of a young man of a somewhat noticeable appearance. The restless roving of his gaze bespoke him a Frenchman, but his square visage, and a skin of a warmer hue than the olive complexion of the Canadian, as plainly told that he owed his lithe form to some ancestral chief of the woods. His dress was a trifle fantastic, yet seemed an affectation; since, although his black hair hung long upon his shoulders, and in it was thrust a hawk's feather, he wore the blue coat of an American soldier. How it had come into his possession, or why he prized it, was a question often discussed along the côte, for his family were British in their sympathies.

Before many minutes, he entered the room with

the manner of one who belonged there, and made his way to where Laurente stood for a moment near a window.

"Blue Jacket!" she exclaimed, with an effort to conceal her surprise.

"I am come, mademoiselle, even though you did not invite me to your fête," he replied.

The girl tossed her head.

"I did not suppose so fierce a brave would care to sit at table with white squaws," she said with evasive irony.

The intruder drew himself up proudly.

"You are right," he acknowledged. "It would ill become a leader of my people."

Laurente could not refrain from a gesture of impatience.

"James La Salle, when will you, the son of a Frenchman, you who have been taught in the school of Le Père Richard, give over the pretence of being a lord of the forest?" she asked. "Ma foi, if such claims as yours were to hold good, we might expect to see half the *coureurs-de-bois* and *voyageurs* hereabout setting out on the war-path."

Blue Jacket uttered an emphatic "Ugh," and then added, with creole intensity, "Mademoiselle, it is true! I long to be free from this life which you call civilized; to be known as of the race of my mother, of my grandfather, the great chief Blue Jacket, who in the last war defied the whirlwind General Wayne, — to be like Pontiac, yes, like Tecumseh, the greatest warrior of them all! This is my wish always except when I am with you."

Startled by his earnestness, Laurente recoiled from him.

"Listen," he continued, cornering her in the recess of the window; "my father is rich; he has given me his farm opposite Frenchtown, one of the finest in the territory. I will build upon it a house as grand as this home of yours; Le Père Richard shall marry us. I will give up my dream of being a chief, and cultivate my lands. When Kenu spreads his wings over the Strait, my red brothers will protect my lodge. They will not let the white snowbird be crushed by the talons of the war-eagle."

Laurente could have shrieked aloud in terror. She saw the dancers as through a mist; the music sounded far off. There was her father on the opposite side of the room, yet a gulf seemed to yawn between herself and him. Lieutenant Snelling and Abigail Hunt passed so near that she could have stopped them by stretching out her hand, yet some power restrained her.

La Salle bent his swarthy face close to hers; she felt his hot breath on her cheek; a faintness crept over her, but she struggled against it.

"Tell me, when shall we marry?" he urged.

Laurente thrust him back.

"Never! Oh, never!" she cried.

"Never!" he repeated with suppressed passion. "Never! Ha-ha, Pahweetah, my snowbird, there will come a day when you will fly to my arms, when you will be glad to have me hide you in the forest. I shall be a king of the wilderness, and you shall be my squaw. You shall do my will in all things; you —"

But Laurente heard no more. Breaking away from him, she sprang forward and touched the sleeve of a young man who was seeking his partner for the new dance just beginning.

"Pierre, this is the *passépié*, I believe," she said.

It was not, but divining from her voice that something was wrong, Labadie said quietly, "To be sure," and drawing her hand within his arm led her to the end of the room.

"Ugh, Pierre Labadie!" muttered James Blue Jacket, as with a scowl he threaded his way among the dancers, and, having saluted Angus MacIntosh with grave ceremony, passed out of the house.

"Pierre Labadie."

CHAPTER THIRD

THE ARM OF TECUMSEH

A FEW days after the "bal paré," in the loft under the sloping roof of the good frame house of Angus MacIntosh, Laurente sat before her dressing-table thinking over all that had passed on the eventful evening. Well might she be happy over her auspicious faring-forth into the social world.

Hitherto she had flitted about its edge, like a child who stands upon the shore and watches the gay carioles filled with merry young people speed past upon the frozen highway of the Strait. Henceforth, no sledging-party to the Grand Marais on Saturday afternoons would be complete without her. She was the acknowledged belle of Le Détroit, her only possible rival being the beautiful Abigail Hunt, who lived in the town on the "côte du nord."

"How gay the ball was; ah, I could dance forever!" she exclaimed, opening the drawer that contained her simple finery and contemplating it with dreamy satisfaction. "All the women said my frock became me well, and the gallants paid me compliments galore; even if Pierre Labadie had the poor taste to dislike my patches and powder. By your leave, Monsieur Pierre, I will wear my locks white when I please. I wonder if the glint of my hair *is* pretty though!"

Laurente caught at one of the soft curls that hung about her neck in the old way, brought it over her shoulder, and held it up to the light. The sun, shining in upon it, showed a warm tint of gold in its brown waves.

"Humph, it just escapes being red," she said with a laugh. "I would have it glossy black like Abigail's. Oh, I wish life were one long 'bal paré'! How gracious the matrons were; how sprightly the demoiselles; how pleasant the bantering homage of the cavaliers! But what a sombre tale Abigail told! Perhaps it was not so much of a jest after all — that I fancied I saw in the mirror the face of James Blue Jacket. How he frightened me with his wild talk! To be his wife? I would rather die! Is love, then, a raging fire? I thought it like the flame of the little sanctuary lamp of Père Richard's new church at the Spring Wells. Oh, I do not want to have a lover for a long time! I do not want to love for a longer time!"

Laurente leaned her chin upon her hand and gazed out of her small dormer window beyond the blue waters of the Strait to the straggling line of houses that formed the American town upon the northern shore.

"Who can explain the prediction of the mirror?" she ejaculated, as she had done many times since the evening of the ball.

Now an answer to the question rose to her lips, —

"Iama, the Wise Woman of the Prairie! It is said she can read the future!

"I will go to her."

With reckless impetuosity the girl started up. Soon after, enveloped in a capuchin of beaver skin, her little feet encased also in fur, she stole noiselessly down the steep stair and out of the house, strapped on a pair of snow-shoes in the shadow of the gallery, and set off across the plain.

Good Father Richard would have chided her superstition; but it was a heritage from her French-Canadian and Scottish ancestors.

Every one along the "côte," Indian, habitant, and English, knew Laurente, and none would have molested her any more than they would have harmed a chirrupy little snow-bunting, which even the bird-trapper does not seek to snare.

It happened, however, that she met no one in the course of her half-hour's walk. The white settlers of the region loved the fireside in the short winter afternoons, except when there was some scheme of merriment abroad; and at this season the redskin warriors were away at the hunting.

Turning aside from the corduroy road that led past the Huron village and down the shore for miles to Fort Malden, Laurente kept on over the plain, making for a thicket upon whose border lived the Squaw Witch of Le Détroit.

The love of solitude, strange wanderings, and a reputed gift of prophecy had cast a veil of mystery about the life of the Indian sibyl. No one could tell to what tribe she belonged; she had been brought a captive to the Strait after a general war among the aboriginal nations. She lived apart, never entering the native villages except when there was an epidemic

of illness. Then the head sachems frequently sent and besought her to go to their people, promising to supply her with game and deer's meat for many moons, and offering her rich presents,—for her knowledge of the healing herbs surpassed that of the medicine men.

As Laurente approached the solitary lodge, she saw before the entrance, near the pine-trees, a dark figure so bent as to seem hardly human, engaged in building upon the snow a fire of brushwood that presently shot up into a flame.

Dragging off the blanket which hung from her shoulders, the hag extended it over the blaze for a moment, withdrew it to allow the smoke to ascend in rings, and straightway outspread it as before.

Then, passing to another fire, kindled not far from the first, by the same method she sent the gray circling column mounting high into the air.

"An Indian smoke signal," murmured the girl, halting in astonishment. "For whom is it intended? Squaw messages are not sent from a camp-fire."

A girl bred in a centre of our new-world civilization, like Abigail Hunt, might have thought it well to turn back. But Laurente had not only the daring of a pioneer woman, but the zest for adventure that belonged to her ardent temperament. Recovering from her momentary hesitation, she pressed on rapidly.

The Indian witch, being deaf and with sight dimmed by years, could neither have seen nor heard her approach. Yet when the Canadienne was but a few rods distant, the Wise Woman turned, as though in some manner other than the evidence of her dulled

senses she had been apprised of the presence of an intruder, and squinting from beneath her heavy brows, recognized the gay young creature who often sent her food from the MacIntosh larder.

"Why is Liliman, the little fairy, alone on the prairie?" she cackled in the patois, half Algonquin, half French, with which Laurente was familiar. For it was still used by creole housewives in their communications with the Indian women who came to their kitchens to sell maple sugar and berries in the season, and the little pelts of the squirrels and rabbits in winter.

"The white snowbird would do well to shun the fire. Singed wings cannot fly far, 'Pahweetah.'"

Laurente's color faded at the repetition of the name given her by James La Salle on the evening of the ball. Why should Iama the witch so call her? Perhaps the circumstance was, however, only a coincidence; such symbolism was common in the Indian speech.

At this thought, her self-confidence returned, and she answered cheerily, —

"Merci, good mother, for your friendly warning. I will keep away from the blaze, not so much to save my wings, as because otherwise 'the old man who sends the winds' would by and by harass me with sharper arrows. As for being abroad alone, I am come to learn of your wisdom."

"Ugh!" grunted the crone, pleased with this ready adoption of her wood-lore imagery.

"Wise mother, tell me of the future!" abruptly adjured the visitor.

The Noko had turned away and resumed her occupation of alternately beating down the fire with her blanket and guiding the smoke-wreaths in their upward course.

At Laurente's rash demand she left her task. Her form straightened until she appeared tall and commanding; her wrinkled countenance took on the calmness of a bronze statue, and her dim eyes glowed with a new light.

"The future," she repeated, raising her voice to a presaging monotone — "the future is written on the broad sky, on the frozen prairie."

Stretching forth her right hand, she traced with bony fingers strange characters, as though against the background of the horizon, and lowering her arm pointed to the untrodden snow-fields.

"In this Moon of Snow-Shoes the ground has been dyed red," she shrilled. "Before 'the Moon of the Young Deer,' the War Eagle will fly over the Strait and the breeze will moan through the forest. When you look upon these signs, my pretty white bird, remember the words of the Prophetess of the Tribes."

The sibyl lapsed into her accustomed querulousness, grew bent again, and, hobbling to the fire, cast upon it another bough of brushwood.

Laurente, dazed by what she had heard, would gladly have taken refuge in flight, but her limbs refused to obey the impulse of her will.

While she remained motionless, as though chained to the spot by an invisible force, the smoke-rings, mounting to the clouds from the double fire, began

to assume form and substance. Could she be in her right mind, or had she succumbed to the power of the great mesmerizers — cold and snow?

Now, about a hundred yards from where she stood, there stepped forth, as out of the column of smoke, or from the depths of the earth, an Indian sachem, tall, gaunt, and emaciated as by frequent fastings, — a warrior clad in buffalo skins, his face painted black, one of his eyes sightless, his long hair streaming in the wind.

An exclamation of alarm from the girl recalled the Wise Woman to a remembrance of her proximity.

A strange perturbation seized upon the squaw. She was no longer the seeress, the voice of the future; her old frame began to shake as with the palsy.

"Foolish papoose, are you a cousin to Wauboos, the timid hare?" she cried, seizing Laurente by the shoulder. "This is but a wandering Medicine Man who has come to his Tribe Mother for food and counsel. Iama is no witch, but only a poor Noko. Be like the little hare, pretty one, if you will, and keep the secret of the woods. If Wauboos were to tell all she knows, where would she hide from the dogs?"

Without replying, the girl shook off the rude grasp, and fled precipitately.

When, having gained the shelter of a clump of trees that shut her out of view from the lodge, she stopped to take breath, one thought shaped itself in her mind. Whatever the occult powers of Iama, the latter had been disturbed because she, Laurente,

was a witness of the arrival of the stranger chief. The squaw-witch had charged her to be as one who has eyes and sees not. Should she obey the injunction? Perhaps, for if she were to mention this adventure of the afternoon, might not her walks in the bracing air be restricted?

Continuing on at a quieter pace, Laurente soon reached home. Unstrapping her snow-shoes at the door of the kitchen, and throwing back her capouch, she entered the room. The notable housewife, Madam MacIntosh, was standing at the deal table busied in beating up in an earthen-ware bowl a mixture of pounded corn and maple sugar destined to appear at supper as the light and sweet bread known as praline.

"A bientôt," cried "la bonne mère," "you were gone nearly two hours, 'ma fille!' I began to dread lest you had met the *Manchon Roulant*¹ and had fallen into the clutches of the goblin by forgetting the date of Christmas Day. Tush, the cold has stolen the roses from your cheeks instead of adding to them. Run away and change your frock for one less dull in hue. A guest is come but a few minutes since. 'Je crois bien,' he would have been off over the prairie to meet you were it not that he had an errand with the laird."

¹ "The superstition of the *Manchon Roulant* (Rolling Muff) is still current among the French Canadians of the vicinity of Detroit. The habitant is warned by the tradition that upon meeting the goblin he must at once put to it the query, 'What day of the month is Christmas Day?' The *Manchon Roulant*, who is never well posted in the calendar, will not fail to reply by asking the same question. Then, woe betide the luckless traveller if the answer does not come readily to his tongue." — Mrs. Hamlin's *Legends of Le Détroit*.

"Bien, what cavalier was thus saved from defeat in a snow-shoeing contest with me?" demanded the daughter, lightly.

"Who but Captain Muir, and mind you use him well, *chérie*," was the urgent reply. "When a gallant gentleman asks a special interview with the father of a pretty *demoiselle*, it is not to talk about the weather —"

"*Laissez-donc, ma mère*," interrupted the girl, the roses in her face blooming again of a sudden. "Have not my father and his friends many matters to discuss?"

"To be sure," rejoined the older woman, regretting she had spoken so plainly.

"To a young maid who has never yet been wooed, love is a sweet mystery which, save in her dreams, she half fears to confront; like the sensitive brier of the woods that shrink from the hand stretched forth to gather it," she said to herself.

While "*la bonne mère*" mused, Laurente, singing in an undertone an old Scotch song, escaped to her room in the angle of the roof.

Clearly she had not spoken of the bold love-making of James La Salle.

Her voice sank to silence on the stair, but the lilting words of the ballad sported through the brain of Madam MacIntosh with odd persistence.

"Oh, I'm blithe that my heart is my ain!
And I'll keep it for mony a day,
Gin I meet not a lad wha to gain
My luv' will fash ilka braw way." ¹

¹ Will strive nobly.

"What whim has come over the child," soliloquized the mother. "I shall be loath to lose her presence from the house, but I was younger than she by two years when I became the bride of Angus MacIntosh. And where to-day can be found on the Strait a likelier suitor than ce Monsieur Muir?"

When Laurente flitted into the parlor or living-room, the two gentlemen ensconced before the hearth-fire of forest logs were deep in earnest colloquy.

Captain Muir sprang to his feet with alacrity. And as she gave him her hand in greeting, he raised it to his lips, somewhat awkwardly, but with the sincerity of one to whom the action meant a respect beyond the passing compliment.

The girl blushed in unwonted confusion. But she recovered from the momentary embarrassment as, with a sense of thankfulness, she became aware that the conversation which her appearance had interrupted in no way concerned her. In fact, she smiled a little in the twilight over the thought of how "la bonne mère" had been misled by her maternal romancing.

"You are convinced, captain," resumed MacIntosh, addressing his visitor, — "you are convinced that the trapper who gave you this news of a battle between the Americans and the Shawanoes on the banks of the Tippecanoe, is not aiming to cheat us by a false report?"

"Sir, he has brought me a written message from one of the King's subjects, who, having abandoned his lands on the Wabash during the war between

England and her colonies, returned there recently to try to get them back again," answered Muir, conclusively. "The letter bears out the runner's story, that, three weeks or more ago, the Yankee Governor Harrison routed the warriors of Tecumseh in the absence of their chief."

Laurente had taken a chair in a corner and was ostensibly engrossed with her knitting. At that time, when all the hose worn by the family were made by the women of the household, a demoiselle was not wont to sit idle, even when the tasks of the day were finished.

"Humph!" ejaculated Angus, "and word of this victory has of course reached the fort across the river?"

"By this, without doubt, although the trapper swears he kept ahead of the French *coureur-de-bois* whom General Harrison sent from the Indian country at the same date. The auguries by which the lively Abigail Hunt recently sought to while away the moments for your guests, sir, are in part verified. Were I credulous, I should half believe she has really the second sight; or else she has heard much comment upon the vexed questions of the day, in comparison with which the American difficulties with the redmen are of lesser moment. If the latter, truly she has used her woman's wit to advantage."

MacIntosh broke into a laugh.

"Had the girl understood the gravity of these matters, she would never have been so bold as to play the part she did," he declared discerningly. "No, no, her reading of the mirror was only a coincidence.

Nevertheless, I admit women-folk have strange intuitions. If any unusual happening hangs over us, they sometimes feel it in the air. Their affections and sympathies endow them with a seventh sense."

"Be that as it may," said Muir, "we have indeed far more ground than women's forebodings, to surmise that the friction between Great Britain and the United States over our claim to impress our seamen wherever found will not be peaceably settled."

Angus nodded.

"When the wood-ranger arrived last night at the gate of Fort Malden, half perished with cold, he could only blurt out the gist of the tale," proceeded the captain. "After the fellow had been thawed out by much rubbing with snow and a dose of old Jan.aica, however, we learned from him that Tecumseh has despatched his twin brother, Elskwatawa the Prophet, down the Lakes to Colonel Proctor. All day I have been on the watch for this emissary; his embassy is of the utmost importance to us."

A knitting-needle dropped upon the painted floor, and at the sound the laird turned to his daughter.

"By my soul, lassie, I forgot you were there," he exclaimed.

Laurente made no reply, but bending forward asked abruptly of the guest, —

"What kind of an Indian is the Prophet?"

Muir started.

"A tall, hollow-checked fanatic who with equal zest prays to his manitou and hurls the tomahawk, it is said," he responded. "Is it possible that you know anything of this traveller, mademoiselle?"

"Ciel! May the good Ste. Anne defend me from ill-luck, and under so forbidding a guise," she protested, rallying her self-possession.

"We have talked enough of politics," interposed MacIntosh, annoyed that the subject had been discussed so freely before the girl. "Muir, you will stay for supper. Come, I'll take no denial; it is safe to wager that the gudewife has already laid a cover for you."

An excuse to linger was not unwelcome to the captain. As they sat in the dusk, Martine, a copper-colored shadow with no high lights save the whites of her eyes, darkened the doorway and announced that the evening meal was served.

An hour later, when Angus and his guest returned to the parlor, Madam MacIntosh again sent Laurente to assist in entertaining the captain, alleging that she herself must needs count over the fine table damask used at the "bal paré," which, having been carefully "made up," was now to be restored to the linen press.

"Your father is always a bit drowsy after his supper," added the mother. "But let him get his forty winks o' sleep, and he'll be ready to go at any debate his visitor may broach, even as a smith attacks the hot iron with tongs and hammer. Mon Dieu, to what work does a Scotchman apply himself with more zeal than to an argument!"

As she foretold, soon after settling in his armchair, MacIntosh grew silent at intervals, and finally, sinking his head upon his breast, began undisguisedly to doze.

Withdrawing to the bench in the recess of a window, the young people conversed in low tones. Although "la bonne mère" had been apparently mistaken in her surmise as to the object of the captain's visit, perhaps she was not so far wrong after all. Certainly it was so, the chance of a tête-à-tête with Laurente that he had waited.

The room was lit only by the blaze of the fire, and the fitful light played about the girl, bringing out her piquant face and graceful head into strong relief against the indistinct background.

Laurente, for her part, beheld, leaning beside the dark frame of the window, with elbow on the narrow sill, a light-haired, fair-complexioned officer, angular in physique, yet filling well his scarlet coat,— a manly, good-looking fellow whose color came and went almost too readily in his smooth-shaven countenance. She would have unhesitatingly pronounced him braver than any of his brave soldiers at Fort Malden, a pleasant companion, and a good friend.

Until the evening of the "bal paré" Muir had not been conscious that he wished to be more to her. Since then he had told himself more than once that his youthful liking for various pretty girls across the seas had stirred his emotions but lightly compared to his present fascination. For Laurente, according to her mood, was sometimes a sparkling French demoiselle, and anon a blithe Highland lassie, bonny and stout-hearted, like a bit of pink heather from his native moors, and all the lovelier for being found in the Canadian wilds.

It seemed to him now that he should never tire of

watching her, as they chatted in the firelight with the naturalness of old acquaintance.

But the precious moments were slipping by, and events looming up in the future threatened to leave him small chance for love-making. He would profit by the present opportunity.

"Miss MacIntosh," he said, breaking a short pause, "I may see you to-morrow, or perhaps not for weeks. A soldier cannot come and go as he will, and this uprising of our Indian allies may be the beginning of a greater struggle. Therefore, I must say now I love you, Laurete. Will you be my wife?"

He took her hand and bent closer, eager to receive the response for which he longed in the secret eyes that a moment since had met his without a shadow of self-consciousness.

But, alack, he had burned his bridges; he could never go back to the neutral ground of frank friendliness which had not contented him.

Laurete shyly averted her face.

"Laurete," entreated the captain, "say I may hope one day to make you my wife? Do I please you so ill that you have no words to answer me?"

"Oh, no, no, you are mistaken; I like you well, Captain Muir," stammered the girl.

The fervor of his words, the sincerity of his gaze, had their influence. The fawn of the forest is daring enough in its native haunts; only when it finds itself in a new atmosphere, or when it is threatened with capture, does it become timid.

Laurete's eyes had been persistently fixed upon the long-forgotten knitting that she had let fall upon

the bench. Now she stole a glance at the captain. Truly, he was a gallant gentleman. His wooing did not frighten her as the brusque outburst of James La Salle had done. Any fillette of Le Détroit might be proud to have so worthy a suitor as Allan Muir. Moreover, added to his sterling qualities, he was a Scotchman, and this was another reason that her father would favor his suit.

With so intrepid and devoted a lover, what need would she have to fear the threats of Blue Jacket? To be sure, it was not Allan Muir who had walked beside her in the misty day-dreams that belonged to the time before she had taken her place in the great world, the far-off time, as it seemed, before the "bal paré." But those were childish fancies! Now she was a "jeune demoiselle," and here was no dream-cavalier, but a handsome young lover suing for her favor, like a hero of old romance.

"Perhaps you will find it in your heart to love me a little," he urged.

A wave of emotion swept over the girl.

"How can I tell? I do not know what it is to love," she said evasively.

"Then you will not deny me leave to try to teach you?" he persisted.

"No," she answered hesitatingly, — "no."

Muir ardently kissed the little hand which, without reproof, he had continued to hold. Doubtless he would have followed up his advantage, but, unluckily for him, at this moment Angus MacIntosh awoke from his nap.

"By St. Andrew," exclaimed the laird, sitting erect,

"I have forgotten myself for a moment! Ring for the candles and the hot water, lassie. Captain, I'll brew you a tumbler of punch to beat any you ever had here at the Strait."

"I thank you, sir," returned Muir, rising; "but it is growing late, and since I have before me the ride of eighteen miles to Fort Malden, I had best be setting out."

"Tut, tut, have I dozed so long? I repent of having inflicted upon you a dull evening," apologized his host.

"Not at all, sir," protested the young man, with a vehemence that covered Laurente's confusion,—"never has the time sped so swiftly."

"Aweel, Laurente's no' backward with canty chat. Still she is but a lassie, with a lassie's limitations as to topics of conversation," averred MacIntosh. "I had in mind to entertain you with my ideas on the Scottish wars of the fifteenth century, and with the story of that ancestor of mine who was made commander of Inverness after the battle of Harlaw."

Muir bowed and remained standing.

He would have listened with patience to any dissertation from Laurente's father, however extended or profound it might be. But he knew there was only one subject which he cared to discuss with Laurente, that of his love for her and the answer he hoped to awaken in her heart.

"Aweel, gin ye maun go, ye maun," continued MacIntosh, in the colloquial manner into which he dropped at times.

Striking the silver gong that stood on the table,

he summoned a slave boy, and Muir asked for his horse.

The boy vanished forthwith, and before many minutes the sturdy Canadian pony was heard pawing the ground outside.

While the captain got into his fur riding coat, MacIntosh, casting a plaid about his own shoulders, folded an end of it around his daughter, and together they accompanied their guest to the door-stone.

Springing to the saddle, Muir slipped a small coin into the palm of the boy, who promptly disappeared. Then, for a second, the lover lingered, hoping for a parting glance from Laurente.

"I almost envy you the ride down the côte on this beautiful evening," exclaimed the laird. "Though the moon does not rise until late, the great comet will light you on your way. How each night adds to its awful brilliancy! Faith, if its fiery centre is not a visible sign of God's wrath, the flaming train, like a host of gleaming swords, may well be one."

As he spoke, he pointed to the heavens above the Strait. There among the stars, like the avenging hand of an offended deity, glowed the phenomenon of the century and sun of the midnight sky, the comet of 1811, now almost in the fulness of its glory.

Across the Atlantic, the nations were watching it with apprehension, seeing a dire and mysterious connection between this burning sphere and the destiny of the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, the Scourge of Europe, now at the zenith of his fame. But in the American wilderness, the white settlers viewed it only

with a vague dread. Readers of cards and teacups shrank from mentioning the Terrible Star. Never until to-day had Laurente heard an attempt to predict the significance of this vagrant sun. But now, as she looked up at it in wondering awe, she seemed to hear again the shrill voice of Iama, saying, —

“The future is written on the sky!”

And presently a strange tremor that was not from the keen air took possession of her, as she caught the casual reply of Muir to her father.

“Yes,” said the captain, carelessly, as he gathered up his rein; “the trapper tells me the Indians see in the great comet a sign from the Master of Life. The Shawanoes have named it ‘The Arm of Tecumseh.’”

CHAPTER FOURTH

NO LOVE WITHOUT A RIVAL

A GREAT snow-storm rendered the road from Fort Malden impassable for a fortnight, and gave Laurette time for meditation or revery, as she might prefer. At first, her heart fluttered and thrilled with excitement as she realized that her slightest word, her wandering fancies, were of the utmost importance to some one, that her handsome lover worshipped her as the ideal woman. She who in her home was still regarded as a child, whose opinions had little weight there, had become an influence in the life of a man strong of will and clever of brain. He loved her, and through that love she could sway and lead him. These reflections were most flattering to the vanity of a young and pretty demoiselle. Having but just been vouchsafed a glimpse of woman's kingdom of love and admiration, she found herself already a crowned queen in the enchanted country.

As the week lengthened into two, however, her girlish elation died away. With dismay she discovered that the consciousness of the captain's devotion did not make her happy. On the contrary, it filled her with unrest. She began to wish he had not avowed his attachment that evening in the fire-

light. Why had he not left her to her day-dreams? "Bien," though he had asked her to let him try to teach her to love him, she had not promised to learn! Still her father would be angry, and "la bonne mère" would call her "chère petite sottie," if she should offend Monsieur Muir. "Miséricorde," it was a pretty pass; but, "n'importe," time would straighten it out. Meanwhile, on a fine afternoon, the laird was sending his man Sandy to the general store of Henry Hunt at Detroit, and, after the bad weather, here was a chance for a visit to her friend Abigail.

For the nonce, youthful vivacity and the creole disposition to shuffle off unpleasant subjects were in the ascendant.

The sunlit, frosty air, the trip across the frozen surface of the river in the fur-lined sledge, the merry tinkle of the bells that hung from the necks of the shaggy-coated Lambreur and Caribou, — all had their exhilarating effect upon the spirits of Sandy's fair passenger. And when he called "ho-là," to the horses and drew up before the spacious log-house whose unpainted timbers gleamed in the sunshine, it was a lively demoiselle, with sparkling eyes and a merry laugh, who alighted from the cariole and crossed the threshold.

The entire front of the house was given over to the store, on one side being piled the beaver, otter, and deerskins obtained by barter with the redmen, while on the other were displayed a variety of goods for the French and Indian trade. Here were Mackinac blankets, guns, pistols, gay calicoes, woollen stuffs

in showy designs; silver ornaments and beads for French fillettes, matrons, and grandmothers, as well as for Indian chiefs and squaws. There were rosaries, moccasins, coarse shirts, boots, sugar, hardware, "eau de vie," apple and pear cider, and "old Jamaica;" thread and needles, yarns and other necessaries. At another time, Laurente might have lingered to inspect that portion of the stock which comprised articles for feminine adornment. But now, hastily bidding the clerk to put aside for her one or two gewgaws that caught her eye, she passed on to the living-rooms, which overlooked the river.

"À la bonne heure," exclaimed Abigail, ready with her greeting. Yet she did not appear so overjoyed at the appearance of a guest as might have been expected.

"Abigail, I have come, because, I am sure, nothing could give me so much pleasure as to spend the afternoon with you," declared Laurente.

The girls had been but quarter of an hour together when who should happen in but Pierre Labadie.

"Ah, Mademoiselle MacIntosh," he cried, "the luck spirits were kind when they led me here to meet you! Is not this the day of days for carioling? My sledge is at the door. Come with me for a trip down the river. The ice is firm and smooth as the floors of matched boards in Governor Hull's new house!"

Abigail, with rare unselfishness, urged her friend to accept the invitation, and at last blushing admitted that she herself had engaged to go carioling with Lieutenant Snelling. What was left to Laurente

but to make the best of the predicament, especially since Pierre agreed to drive her down to call on his sister Catishe, and bring her back before Sandy could finish his errands.

Soon the two light-hearted young people were speeding along the broad corduroy road that followed the line of the old Ste. Anne Street; past the imposing residence of the governor, noted far and wide as the only brick house in the territory; past the log pile whereon Judge Woodward had recently held a session of the law court. Then Pierre turned his fleet ponies down the bank at the point where there was a ferry in summer; and, directly, they were flying along the frozen Strait, now the animated scene of a winter carnival.

Besides being a clear December day, it was the opening of the holiday season. Even the improvident *courreur-de-bois* who had but the clothes he wore, had gayly spent his last coin for the loan of a *cariole* and a swift little mare, that he might join in the races at the Grand Marais, or take his *demoiselle carioling*. At some of the habitants' homes of Petite Côte or Spring Wells, they would be sure to find dancing and abundance of good cheer.

The drive of the young *cariolers* who so unexpectedly found themselves in each other's company, was only a whirl down beyond the mouth of the creek and the cabin of the Savoyard, by whose name the Rigolet des Hurons was beginning to be called, and who was growing rich on its banks by hiring out during the winter cast-iron stoves which he brought from Montreal. Then a short rest at the Labadie

homestead at the bend of the river, and back, without urging the thoroughbreds on the return trip.

No doubt, during that drive Laurente forgave her childhood's friend, Pierre Labadie, for his temerity in misliking her powdered locks at the "bal paré." For she told him of the incident which she had mentioned to no one else, — the story of old Iama's smoke signals, of the mysterious chief who arose before the door of the Wise Woman's lodge, and the rumor that an Indian Prophet was on his way to visit General Proctor.

"What does it all mean, Pierre?" asked the girl, anxiously, as she concluded. "What have you Americans done to arouse the enmity of Tecumseh and his people?"

"Done," echoed Labadie, with bitterness, giving the ponies a touch with the whip that made them spring forward with a jerk. "Done! It is rather what we have failed, or been unable to do to buy their friendship! The secret agents of the British have stirred up the Shawanoes against our settlers on the Wabash. They have commented around the council fires upon the difficulties between the United States and Great Britain because of the unwarranted boarding of our ships, and have attached the Indian nations to their government by lavish presents such as we have not the funds to give."

"What, my countrymen strike hands with the painted savage against their friends and neighbors! Impossible!" cried Laurente, with assurance.

"I wish it were impossible," declared Pierre, grimly. "Tecumseh is the master-spirit of the Indian con-

federacy, their leader in battle, the orator of their councils; but Elskwatawa rules them almost as absolutely, by his pretended communings with the Great Spirit, his austerities, and his forest magic. His visit to Colonel Proctor is proof that he is confident of being well received, Laurente."

"I should not have told you of it. I am a British subject, and have no wish to be disloyal," she exclaimed in distress.

At this point Labadie again drew up his horses before Hunt's warehouse.

As he assisted the demoiselle from the cariole, he whispered to her, with smiling eyes, —

"You have told me nothing that you need regret, dear Laurente. The United States are not at war with Great Britain, and our genial Governor Hull affirms that on this side of the border we are unjust to your general in command. See, as I predicted, Sandy is employing his time to advantage while awaiting us. There he is in the store, enlightening Jean Cécire upon some abstruse matter, I'll wager, over a measure of 'liqueur de pêche,' while Lam-breur and Caribou are no doubt still stabled in the yard."

An hour later, Laurente was at home once more. During the afternoon, for all her chatter, she had not let fall a word to Pierre concerning either Captain Muir or James La Salle, having wit enough to know that when a man is devoting himself to a pretty woman, he does not want her to talk of other men. Of Muir's suit, delicacy, indeed, forbade her to speak. But had she so much as hinted at the presumptuous

love-making of Blue Jacket, and his vindictive threat, how well it would have been both for herself and for the daring young American to whom from childhood she had so often involuntarily turned for protection against real or fancied peril.

The argument by which Labadie sought to allay the fear of Miss MacIntosh that she had said too much concerning her encounter on the prairie, was often heard in the town after the dawn of the New Year. Far from the seat of government at Washington, and depending for despatches upon a post brought over the mountains and through morasses, in the saddle-bags of an adventurous rider, the people had to wait long for news. The governor and others in authority supposed the war rumors to be but as the rumbling of distant thunder that would presently cease. The alleged alliance between the British and Indians was believed to be a report spread by the subtle Elskwatawa to gain followers among the warriors of other tribes.

A few of the young men of the community did not take this view, however, but began to drill with the soldiers of the fort, which still bore the name of the English officer Lernoult, who built it in the days of the British occupation.

As for the women, though many among them continued to while away the evenings bidding guests to dancing parties and fêtes as before, others read portents of strife in every unusual circumstance.

On the Canadian shore, meanwhile, the winter that began with so much social gayety, dragged toward a

close. Neighbors of opposite sides of the river had grown distrustful of one another; and the Saturday excursions to the Grand Marais were all but abandoned.

Upon no one did this dulness pall more than upon Laurente MacIntosh. Perhaps it was because she was cut off from her friends of the *côte du nord* that she found herself thinking of them so often and so kindly. Captain Muir had spent many evenings at her home, and stood higher than ever in the favor of the laird. But, although Laurente was gracious to him, she naïvely evaded all his efforts to secure another chat with her in the firelight, and he was forced to acknowledge that he made no progress in his wooing. No doubt matters would have come to a climax between the girl and himself, were it not that, immediately after the festivities of "le jour des Rois,"¹ he was ordered to Fort George, so suddenly that he had no time to take leave of Laurente, and could only send her a hurried note filled with ardent expressions of regret over his abrupt departure.

At last the snowfalls became less frequent. The prairies showed rugged and brown; and occasionally, amid the blustering winds of March, softer breezes swept over the plains, like a flight of early birds from the south.

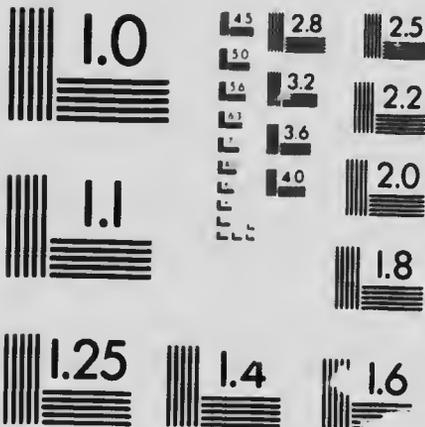
A thaw of this kind had broken up the ice in the river, and made the roads along its margins deep sloughs of mud. But one morning when the Frost King had resumed his sway to the extent of render-

¹ The sixth of January.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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ing the river path passable, Laurente, having been housed for days, gayly availed herself of the chance to go abroad.

With a lighter heart than she had known for weeks, she made her way over the rough ground, pausing now and then to look with delight far up and down the Strait.

Beneath the sunshine, the flood of waters from Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan shone golden, silver, and azure. Swift and invincible, like the fabled Indian giant Unktahee, they rushed on to Erie and Ontario, each moment gathering new strength for their final mighty plunge over the precipice and down the gorge of the Niagara.

The gleaming tide suggested no such stern imagery to the girl, however.

"How bright the water is!" she said aloud; "the sunlit ripples make me think of a sportive troop of Neebanawbaigs,¹ or a bevy of French fillettes in white Normandy bonnets dancing down the stream as though it were the floor of a ball-room. And, 'ma foi,' there is a canoe among them now, — like a Colin Maillard giving chase. Who is venturing so boldly to cross the river when the current is not yet clear of ice? Heigh-ho, I wish it were a visitor for us! But that is impossible, since the colonel at Fort Malden has patrolled our frontier."

Continuing her walk, she still watched the little craft as it buffeted with the stream. Before long she saw it had but a solitary occupant, a man who paddled with ease and skill.

¹ Indian water-spirits.

As he approached the strand, he waved his red scarf to attract her attention, and a cheery voice called to her across the stretch of blue, —

“Laurente! Laurente!”

“Pierre Labadie!” she exclaimed, stopping short in astonishment.

“Yes, mademoiselle, like a worthless coin, I am always turning up,” he laughed.

The swollen waters floated the canoe well on to the beach. Leaping ashore, he dragged it up the bank, and hastened to the path where she stood awaiting him.

“O Pierre, why did you cross the river when the canoing is so hazardous?” she remonstrated by way of greeting. “And surely you know the shore is guarded. Go back, it is not safe for you to be here. Oh, why did you come?”

“The reason is easily given; I came to see you, ‘ma belle,’” he replied. “As for your countrymen, if they are over-warm in their reception of me, I must respond in kind,” and he tapped the pistol in his belt.

“Let us hurry to the house,” urged Laurente; “my father is not so hot against the Americans that he will refuse you a welcome, and ‘la bonne mère’ will be glad to hear of our friends in the town.”

“I thank you, mademoiselle,” rejoined Labadie; “but since fortune has granted me this meeting, I will not relinquish the opportunity for a word with you alone. These are strenuous times, and we do not know what may be before us. I am going away.”

The girl gave a sharp cry.

"Yes, I am going to Washington to offer my sword in the service of our cause," he went on fervidly. "There is much that I wish to say to you, Laurente. On that day, long ago, when the old town of Detroit was swept away in flame, when I stood in your path and stayed your childish flight upon the beach, when you bade me take you home, something told me that you would one day be all the world to me, — that I would long to make a home for you in my heart. And so it is. Yet now, my life is not my own to offer you; it belongs to my country. I have loved you always, yet I must not plead for your love, nor ask you to plight your troth to a lover who may never return. But if I come back, sweetheart, if I win honors to lay at your feet, will you listen to me?"

He paused for her reply. But she remained silent, looking fixedly at him.

It may be that he read his answer in her eyes. At least, again the luck spirits were kind, for just then the wind, which had been peeping under her blue hood and plucking at her shawl, gave a sudden jerk to the latter and made off with it.

Pierre promptly sprang to the rescue; and so it happened that in folding the plaid again about Laurente, he folded her in his arms as well.

"O Pierre, come back! Whether you succeed or fail, come back," she whispered, leaning her head upon his breast.

As quickly she drew away from him, exclaiming, "Listen, do you not hear the sound of a horse's hoofs? Make haste; put off in the canoe! The rider

is coming at a gallop. None but the soldiers ride so fast; it must be the mounted patrol! Go, go!"

"Dear one, say you love me, even as I love you," urged Pierre, still lingering.

"Ah, yes, God knows I love you," she acknowledged involuntarily, dazed at the sudden revelation of her own heart that the last few minutes had brought.

"Laurente, I swear I will be true to you to my dying hour; no other woman shall ever be my wife," he protested. "No, I will not go in this moment of our betrothal, which I had not dared to hope would come to make this our last interview a foretaste of perfect happiness. I will not avoid this trooper; my aim is as good as that of any man at Fort Malden."

Laurente smothered a cry.

"Will you shoot the man, or be shot down before my eyes?" she exclaimed.

Labadie saw his dilemma. Whether he should overcome his antagonist or be captured, the girl would be placed in a most distressing position. Moreover, how could he invite an encounter in her presence?

"You are right, 'ma belle;' for your dear sake we must part now," he said. "God keep you, dear love, dear love!" Once more clasping her to his heart, he kissed the sweet lips that still tremulously bade him leave her.

Then, springing to the canoe, he shoved it into the water, and was too far from the shore to be distinguished, by the time there galloped into sight a spirited black horse bestrode by a young officer

whom Laurente recognized with an exclamation of astonishment.

"Captain Muir!"

"Miss MacIntosh!" cried the captain, equally amazed; but turning quickly from her, he called out a brusque command to the paddler in the stream.

"Halt! Halt, I say!"

The canoeist paid no heed, and in a twinkling Muir levelled his pistol at the boat.

"Monsieur, I beg of you — do not fire!" pleaded the girl, distraught.

The officer wavered.

"Who is that man?" he demanded sternly.

"Oh, monsieur, only a French trader. Since we women-folk can no longer go across to the town, we must depend for our shopping upon what the *coureurs-de-bois* and *voyageurs* may bring in their pirogues. Surely you have no quarrel with these wanderers?"

"But he has brought you nothing," objected the captain.

Laurente drew herself up to her full height.

"He came to-day to learn what I would have," she said proudly.

Muir cursed his luck in having offended her.

"Mademoiselle, I have no wish to harm any one who would do you even so small a service as this pedler," he continued: "Nevertheless, it is as well to frighten the fellow and warn him that he must bring nothing but women's gear in his pack. By your leave —"

Thereupon, he discharged his pistol, aiming wide of the skiff.



At the report, Laurente could have shrieked aloud in terror. But her confidence was restored when, as he lowered his weapon, she saw the canoe still making gallantly for a small settlement of the French, situated at some distance above the stockaded American town.

The sight gave her courage to turn away, and her air of indifference was so well assumed as to deceive the captain. Apologizing for having frightened her (he little knew how much), while engaged in the performance of his duty, he dismounted and, leading his horse, walked by her side, recounting incidents of his return journey from Niagara.

Being a lover, however, he soon began to pour out his heart to the girl, to speak of his aims and plans; and had she loved him also, this revelation of his inner self would have been infinitely dear to her.

At times, indeed, she had fancied that she loved "ce Monsieur Muir." To be a bride robed in fleecy white, and have a grand wedding festival; to be congratulated by all the MacIntosh friends and envied by all the demoiselles of the côte! And then to go away to live at Fort Malden or Niagara! All this would be very fine, and "la bonne mère" often declared the captain would make a good husband. But to be bound until death should break the bond! Would she and the gallant Scotchman weary of each other? Would she ever wish to be free again?

Laurente had asked the advice of the saintly Père Richard in confession when she crossed the river to

attend the church at the Spring Wells, for she followed the faith of her French-Canadian mother.

"My daughter, pray that God may make known to you the real desire of your heart," said the good father.

And now everything was made plain. Laurente smiled to herself and her eyes shone, while the words of the officer fell upon deaf ears. At Pierre's fervid "Laurente, I have always loved you," her doubts had vanished like mists before the sun. Pierre's love for her and her love for him would shed joy upon her whole existence, as the sunlight makes the prairies, the rivers, and even the depths of the forest fair.

When Pierre folded her in his arms, she felt that he took her into his life for so long as it should endure and her heart thrilled with a sweet content. She knew she would be happy as Pierre's wife, though their home were in the wilds. Or, at least, no sorrow the future might hold could be so great as would the grief of a life-long separation from him. Yes, her prayer was answered; how could she have imagined for a moment that she loved Captain Muir? She had only been piqued by the fear that Pierre did not love her.

Now the captain, talking on, approached the dangerous ground of his aspirations with regard to herself. It would have been better indeed to bid him hope no longer. But, with a gentle unwillingness to inflict pain, the girl, in a sudden change of mood, grew gay and, adroitly changing the subject, rallied her companion upon indifferent matters until their

stroll came to an end at the door of her father's house.

Muir had only returned to Malden with despatches. Accordingly he departed again for Niagara within a few days, and quiet once more settled down upon the MacIntosh home.

CHAPTER FIFTH

THE REVELLE

THE "fœux de joie" for the fête of St. Jean Baptiste, the Midsummer Eve of English song and story, had died out more than a fortnight before. It was not far from midnight on the eleventh of July, 1812. There was no moon, and the river flowed noiselessly in a black, forbidding flood toward the inland ocean of Lake Erie. The habitants and settlers on both sides of the Strait were sleeping unconcernedly, but under the faint light of the stars that gleamed through rifts in the clouds, a band of American soldiers embarked from the northern shore.

For a few moments the boats drifted upon the swift waters, then, at an order spoken in a low, decisive voice, the paddlers struck out, cutting the current like a wand.

In the prow of the foremost craft stood Lewis Cass, colonel of a newly enrolled regiment of volunteers. In command of one of the other pirogues might be recognized the athletic figure of his subaltern, Pierre Descomptes Labadie, who had returned with him from Washington, mustering recruits in the Maumee valley on the way.

As the men of this second boat paddled in rhythmic time, they spoke in undertones among themselves, unchecked by their officer.

"The signs are dark enough! Was the earthquake of six weeks ago felt at the lower end of the côte, as with us at Hamtranck?" inquired one of his comrade.

"My cabin at the Spring Wells trembled like an aspen, and the branches of the trees in the yard were tossed as if by a hurricane, although there was no wind," was the ready answer.

"The walls of my farmhouse rocked like a cradle," interjected a third soldier, "and la petite Modeste, my sister's child (who in the autumn voyaged with her from Michilimackinac), feeling the floor unsteady, asked if she was on the bateau again. Surely this shuddering of the ground is a warning of coming disaster!"

Labadie's patience at length gave way.

"Men, have done with this comparison of omens," he cried with asperity. "The earthquake was indeed serious in its effect. I heard a habitant of Grosse Pointe say that by the shock his bowl of mush and milk was spilled. Moreover, the Indians who have come in from the Saginaw trail tell a strange story. They say that in the winter the waters of Orchard Lake began to boil as though in a great kettle over a fire, and up from the depths of this manitou-caldron came a vast number of turtles, of which these pious pagans made a sacre' feast. Assuredly this portends that there will be fewer turtles thereabout for some time to come."

His sarcasm, if not convincing, silenced the two fellows who had begun the conversation, but the third grumbled under his breath,—

"Diable! Monsieur le lieutenant may jest as it pleases him, but every habitant and Indian knows that the trembling of the ground is the tread of the Great Shawanoe's foot as he marches through the forest to Le Détroit. He is more than man, and he is our enemy! How can we hope to conquer?"

An angry reprimand rose to the lips of the young leader, and, drawing his sword, he was about to bring its dull edge down upon the shoulders of the malcontent. But a wiser second thought prevailed.

"Mes amis," he said, -- for was he not one with these people, and to lead them to victory must he not hold their confidence? -- "'mes amis,' Tecumseh is but a savage, -- formidable only in his courage. If you must have omens, I can give you a better one than any you have named. One day in the early spring, as Mr. Cass and I walked toward our homes after drill, we encountered Jean Cécire running up from the river.

"'Messieurs, messieurs,' he shouted, short of breath and wrought to a high pitch of excitement.

"'Well, Jean, what is it?' we called.

"'Oh, messieurs, messieurs --'

"He halted, hesitated for the English words, and at last blurted out, 'Oh, messieurs, messieurs, *United States, he go by on ze ice.*'

"Without delaying to question our valiant sergent, but fearing we knew not what, we hurried to the bluff, and one glance at the river solved the riddle. There, about five hundred yards from the shore, floating regally toward the lake upon a block of ice, was a gigantic eagle, the emblem of our country.

What does this presage but victory for our flag? The eagle fears no foe; undismayed, he stares the sun itself in the face. Our forces shall win by land and sea."

The enthusiasm of the French officer proved contagious, and a murmur of approval arose from the men.

"The American eagle drifting onward to Lake Erie? Yes, it is a good omen," cried one soldier.

"We will not desert you, Pierre Labadie, we will uphold the new flag," reiterated others.

At this moment the dugout, running in close to the colonel's boat, grated on the pebbles of the beach.

"Then, follow me, 'mes amis,'" cried the lieutenant, again unsheathing his sword.

As he was about to leap ashore, however, a sharp command restrained him.

"Monsieur Labadie," called Colonel Cass, "I can permit no man to go before me in this expedition."

Labadie fell back, disappointed, yet recognizing that the honor belonged to his chief. As soon as the latter had stepped on the strand, he sprang after him, a close second.

Thus it happened that on the twelfth of July, about noon, Angus MacIntosh returned to his home from the village of Windsor in a towering rage. Casting down his hat of home-braided straw upon the table of the living-room, he began to walk up and down the floor, giving vent to his wrath, while "la bonne mère" and his daughter listened in consternation.

"Gudewife," he exclaimed, "reach me down my old claymore from the wall yonder, and go bring me

my barkers.¹ By St. Andrew, I'm no sic an auld carle but that I can yet strike a blow for the defence of the land against a party of moss-troopers."²

"'Ciel! Qu'avez-vous, mon ami?' Have you met the Red Dwarf? Or was your morning tiff of 'liqueur de pêche' not to your liking?" inquired Madam MacIntosh, in dismay.

"Woman," rejoined the laird, still more incensed, "the Red Dwarf is grown a giant, and the giant is Tecumseh. I wish he were here with ten thousand of his ilk. As for the 'eau de vie,' whoever knew Godé de Marentette to set before his friend anything but the best? Cease your clavering, and I'll tell you what has come about. Last night the Yankees landed on the côte while the guards were drunk at the tavern; and this morning at dawn Governor Hull followed with the rest of his army."

"The Americans have invaded Canada!" exclaimed Laurente; while "la bonne mère," throwing up her hands, apostrophized the ceiling.

"Yes; it was their boats and not a fleet of Indian canoes that we saw at sunrise," continued MacIntosh. "When I rode into the village, the market-place was filled with a clanjamfry of Canadians and bluecoated soldiers who maundered and clamored. Then who should mount a chair brought from the tavern but Hull himself, gey pompous and niff-naffy, and addressed our gude-folk, inviting them to join the American standard and thus secure their independence. It was a brave speech — written, I'll wager, by Mr. Cass. And it took well, for some enrolled on the

¹ Pistols.

² Border robbers.

spot, and others agreed to take no part against their old acquaintances of the 'côte du nord.'"

"Dieu merci!" ejaculated the dame; "it is not good to see neighbors become enemies. Should not we of both sides of the Strait be one people?"

"Madam, what you say is treason," interrupted the laird. "My house shall be prepared for defence, and if any bluecoat appears hereabout, he is like to be shot down with little warning. Laurente, do not forget my words."

By this, the two women were in tears, and the MacIntosh, having spoken his mind, went out to cool his wrath by a walk along the strand.

"What can have made my father, a Jacobite, of a sudden so loyal to the King?" sobbed Laurente, when mother and daughter were thus left together.

Dame MacIntosh promptly recovered her equanimity.

"'Chérie,' the laird has had letters from Scotland," she explained. "The King has most graciously restored the Moy estates, forfeited during the rebellion against the House of Hanover. And the earl, who is in his last days, has written to my husband that, as the next leader of the clan, he must make his submission. MacIntosh may care little for King George, but the command of his chief is sacred. For myself, I would not care to cross the seas; but *you*, Laurente, one day you may be a great lady."

"And go to England, to the court?" queried Laurente, with joyful enthusiasm.

The mother nodded in satisfaction, as her fond eyes rested upon the glowing face turned toward her, and

she thought how rich dress and jewels would set off her daughter's piquant beauty.

"'Allons, ma fille,' you see now why your father would gladly have you marry 'ce Monsieur Muir,' — a Scottish gentleman whose rank approaches his own; and why he warned you against encouraging any bluecoat lover. 'Je crois bien' he saw Pierre Labadie among the troops in the market-place."

The light died out of the expressive countenance of the young girl, and the splendid picture of London and its charms, as conjured up by her imagination, faded away.

"My father may one day have the power of life and death over the MacIntosh clan," she said, drawing herself up defiantly; "but he will never possess the right to bestow his daughter's heart. I shall marry whom I will, or not at all."

Having thus asserted herself, she rushed away to the little room on the ground floor that she occupied in summer, the loft being warm. Here, in her quiet nook overlooking the orchard, she sat tearfully sewing, until at last the tranquillity of Nature, the song of the bluebird and the woodpecker, the softness of the air blowing through the apple-trees and across the long grass, and of the sunlight glancing through the green boughs, soothed her, as a grieving child is comforted by the caress and smile of its mother.

Days passed. The American intrenchments were completed, but no detachment of troops was ordered to march on Fort Malden. One evening, as Colonel Cass sat at a rude writing-table in his tent, engaged

in mapping out a plan of attack, an orderly appeared at the entrance and, saluting, said, —

“Sir, the general asks your presence.”

The colonel rose to his feet.

“Say that I will wait upon him at once,” he replied with equal terseness.

In an exultant mood Mr. Cass strode through the camp.

“At last we are to measure swords with the enemy,” he soliloquized.

Arrived at headquarters, however, he found the surroundings little indicative of preparations for a sally. Governor Hull sat bolt upright in his chair, resplendent in the full uniform of a general; and truly, with his fine physique and snow-white hair, he presented an imposing martial figure. In his hand he held a closely written despatch, and at his feet lay the envelope of birch-bark in which it had been safely carried, secreted in the clothing of the messenger.

Before him stood a keen-eyed French-Canadian whose complexion, sunburned to a coppery hue, and his blue blouse and deerskins, proclaimed him a beatman just from a long voyage.

“Mr. Cass,” began the general, “I have sent for you as one of my council, that you may hear of the happenings in the north from an eye-witness. Our fort at Michilimackinac has surrendered, with the honors of war, to one thousand British and Indians.”

Although startled by this disastrous intelligence, the colonel betrayed no surprise during the voyageur's story.

"You may go," said the chief to the latter, when the recital was concluded. "Colonel, we must reward even the bearer of ill news; pay the man."

Mr. Cass smiled satirically, took from his pocket a Spanish pistole, and tossed it to the fellow, who thereupon withdrew.

When the occasion for impressing the scout with the importance of the American general was passed, Mr. Hull seemed to collapse.

"Colonel, pray excuse me," he said, casting down a bootjack and pulling off his shining and shapely boots. "And reach me that fan, I beg of you. Egad, the night is uncommonly sultry even for the season. In view of this despatch, I shall order a return across the river."

"Sir, I trust you will reconsider this hasty decision," protested Mr. Cass. "The news from the north will only strengthen the resolve of our men. Give me leave to lead my regiment to Fort Malden, and before the end of the month, the post shall be ours."

General Hull leaned his head upon his palm in an attitude of deep dejection.

"The woods are alive with savages ready to attack us," he muttered.

Mr. Cass laughed breezily.

"If we meet the redmen, we will fight them," said he. "Fortune gives her hand to a bold man."

His arguments finally prevailed, and the next morning the elated colonel, with two hundred and fifty men, among whom was Lieutenant Labadie, set out to reconnoitre the enemy.

The following day, Labadie, footsore and weary but light of heart, appeared again at headquarters.

"General, I bring a report from Colonel Cass," he said, delivering it.

The governor nodded with urbane courtesy, and breaking the seal of the letter, read,—

SANDWICH, UPPER CANADA, July 17, 1812.

SIR, — In conformity with your instructions, I proceeded with two hundred and fifty men to reconnoitre the enemy's advanced posts. We found them at the bridge over the River Canards, at the distance of four miles from Malden. After examining their position, I left one company of riflemen to conceal themselves near the bridge, and upon our appearance on the opposite side of the river, to commence firing, in order to divert their attention and to throw them into confusion. I then proceeded, with the remainder of the force, five miles to a ford over the Canards, and down on the southern bank of that river. About sunset, we arrived within sight of the enemy. Being entirely destitute of guides, we marched too near the bank of the river, and found our progress checked by a creek which was impassable. We were compelled to march up a mile, in order to effect a passage over it. This gave the enemy time to prepare for their defence. On coming down, we found them formed, and they began a fire of musketry. Our men moved with great energy and alacrity. After the first charge, the British retreated, while we continued to advance. Three times they formed, and as often retired. We drove them full half a mile, when it became so dark that we were forced to relinquish the pursuit. We learned from deserters that nine or ten were wounded or killed. The number that opposed us consisted of a detachment of the Forty-first Regiment, some militia, and a body of

Indians. . . . There is no doubt that their force considerably exceeded ours. Lieutenant Labadie conducted himself in a most daring and able manner. I have every reason to be satisfied with the whole detachment.

Very respectfully, Sir, I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

LEWIS CASS,

Col. 3d Regiment, Ohio Volunteers.

TO BRIGADIER GENERAL HULL.

Enthusiastic, and fresh from the struggle that had ended in success for the American arms, the young officer awaited with impatience some exclamation of gratification from the general, some ejaculation of praise for the men who had fought and won in the first skirmish of the war.

What was then his chagrin when Hull, having perused the despatch with leisurely precision, turned to his table and, drawing toward him a sheet of paper, began to write.

Presently, folding the missive, he handed it to the lieutenant, saying, —

“Labadie, you will carry this answer to your superior officer. It is an order to Colonel Cass to return at once to camp with his command.”

Labadie had not been long enough a soldier to receive this communication in silence.

“But surely, general,” he stammered, doubting if he had heard aright, “our victory has created consternation at Malden. Are we to abandon the position that our men have so intrepidly gained? By doing so, would we not be lacking in devotion to our cause?”

He paused in his appeal, for Hull's face grew purple with anger.

"Enough, sir," broke out the commander, in a rage; "am I to take counsel of a stripling? Be off on your errand. If you say more, I will have you court-martialed."

Had the brave Cass been permitted to pursue his advantage, it is probable that, with Malden forced to surrender, the whole history of the contest on the border would have been changed. Soon after the recall of the skirmishing party, intelligence reached the camp at Sandwich that an armistice had been agreed upon at Washington, but it did not include the armies of the frontier.

About the same time an express came in with the news that Captain Henry Brush, namesake of the Yankee husband of Dame Adelaide, was coming from Ohio by way of the River Raisin with provisions for the troops.

It being also learned that a company of British had left Fort Malden to intercept these supplies, Colonel Cass led forth his men to hold the party in check. They were, however, attacked and routed by Tecumseh, and this defeat was the death-blow to the spirit of General Hull.

With the prospect that the Strait was to become the theatre of the war, he had grown still more fearful lest hordes of Indians would come down from the northern forests, and in relentless fury over-run the "côte du nord." A fast aging man with his family gathered about him in his new home here in the west, the bold soldier who had followed Anthony

Wayne to victory, faltered when there arose before him a ghastly vision of his beloved daughter and grandchildren, and his people of Le'Détroit as victims of savage barbarity.

Accordingly, on the eighth of August, his lion-hearted officers, who would so gladly have pushed on to conquest, received a peremptory command to embark the troops for re-crossing the river, and, amid a dissatisfaction which amounted almost to mutiny, the unnecessary and disgraceful retreat began.

Thus was Canada evacuated by the Americans, after a military occupation of less than a month.

CHAPTER SIXTH

ONE LOVE DRIVES OUT ANOTHER

LIKE the fabled White Doe of the Indian legend, the Moon of the Young Deer¹ came up out of the forest, looked at her bright reflection in the pearly tide of the Strait, and took her course across the prairie of the sky. vainly until dawn would Gheezis, the Sun-warrior, pursue her with his gleaming arrows. But the arrows falling upon the meadows of Le Détroit strewed the ground with gold and silver.

Early in the evening, Laurente MacIntosh sat at her window, dreaming as young girls dream when the moonlight sheds a glamour over all things, and life seems as filled with beauty as the summer night.

Like a swift canoe upon the river, her reveries soon drifted to thoughts of her lover.

"Where is Pierre?" she asked of her heart, as if it must find an answer to the question.

A fleecy cloud obscured the moonbeams, and cast a gray shadow upon the girl as she sat with hands clasped upon her knee, looking across the orchard to the broad expanse of waters beyond, and the lights in the houses of the town on the opposite shore.

¹ August.

The shadow put an end to her shy love-dreams and recalled her to sadder reflections.

"Oh, war is cruel-hearted," she cried, turning her eyes to the western horizon, where now, in the momentary eclipse of the moon, the great comet shone blood-red, terrible, and in form more like than ever to the threatening arm of an Indian chief.

"War with the redmen we must expect in this frontier country, but why should we be at odds with our friends across the river, because of a quarrel between England and the States that in no way concerns us? Oh, why is Tecumseh our ally? I would as soon —" Laurente shuddered, but repeated to herself with added emphasis, — "yes, I would as soon give my fate into the keeping of James La Salle, as intrust the cause of my country to the Shawanoe and his brother, the Prophet. I am only a girl, yet it seems to me that no good can come of this alliance with the savage. Oh, I am more afraid even than when the Americans were camped at Sandwich, and we were in daily fear that they would over-run the côte with fire and sword. For I knew Pierre was in that camp, and he would find a way to spare this house and those I love. But now! Who will protect us against the Indians if, defying Tecumseh, they grow drunk on fire-water? Who will save me from Blue Jacket, if Tecumseh takes command? It is said he has small respect for this Colonel Proctor who has lately come to Fort Malden. O Pierre, as your wife, I would gladly follow you in the march and into the battle. I would become a soldier, and

no one should know me for a woman. I would tramp by your side through the morass and the forest, share your privations without complaint, be brave as you are brave."

At the fancy, Laurente left her place by the window, and, striking a light by means of a tinder-box that lay at hand, lit a candle.

Holding it high above her head, she peered into the mirror of her dressing-table, which, chintz-curtained and skirted, seemed a fantastic semblance of some fontanged and farthingaled "grande dame" of the days of the *Sieur de Cadillac*.

The wistful face reflected by the glass was not reassuring. It said, indeed, that the demoiselle had courage to follow her heart's hero through trials and dangers; but it would never pass for the face of a boy; the eyes were too deep and tender, the curves of the cheek too soft, the mouth too wet and rosy.

The fertility of her notion began to impress her. She frowned, and, thinking the fault lay, perhaps, with her long wavy hair, caught it up and massed it above her straight brows. The result only gave to her pretty head and throat a more piquant grace. She might sacrifice every one of those bright curls to the shears for love's sake, but such folly would help her little.

Laurente uttered an exclamation of impatience at the mirror's verdict, and blew out the candle. But a new thought caused her to blush and sigh in the half-light. Was her romancing unmaidenly? "At least, Father Richard would never consent to marry

me to Pierre that I might go soldiering with him," she sighed. "Oh, this pitiless war, which separates those who love each other, and puts off the wedding of a 'jeune demoiselle' until, with waiting, she is like to be an old maid."

As she returned to the window, the sound of a pony's feet clattering up the road from Windsor caused her to start with alarm, which, when the hoofbeats drew nearer, was succeeded by a nervous shrinking.

"It is Monsieur Muir," she said to herself. "Now that he has come back, I must let him know I have given my love to Pierre. But how? My mother will not hear me speak of Pierre, and she would not risk my father's anger by telling the captain I am promised to another. Well, I must tell him myself. It is but just to him, and he will not ask for an unwilling bride. He is too generous, and too proud. Ah, he deserves to be loved by some true woman, but I am not the one. I love Pierre, — only Pierre!"

Instead of riding up to the house door, the horseman dismounted at the orchard gate, and, finding it unlocked, entered by that way.

"He hopes to find me walking under the trees, or loitering on the gallery," conjectured the girl, catching her breath.

Yes, it was the captain. Leaving his horse tied to a picket, he took his path across the grass. A few steps showed him the orchard was a solitude, and he could not know that a pair of troubled eyes watched him from a shadowed room beyond the gallery.

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Did then the subtle seventh sense which the laird had ascribed to women only yet dwell in him as a heritage from a gentle mother? Did the mysterious electric current by which one nature acts upon another render him vaguely conscious of the nearness of the woman he loved? Or was it only that his soul, being filled with thoughts of her and of the uncertainties of war, found expression in the quaint ballad which he sang to himself, as he came on —

“Wilt thou be my dear one? —
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Oh, wilt thou let me cheer thee! —
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee,
I swear and vow that only thou
Shalt ever be my dear one, —
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shalt ever be my dear one.”

The moon was now shining as tranquilly as before, but to the listening girl there suddenly seemed something weird and uncanny in its lambent light.

“Lassie, say thou lo'es me,
Or if thou wilt not be my ain, —
Oh, say no thou 'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, die
Trusting that thou lo'es me!
Lassie, let me die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.”

As the singer concluded, Laurente again looked from the window.

Muir had paused in an open space between two trees. The moonbeams fell full upon his erect figure, transforming his well-worn uniform to a suit of silver mail, and lending to his face an unnatural pallor.

"My God! It is like seeing the wraith of one who is still living," faltered the girl, sinking upon her knees in the darkness. "What if, when he goes down to Malden again this evening, it may be never to return! In the battle that must come between our troops and the Americans, — who are destined to conquer, who to fall? I cannot tell this gallant lover now that I do not love him. It is little enough he asks of me, —

" 'Lassie, let me die
Trusting that thou lo'es me.' "

As she repeated these closing words of the song, Laurente gave way to her emotion; while the captain, unconscious of the effect of his unpremeditated serenade, finding the gallery deserted, passed around to the front of the house, and was speedily admitted by old Sandy.

The despondency of the young officer disappeared before the kindness of Laurente's greeting, especially since, notwithstanding her assumed gayety, he saw upon her sweet face the traces of tears, which he mentally compared to the dew upon the petals of the eglantine. He must cheer her, he thought, "soothe the fears aroused by the late skirmishes of the British troops with the Americans," at Brownstown and Mongaugon. But, although gracious, she, as usual, gave him no chance for a tête-à-tête. After

lingering for two hours or more, he took leave of MacIntosh and "la bonne mère" in the pleasant parlor and, turning to Laurente, said boldly, —

"Mademoiselle, before I go, will you walk with me for five minutes in the moonlight?"

How could she decline? The remembrance of the apparition that had presented itself to her fancy in the orchard checked the excuse upon her lips, and she went out with him into the peaceful loveliness of the evening.

"Mademoiselle," he began, as they paced the road together, "months ago I avowed my love for you. Now I ask you once more to be my wife. Give me your decision to-night. Whether we have war or peace, I shall not come for it again."

Laurente became singularly agitated.

"Oh, monsieur, monsieur, — forgive me, I cannot," she faltered, only half articulately. "Let us speak of something else! Oh, you must come again, and then I will answer you. Do not press me now."

The captain looked down at her with tenderness, strangely moved by her appeal.

"Dear little demoiselle, she *does* love me, after all," he thought, and his heart beat high with happiness. "Those downcast eyes, this pretty tremulousness and confusion, — surely these bear witness that I have stormed the sacred citadel of her heart. Yet, my faith, what an ado a girl makes about the terms of surrender! Egad, this game of love is like a bit of military strategy; the least false move might prove one's overthrow. I must let her have her way; but —

"Laurente, Laurente," he whispered passionately,

as he bent down and kissed the little hand that trembled on his arm.

Laurente drew away from him.

"Good-night, monsieur," she said, moving quickly to the door-stone.

"Laurente, one word," he pleaded.

"Au revoir, God keep you, monsieur; I will pray for you," she repeated. And, allowing him no opportunity to say more, she fled indoors.

The house and orchard of Angus MacIntosh had recently, like those of his neighbors, been surrounded by a palisade of stout pickets, after the manner of the homesteads of the early settlers. The main entrance was by a broad gate, like that of a fort, built across a roadway just wide enough for a charette or cariole, — a roadway that led up to the door, and thence around the buildings.

During the day, this gate and the postern at the end of the orchard stood open, but late at night both were barred, making the enclosure a defence alike against the Americans and the redmen.

In the summer, the space before the house on either side of the narrow road was always bright with the season's blooms. Here one morning, a few days after the visit of Captain Muir, Laurente worked among her flowers, training the hollyhocks, a bevy of flaunting beauties from the Levant, to the trim decorum suited to a French demoiselle; loosening the earth about the marigolds and balsams, the sweet-williams and zinnias, the herbs and simples; and occasionally plucking out a vagabond weed hiding

among them as though it sought to elude the vigilance of the industrious gardener.

Very pretty she looked, as she bent over the mass of living color that glowed pink and golden, flame-tinted and purple, like a forest fire. Her blue sun-bonnet had fallen back, and as, disturbed by a slight sound, she turned her face, flushed with exercise, in the direction from which it came, she seemed, among these summer blossoms, the sweetest flower of all.

Evidently some such comparison occurred to the young man who had entered the garden and was making his way toward her. For his restless glance lit up with a half savage delight in the girl's beauty, and the desire of possession burned in his heart with an intensity like that which prompts the red chief to barter all he has, even to his gun, in exchange for a dusky bride whose shy eyes have made him a captive.

At sight of the intruder, however, Laurente sprang to her feet.

"James La Salle!" she exclaimed with a swift thought of flight.

"Yes, mademoiselle," he rejoined, going through the motion of doffing his cap with creole grace, although he wore upon his head only the hawk's feather thrust through his black hair.

"Yes, James La Salle. Do you run away when your other lovers come to see you? Well, you need do so no longer, for soon I alone shall come, and for my coming you shall sigh. I do not wish to frighten you, my pretty white snowbird," he continued in a gentler tone, that had in it something of the music

of the woods. "Of those who pay you court I am the best able to save you from the fate of many helpless women and children in time of war. Your father is growing old; he has lost the strength of his arm. Your British lover is sent out against the Americans —"

Laurente uttered a cry of apprehension. Her tormentor's eyes gleamed as he perceived that his words had struck home.

"What will you do when Tecumseh's warriors tire of the cowardly Colonel Proctor at the fort, and sweep over the prairie, plundering the Canadians?" he went on. "A torch will soon make a breach in this strong palisade. What will you do when the Americans fight the redmen here, perhaps before your door? Only two days ago the Yankees were victorious in a fierce battle at Mongaugon; they will take Canada before breakfast some morning. What will you do then?"

Laurente smiled, and her courage returned.

"If that day comes, you shall see what I will do, James La Salie," she cried, raising her head proudly. "How dare you speak to me of love? If you truly loved me, you would be ready to defend me, without asking reward for the service every true man owes to a woman in danger, whether she is dear to him or not. You have neither the noble spirit of the great Tecumseh, nor the white man's skill with his sword."

The intruder's dark frown grew darker.

"Ugh! I know to whom you look for aid," he declared with a scornful laugh. "But when the redcoats fled from Mongaugon, they took with them

a score of captives. Among these was Pierre Labadie."

Laurente grew white to the lips.

"It is not true," she asserted, confronting her unwelcome visitor as a frightened fawn when brought to bay turns upon the hunter a look of pleading.

"It *is* true," repeated the creole, vindictively. "Colonel Proctor is bringing the prisoners to the camp near the Sandwich church. To-morrow they are to be delivered over to Elskwatawa the Prophet, to be burned at the stake. Tecumseh is not here to intervene. The great Shawanoe has gone to the Maumee valley."

An expression of wild despair stamped itself upon the face of the tortured girl, and, picking up the keen-bladed hunting-knife which she had used to cut flowers, she cried in desperation, —

"James La Salle, go, or I may kill you."

La Salle laughed derisively and caught her wrist.

Laurente felt her grasp upon the weapon relax.

"Father! father!" she screamed.

"Hush," cried Blue Jacket, wrenching the knife from her and throwing it away. "You are mad, mademoiselle. Why should you hate one whose only wish is to serve you? I came to tell you of your lover's plight, so that you may not count upon his being able to help you. Among my people it is the strongest warrior who wins the love of the daughter of the forest. I am the strongest of your lovers. Hush! See, I am going."

So saying, he rushed down the path and through the gate, just as a shot rang out across the garden.

The next moment, the laird appeared on the gallery, holding in his hand a smoking pistol.

"I swore to shoot any American caught prowling around; but I must thank you, my lass, for crying out," he exclaimed. "How came the fellow here?"

The girl burst into tears.

"Oh, father," she faltered, "it was not Pierre, as you think, — it was only James La Salle."

"By St. Andrew," interrupted MacIntosh, "I expected La Salle with a message from Colonel Proctor. Now, because of your silly fright, you have caused me to shoot at him, and have made him our enemy. Women always poke the fire from the top. When misfortunes befall, injuries follow."

His daughter did not answer, but with unsteady step passed into the house.

"Mother, my head aches; I will not come to dinner," she said, pausing at the door of the kitchen, where Madam MacIntosh was stirring a bowl of sagamite — a porridge made of corn and fruit — over the fire.

"Ah, 'pauvre petite,' said "la bonne mère," with maternal solicitude. "Yes, go and rest, and you shall have a dainty luncheon, later."

Grateful for the assurance that she would beat liberty for some hours, Laurente went to her room, bathed her flushed cheeks, and tied on her sun-bonnet anew. Then climbing out of the window, she drew the leather curtain together, ostensibly to shut out the heat and light, but really to conceal from any chance visitor to the orchard the fact that she was not inside.

Thankful that the kitchen did not give on the

gallery, she forthwith made her way across the grass, and, passing through the gate, stepped out on the corduroy road that led down the côte, and walked quickly toward Sandwich.

A tramp of five or six miles lay before her, and it was already noon, — the hot, burning noon of an August day. To keep up the rapid pace at which she had set out was impossible. Several times, from sheer exhaustion, she was forced to rest; and once she stopped at a farmhouse for a drink of water.

At last, between two and three o'clock, she reached the level stretch of road whereon bordered several houses and the English church which constituted the village below Windsor.

From its dulness, the girl perceived there had been no such stirring event at the encampment as the arrival of the British colonel and his prisoners. She continued down the road, therefore without reflecting upon the distance she would have to retrace to reach home once more.

Before long, however, she stopped short, and, kneeling, bent an ear close to the ground. Yes, the faint sound she had heard marked the footsteps of marching men.

For the first time Laurente thought of herself. Never did she appreciate her wood-bird freedom as at this moment, when upon her liberty depended, perhaps, the life of her lover. If the commander encountered her, a young girl wandering thus alone, might she not be apprehended also?

Looking about for some hiding-place, she remembered having recently passed a bit of woodland, and,

running back to it, had scarce time to conceal herself in the underbrush before the troops came into view.

A band of redcoat infantry of the rank and file, they were neither better nor worse than many of their comrades of that day, — men who consoled themselves for the irksomeness of their service in the wilderness by drinking heavily when opportunity offered, and brawling on occasion; a loose and desperate set, cruel in war, and with as little regard for the property of the British-Canadians as for their American foes.

Among them, but mounted on a fine English horse, was a very stout man with a full red face and a long bristly beard. He appeared more like a butcher than an officer. Nevertheless, at another time Laurente would have scrutinized him curiously enough, for this was Colonel Proctor, leader of His Majesty's forces.

Now, her anxious eyes passed him by, and fixed themselves upon a little group of captives, who, afoot, and with a special guard, brought up the rear. Travel-worn, dejected men they were, their arms being bound behind, so that they could not even wipe the dust and perspiration from their faces.

There was a struggle between compassion and indignation in the mind of Laurente when she heard one of them ask in vain of a soldier a draught of water from the canteen which he offered to one of his comrades. But presently her heart seemed to stop beating. Yes, James La Salle had told her the truth; there, among the unfortunate men, was the alert, well-knit form of Pierre Labadie.

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Absorbed in watching him, she leaned forward from her vantage-point behind a tree. Was it the love and pity in her gaze that drew his glance into the depths of the thicket?

At all events Labadie, as he plodded along, footsore and weary, after this enforced march of nearly twenty miles, was suddenly favored with a stange vision.

Had his fevered thirst called up this hallucination? Weakened by the physical sufferings he had undergone, and haunted by the horrors that menaced him, was his mind giving way?

What he saw was the graceful form of a young girl in a sad-colored frock, scarcely distinguishable from the shadows of the tree-trunks, a young girl fair as a prairie rose, looking out from a background of greenery.

Such might have been one of the meadow nymphs of creole folk-lore. Yet, no, it was not a delusion. Pierre threw back his head with an air of renewed courage, and his soul thrilled with gladness. It was really the face of Laurente. She whom he loved best in the world was looking out at him with lovelit eyes from the heart of the wood. For one happy instant all the ardor of his nature answered their brave glance.

He was recalled to himself by a harsh voice swearing at him roundly, and bidding him keep to the trail. At the same moment, the private beside him threatened to strike him with his musket.

Labadie's unflinching look held off the brute for a second, and an officer, stepping between them, knocked up the firelock with a sharp reprimand to the man.

Had the blow fallen, Laurente felt that she would have cried out, and rushed to the side of her lover regardless of the consequence. As she drew closer to the tree, she saw, with surprise, that the officer who had interposed in his defence was Captain Muir.

As though forced by fate, the gaze of the captain fell upon the girl shrinking in the underbrush.

Laurente trembled. Would her ambush be unhappily discovered by others of the party? Would the soldiers drag her forth, bind her as Pierre was bound, and take her also a prisoner to Sandwich? True, she might plead that she was British, and Monsieur Muir would intercede for her; but how much would his influence avail with Colonel Proctor? Was she thus, in the beginning, to be cut off from all power to help Pierre?

She pressed her clasped hands to her lips to keep from uttering a moan of despair. Her eyes met those of the captain. Their mute appeal must have revealed to him all she had been unable to bring herself to tell him during many weeks, — the story of her love for Pierre and the hopelessness of his own suit.

He started, and his hand went to his heart as though he had received a mortal wound. Gallantly rallying, however, he sent back to the woman cowering in the thicket a look of encouragement, of noble sympathy and undying love. Then, wheeling about, he gave a sharp order to his men, —

“Attention — forward!”

And the rear guard with their prisoners passed on at a more rapid pace.

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When they were gone, Laurente made her way through the little wood to the open prairie, and set out for home, avoiding the village. One thought urged her onward. She must effect Pierre's release before morning.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

JAMES BLUE JACKET

THREE hours later, when dusk was falling, as Laurente, faint and exhausted, reached the orchard gate, a tall figure strode into the road from the shelter of a pear-tree, and stretched out a hand to detain her.

"James La Salle, let me pass," she demanded haughtily. "Have you altogether forgotten the gentle French courtesy to which you were reared, that you dog the footsteps of a demoiselle until she must in future refrain from going about unattended?"

"The white snowbird has flown too far; she is foolish to tire her wings," returned La Salle, softly, the creole part of his nature in the ascendant. "Mademoiselle, I will make a bargain with you. To-morrow Pierre Labadie will be delivered over to Elskwatawa, and Tecumseh is not here to spare him. Yet, if you wish to save your lover, I will help you."

Laurente scanned the inscrutable countenance before her.

"James La Salle, do you mean what you say?" she asked, with a fluttering of hope.

"I can and will, upon one condition, set Pierre Labadie free; his life is at your disposal," he added.

"Laurente, I have already told you that for your sake I will settle down to the life of a rich French habitant. I have been well taught by Le Père Richard as any of the young men of the côte. Promise to marry me, and Pierre Labadie shall have his liberty."

Laurente drew back despairingly.

"Oh, why do you afflict me with this pretence of help, of generosity?" she broke out with bitter impatience.

"Mademoiselle, listen to me," urged the creole. "I *am* generous. It is not every man who would risk his own life to save one who loves the woman he wishes to make his wife, — one whom she loves in return! But, once you are mine, I shall fear no rival; I shall look to the keeping of your heart. The choice is before you. If you love this Pierre Labadie, you will sacrifice your love in exchange for his life. If you do not love him, at his death you will dim your pretty eyes with weeping for a while, and then you will forget."

In the twilight Laurente stared helplessly at the man who asserted so confidently that he would compel her love and hold her very soul in bondage. How she feared him!

"But — but, I cannot promise to marry you, James La Salle," she insisted, struggling against the influence which to-day would be called hypnotic. "I am betrothed to Pierre Labadie."

La Salle laughed derisively.

"You will soon be quit of your promise since he dies to-morrow," he said.

Laurente caught her breath in an effort to repress a sob.

"Promise me that if I save Pierre Labadie you will be my wife," relentlessly persisted La Salle.

The girl's heart seemed benumbed. Whatever alternative she chose would put an end to her own happiness. But Pierre's life was the boon to be won. Why did she hesitate? No, she must not! Striving therefore to banish for the nonce her antipathy for this man, she answered, with hopeless apathy, "Very well, James La Salle; if you save Pierre Labadie, I will be your wife. No, do not touch me; stand back and let me pass."

"Mademoiselle, you may trust me," replied La Salle, stepping aside and bowing to her with the air of a grand seigneur. "To me, every hair of your head is sacred. I will begin to build my house to-morrow."

Breathless, the girl at last gained the MacIntosh home. The laird was taking his forty winks in the cosy parlor, and had not missed her, it being supposed that she was still in her room. "La bonne mère," anxious as she had been, seeing that the child was utterly fagged out, forbore to question her, content to wait for the confidence sure to come, sooner or later.

The Pani servants were gone to their quarters in the yard for the night. But the mother led the way to the kitchen, and, bidding her sit down on the settle in the chimney-corner, brought her strawberry wine in a silver cup and a piece of the fine white bread which the good housewife herself always kneaded and baked with great care.

This consideration had its reward. Revived by the simple cordial and the food, with nerve tension relaxed by the sense of security, Laurente began to weep silently. Before many minutes, casting herself into her mother's arms, she sobbed out the whole story of Pierre's capture, his peril, and the promise that had been extorted from her.

"James La Salle! Your father will be angry because it is not Captain Muir, and, for my part, I should prefer another for a son-in-law. Still, the La Salles stand well; and when the young man has given up his vagaries, cast aside his hawk's feather, and ceased to dress like a *coureur-de-bois*, he will appear a handsome gallant," concluded Madam MacIntosh, with a practical disposition to make the best of circumstances.

Laurente shuddered and hid her face in her hands. "I would rather die than marry him," she avowed.

"La bonne mère" sighed. The situation was beyond her simple efforts at consolation.

"'Eh bien, chérie,' grieve no more to-night," she said presently. "In the morning you may look more calmly upon what you have done. At least you need not fear to sleep; since, with you for the prize, James La Salle will do his best to fulfil his promise."

Mechanically the girl rose. Before she reached the narrow hallway that led to the sleeping-rooms of the first story, however, a faint, yet peremptory tap at the house-door caused her to pause nervously.

"La bonne mère" moved quickly to the door.

"Who is there?" she asked in a low tone, for in those days caution was next neighbor to security.

The voice that answered was familiar, though muffled.

She drew the bolt, and into the room dashed a man, bare-headed, and in the undress uniform of an American soldier.

Laurente suppressed a scream like the startled note of a bird, and darted across the floor.

"O Pierre, Pierre!" she exclaimed, casting herself into his outstretched arms.

"Laurente dearest," murmured Labadie as he clasped her to his breast, and kissed the sweet lips whose involuntary cry told him how deeply her heart was stirred.

"But, Pierre," she said after a moment, slipping shyly from his caress. "How did you escape? Grace à Dieu! On my knees I will thank Heaven for your deliverance every day of my life!"

As, with heightened color and glad smiles, she looked up at him, Pierre thought no young maid in the world could be more beautiful.

"Tell me about it," she urged, as he led her back to the settle and seated himself beside her.

He was spared from replying at once by "la bonne mère."

"Cannot you see the lad is spent with fatigue, Laurente?" she interposed, pouring for him a draught of "eau de vie."

Laurente sprang up and brought food, which he willingly accepted, saying, with an attempt to make light of his privations, that the Britishers had not entertained him any too lavishly during his stay among them.

Eagerly the girl waited upon him, supremely happy in the joy of the moment.

When he had done justice to the fare, she drew aside the little table upon which it had been served, and resumed her place at his side.

"Now you shall describe to us the manner of your escape," she ordered, with a pretty show of authority. Yet, of a sudden, her spirits sank as a dark face arose before her mental consciousness, and the thought obtruded itself upon her that she had bought these few blissful moments at the price of her life's peace.

Pierre still hesitated. Laurente's ingenuous manifestation of her affection moved him profoundly, and strengthened his love for her. How could he cast a shadow upon her heart, chase away those smiles, every one of which was so dear to him, and the glow of happiness that lent an added charm to her beauty? But why that anxious look? Did she already surmise his position?

"Dearest," he said, taking her hands in his, "I have *not* escaped. Colonel Proctor, with a clemency I dared not anticipate, accepted my parole until midnight, when I must present myself again at his camp. My brave love, do not grieve. In this half hour with you is compassed more joy than comes to many a man who lives to be old."

Laurente scarce noted his attempt to soften the truth.

How unworthy seemed her thought of herself a moment before! Believing Pierre free, she had yet shrunk from the sacrifice she had chosen.

"O Pierre, you shall not go back!" she cried, clinging to him with frantic pleading. "You must get across the river; the canoes lie outside near the wall of the house, and —"

Breaking away from him she ran to a corner, caught up a paddle, and, returning, put it into his hand, adding, —

"Come, be off without delay."

Labadie's hold upon the rude oar tightened, and, as he glanced down at it, a gleam of hope shone in his eyes, as if he felt liberty within his grasp.

The next minute he cast the paddle away, and shook his head.

"Do not urge me; it is impossible," he declared.

"No," protested the girl, misunderstanding. "Old Sandy does not lock the gates until ten o'clock; the way is clear."

Pierre smiled with the fortitude of a hero.

"Sandy has agreed to keep one gate open for me, although to do so may spoil his record for punctuality," he responded, with an effort to speak lightly.

"But to return will mean, for you, death, — perhaps death by fire," she faltered.

"It will mean death, without doubt. The manner of my death rests with Elskwatawa," was the steady answer. "But I would be unworthy of your love, dear Laurente, were I to break the pledge upon which I have staked my honor. I must go, and now, sweetheart. God bless you for the love you have given me. I saw you in the wood, and knew you came to cheer me."

In vain Laurente, with all a woman's arts, sought to

move him from his decision. Her tender entreaties might well have unnerved the most intrepid, but honor triumphed.

"Promise me one thing," she begged at length, "if a chance is offered to you to regain your liberty, promise me that you will seize upon it?"

"The love of life is strong to the last in the heart of the bravest," he acknowledged readily; "yet —"

Laurente ceased her entreaties. But the discretion of "la bonne mère" was put to rout by the sigh with which Pierre concluded his otherwise unfinished sentence.

"Be of good courage, my son," she broke out, "and do not say 'adieu,' but 'au revoir,' for James La Salle has sworn you shall have an opportunity to escape."

"James La Salle," repeated Labadie, with unwonted sternness, — "Blue Jacket is not the man to pluck a brand from the burning unless to light some hope of his own. What does this mean, Laurente?"

"It means, Pierre, that you may safely trust him," explained the girl, fervidly. "Let us waste no more of these precious moments in speaking of him. If you *will* go, alas, — I shall go with you, at least to the gate."

But Pierre was not satisfied.

"Madam, *you* will tell me more? Otherwise I shall not put faith in this ally's sincerity," he persisted.

"Well, well, if you must know," yielded Dame MacIntosh, falling into the snare, and disregarding the signals of Laurente, imploring silence, "Laurente has promised to marry him if he sets you free. But naturally, such vows are made only to be broken."

"Mother!" ejaculated Laurente, as, overwhelmed with distress, she sank down upon the seat in the chimney corner.

For a second Pierre Labadie stood looking fixedly at her.

Then, kneeling beside her, he took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly.

"Laurente, I understand; you would even sacrifice yourself for me," he said; "but you shall not do it. Remember this, and, madam, I call upon you to witness my words. Do not forget them, no matter what lying stories may be brought to you. I swear that I will never accept my life or freedom at the hands of James La Salle. My love, do not despair; after all, it may be 'au revoir,' if God so wills."

Clasping her to his heart, he kissed her once more, and then, wringing the hand of Madam MacIntosh, tore himself away.

When he was gone, Laurente fell back almost fainting.

"Mother, you have destroyed his last chance of deliverance," she sobbed hysterically.

She did not notice that her father had entered the room, and stood staring at her in the dazed fashion of one who has been awakened by an unusual commotion from a tranquil doze, prolonged by his having been left in solitude.

How Laurente got through the next day she could not have told. But "la bonne mère" knew she spent much of the time kneeling at her window, alternately watching the road beyond the orchard, and the blue waters of the Strait in quest of a messenger, and

looking up at the calm, cloudless sky, while she prayed God to save her lover.

At evening, as the family were about to retire, the stillness of the hour was suddenly broken by a wild shriek that swept over the prairie like the fierce voice of a devastating storm,—a yell so fear-inspiring it might have been the cry of lost souls exultant in their rebellion.

The laird started to his feet, crossed the room, took a pair of pistols from the drawer of his secretary, and laid them before him on the table.

"The Indians!" ejaculated Madam MacIntosh, making the sign of the cross. "The Lord have mercy upon us! It may be we shall never see the morning!"

Laurente stood beside her mother, white and rigid, but her eyes, like those of her father, rested on the pistols.

Shortly before, with the thought of the promise she had given to James La Salle vividly present to her mind, she had felt that the future held no happiness for her. But the tide of hope had rushed back to her heart while she prayed and waited during the long day. She was young, and, with the natural instinct of self-preservation inherent in every living creature, she resolved that if die she must, she would at least sell her life as dearly as possible.

Like the awful roar of a prairie fire, the clamor drew nearer. Above the bloodthirsty whoops of the savages could be heard the shouts and oaths of men scarce more civilized; and, now and again, a command rang out in the English tongue. The party

battered on the gate of the palisade with such force it seemed as if the stout cedar saplings which formed the palings must give way, like reeds before the wind.

While the little group in the living-room waited aghast, the door burst open and hale old Sandy rushed in, armed with a blunderbuss.

"Your honor," he cried, addressing the laird, "this scaff-raft of savages and redcoats have come, so says their leader, upon an unco' peaceable errand."

MacIntosh laughed grimly, and took up one of the pistols.

"Aweel, we are prepared to receive them with a like cordiality," he said with dry humor.

"They are led by a British officer who makes bauld to say he has a warrant to search through these premises, by your honor's leave," continued the old servant, in a tone of apology for repeating the message.

"What, search my house!" cried Angus, in a rage.

"Yes, your honor. It falls out that Mr. Pierre Labadie, of the American army, who was made prisoner at Mongaugon, is escaped; and some camsteary and obstinate carl will have it he is in hiding here," proceeded the Scot, doggedly examining the lock of his musket.

At the mention of Pierre Labadie, MacIntosh saw his daughter quail with alarm. The sight angered him still more, and he turned away abruptly. Perhaps, nevertheless, some wish to spare her prompted his answer.

"Bid this churlish officer and his rampaging fiends carry back to Colonel Proctor the compliments of

MacIntosh of Inches, and say to him that I am a British subject. My house is my castle. No man shall enter it against my will, and I will defend my rights to the last."

At every word the old servant nodded in approval of the message, and, finally, he broke out audaciously, "Aweel, your honor, such is my own opeenion."

Great as were the odds against the laird's small garrison of domestics, the stubbornness of the Scot was aroused in Sandy as well as in his master.

Before he was off with his spirited reply, however, "la bonne mère" interposed, —

"Of what avail will it be to gain the ill-will of Colonel Proctor," she protested, turning to her husband. "Let a posse of the soldiers search the house if they will; then bid them be gone, and joy be after them."

Again MacIntosh glanced at his daughter.

Laurent's eyes shone; a happy smile played about her lips; her hands were clasped upon her breast in a gesture of thankfulness, and her lips moved as if in grateful prayer.

Angus heaved a sigh of relief. Clearly the intelligence of Labadie's escape was news to the girl. The young man had not sought refuge here, as he at first had feared. Seldom was MacIntosh known to yield in judgment to his wife, but now the old servant witnessed the unexpected.

"Stay, Sandy," called the laird, "we must think of the women, and settle this matter as amicably as may be. Admit the officer and some half dozen of his followers, but no more."

Muttering to himself, and with a disappointed air, Sandy departed, to return in a few minutes conducting six men, the chief among them being no other than the ruthless Dickson, the renegade white. They wore the blue blouses and elkskin trousers of the *coureurs-de-bois*, but the faces of all but the leader and one other were smeared with Indian war-paint. In this last individual, Laurente, with a shudder, recognized James La Salle.

Dickson had the grace to salute the master of the house before beginning his task.

"Sir," said the MacIntosh, haughtily, "I protest against this visit. Being a loyal Briton, however, I will not resist authority asserted in the name of the King. You may search my house; it shelters no traitor."

"Ha, ha, ha! That we shall soon decide for ourselves, my good sir," laughed the soldier-scout, roughly; "I regret the intrusion, but my orders admit of no delay. Men, to your work!"

The latter needed no second bidding, but promptly ransacked the rooms, one after another. They beat upon the walls in the hope of detecting some sliding panel, such as was common in the houses of the period, as affording entrance to a loft or cellar used in troubled times as a refuge from the Indians. They thrust the bayonets of their firelocks among the pillows of the settle, and through the deerskin window-curtains. They rammed their muskets up the chimney, to cut off the possible escape of the hunted man by means of the flue.

James La Salle took no part in the search, but,

pausing beside Laurente, while the attention of his companions was engaged elsewhere, he whispered, —

"Do not be afraid, mademoiselle, have I not kept my word to you? Thanks to my efforts, Pierre Labadie is free. Do not fear to tell me in what part of the house he is concealed, that I may hoodwink the vigilance of the men and divert their search elsewhere. A lifting of your eyebrows, Pahweetah, when they draw near his hiding-place, and I will understand."

Laurente shrank back in disgust from his arrogant assumption, and a suspicion of the depth of his perfidy flashed upon her. Was it true that through him Pierre was now at liberty? And if so, had he effected her lover's escape only to speedily track him down with this pack of human bloodhounds? Had he thus kept to the letter of his agreement in order to hold her to her promise, while making sure that Labadie would be recaptured and delivered over to Elskwatawa?

At least, and her courage returned with the assurance which she gained from his very eagerness, Pierre was indeed free, and the longer the searchers delayed hereabout, the greater his chance of eluding them.

Drawing herself up, she said loftily, —

"You will not believe me, James La Salle, but I tell you, Pierre Labadie is not here."

"Yes, my pretty pigeon, I believe you are lying," answered La Salle, cunningly; "I know he *has been* here. He kept his parole, and returned to the camp, to the surprise even of Colonel Proctor, who roundly called him a fool for his scruples of honor. But I

have no doubt you planned with him where he should be concealed in case of his escape. He could not have got away in a boat, for all day Indians in canoes have been on the watch."

Laurente uttered an exclamation of despair.

La Salle smiled triumphantly, taking it for an admission that he had surmised aright.

While refraining, himself, from any act of force, and pretending to distract the attention of Dickson and his men, now from one point and again from another, he permitted them to invade the rooms of the women. At length, when they had ripped up the beds with their weapons, explored the garret and cellar, and made a thorough investigation of the farm buildings by the light of pine torches, the truth forced itself upon them that they had come on a vain errand. The fugitive was indeed not there.

"Curse you, Blue Jacket, you have led us on a wild-goose chase," exclaimed Dickson, in unavailing wrath.

La Salle swore in turn, under his breath, and shot at the scout a look which augured that the man who spoke to him as though he were a dog was like to pay dear for his arrogance.

"If the American is not here now, he may come later," he muttered, controlling his anger.

"True," replied Dickson; "we will leave a guard to capture the Yankee if he makes his appearance after we are gone."

Raising his voice, he bade his men remain on duty at the house until they should be relieved. La Salle smiled to himself with vindictive satisfaction.

This would make him quits with Laurente. She had not by so much as a look expressed obligation to him for the escape of her lover. Well, should Labadie venture near her home, he would certainly be taken, and Blue Jacket's jealous revenge would be complete.

But the wiliness of the Indian nature of La Salle prompted him to strike secretly. Moreover, in his wild heart burned the fierce resolve that Laurente should be his wife, whether Pierre Labadie was taken or not.

Accordingly, summoning whatever of debonair creole grace he possessed, he made his way back to the living-room, where the girl had sunk into a chair beside the dark chimney.

"Mademoiselle, I have fulfilled my promise to you," he said self-confidently, as he paused before her. "You have not thanked me; but I do not desire gratitude. No; I wish you to feel and acknowledge my power. At my word, the redmen and soldiers outside the palisade will go away and leave this household in peace. You have no cause to fear, my white snowbird. I am leaving a guard to protect you."

"Monsieur, in my father's house I require no guard of your setting," she answered disdainfully.

"Still, they will remain," he said with a Gallic shrug.

"James La Salle," cried the distracted girl, "if you wish to spare me, as you pretend, you will go now. Your wooing will keep for another occasion."

La Salle bowed with mocking homage, and replied,

"Mademoiselle, I beg to remind you that I have no need to woo, for you are already my promised wife. I go to prepare for our wedding."

Then, with a careless laugh, he joined Dickson, and went out with him, leaving the posse of soldiers quartered on the family.

Whatever harangue the officer addressed to the redcoats and Indians outside the palisade, it proved in the end effective. With a wolfish howl of disappointment at being baffled of their prey, they set off for the camp of Proctor.

Meantime, Angus MacIntosh raged like a lion over the havoc wrought by the searchers. So thankful were the women when the savage horde were gone, however, that by contrast they were disposed to make light of the presence of the guard. "La bonne mère" even proceeded with right good-will to give an order to Martine, in compliance with their gruff demand for a supper of the "best in the house."

CHAPTER EIGHTH

A BRIDE AND A BOMB

"**P**IERRE is free!" The words danced through the brain of Laurette and awoke a happy thrill in her heart. "Thank God! Thank God! Pierre has eluded his pursuers, and by this time he must be across the river."

At first the girl felt only exultation at the assurance given her by the vain search of Dickson and his followers. But La Salle's boast recalled her to herself with a sudden chill, like a dash of water cast into the face of a sleep-walker. Blue Jacket had kept his promise; she must marry him when he came to claim her. It was the price she had agreed to pay for Pierre's life. Although she had just replied so proudly to her unwelcome suitor, when she gained her own little room at the rear of the house, she fell upon her knees beside the window and, stretching forth her arms toward the starlit heavens, cried out to God to mercifully strike her dead rather than abandon her to the fate she had chosen.

In her misery she bowed her head upon the window-ledge, and buried her face in her hands. But presently there came to the overwrought girl, like the first white light of dawn after a stormy night on the Lakes, the recollection of Pierre's fierce

asseveration when, through the garrulity of Madam MacIntosh, he learned of the promise that had been extorted from herself.

"Laurente, no matter what lying story may be brought to you, remember, — I will never accept my life or freedom at the hands of James La Salle!"

Laurente, cheered by renewed hope, looked up. A falling star shot across the sky and disappeared amid the mists of the Strait. Was it an angel sent from on High with a message of peace to sorrowing humanity?

The girl crossed herself and took courage. She seemed to hear again Pierre's firm voice; she felt as if his protecting arm enfolded her.

"Had James La Salle effected her lover's escape? No, what he said was false. In that case, she was released from her bond. And yet, Pierre was free.

"Oh, how good God is! Shall I not trust in Him?" she ejaculated. And, beginning to repeat the prayers she had been taught as a child by "le bon Père Richard," she fell asleep over them, with her head resting on the window-ledge, and her face turned toward the river.

The next morning, Angus MacIntosh, ignoring the posse of soldiers billeted upon him, set out for Proctor's headquarters to protest against the indignity to which he had been subjected in the search of his house, and to demand redress.

He returned home in no gentle mood, but with news that brought his domestic affairs to a climax.

"By St. Andrew, madam," exclaimed Angus to his wife, as he paced the floor of the living-room, as was his habit when excited, —

"By St. Andrew, here's a braw kettle of fish! You have related an unco' story of how James La Salle compassed the escape of that ne'er-do-weel, Labadie, and how Laurente has promised to marry him for his reward. Zounds! Down at the camp they are telling a different tale."

Laurente, attracted by the loud tones of her father's voice, had entered the room as he spoke the last words. Steadying herself against the table, she gazed at him in mute appeal, not daring to frame the question that trembled on her lips.

"Upon my soul, I wish it was La Salle who had got himself into trouble for his two-facedness," continued MacIntosh. "But, no, — the Red Dwarf take it all, 't is Captain Muir who is to blame for Labadie's flight. Muir, it seems, ordered that the prisoner should be left unbound, and — well, it is thought the American got away in a canoc an h. r before his escape became known. Proctor was wild with rage; Elskwatawa, sullen as a fox; and Muir was at once placed under arrest."

An exclamation from Laurente caused the laird to pause, but it was only for a moment.

"Well may you cry out, my lass," he said, turning upon her. "The first intelligence to greet me was that the unhappy captain was to be court-martialed, and was like to suffer the penalty from which he delivered the Yankee."

"You interceded with Colonel Proctor? Surely

the man would not thus sacrifice one of his own officers," faltered the girl, white to the lips.

"Colonel Proctor would go to any length to impress the Shawanoc," answered the laird, glumly. "Nevertheless, I went to him and, though I tried to be smooth-spoken enough, by St. Andrew, we had an unco' warm half hour. For I told him to his face that if he proceeded against the captain, the Canadians, to a man, would rise against him."

"Miséricorde! And how did it end?" inquired "la bonne mère," while Laurente waited in breathless suspense.

The shadow of a smile flitted across the face of the Scotchman.

"Oh, the captain's indiscretion is to be passed over in view of his past services;" he explained. "I am to send to the high and mighty Proctor a barrel of the fine old Scotch whiskey brought out to me at such great expense last year, and to Elskwatawa a cask of peach-brandy."

Madam's face brightened, and she broke into a laugh, as she said,—

"It is a shame to waste the good liquor on the Britisher and the Shawanoc, but I know, to help your countryman, you did not grudge it, 'mon ami.'"

Even Laurente, now that the tension of her nerves was relaxed, smiled faintly. Yet there was in the smile a shadow of cynicism foreign to her nature, as she reflected,—

"How strangely different is the value placed upon human life! Now it is esteemed at the price of a woman's heart; and again it is bartered for a dram."

"Thank God, Monsieur Muir will come to no harm through his loyalty to old friendship," she stammered. But in her thoughts she paid him a tribute which, in everything short of her love, would have recompensed the gallant captain for whatever generosity he had shown the prisoner.

"He is a noble gentleman," she repeated to herself. "Whatever aid he gave to Pierre was given for my sake. Loving me with all his heart, he saved his rival, the man I love. May he some day be rewarded with the love of a woman worthy of him."

Surely if Laurente had not loved Pierre, her affection would have gone out to Muir at this proof of his devotion to herself. The next words uttered by her father, however, quickly recalled her from her softened mood.

"Loyalty to friendship be d——!" ejaculated Angus, with vehemence; "does a man risk his honor for his friend? No, only infatuation for a woman renders him guilty of such folly. Egad, Laurente, with your coquetries you have brought trouble enough to your family, and put more than one of your lovers in peril of his life. There shall be an end of this. Captain Muir is to be released to-night. To-morrow he is to set out for Niagara with despatches. You shall go with him as his wife."

"But, father, Monsieur Muir knows I do not love him," gasped Laurente, all her spirit and opposition returning.

"Love! By St. Andrew, this is no time for sentimental sighing," replied her father, curtly. "If you would be saved from La Salle, my lass, you had best

accept with a good grace the marriage I have made for you!"

"How is the child to be married to-morrow? With the two sides of the river at war, we cannot get across to the church at Spring Wells nor ask Le Père Richard to come to us," softly interposed the mother.

"Laurente shall be married at the English church at Sandwich. Say no more, it is my will," thundered the laird. And, thereupon, he left the room, banging the door after him.

The comely countenance of Madam MacIntosh was usually a mirror of amiability indicative of a yielding disposition. But now an expression of quiet determination settled upon it.

The laird had unwittingly arrayed against himself that strongest of all moral forces, religious conscientiousness.

Upon matters of religion, Angus and his wife had long since agreed to disagree. When in his youth the Scotchman married pretty Archange St. Martin, he promised that she, and any children that might come to them, should be free to worship according to the faith in which she had been bred. Until to-day he had never sought to evade that agreement.

But Madam MacIntosh, for all her placidity, would no more have consented to violate her conscience and the traditions of her race by permitting her daughter to be married in this manner, than she would have delivered that daughter over to be burned.

Knowing this, Laurente knew as well that her mother's heart would not be broken by the discovery of the plan she formed to retain her liberty.

Early on the following morning, Captain Muir rode up to Moy Hall. The laird's sanguine assurances had convinced him that he had been mistaken in reading so much from the look he had seen Laurente exchange with Pierre Labadie in the wood. This being the case, might he not by earnest pleading gain her assent to this hasty marriage with himself?

The birds sang in the orchard; the flowers Laurente had planted bloomed gayly behind the palisade. The skies were blue; the sunshine was all-pervading. It was as fair a day for a wedding as ever dawned in perfect beauty, as if in answer to the prayer of a happy bride.

Angus himself threw open the door to the expectant bridegroom.

"Come in, come in, lad, and haste to your wooing. If you find the lass backward, you must only urge her the more," he said, with a hearty grasp of the captain's hand. "Laurente! Laurente! The girl is no doubt with her mother. She will bid you welcome, anon."

But to her father's call Laurente made no response. Madam MacIntosh sought her through the house; the servants declared they had not seen her that day. Search was made through the orchard and fields, and old Sandy, leaping upon the black pony Caribou, explored the neighborhood.

It was when the household were wrought up to the pitch of distraction that Martine the Pani woman brought to her mistress a note folded in three-cornered fashion which she professed to have shaken out of the draperies of Laurente's dressing-table.

The laird took the scrap of paper from his wife's trembling hand and read it aloud, —

MA CHÈRE MAMAN, — I beg you to soften the anger my father will feel against me when he finds I am gone. I cannot marry "ce Monsieur Muir" in the English church. I cannot marry him at all. I am going to stay with my cousin Adelaide Brush; my heart is in the American town with the man I love. His country must be my country, even as, God willing, his home shall one day be my home. It is to escape the marriage my father wishes to force upon me that I go away. But every day I shall look across the river and send my love to you and him, even though, to my grief, I shall know he is angry with me.

LAURENTE.

In his wrath MacIntosh tore the pathetic little letter into shreds and cast them upon the floor.

Captain Muir's fine face flamed red with wounded pride and love. Without a word, he turned upon his heel and strode out of the house and down the road, forgetting he had not come afoot, until a slave boy, seeing his abrupt departure, called after him and led his horse down to the gate. Then he mounted and rode away, never to enter Moy Hall again.

Unconsciously dramatic as was his going, it was scarce noticed by his host, who continued to storm; nor by "la bonne mère," who, giving way to hysterical



weeping, reproached her husband for his ... ess in driving their daughter from the shelter of his roof, and cried despairingly that they would never see the child aga...

Shortly before sunrise, Laurente had put off in a canoe from the little wharf before the palisade. She knew indeed that she was embarking upon a future which would separate her from her childhood's home more widely than the silver waters of the Strait divided the Canadian province of his Majesty King George the Third from the new United States' territory of Michigan, the country she was choosing as her own.

But though now and again she arrested her paddle to dash from her eyes the tears that caused the outline of the American shore to grow dim, her resolution did not fail. A woman's heroism is the heroism of love and devotedness. Laurente was upheld by the sense of obeying her conscience. She was also working out the problem of a woman's life, the destiny that bids her leave father and mother, to break even the tie between herself and her native land, for love's sake.

The greeting of Madam Brush was characteristic.

"Mam'selle, you would better have stayed at home and married the reckless Scot rather than cast your lot with the women of Detroit, who are like to see many hardships and dangers before the year is out," she said with brusque motherliness. "However, set your mind at rest about Pierre Labadie. Yes, he got across the river safely. My dear, you

would have felt proud at the ovation he received in the town, and to hear the praise General Hull gave him for his bravery at Mongaugon. But, truly, luck has a slender anchorage! Scarce half an hour ago he left the fort with a detachment under Colonels Cass and McArthur, sent out to meet Captain Henry Brush, on his way from Ohio, and prevent the supplies he brings from falling into the hands of the British.

"Yet do not be disheartened, child, he will return before long," she continued, as Laurente sank dispiritedly into a chair. "Come, draw up to the table, for here is Ursule with a welcome. You are faint and all in a tremor; when you have eaten, you will feel better. A good meal is a great consoler."

"Yes, ma Sugar Honey, de ribber breezes hab' a hungry edge," said Ursule, putting before the girl a tray whereon was set forth a breakfast of delicately brown crêpes, white bread, and fragrant coffee.

Laurente smiled her thanks, summoned a merry word to answer the Pani woman, and, cheered by the kindness of her hostess, broke her long fast.

Edmond, her former little sweetheart, now a tall lad, and the younger children hung about her, overjoyed to have her among them. They were, however, promptly banished by their mother who, really rejoiced to have the company of her sprightly young relative, was impatient to unfold a budget of gossip not meant for the ears of "little pitchers."

"Well, well," she began as, having, at Laurente's request, supplied her with a long seam to fell, she settled herself by a window and began deftly to knit

a new heel into a stocking, "it is fortunate you have come to-day! You are just in time for the wedding."

"The wedding?" repeated the girl, raising her eyebrows inquiringly.

"To be sure; the marriage of pretty Abigail Hunt with the handsome Mr. Snelling, who is now a captain, and the more eager to make Abigail his wife, because the British may presently make her his widow."

Laurente shuddered, but she answered boldly,—

"After all, it is a great honor to have a hero for a husband; and, of the soldiers who go to battle, many retur "

Madam brush bit her lip, and bethought herself that this was not the way to entertain her visitor.

"True, and often the bravest bear a charmed life, as you and I have grateful cause to know, my dear," she said, with unusual emotion. "My husband, at his post outside the fort, has as perilous a position as those who went down to the Maumee. But the prayers of a soldier's wife and children, or of his sweetheart, if he has not given these hostages to fortune, have brought him safe back from a forlorn hope before now. So, Laurente, we must go to the wedding this evening with cheerful faces; you, to add to Abigail's gladness by your hopefulness, in the absence of your lover; I, to show her that a soldier's wife must share his courage."

Laurente's eyes shone, and a wave of admiration for the elder woman swept over her. Where was now the sharp-tongued lady who looked back regret-

fully to her father's home on the Canadian shore? In this hour of danger, she might have returned with her children to the shelter of Strebane. Instead, she had taken her stand beside her husband and made his cause her own with a loyalty worthy of a patriot's wife. Hers was a patriotism the more devoted because it was not a natural impulse, but a virtue fostered by love.

Dame Adelaide's sturdy fortitude was to the girl like the stroke of flint upon steel. Her enthusiasm caught fire and her gayety returned.

"Cousin Adelaide," she exclaimed, "I will run over to Abigail's and wish her joy."

Before she could put her intention into effect, Edmond came running in with a message from the bride-elect. Abigail, having heard of the arrival of her dearest friend, begged Laurente to come and help to put the last stitches in her wedding gown, since she and Madam Hunt would be hard put to finish it in season.

The sunset clouds, like a garland of flowers, wreathed the western sky, and shed their soft light like fallen rose-petals upon the pearly waters of river and lake. In the best parlor of Henry Hunt's new house, a little company gathered to witness the marriage of his sister, the beautiful girl from Massachusetts, to the former aide-de-camp of Governor Meigs of Ohio.

There was Governor Hull in full uniform and surrounded by his official family, — a truly resplendent group. For his Excellency not only prescribed the wearing of gold lace upon every occasion of even

semi-importance, but was accustomed to sell the cloth and trimmings of the military coats at a handsome profit. There were the officers' ladies, and the representatives of the town's best society; the matrons in gowns of satin or brocade so rich that it "could stand alone," with tippets of Honiton lace and gold chains about their necks, and pendants in their ears. The men, wearing the black silk knee-breeches and hose, with shoe and knee buckles, which, with extra cambric around the throat, were a sign of gentility among civilians.

There were also a few gallants whose vests were more gaudily flowered, and their watch-fobs more showy than those of their fathers; and several young girls in white dimity, brightened by silken scarfs of cherry-color, apple-green, or French blue. Among the women were Madam Brush and Laurente, the latter, charming in a jonquil frock which Mesdames Hunt and Brush had, as they said, "thrown together" for her, despite the haste with the bride's attire, — Laurente, as pretty and smiling as any. Yet a close observer might have noticed that her smile was wistful and her glance absent.

At times instead of the pleasant room decked with golden rod, and bridal gifts of asters, blooming stalks of hollyhocks, and gladiolii from the gardens of the town, she saw only the miasmatic mists, the trailing vines and dank woods of the fever-breeding marshes through which, she had been told, Pierre Labadie was riding beyond Frenchtown.

The army chaplain took his place and cleared his throat. Now the bridegroom stepped forward from

the group of officers, looking very straight and handsome as he took his place alone. There were to be no especial attendants, though, according to a custom handed down from the days of the *Sieur de Cadillac*, half the guests would sign as witnesses of the marriage.

A pause was followed by a stir, and a lively *demoiselle* whispered to her neighbor. —

“ Was there ever a fairer bride ! ”

At the words, *Laurent* turned quickly, to behold *Abigail*, a graceful figure, slight and flexible, entering upon the arm of her portly brother.

She was pale, but her pallor was of the rich olive complexion of the oriental, and enhanced the beauty of her lustrous eyes and her wealth of dark hair, which, parted above her broad brow, was gathered up in a knot, after the manner of a Greek maiden, beneath the bridal veil. Greek too was her fleecy gown, such being the fashion at *Napoleon's* court and copied by the English.

Anon, bride and groom stood together before the chaplain, and the words were said that united them until death should break the bond. For, in the days of the moulding of the nation, marriage was not regarded as merely a civil contract to be readily dissolved by complaisant courts nor were our statesmen, patriots, and heroes the children of such marriages.

Josiah Snelling and *Abigail Hunt*, like other young couples of the time, took each other for worse, if might be, vowing to be true through every change of fortune, every trial of the heart. And when the chaplain, in a nasal voice, finished the simple cere-

mony with the usual admonition, "What God has joined together let not man put asunder," to each member of the company the charge held a sacred solemnity, and was like one of the fixed stars that ever shine down upon the flowing tide of the Strait, whether the waters be troubled or peaceful.

Now the guests gathered about Captain and Mrs. Snelling with their congratulations. Gallants good-naturedly contended to snatch a kiss from the bride, or, failing in this, stole consolation from the lips of a sweetheart or some pretty demoiselle in dangerous proximity.

The merriment was at its height when, above the laughter and gay badinage, the clicking of silver and pewter drinking-cups, and the music of old Wealthy's violin, there arose the noise of a commotion outside, and directly the drum-beat "to arms" sounded through the town.

"My God, the British have come!" cried Mrs. Hickman, the general's daughter.

The hand of each military subordinate present went to the pistols at his belt or touched his rapier. The majority of the guests rushed to the windows, and the bridegroom, springing from the side of his bride, started in search of his sword.

General Hull, however, laid a hand upon his arm.

"Captain, you need not go," he said kindly; "on your wedding day I will not send you to the ramparts to be a target for the enemy."

But Snelling was not a man to dally, even under the spell of a wife's love-lit eyes, with that martial call ringing in his ears.

"Not go," he exclaimed, with one glance at Abigail, who by neither word nor look sought to detain him, but waited as though turned to stone. "Not go! Sir, I feel like doing my duty now, more than ever!"

The general smiled.

"Stay," he said, "the summons is a false alarm, given at my order to test the discipline of our little force here in the fort."

At this assurance, the guests, with a laugh, as over an excellent jest, came trooping back.

Hardly were the mirth and the dancing resumed, nevertheless, when a cry of "make way" arose in the street, followed by the clatter of a horse's hoofs. The next moment, the door of the festive room burst open, and an officer, booted and spurred, strode across the floor to the place where the governor stood.

"Your Excellency," he said, "I am sent back by Colonel Cass to tell you that the British ship, Queen Charlotte, is moving up the river. If you have no other command for me, I ask leave to at once rejoin the detachment on the way to the Raisin."

Scarce had he uttered the words, when a murmur went up from the women-folk, —

"A fan! Water! Miss MacIntosh has fainted!"

Miss MacIntosh! The young officer started and changed color as he would not have done under the enemy's fire. Laurette here? Ah, had he known! He could not see her; she was over there, surrounded by a bevy of fussing matrons. He must wait rigid, as a statue, and hear the general grant a suave assent to his over-hasty request for permission to ride off again without delay.

At this juncture Madam Snelling came to his aid with her woman's wit.

"Your Excellency," she interrupted, with the audacity of her new dignity, pressing forward between the commander-in-chief and the disconcerted subaltern, "I insist that before the lieutenant departs, he shall pledge me as a bride in a cup of my brother's Burgundy, which the guests are so kind as to say is of the best."

The general laughed with easy good-humor. "Upon my honor, I have never tasted Burgundy of a finer bouquet," he replied courteously. "Labadie, Madam Snelling is commandant here for the nonce, and even the hard-pressed messenger is entitled to a stirrup-cup. Report to me for orders in ten minutes."

It was on such occasions that General Hull appeared to advantage. Benignant in temperament, considerate in disposition, nothing could be more gracious than his manner.

As for Pierre Labadie, though often in after life he toasted the bright eyes of Abigail Snelling, and that without arousing any jealousy in the breast of his own wife, on this evening, as it chanced, he did not taste Henry Hunt's famous claret.

For no sooner had he followed Abigail out of ear-shot of the governor and his staff, than she said, pointing to the farther side of the room, "There is Laurente, just over her swoon. Go to her; a word from you will do more to revive her than all other remedies."

Then, raising her voice, she continued, addressing

the group who surrounded the girl, "Ladies, now we are to have the sword-dance, if you please! How can your partners find you if you gather in a corner?"

Thereupon, the shrewd negro, Wealthy, having gained new strength for his bow amid the good cheer of the wedding supper, struck up the air of Sir Roger de Coverley, and the lovers were left alone.

"Mr. Labadie," said General Hull, when, just on the moment, the lieutenant duly reported, "I have decided to retain you on duty here. We may at any time be cannonaded from the batteries erected by the enemy across the river, as well as from the Queen Charlotte. Moreover, I have word that General Isaac Brock, the most active and intrepid commander in the British provinces, has reached Fort Malden, and taken command of the forces there. At this crisis I wish to draw my officers about me, not to separate them; I have, therefore, despatched an aide-de-camp to Colonels Cass and McArthur, ordering them to return."

CHAPTER NINTH

THE FORT OF THE STRAIT

THE next day was the fête of "Our Lady of the Harvest."¹ All was silent across the river, and the menacing batteries of the British began to seem but a show of defiance, the more, since the American forces were known to be the stronger.

Accordingly, in the early morning, a company of the French of the town obtained permission to attend the Grand Mass at the new church of Ste. Anne, more than a mile below the fort. With them went Laurente MacIntosh, and beside her strode Lieutenant Labadie, he being off duty for the time.

The sweet face of Laurente no longer wore the shade of sadness that sometimes crept over it as she grew lonely for her own people, despite the brusque motherliness of Dame Adelaide.

For what girl could be pensive on so beautiful a morning, when her lover walked with her through the August sunshine?

The Strait lay outspread before them, a white-crested sea of azure whose breezes toyed with the new ribbon of her coquettish bonnet of woven grass, and stirred the lace of the little kerchief that lay soft against her pretty neck. In the fields, the ripening

¹ August 15th.

maize, wheat, and barley waved in the summer air, and the many windmills bordering the river rocked their long arms as if in gleeful expectation of the harvest wealth that of right should find its way to their hoppers. The orchard boughs bent low beneath their burden of Normandy pippins and "pommes de neige," the latter like great red roses amid a mass of green; and the old French pear-trees dropped their golden treasures before the farmhouse doors. Nature's harvest song was of the gladness of hope fulfilled.

The church, the best edifice obtainable since the great fire of 1805, was only a bare, frame warehouse, once used for the storage of furs and Indian supplies. But how restful it was to Laurente to sit in the Labadie pew between Pierre and his sister Catishe; how sweet to kneel beside Pierre and join her petition with his. Surely this is the purest height of human bliss, the closest union of soul with soul, when those who love each other pray together.

"Laurente dearest, say that I may ask Le Père Richard to marry us now," whispered Pierre to her after the service. "Yesterday we were guests at a joyful wedding; let us celebrate our own to-day? Captain Snelling will go to battle strong in the love and rendered braver by the prayers of his young wife. If you love me as I love you, Laurente, you will make me happy also."

Had he not pleaded so impetuously, Laurente would not have loved him half so well. She smiled and blushed as though indeed her heart said, "Yes," yet she was far from yielding after all.

"What, be married to-day, now? And in this dimity gown that has been made over twice? Impossible!" she declared.

"Hang the gown!" ejaculated the impatient lover. "If'm, I mean, dearest, — no woman could look lovelier than you do at this moment."

Laurente pursed her lips roguishly, as if to say, —

"Sir, you think so, because no one yet has seen me dressed as a bride." But Pierre looked so disconsolate because of her obduracy that she answered with sudden seriousness, —

"'Eh, bien, mon bon ami,' perhaps, in the matter of the gown, I might be overruled. But, you know, I shall not be eighteen years old until the autumn, and before then I cannot marry without the consent of my father."

Here was a difficulty for which there was no remedy but time. Pierre muttered something that was not a blessing upon the law. His sweetheart was not yet of age. Since Angus MacIntosh opposed his suit, he could not hope to wed her until the woods should change from green to gold and crimson. Yet, alas, by that time the prairies were like to be red with blood, and he and Laurente might be done with life.

These were gloomy forebodings, however, and he would not let his thoughts dwell upon them, especially as the girl quickly recovered her gayety.

At least it was pleasant to have her come with Catishe and a party of friends to breakfast at the Labadie homestead. And then there was the walk back to the town together, in the mid-forenoon, when

he and she light-heartedly planned for themselves a home fairer than any castle in Spain, and looked forward to a future whose skies should be forever cloudless.

How often both were to remember that morning, for it was like the calm before the storm.

The lovers were sauntering on, nothing loath to make the way as long as might be, when suddenly, with a soldier's alertness, Pierre came back from his wanderings in love's paradise to a consciousness of what was happening around him.

"Look, Laurente!" he said, pointing to the broad tide of the Strait; "let us hurry; for *you* should be in-doors, and I on the ramparts."

"Why! Because of a canoe upon the river?" she objected, piqued at his haste.

"A canoe with a white pennant; it brings some message from the British," he replied, striding forward so rapidly that, flurried and short of breath, she found it difficult to keep up with him.

When they reached the stockade the pirogue had disappeared from view behind the buildings that clustered around the water-gate, but it had already been cried by the sentry and reported by the officer of the guard.

Escorting Laurente to the house of Madam Brush, Pierre took a hasty leave of her. He gained the wharf just in time to witness the landing of two redcoat officers, one of whom he recognized, in a flash, as his rival and friend, Allan Muir, who had so nobly, and at the risk of his own honor, given him liberty.

"Muir, God bless you," he said in French, knowing he would not be understood by the other man. "You left me no alternative but to take the chance of escape you gave me. To refuse it would have led to your certain betrayal, while to accept promised you immunity from blame. Had I heard in time that your generosity was discovered, I would have returned to die, so that no harm might come to you through me."

The gallant Muir had time only for a cordial hand-clasp, when Captain MacDonnell turned toward, and, according to the usage of war, dismissed the envoys.

They were then conducted, by order of General Hull, to the room in Henry House, the residence which had been the scene of the recent wedding festivities.

The place was quickly surrounded by a throng of townspeople, but, pushing his way through the crowd, and past the soldier on guard, Labadie entered the military headquarters.

"Lieutenant Labadie," said an aide-de-camp whom he encountered in the hallway, "the general has asked for you. He wishes you to act as his secretary at this meeting."

When the lieutenant reached the council-room, he beheld General Hull sitting erect in a great armchair, while the messengers stood before him.

"Sir," began the senior officer, Captain MacDonald, "in the name of General Brock, commander-in-chief of his Majesty's forces in Canada, I demand of you the surrender of this fort and town of Detroit. It is far from his Excellency's wish to join in a war of

extermination; but you must be aware that the horde of Indians who have attached themselves to his troops will be beyond his control the moment a battle begins. By capitulating, you will find him disposed to enter into such conditions as will satisfy the most scrupulous sense of honor."

"And, your Excellency," continued Captain Muir, stepping forward, "in proof that Captain MacDonald and I are authorized to enter into any arrangement tending to the peaceful settlement of the matter, I beg to hand you this paper, duly signed by General Brock."

Governor Hull received the document, and glanced over it in a dazed fashion, as though his energies and spirit were paralyzed in the face of the audacious summons.

While Pierre Labadie took down the notes of what was said, his fingers twitched nervously, as though he would gladly have cast away the pen for the sword. Captains Snelling and Findlay shot at their chief glances of impatient inquiry. The other members of his council frowned darkly.

Still the silence was unbroken. An insolent smile hovered about the lips of Captain MacDonald, but Muir stared straight before him. He had not liked his appointment upon this errand, and now he regretted it the more because the open scorn of his brother-officer enraged the Americans.

It pierced even General Hull's armor of callous indifference too; for, pulling himself together, he at length replied, —

"Gentlemen, tell General Brock from me that the

fort and town of Detroit will be defended to the last extremity. If, however, his summons has been brought about by acts of certain of my officers which were committed without my knowledge, say to him also that I deeply regret them."

At this humiliating apology for subordinates who had only done their duty, offered to a commander making an extraordinary demand for his royal master on the other side of the Atlantic, the Americans exchanged glances of indignant disapproval. They would have had the message ring with defiance.

Ignoring them, nevertheless, their general rose, as a signal that the conference was over, and left the room with ostentatious dignity.

The envoys were detained several hours, after which delay, blindfolded as before, they were led back to their boat. The bandages being then removed from their eyes, they put off for the Canadian shore, bearing with them a letter to their commander from General Hull, -- a letter whose contents no one knew but the writer, though it was supposed to be a reiteration of his determination to defend the fort, as expressed in presence of his council.

Before the close of the afternoon, Pierre Labadie, riding through the town on a swift Canadian pony, called out to Laurente in Madam Brush's garden to keep in the house, for there would soon be firing. He added that he himself was ordered to Spring Wells with a picket guard under Captain Snelling.

Hardly had Snelling's detachment set out, when, from the battery across the river, the cannonade began and was as promptly returned from the fort.

The town being unpalisaded except for individual enclosures, the people, both American and French, came running into the stockade; many of the women with infants in their arms, and shrieking, toddling babies clinging to their skirts; others dragging beds and furniture or hastily gathered baskets of food. All the men and boys were away to the ramparts, those who were musketless having provided themselves with pikes. One regiment was posted in the citadel yard. A battalion under Colonel Findlay encamped in the rear of the town; another on the prairie to the west.

Early in the evening the general sent his son, Captain Abram Hull, to conduct Madam Brush, Laurente, and Abigail Snelling to one of the barracks, where a number of the officers' wives had taken refuge. Here they spent the hours, striving to encourage their neighbors, soothing the frightened children, and making flannel cartridges for the soldiers.

At ten o'clock the firing ceased, but the troops rested on their arms, for a rumor spread that Tecumseh was leading his warriors through the woods from the direction of little Fort Nonsense at the edge of the prairie.

It was after midnight. The moon looked sternly down upon the hostile armies of the Strait, its calm face lined and scarred like that of a mighty warrior. The stars kept their watch, — the world's silent sentinels. As Jean Cécire, the guard at the western gate of the stockade, paced forth and back, he caught the sound of hoof-beats on the river road, and, straightway, out of the shadows cast by the

neighboring orchards appeared a man riding at full gallop.

Drawing rein so abruptly as to bring his pony back upon its haunches, and speaking the password, he added, —

“Open quickly, I bring a despatch from Captain Snelling.”

“Certes, Monsieur Labadie! I wish you one good morning, and one bettair break fast zan ze hot shot,” replied the mettlesome Jean, throwing wide the gate. “Sacré! zere is no fish so small but he hopes to become a whale!”

The messenger scarce heard the good-natured jibe as he rode on into the citadel.

“The general? Where shall I find the general?” he demanded of the sentry.

The soldier pointed to the gallery of one of the buildings. “His Excellency is over there asleep,” he said with a grin.

Labadie frowned, and, crossing the yard, found General Hull just rising from a mattress on the floor of the gallery.

“Your Excellency,” he said, saluting, “I am ordered by Captain Snelling to report to you that the Queen Charlotte lies in the channel opposite Spring Wells, and to ask that a twenty-four pounder be sent down, so we may dislodge her from her moorings. This can be readily done, since the shore is higher than the decks of the ship.”

The general yawned, wiped his eyes, and absent-mindedly filled his mouth with tobacco, — a habit to which he was addicted.

"Upon my soul, it would be well if the zeal of my young officers were more tempered with discretion," he mumbled thickly. "A twenty-four pounder could not be transported across the River Rouge. Carry to Captain Snelling my order that he return to the fort with his command at dawn."

Labadie's mind was in a turmoil. The field-piece refused, when so good an engineer as Captain Snelling estimated that the bridge of the Rouge would bear its weight! The detachment recalled!

"Humph! Nothing venture, nothing have," he muttered sullenly, as he rode slowly back over the "côte du nord-ouest."¹

The day was just breaking when the disappointed troops re-entered the stockade.

In vain Captain Snelling sought for the commander. "Zounds," he cried at last to the latter's son, Captain Hull, "when his Excellency wakes, say to him that from Spring Wells I discovered no military preparations at Sandwich during the night. But more than once I and my men heard the sound of oars, which were no doubt those of the boats passing from the Queen Charlotte to the brig Hunter, or to the opposite shore. And now tell me, where has my wife taken refuge?"

"Madam Snelling is lodged, with Miss MacIntosh and other ladies, in the barracks across the parade. They are not yet astir," rejoined young Hull.

¹ The right bank of the Detroit River was called the "côte du nord," the left bank the "côte du sud." The part of the "côte du nord" below the fort was the "côte du nord-ouest;" the settlement above was known as the "côte du nord-east."

"Well, they are safe if the attack is renewed. And, thank Heaven, Pierre, at last we may sleep. Sixteen hours on duty will tire out even a soldier. Here is a cot; we will toss up a coin for it."

So saying, Snelling pointed through the open doorway of an unoccupied room of the officers' quarters. Labadie followed him in, and, leaving the bed for the captain, cast an army blanket upon the floor and lay down upon it.

Before many minutes the companions-in-arms were sleeping the sleep of exhaustion.

"Phiff! Bomb! Bomb!"

About six o'clock the report of a gun brought the lieutenant to his feet before an hour had elapsed. At the same time Snelling opened his eyes with the blank stare of one whose mental faculties are not yet fully aroused.

The next moment he too sprang up.

"The bombardment has begun in earnest!" he cried, as the firing continued. "Ah, now that the balls have been set whizzing, we shall soon drive the redcoats from their earthworks."

"Listen," said Labadie. "Our batteries along the shore return the fire briskly; but why do not the guns here at the fort reply?"

Snelling swore roundly.

"Our commander should have retired on his Revolutionary laurels; his valor has grown weak-kneed. I must inquire the meaning of this silence," he added, and therewith rushed to the water bastion.

Stopping only in the yard to inquire whether

the general had come out, Labadie followed to the parapet, where he found Snelling scanning the river.

"Look, Pierre," he said, and, passing his lens to the lieutenant, he wheeled about and started for the governor's quarters.

At this juncture, however, General Hull made his appearance on the parade ground.

With a few rapid paces the captain was beside him. "General," he began in a clear, ringing voice that had in it a soldierly exultation, "the enemy are crossing the river at Spring Wells."

A cheer went up from the officers and garrison upon the ramparts. Now, even without a glass, they could see the dark line of boats that reached across from a point near the old Huron Mission to the Red Mill.

With the exception of the general, every officer of the military council, every private and militia-man, was eager for the battle promised by this move of the enemy.

But the commander?

"Ze general, has he seen ze 'Chase Galère,' or heard ze bark of ze Huntsman's dogs, zat he looks so white-livered — bouleversé — what you zay, — *up-sot?*" inquired Sergeant Jean Cécire, laying a detaining hand upon the arm of Lieutenant Labadie.

"Diable!" ejaculated Labadie, shaking off the grasp.

"Ha-ha, eet is le diable, 'sans doute,' ze redcoat commander? Mais ze devil, he have been beat before this."

Haggard and undecided, General Hull presented

a striking contrast to his usual dignified and elegant presence. He who had been ever such a martinet in the matter of military uniform, showed a slovenly disorder in his dress and a perturbation of mind unbecoming a leader of brave men.

To the surprise of his officers, he did not go upon the ramparts to view the enemy, nor give any directions for the ascertaining of their number. But, as though chiefly concerned to save his ammunition, which was being consumed very fast by the long twenty-four pounders, he sent repeatedly to the batteries the order to fire with more deliberation. While he paced the parade, officers and troops watched the boats of the British as they plied to and fro, protected by the guns of the Queen Charlotte and of the fortifications on the southern shore.

"General, give me enough men to haul a piece of ordnance a short distance down the river road, and I will scatter the enemy like chaff before the wind," pleaded Snelling, almost beside himself with rage that no steps were being taken to drive back the invading forces.

"I beg of you, sir, let me take a party of Frenchmen across the Strait and spike the British guns," urged Lieutenant Labadie.

"Discretion is the better part of valor," quoted the general, sententiously. "My forces are best posted as they are, and I do not wish to move them."

His voice shook, and, as he finished speaking, he seated himself upon an old tent that lay upon the ground between the guard-house and the gate. It was the most protected spot in the fort.

Now occurred a ludicrous diversion.

A hubbub arose from the town, and through the eastern gate of the stockade, and across the yard, came two soldiers, running as if for their lives, as indeed they were, for, close upon their heels, a horseman pursued them with drawn sword.

"Sacré! It is the general's son, and, as usual, rather the worse for liquor," broke out Labadie in disgust.

"By Jove, the fellows are of the company of French militia that I took with me to Spring Wells," muttered Snelling, angrily. "What has Captain Hull to do with my men?"

"Oh, monsieur," called out one of the fugitives, gasping for breath, "you give us leave for 'un peu de temp,' we tinks we go see how fare our wives and our littler children."

"Oui, oui! Mais, le capitaine ici, he order us to ze bastions," interrupted the other. "And when we do not obey, he chase us to ze death, like we were ze hog, or ze redskin."

Abram Hull rode up in a rage.

"Sir," he cried to the general, "these men are deserters; I demand that they be punished."

"You mistake, Captain Hull," interposed Snelling, stepping forward, "these are my men and they are off duty."

But the captain's potations had made him eager to quarrel with all who crossed his path.

"Sir," he roared, springing from his horse, and flourishing his sabre, "you uphold these fellows. You have impeached my honor as an officer; I demand satisfaction."

"The moment I am relieved from my post, I will gladly settle this difference," answered Snelling, exasperated.

Hot for the fight, both men glanced toward the general, mutely asking that the rules of military discipline might be suspended in their behalf.

But General Hull appeared now thoroughly aroused, for the first time, —

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, this is no season for private quarrel, when the enemy is at our gates," he declared, pointing down the river. Then, turning, he begged an orderly, in an aside, to take care of his rash son. The latter, whose flare of anger had given place to a hazy unsteadiness, was thereupon cajoled into being led away to the officers' quarters, where he was placed under guard.

Meantime, the cannonading and return fire went on with little intermission. A fine French pear-tree, revered by the creoles for its associations with the old régime, evidently served as a mark for the enemy. Noticing this, Captain Snelling directed Jean Cécire to take two of his men and cut it down. The men worked willingly enough, but the wood of the splendid old tree was firm as steel, and, although they wielded their axes well, the work progressed slowly.

"By Gar," exclaimed Jean, as he stood over the toiling woodmen, "ze pommier, he stand up against John Bull so proud as one grand French chevalier to ze last."

Hardly had he spoken, when a shot from the battery across the river struck the tree, a few feet from its base, and the great trunk fell.

"'Merci, merci,' Monsieur John Bull," cried Cécire, with the abandon of his French-Canadian disposition, "merci, for your help. But, ah, ze chevalier, he is fallen in ze good fight."

The valor of the gray-haired general was palsied by the realization of the awful peril of his wife, his daughter, and her little ones. But the hearts of his subalterns and of every soldier stationed on the ramparts or in the meadow outside the palisade were nerved to greater courage by the dangers that menaced the women and children of Detroit.

Captain Snelling had not had an opportunity to exchange a word with his bride since his return from Spring Wells, nor had Pierre Labadie caught a glimpse of his sweetheart. Now when the enemy had gained an all-too-correct range, they cast many an anxious glance toward the building which sheltered the ladies.

Ere long, with a sizzling sound, a shell fell near it. In another instant there was a terrific explosion and a blaze of dazzling light, followed by the terrified shriek of female voices.

When the smoke lifted, the men on the parapet saw that almost a whole side of the barracks where the women were had been carried away by the shot. It was soon discovered as well that two officers who had gone in to encourage their families had been killed.

"My wife! See to her, Labadie, since I cannot leave my post," cried Snelling, a look of agony upon his face.

Pierre, his brain reeling with anxiety for his beloved Laurente, ran across the parade.

The women and children, many of them already senseless, were being hurried to a bomb-proof magazine from which the last of the ammunition had been removed a few moments before, for use in the coming battle.

When Labadie reached the distracted group, the blood rushed back to his heart in a tide of thankfulness, as he beheld, among those ministering to the swooning ladies whose husbands had so tragically met their end, two young girls. They were Laurente MacIntosh and Abigail Snelling.

"Laurente! Abigail! Thank God you are unhurt!" he ejaculated.

Laurente rushed into his arms, and Abigail smiled up at him as he delivered her husband's message. Having conducted the two brave women to the magazine, he reluctantly left them.

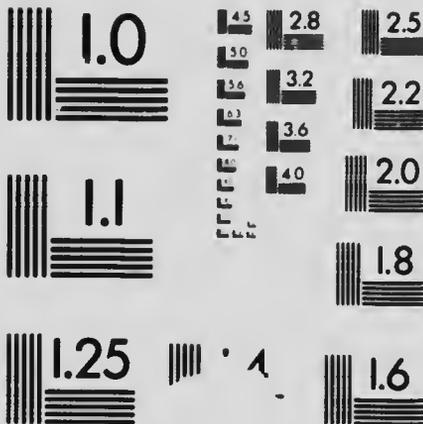
"Ah, Laurente, how happy you are that you have seen Pierre," faltered the little bride as the great iron door shut them in. "How close and damp it is here! The roar of the guns outside, and the cries of the children around us, almost drive me mad. Oh, if I could speak even one word to my husband! I may never again see him alive. Why did I not go to him on the ramparts, in face of the enemy's fire! If he should be shot down, what would I care for life without him!"

"Cheer up, sweet one," whispered Laurente, slipping an arm about her friend, "for surely Captain Snelling is not destined to fall in this war with the British. Did he not have his hat shot off at Mongaugon and the hilt of his sword grazed by a bullet? But let us



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pray to God for our dear ones, Abigail, let us pray without ceasing while the men we love are under fire."

They fell upon their knees and joined in the chorus of petition that arose about them like a beautiful chant, in which the religious imagery of the New England Puritan, the Scotch Calvinist, and the daughters of the fleurs-de-lis was curiously mingled.

Its echoes had scarce died away, when there came a muffled sound of some one calling through the door of the magazine.

Little Madam Snelling started to her feet.

"It is my husband," she exclaimed joyfully, and, running to the entrance, cried out to him.

The intuition of love had not misled her.

"Dear heart," said Captain Snelling, through the door, "at any moment I may be shot down. I have come to say farewell, if it must be, and to ask of you a promise."

"My love, my love," sobbed Abigail, "any vow you demand of me I will keep most sacredly."

"Heart of my heart, I will not ask that, if I fall, you will never marry again, — but promise me you will never marry an Englishman?"

So overcome with emotion was the young wife that she with difficulty repeated the required promise, but the captain went away content.

Laurente soothed and strove to comfort her friend. Nevertheless, so delicate is the balance between pathos and humor, that while she wiped the tears from her eyes, she was seized with so strong an impulse to laugh that she could scarce control the

tremor in her voice, which, happily, Abigail misunderstood.

“Ma foi! The man is jealous of a possible successor, even while he faces the enemy,” she whispered to Madam Brush. “Yet I have heard it said that he who takes an eel by the tail and a woman at her word holds nothing.”

CHAPTER TENTH

THE COMING OF THE REDCOATS

“**PÈRE RICHARD!** Père Richard! What shall we do? Where shall we go? The redcoats and the Shawanoes are at our doors! Save yourself, save us, Père Richard!”

With this chorus of cries the people of the côte du nord-ouest poured into the warehouse church, where, with a congregation of a score of devotees, the priest was saying the Mass daily offered at the rising of the sun.

But the tumult both within and without was like the wind-swept waters of Lake Huron breaking against the bold, laurel-crowned bluffs and crags of its rugged shores. The gaunt figure at the altar might have been that of a tonsured monk in a monastery chapel, far from the din of arms, the perils of war. The flickering flame of two tall wax candles, and a long ray of sunlight, falling across the altar-stone that enshrined the precious relics of Ste. Anne, shone on the ghastly form in priestly robes, as it might have rested upon some marble saint in a niche of the great cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris while about it surged the shrieking crowds of the Reign of Terror.

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"Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum," murmured the priest in a low tone, as though deaf to the clamor around him.

"Et cum spiritu tuo," responded the trembling clerk.

Overawed, the parishioners fell upon their knees, the women, weeping and sobbing, the few old men and boys, all that were left on the côte, half-sullen, yet with unshaken confidence in their pastor.

Apparently unmoved, "le bon père" continued the Mass. Clear and sweet, as the rippling of a prairie brook or the song of birds, rang out the silvery voice of the little sanctuary bell. The people bowed their heads in prayer, following the words of the priest in the sublime Latin, a liturgy familiar to them as was their native French.

"What return shall I make to the Lord for all He has given me? I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Praising, I will call upon the Lord, and shall be saved from my enemies."

A silence followed,—a silence that comes in Heaven, perhaps, when for an interval all sounds even of praise are hushed, while the celestial courts prostrate themselves before the throne of the Most High.

A few moments more, and there was a stir among the benches. An old woman crept up to the altar-rail; next came a young girl in the dress of a nun; and, anon, a patriarchal habitant whose descendants numbered nearly fourscore, knelt beside the woman and the girl.

Now for the first time the priest turned from the altar. His countenance was serene as usual, yet, as the people looked upon it, they were inspired with a new courage. Descending the two steps to the rail, he administered the communion and, returning, finished the Mass.

Then, again facing the worshippers, he addressed them, —

“My people, the British are powerful; the Shawanoes and their Indian allies relentless; but you have not appealed to God in vain. If you fear to remain in your homes, gather in the schoolhouse. There I will protect you with my life, if need be.”

Out of the church they streamed and took possession of the building near by. Here the indefatigable Père Richard had established class-rooms provided with all the available apparatus known at the time, for teaching chemistry and physics to the French-Canadian youths and demoiselles sent to him for instruction; besides a technical school for the education of the young Wyandotte squaws in spinning, sewing, and housekeeping.

Such was the scene enacted upon the côte du nord-ouest on the morning of the 16th of August, 1812.

The British, having landed, had paused to build camp-fires and to breakfast. General Brock, being reinforced by Proctor's regiment and six hundred Indians led by Tecumseh, the troops bore down upon the côte.

The refugees had found shelter none too soon. From a room in the upper story of the school build-

ing the terrified women and children saw the redmen sweep over the farms like a whirlwind, leaving behind them ruined harvests and homes. Not a place on the river was spared as they passed.

"They are plundering the house where 'mon ami' brought me as a bride," lamented Dame Labadie; "Hélas, they are driving the cattle and horses before them, — L'Éclair, my beautiful heifer, and La Fortune, a pony that can show a clean pair of hoofs to every racer at the Grand Marais!"

"What does it matter, ma mère, so long as the children are safe?" sighed her daughter Josette, the wife of "Debendon," pressing closer the babe at her breast, while she glanced across to the settle behind which another child was hidden.

"The savages have broken into the church!"

The cry re-echoed through the house.

"Silence," exhorted Père Richard. "Jean Knaggs, keep away from the window, or your mother shall dress you again in the girl's frock of which, at your entreaty, I bade her divest you."

The lad slunk back into a corner, followed by a titter from the other children, who, for the moment, forgot their terror.

Like the cast-out demon of the possessed man of Scripture, it speedily returned, many times augmented, as pandemonium raged outside. But the boy Knaggs, being the son of a soldier, and forgetting alike the priest's injunction and his mother's solicitude, stole again to the window.

"Oh, mon père, look!" he begged; "the savages have destroyed the wonderful organ that was sent

from France! See them rush out of the church tooting on the long pipes."

"I see," Father Richard calmly avowed in French, from his station below stairs. "Truly, the redskins have a taste for music."

All at once an exclamation of dismay broke from the refugees in the schoolhouse.

For they saw Père Richard stride fearlessly out into the road as Colonel Proctor, upon a bay horse, rode up among his yelling allies.

Standing alone against that horde of redcoats and Indians who could have borne him down like a spear of grass before the wind, the priest raised a hand to stay their progress.

The tall figure might have been the spectre of war's battlefields. At its gesture of command the half-drunken savages hesitated in sheer amazement, and, with an oath, Proctor drew rein.

"Zounds, so you are the curé," he continued. "Well, move out of the road, monseer, unless you wish to be ridden down!"

Le bon père maintained his ground.

"Monsieur le colonel," he said with quiet dignity, "I demand that you order your followers not to molest the helpless women and children gathered in this house. If you refuse, the chastisement of God will fall upon you."

Even the merciless, overbearing Proctor changed color before this bold arraignment.

"And you, Walk-in-the-Water," added the curé, in the half-French, half-Indian patois of the Strait, as he caught sight of the Wyandotte chief who, in full war-

paint, led his braves afoot, — “you to whom I have given bread and salt, whose children I have baptized and taught, you to whom your father at Washington sent a present, — how is it that I see you in the ranks of the Saganosh?”¹

“Black Robe,” answered Walk-in-the-Water, “the Wyandottes are the older brothers of the red people. Had we shut our ears to the call of the great Tecumseh, he whose father is the sun, we should have been dishonored among the nations. But we do not forget. No harm shall come to those whom the Black Robe stretches out his hand to save.”

So saying, he signed to several of his warriors, who, thereupon, took their stand before the house door, which stood wide open. No one knew better than Père Richard that to bar a door against the redman is to arouse his implacable resentment.

Although the swashbuckling English colonel understood not a word of this interview, the pantomime made what passed plain to him. The temerity of the priest, his influence over the powerful chief whose alliance it had required all the eloquence of Tecumseh to win, did not fail to impress him. The warning to himself awakened in his mind the superstitious uneasiness which in the callous takes the place of conscience.

“Sir curé, I regret the despoiling of your church. 'Pon my soul, I do,” he blurted out; “and, with these savages, I will leave a posse of soldiers to guard the remainder of your property.”

The curé relaxed a degree of his uncompromising

¹ An Indian name for the English.

attitude, as he replied, with a marked French accent, "Monsieur le colonel, I accept the guard for the protection of the women and children. Of my property, besides this building, there is left only a printing-press, which, indeed, I would gladly secure from destruction."

"A printing-press, save the mark! A printing-press here on the border of the wilderness," cried the blustering Proctor, breaking into a loud guffaw, and turning about to repeat the jest to his subordinate officers as they rode up. "'Pon my soul, this French curé is a most extraordinary man! General Brock must hear of it. By all means, sir curé, your printing-press shall be spared, for presently we shall want to print upon it the news of the capitulation of Detroit."

A sceptical smile played about the lips of "le bon père."

"That time will never come," he said confidently. "If I thought otherwise, I myself would break the press to atoms rather than have it put to such a use."

"'Pon my soul, we shall see, we shall see, monseer; you may be a saint, but I doubt if you are a prophet," derided Proctor. And, raising another insolent laugh, in which the subalterns about him readily joined, he rode on at the head of his regiment.

The rabble of savages and hangers-on having passed, the troops came in a close column of platoons of twelve, or sometimes of only seven or eight file, in red coats. And, within ten minutes, an officer, glittering with gold lace, and mounted upon a magnificent English horse, pressed up the road fully two

hundred yards in the fore of the main division, as if he were going to parade.

It was no other than General Brock himself, — a handsome, prepossessing man, just in his prime, who would have stood over six feet in height. His complexion was fair, his physique large, and his bearing eminently military. He sat easily in his saddle, and his whole air was that of a victor, rather than of a commander leading his forces to battle.

Attracted by the sight of the guard before the house of the priest, he halted and called to Père Richard, who still stood at his door, —

"I'll trouble you, sir, to make way for my orderly to go to the top of your house to see if, perhaps, a white flag may be waving from the ramparts of the American fort yonder."

"Le bon père" bowed with Gallic courtesy.

"Your men have already been up to the roof a score of times, and you are welcome to mount the stair also, monsieur," he answered. "But you will never see the flag of surrender on those bastions where the 'Stars and Stripes,' the most glorious banner in the world, now floats so bravely in the sunshine."

The general's brows lowered. He frowned at the bold Frenchman whose eyes had kindled with patriotism and pride in his adopted country. Yet something of his ostentation vanished, and a thoughtful expression settled upon his bronzed features.

"Has Hull, like a sly old dog, deceived me, and am I caught in the eagle's talons?" he muttered under his breath.

"Monsieur?" inquired the priest, thinking himself addressed.

But, without condescending to glance at him again, the commander put spurs to his horse and galloped ahead, followed by his staff.

At the fort, the two river batteries, and the one in Judge Woodward's garden, were manned by a part of the fourth regiment under Captain Snelling. The Michigan militia and Ohio volunteers were in the rear of the town, it being anticipated that the Indians would attack from the woods. Cannon loaded with grapeshot commanded the river road, ready to sweep away the columns of the enemy; and beside the guns stood four hundred rounds of shot, grape and shell, a thousand rounds of other ammunition being also supplied for the defence. Every man was impatient for the fight, and expected a proud day for his country.

On came the British, the sunlight gleaming on the scarlet ranks and burnished muskets of the infantry, and shining full upon the golden staff of the crimson standard, the sword-hilts, gold-laced uniforms, and red saddle-cloths of the mounted officers.

"Diable, it is a gala array; but we will soon spoil their pretty pageant," exclaimed Lieutenant Labadie, as he watched them from the western parapet. "Par-blen, here is the one chance to rake with shot the whole of the enemy's line."

In his enthusiasm, and taking for granted that the emergency gave him the right to act, he sprang forward with a fuse to fire one of the great twenty-four pounders.

Before it touched the charge, however, the brawny Scotch major in command of the battery flung himself upon the lithe creole.

"By St. Andrew!" he cried, "not a shot is to be fired until I have word to open upon the enemy."

The grip of the Scot was like iron.

"What does this mean, Anderson?" protested Labadie, angrily, when, after a desperate struggle, he broke loose from him.

"Drat if I know!" rejoined the warrior from the land of the heather, with tears in his eyes; "but a soldier's duty is to obey orders. Perhaps the general is reserving the attack until the enemy get so near that we can look them square in the face."

The next moment the opportunity for an enfilade was lost. The British officer at the head of the column, perceiving the snare, gave notice to General Brock, who immediately changed the position of his troops. Leaving the road, they advanced under cover of the thick orchards which stood between them and the fort.

It was nearly noon, and General Hull had remained during the greater part of the morning seated in the shadow of the wall, very much agitated and stuffing tobacco into his mouth in such quantities that his ruffled shirt-front and white neck-cloth were stained by its use.

The bursting of another shell, which killed a surgeon and two men, increased his alarm, and he withdrew to his quarters.

The British were now so near that Captain Snelling started in search of the commander to demand that

something be done. On his way he encountered Abram Hull, who, oblivious of the quarrel of yesterday, offered him one of the pikes made for the boarding of the Queen Charlotte.

"Captain," began his late opponent, "the general directs you to take this letter and flag—"

He got no farther, for, glancing for the first time at the pike, which he had taken mechanically, supposing it represented some plan of defence, Snelling saw knotted about it a white handkerchief.

"What, what is this?" he objected, hot with indignation. "D—you, sir, I will never disgrace myself by carrying a white flag to the enemy."

Young Hull laughed derisively, and running into the officers' mess brought out a long white tablecloth, which he fastened to the pike. Was the man demented, or still the worse for his late indulgence in Old Jamaica?

Snelling wrenched the rag from him and would have torn it to tatters had he not been summoned across the parade by an imperative call from the general.

"Sir," said the latter doggedly, ignoring the captain's heated demand as to the purpose of the flag, "you will carry my order to Colonel Findlay to withdraw his troops inside the fort."

In a towering rage, the brave Snelling sprang upon a horse which an orderly held ready for the general's own use, rode through the gate, and delivered the message.

"Withdraw, without firing a shot!" retorted the impetuous Ohioan; "I will not obey!"

Snelling wheeled his horse to ride back, and as he faced the stockade muttered an oath, for there upon the ramparts stood Captain Hull frantically waving the tablecloth flag.

"My God, the country is sold!" exclaimed the gallant Findlay, as he too beheld the signal of surrender.

Although afoot, he fairly outstripped his fellow-officer in seeking the commander-in-chief, whom he encountered near the gate.

"General Hull, what in h—ll am I ordered here for?" he demanded fiercely.

"Humph, Colonel Findlay, you will have your fill of fighting another time," replied the commander brokenly. "You young men are rash. To await the storming of the fort would be to place ourselves at the mercy of the savages, and I must consider the women and children who are under my protection. I can secure better terms from General Brock now than would be possible later."

"Terms! Damnation!" broke out the Ohioan at a white heat. "We can beat this handful of British on the prairie. I did not come to the Strait to surrender; I came to fight."

Meantime, the white flag floating from the bastion was greeted by the soldiers, both within and outside the fort by a cry of amazement, which was quickly followed by a yell of rage.

At the very moment when they were ready to pour out their heart's blood for their country, this beloved country was disgraced.

The troops in the field, upon being ordered to retreat, crowded into the enclosure. Many wrenched

apart their muskets or dashed them upon the ground with such violence as to break them to pieces. Disorder reigned.

"A curse upon the traitor!"

"Death to the coward!"

Such were the imprecations that assailed General Hull on every side. Some of the officers and men wept like children with disappointment, wounded patriotism, and rage. Even the spirit of the women was aroused by the indignity, and, above the din, their voices were heard protesting in impotent wrath that the fort should not be given up.

"My God, Labadie," ejaculated Major Anderson, as he snapped his sabre over one of the guns, "and we might have wiped those redcoats out of existence!"

"Well provisioned as we were, we could, at the worst, have held out for days," returned Labadie, gloomily. "The palisade is so strong that the men had to use tomahawks to open spaces for their muskets." Thus, without an attempt at defence, without consultation with his officers, did General William Hull, one of the heroes of Stony Point in the War of Independence, surrender the fort of the Detroit to an inferior force of not more than a thousand white men. The number of their red auxiliaries, however, could not be estimated.

It was high noon. The green boughs of the sycamores inside the stockade swayed in the river breeze, but on the prairie the sun beat down on the British, who, as they caught sight of the shameful white flag waving from the ramparts, broke into a wild cheer,—

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a cheer augmented by the blood-curdling whoop of Indian braves cheated of the joys and cruelties of savage warfare.

A white man on horseback, whom several of the watchers on the parapet recognized as Colonel Proctor, rode to the front and, after much gesticulation, brought the entire force to a halt. Two infantry officers then stepped forward. Lieutenant Labadie, to his chagrin, was sent out to meet them. As in duty bound, he received them with military courtesy, and conducted them to a marquee erected outside the gate.

So insolent were the enemy over their easy victory, that many of the soldiers rushed into the fort before the capitulation was signed. But, upon the indignant demand of Colonel Findlay, they were commanded to retire.

The formalities being completed, General Brock, mounted, and presenting an imposing appearance in his resplendent uniform, cantered out upon the esplanade.

Abreast with him rode a splendid figure that might almost have been taken for an equestrian statue endowed with life, for the rider and the red-roan stallion beneath him seemed cast in one mould. The Indian warrior, nude to the waist, showed a torso like polished bronze; his imperious head was crowned with eagle's feathers, and his countenance reflected the courage, dignity, and strength of an extraordinary personality.

Even in their bitter sorrow and rage, the entrapped Americans cast covert glances of interest,

not unmingled with apprehension, at this immobile horseman, as he galloped through the gate, gazing with silent scorn upon the paltry pageantry of his allies.

A woman first spoke the name in the thoughts of all.

"Ma foi, it is the great Tecumseh!" exclaimed Laurente MacIntosh to her companion, young Madam Snelling.

Though still tearful over the fall of the fort, partly from feminine curiosity, but more from a wish to learn the whereabouts of husband and lover, respectively, they had pushed through the crowd of townspeople who, in gloomy silence, thronged to witness the entrance of the British.

Behind the English commander and Tecumseh, the Springing Panther of the Shawanoes, rode the staff and other officers, — Colonel Proctor, Colonels Elliott and McKee the Indian agents, together with a group of warriors, Walk-in-the-Water, old Roundhead the sachem of the Wyandottes, Splitlog, Logan, and others.

"There, there," continued Laurente, "that ill-favored redman is the chief I saw at the hut of Iama, the Wise Woman."

Since coming to live in the American town, she had told Abigail of this visit to the sorceress.

"Mademoiselle, that one-eyed dog is Elskwatawa, brother of the Great Shawanoe," volunteered Jean Cécire, as he passed.

"And — and —"

The girl suddenly shrank back in terror, and

Madam Snelling, recoiling likewise, sought to screen her friend with her own pretty shoulder.

For there among the British, his blue jacket covered with gold lace and conspicuous among the scarlet coats, bareheaded, with a hawk's feather thrust through his long straight hair, rode James La Salle.

"Miséricorde, I am more afraid than when shot and shell rained around us," whispered Laurente, crossing herself. "Let us go home to Dame Adelaide's. Pierre and your husband, dear Abigail, will be sure to seek us there."

"Yes, we will go," readily assented Abigail, "I do not wish to see the disarming of our brave soldiers. Oh, that we should have lived to witness this day!"

Already the American troops were filing out of the gate in gloomy silence, and those who had not destroyed their arms, now stacked them on the esplanade. Rugged faces that never blanched in danger were wet with tears of agony and disappointment, as the men saw the glorious banner of freedom lowered, and beheld given to the breeze the red flag of England, which they had thought never again to see floating over the fort of Le Détroit.

The standard was saluted by salvos of artillery from the batteries on the Canadian shore and those of the fort. The Queen Charlotte and the brig Hunter, sailing up the river, discharged their guns as fast as the crews could load and fire.

The British general, his officers, and the Indian chiefs had dismounted, but during the thunder of

cannon, the cheers of the soldiery, and the fanfare of trumpets, the redmen stood impassive as stone.

Noting this with some uneasiness, General Brock was seized with an inspiration.

Approaching Tecumseh, he said, —

“Chief of the Shawanoes, this victory over the Long Knives¹ is due as much to you as to me. I wish to show you, and all your warriors, that the King of England values the service you have rendered him.”

With these words, he took off the sash of crimson silk that he wore, and tied it, in a similar fashion, about the waist of Tecumseh.

The eyes of the other Indian chiefs gleamed with gratified pride in their leader, and more than one gave utterance to his satisfaction in an emphatic “Ugh!”

For an instant the great Shawanoe was silent. Then, inclining his head with a regal grace that an emperor might have envied, he replied, —

“It is well. I thank the King your father for his present.”

Thereupon, the warriors broke into a shout of triumph. It was re-echoed a thousand times, as a horde of savages rushed through the gates, like the whirlwind of a prairie storm, yelling, firing, seizing the horses of the surrendered, and despoiling the town like so many fiends. The havoc was, however, presently stayed by Tecumseh, who, too scornful of his white foes even to wreak his vengeance upon them, ordered his followers back to the woods.

¹ Americans.

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While this scene was being enacted, Colonels Cass and McArthur arrived with their troops, eager for battle, having been overtaken late the evening before by the messenger sent to recall them. They had made all haste, keeping under march throughout the greater part of the night. The occasional firing heard from the direction of Detroit led them to suppose the fight had begun. When, a short distance below Spring Wells, they were apprised by a fleeing citizen that General Hull had surrendered, they could not credit the news, and sent out scouts who brought back the information that it was indeed true.

Resolved not to rush into the power of a haughty foe, they retired to a position near a bridge. Here they slaughtered an ox, cooked and ate it without bread or salt. This was their first warm fare since they had left the town, except when they had dined on roasted corn and pumpkins, for the expedition had not been properly supplied.

The meal over, an officer went forward to learn from the British the terms that had been made, and to give notice that if unconditional submission was expected, they would defend themselves. Before the envoy's return, Colonel Elliott, the English Indian agent, approached the little band of resolute men, bearing a flag of truce and accompanied by a party of Indians. He brought a letter from General Hull stating that the detachment was included in the capitulation and it must, therefore, report at the fort.

The command was met by curses from the indignant officers and soldiers. But, surrounded by a savage foe, without provisions, and with a scanty

supply of ammunition, it was alike impossible to retreat through the woods to Ohio, or to overpower the enemy. Forced to yield, they marched to Detroit and laid down their arms. But Colonel Cass, stung with mortification, when ordered to give up his sword, indignantly declined to comply, and, breaking the blade, threw it away.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

THE FORTUNES OF WAR

IT was the day after the surrender. In the living-room of the Brush house, Dame Adelaide, heavy-eyed but resolute, stood at the table cutting out from blue cotton homespun a blouse many sizes too large for little Edmond. Slightly withdrawn from the windows, in a position to overlook the street without being seen, sat Laurente MacIntosh and Abigail Snelling engaged in sewing upon portions of the same garment.

Occasionally, indeed, the coarse cloth became to Madam Snelling a blue mist and her needle only a point of light, but she kept steadily at her task.

"Cheer up, Abigail my dear," said Madam Adelaide at last, "although Captain Snelling is, like the other regular officers and men, to be taken a prisoner of war to Montreal, have you not already decided to follow him there?"

"Yes, yes," assented the little bride, weakly; "but, ah, Madam Brush, how happy you should be that your husband belongs to the militia, since they are permitted to return to their homes on parole not to serve again during the war, and —"

"Humph," interrupted the mistress of the house, with a flash of her accustomed spirit, "his Excel-

lency General Hull may have betrayed the army, even as the stupid old ram among the sheep he bought from the British lately led the flock to be shorn; but I know more than one American officer who has neither surrendered nor given his parole, and never will."

Abigail started. An exclamation of surprise rose to her lips, but she suppressed it, and the eager query that would have followed.

Colonel Elijah Brush had disappeared, although during the cannonade he was in command of his regiment. For whom was Dame Adelaide making this habitant's suit of homespun on which she had begged to help, to keep from fretting herself ill? Surely Laurente was a heartless girl, or else how could she sit there smiling, and sometimes even humming snatches of a song, when she had not seen her lover since the British entered the town.

"Why, Laurente," asked the little bride, abruptly, "where is Pierre Labadie?"

For answer Laurente dropped her sewing and broke into a peal of mirth.

Observing Abigail's half-piqued, half-wounded expression, however, she checked her merriment and said penitently, —

"My dearest dear, I should not be frivolous when you are sad! Yet every time I think of what happened, I am like to die a-laughing. Yesterday afternoon, when we were returning home after seeing the British ride in, you broke away from me and ran on, thinking, no doubt, to meet your husband on the parade. Our troops were forming in line to be de-

livered as prisoners, and I turned back, in the hope of obtaining a glimpse of Pierre. As you know, there was great confusion, for already the redcoats were beginning to plunder our stores and the officers' quarters. I stood near one of the buildings of the cantonment, ready to escape, should James Blue Jacket chance to appear again. All at once, a soldier pushed past me and entered the barracks. I was on the point of crying out, for it was Pierre himself. No doubt my good angel held me dumb. Feeling that something of importance was taking place, I drew off a little, lingering as if lost in admiration of a ye ag British lieutenant stationed near by."

"Laurente, how could you?" exclaimed Abigail, in matronly disapproval of such light conduct.

"But all the while," continued the girl, demurely, "I kept a sidelong glance on the door of the barracks. My watching was not in vain. Presently out came Pierre carrying an officer's trunk on his shoulders, his cap down over his eyes, and his face almost hidden in the shadow of the box. Then, quick as a flash, I understood; he was resolved to get away from the fort without giving his parole, and would have it supposed he was detailed to carry the trunk. Miséricorde, how fast my heart beat! I knew he had to pass not only my English lieutenant, but Colonel Findlay, who was marshalling the troops."

"Oh, my dear, what an ordeal! And did Monsieur Labadie see you?" inquired Abigail, now all sympathy, while the click, click, of Madam Brush's shears went on uninterruptedly.

"I think he did," rejoined Laurente, a deprecating expression flitting over her face.

"And what did you do?"

"I — oh — I smiled, and, snatching the flower from my hair, threw it to the Englishman. He laughed and caught it, which by-play attracted the gaze of Colonel Findlay, and put him in such a rage that he bent his eyes on me as if he would have stabbed me with them for being so ready to coquet with the enemy. Yet, *ma foi!* was not that just what I wanted? For, the attention of both the British and the American officer being fixed on me, Pierre passed unnoticed out of the gate."

"And escaped?" exclaimed Abigail, clasping her hands.

"And escaped," repeated Laurente, triumphantly. "Since nothing has been heard of him, he must have safely passed the marquee on the esplanade and gained the house of some neighbor on the *côte*. By this, no doubt, he is on his way to join the troops of Governor Meigs. Still —" and here for the first time she faltered, — "I hope he knew I put the flower in my hair because he likes it so, and that, but for his sake, I would not have bestowed a second look on the impudent redcoat lieutenant."

As the girl finished her story, Madam Brush arrested her work and approached one of the windows.

"See," she cried, "here is Tecumseh coming down the street. He makes a fine appearance in that suit of buckskin, with a sword at his side! Many say he is the son of the noble *Sieur Bienville* by a Cherokee wife. Be this as it may, his moderation

since he came into the town might be copied with advantage by his white allies."

"He has quarters under the same roof as General Brock," said Laurente; "and truly the great Shawanoe has shown himself less cruel than this Colonel Proctor, who has been made governor of the fort and territory."

"Well, well," proceeded Dame Adelaide, turning away, "I must arouse Wealthy, and bid him hide our provisions from the redcoat soldiers. It seems many weeks, instead of two days, since your wedding, Abigail, child; but that rascally old negro has not recovered from the effect of the negus in which he drank to your happiness. Such a coward as he is too! You know my father gave the slave to me at my marriage, but I heartily wish I had sent him back to Strebane before the war began."

Old Wealthy's convivial habits were indeed a trial to his mistress. On returning on her errand, she admitted that she had found him in a condition to aid Ursule in secreting the stores. As she resumed her cutting, young Edmond burst into the room, crying, —

"Mother, mother, a British officer and a posse of soldiers are paying a visit of inspection to every house. They will be here in a minute."

In the twinkling of an eye, Madam Brush lifted a board of the floor, caught the sewing out of the hands of her guests, thrust it, together with every scrap of the blue cloth, into the opening, and replaced the board.

Hardly had she done so, when there came a sharp rap, as of a sword-hilt or musket, at the house-door.

Stepping into the narrow hallway, she threw open the door, but the next moment started back with an exclamation of surprise; for there stood Colonel Proctor himself.

That any one could disconcert Madam Adelaide, neither Laurente nor Abigail would have believed possible; yet now she was certainly strangely agitated and white to the lips.

Luckily, the harsh English colonel ascribed her perturbation only to a wholesome awe inspired by his visitation.

"Madam," he began tersely, "finding that the citizens have not obeyed my order to surrender their arms, I am going the rounds to make sure that every musket and sabre is given up. Have you anything of the kind in the house?"

Madam Adelaide's self-possession returned as she faced the overbearing governor.

The reaction from her late domestic exasperation caused her eyes to twinkle with humor, as she replied with mock humility, purposely addressing the doughty colonel by a title above his due, —

"Well, general, I must acknowledge that I have *one* British piece."

"What, a field-piece?" he asked, astonished. "Then I daresay it is the small brass cannon taken from our troops at Saratoga, which I have heard is one of the treasures of the fort."

In anticipation he already heard the acclamations that would greet the discovery of so rare a prize.

"It has seen service in the field," asserted the lady; "of what use it is now, I leave you to judge."

So saying, she led the way through the house to a shed at the rear of the kitchen, where, upon a heap of straw, sat Wealthy, just awakened from his drunken slumber.

"There, your Excellency," said Dame Adelaide, pointing to the old negro, whose eyes grew round with terror at sight of the redcoats, "there is the British piece of which I told you, — a black whom I would gladly send across the river where he belongs."

Before she finished speaking, however, Colonel Proctor broke into a volley of expletives, to the effect that he was not in the slave trade. And thus, as with an explosion of musketry and a trail of red fire, he beat a retreat, leaving the Yankee officer's high-spirited wife, mistress of the situation.

After the surrender, the French militia who lived along the *côte du nord*, to the east and west of the fort, went back to their pipe-stem farms; and, being thus assured of the protection of husbands and fathers, the women and children who had taken refuge in the schoolhouse at Spring Wells ventured to return to their despoiled homes.

Although "Le bon Père Richard" was so cheerful through it all, he had been hard pressed to provide for them during the trying days when they were so suddenly cast upon his hospitality; while with so many lives in his keeping, his responsibility had been great.

Now his anxiety for the safety of his flock was for the time relieved, and he found himself on

the church premises with only his youthful clerk and major-domo Isadore, who followed him about, lamenting the loss of one thing after another which had been carried off or destroyed, either by the soldiers or the redskins.

At last Father Richard came to his own cabin, a small two-roomed log-house with an out-kitchen. Entering it alone, he saw, as he anticipated, that his little study had been sacked. But Walk-in-the-Water, the old chief, had sent his son Shkotai,¹ to turn the raiders, white and red, out of the house. Was the young brave in time?

The priest passed on quickly to the inner room. It was as he left it, except that his desk had been rifled. This was not the work of savages! Still, he could afford to smile. For their pains, the plunderers had secured only a few Spanish pistarens, the silver small coins current in the territory and of the value of a British sixpence.

He glanced eagerly beyond the broken writing-box, to a corner where, covered with a patchwork counterpane, was a frame, ostensibly a rude couch.

Ah, it was not disturbed. Shkotai, his former pupil, had been vigilant.

Almost tenderly Père Richard turned back the coverlid. Thus might a miser have taken a surreptitious look at his hoarded gold. To the ascetic celibate whose heart was set on higher things, it was as great a joy to find his one earthly treasure unharmed.

After his duty to God, to his spiritual children, he

¹ The Firebrand.

loved his printing-press. There it stood, untouched. Beside it lay a yellowed printed sheet, — a number of the first newspaper of the territory, the "Michigan Essay," which he founded three years before, but was forced to discontinue, because each reader expected the compliment of a free copy.

The press was a clumsy affair, built almost entirely of wood, and on the same model as the structure at which Franklin worked in his apprentice days. Nevertheless, the priest rested his long bony hand caressingly upon it.

How many days and nights of planning it had cost him! How much patience in accumulating the coin to pay for it, since not a pistareen could be laid by until every demand of justice and charity was satisfied! And when the sum was finally assured, and the order sent, what an undertaking to have the machine transported over the mountains from Baltimore, and up Lake Erie! What an achievement when it was here at last, the wonder of the whole region! The only printing-press in the Northwest, — a power for the dissemination of knowledge; a champion of liberty by which the utterances of patriotic men might be repeated many thousands of times, might live when their ringing voices were silence forever; an influence for good or evil as might be, for good, as should be in this instance; an educator of the people and a guardian of their rights. For, although the newspaper was defunct, special intelligence and many public documents were printed on the press.

While Père Richard remained lost in his pleasing

revery, which was but a moment's respite from the cares of his daily life, a small cloud, like a mammoth lacrosse ball, rolled along the wagon-trail that connected Spring Wells with the fort.

Betimes, out of the dust emerged a mounted British dragoon. He checked his speed as he approached the house, and just as Isadore, with callow curiosity, rushed around from the kitchen, fearful of missing anything there was to be seen.

"I wish to find the curé; can you tell me where he lives?" demanded the soldier, cavalierly.

The youth was spared the trouble of replying, for straightway Père Richard appeared to answer for himself.

"I am the curé," he said; "what is wanted of me?"

"Aw!" ejaculated the dragoon, unfolding a sheet of blue foolscap paper, and handing it to the priest, "well, Mister Curé, General Brock orders that you print this upon your press, and circulate it as widely as possible; he will defray the cost."

Then, without waiting for assent or inquiry, he wheeled his horse, and was off again to the fort.

Mechanically the priest went back to his room and sat down on the bench by the window. Mechanically he glanced at the document.

It was a copy of the articles of capitulation, — the terms of the surrender of Detroit.

Aroused to indignation by the very sight of the galling lines, Father Richard started to his feet and stood before the printing-press.

His flashing eyes caught sight of a tomahawk

which Shkotai, Walk-in-the-Water's son, had left on the bench. He took it up. How dared the British commander insult him! Was he not an American citizen, loyal to his heart's core to the country that received him when he fled from France, an exile of the Terror? Had he not declared to Colonel Proctor that such a document should never be printed on his press? Had he not defied the general to his face? Yes, he would destroy the press.

He raised the tomahawk. Another instant, and a vigorous blow would have shattered frame and rollers.

Fortunately, however, a second thought stayed his uplifted arm. It fell limp at his side, and the hatchet dropped with a sharp noise to the floor.

"May God forgive me!" he exclaimed in French, his stern conscience stricken with compunction. "Not every impulse that seems good is immediately to be followed, nor is the contrary to be rejected. I have taken too great satisfaction in this poor machine and whatever it may have accomplished here at the Strait. I thought the burning words I flung at the insolent Proctor sprang from the purest patriotism, but now I fear there was in them something of the heat of passion. The Lord has humbled me, by making the object of my pride the means of my chastisement. No, I will not destroy the press."

He stood before it, with hands lightly interlaced and bowed head, as though accepting a just sentence. His lips moved in prayer, and a deep scar on his left cheek showed white against the slight flush that suffused his usually pallid countenance.

The scar had a history. During the Revolution in France, Gabriel Richard, the young priest of St. Sulpice, was proscribed by Robespierre, and a gendarme entered his room to arrest him. He escaped through a window; but, as he fled, a "trico-teuse"¹ flung after him a Sèvres coffee-pot, obtained from the looting of a palace. Had the aim of the fury been better, his life might have ended then and there. But, missing his temple, the missile struck his cheek with such force that the coffee-pot was broken to pieces, inflicting a wound whose mark would always remain.

Here to-day, in his rude log-house on the American prairie, the soft sound of the wind as it blew through the open door was like a long sigh. It was succeeded by a tense stillness. The active mind of the priest ran on. He shifted his position, and a light leaped again into his dark eyes as a new thought dominated him.

"No, I will not break this wonderful mechanism, for it may still have a mission," he said aloud. "In submitting to the order I have received, may I not be an instrument of the providence of God? The British commander thinks by means of the press to spread the glory of his triumph; it is more like to be a factor in his defeat. Where is the American, whether of Yankee or creole origin, but when he sees the news of this infamous surrender set forth in glaring type, will find his heart fired anew with zeal for his country's honor! A priest should not favor warfare. Yet, since Detroit was gained without a

¹ One of the knitting-women of the Reign of Terror.

battle, surely it is well to pray that the British may be driven back across the river by a victory as bloodless and more reputable. The might of the sword is great, but the power of the press is greater. Moreover, 'ce Monsieur Brock' may be a brave man, but Proctor is a bully, and I'll warrant he can run."

The days passed. For a month the river was dotted with canoes and dugouts engaged in transferring the captured stores from Detroit to Fort Malden. The American commander, his officers, and troops were taken north, and Captain Snelling's young bride was permitted to follow the adverse fortune of her husband.

Pretentiously, General Hull had once boasted that he would go through Montreal playing Yankee Doodle. The British now resolved he should keep his word. Accordingly, as the surrendered troops entered the city, before Hull's carriage marched a full military band, playing the air in derision. Nathless the jest was in such bad taste that a prominent officer left the ranks in chivalrous indignation.

When the procession reached Nelson's monument, the escort uncovered their heads, but the prisoners of war did not, of course, salute. Angered at this, a militia captain made a motion to knock off Captain Snelling's hat.

"At your peril, touch me!" cried Snelling, and the redcoat evidently thought it best not to annoy the Yankee officer farther.

In Detroit, meanwhile, the brutal Proctor winked at the depredations and outrages constantly committed by the Indians and his soldiers,—offences

which ranged from petty theft to murder. With the exception of the French residents and a few officials, every man known to have been prominent in the American cause was paroled and deported.

The savages brought in many captives from the frontier of Ohio, — soldiers, peaceful settlers, women, and children. All were bareheaded, and some of them were nearly nude, having been robbed even of their clothing. The personification of misery and want, they were forced to sleep on the ground, under the open sky, or in unclean wigwams, and during the day were led around the streets by their red captors in the hope of ransom. Nor was their mute appeal in vain, for the already impoverished townspeople, moved to compassion by their sufferings, by strenuous effort and personal sacrifices, bought the freedom of these prisoners. The women too, with Madam Brush and Dame Labadie in the lead, and Laurente as an efficient assistant, gave their time to making garments for the unfortunates, and often a housewife who had no money left, traded blankets and clothing to rescue some poor little child brought to her door by a drunken redskin.

The early frosts whitened the prairies; St. Martin's tide, the bright afterglow of summer, faded like the last roseate and amber clouds of the sunset. A thin ice began to form at the river edge; there came a flurry of snow, and the dark, cold evenings of late November set in.

Old Wealthy, admonished by his mistress' threat to deliver him over to the British, had not touched negus nor "English milk" (rum) for many weeks.

Nevertheless, his ebony countenance often wore a dazed expression, and he frequently announced that the house of Elijah Brush was haunted. How else account for the strange tread sometimes heard in the living-room at night,—the strange step, so like the master's footfall on the stair?

In vain Dame Adelaide declared the wood of a new house was apt to creak, and bade him not to frighten the children. He only shook his head and persisted that, "De Red Dwarf done cotched Massa Brush, sartain sure, and his haunt done come to warn de missus."

Once the colonel's little daughter started up from sleep, crying out that she heard her father's voice. Several nights afterwards, redoubtable Edmond, awakening to find the loft lonely and fancying his mother was below in the living-room, longed, like many another embryo hero, to have his courage bolstered up by her assurance that all was well.

Possessing himself of a stout stick with which to combat the shadows, he set off to join her, guided by a cold ray of moonlight that shone through a window at the foot of the stairs.

A few moments later, a piercing scream rang through the house. Immediately the living-room grew dark, where, an instant before, a light had glimmered, and the household, hurrying with flickering candles to the hallway, beheld Madam Brush, in nightcap and bedgown, bending over the insensible form of her young son, who, reviving, declared he had come face to face with his father's ghost.

The very next evening, as it happened, Laurente

MacIntosh remained up late to finish the revamping of a pair of hose of goodly size which her hostess was inexplicably eager to have completed.

As she sat alone in the living-room, chancing to raise her eyes from the knitting, she shuddered involuntarily, for opposite to her in the doorway stood, not an apparition surely, but Colonel Elijah Brush in the flesh.

"Zounds, Laurente, is it you? I expected to find my wife here," he said, coming forward into the room, since further attempt at concealment was useless as far as this young guest was concerned. "Luckily, you are too brave a girl to cry out at sight of a hunted man who, what with being buried alive for three months in the gloom of a wet cellar, and with bones racked by fever, has become verily the ghost of himself. Where is Dame Adelaide?"

"I will go in search of her; and, when I am gone, blow out the light, I beg of you," entreated the girl.

As she reached the door, however, Madam Brush appeared upon the scene, laden with a hamper covered by a square of white damask, from beneath which were visible the necks of two stout glass bottles. She betrayed no surprise that Laurente shared her secret. Perhaps the knowledge was a relief to her overburdened heart. In any case, Colonel Brush gave her no time to ask questions.

He had stood warming himself before the fire, and now catching up one of the bottles from the basket, he put it to his lips.

"Ha! h'm, this old 'eau de vie' will banish the ague," he exclaimed, as he set it down at last and

began to make a meal of the food before him; "Adelaide, between that black numskull's talk of haunts, and the fright of the children, it is impossible for me to remain here longer without discovery. And even if this were not so, the swelling of my limbs warns me that if I am to try to join the troops in Ohio, it must be without delay. I am resolved to go to-night.

Tears welled up in the brave eyes of the wife, but she answered steadily, —

"I have anticipated this, and have planned for your escape. It being St. Andrew's night, I made a bowl of negus, and told Edmond to carry it to the guards at the western gate, and say it was sent with the compliments of his mother, the daughter of old John Askin. The men are not Scots, indeed; but a soldier seldom refuses a draught of good liquor. Edmond did not forget my command to remember the password, if by chance they let it fall, or to get it from them without exciting their suspicion. Trust a boy to be sharp in such matters! The child thinks, in fact, that I want it in order to help some ransomed captive to get away. By now, thanks to the stiffness of the negus, the sentries are in too happy or too heavy a mood to halt a peaceful habitant going out to the c^{ôte} in the small hours of the morning, especially when he has the countersign —"

"And the countersign is?" interrupted Elijah Brush, laconically.

"Is St. Andrew," replied Madam Adelaide.

"The voyageur's disguise, made in the hope that you might get away in the summer, would give you

poor service now," she added with a show of cheerfulness; "but I have one that will suit you better."

Sliding open a panel of the wall, she took from the press formed by the opening a blanket coat, a fur cap, and gloves of beaver-skin.

The fugitive arrayed himself for the journey, finishing his supper between times.

With trembling hands, Laurente helped to put together a small packet of clothing and provisions, and tied them up in a blue homespun handkerchief. When all else was ready, Madam Brush drew forth from the secret press a knitted silk purse whose meshes showed several gold coins, and a brace of small firearms.

Elijah Brush accepted the purse silently, but his countenance lighted up as he thrust the pistols into his belt.

"Zounds, Adelaide, you contrived cleverly to keep them," he cried, in admiration of her powers of resource. "Truly you are the wife for a soldier!"

Therewith, the matter-of-fact colonel stole an arm around Dame Adelaide's ample waist, and imprinted upon her handsome cheek a kiss more ardent perhaps than he had bestowed upon her since the time of their courtship. For in those days, life was hard and practical, and any demonstration of affection unusual and unexpected.

Taking the bundle from Laurente, the colonel saluted her finger-tips with gallant courtesy. Losing her composure, Madam Brush clung to him.

"May God bless you, my husband, and I bring you back to your home some happy day," she sobbed.

He kissed her again, and, quietly opening the house-door, went out. It was about two o'clock in the morning.

His wife did not dare to watch him out of sight. Closing the door, she extinguished the candles on the living-room table.

Then she and Laurente crept away, not to sleep, but during the long hours, and for many days and nights afterwards, to follow the wanderer with their thoughts and prayers. No word from him came to the devoted wife. All she knew was, that since he was not stopped by the sentries, or brought back by Proctor's scouts, he must have succeeded in getting away through the woods.

CHAPTER TWELFTH

A LOVER'S MESSAGE

THE Christmas holidays passed with little merriment. As usual, however, on the eve of the "Jour de l'An" the d'Ignolce or masqueraders went their rounds from house to house, demanding the piece of "chignée" (pig's tail), which every family reserved for them, together with a few simple gifts to be distributed among the poor.

The Strait was ice-bound, except for a narrow gray tide where the current was strongest, bordered by wide frozen fields that once had been a gleaming sea. The prairies were vast tracts of untrodden snows. All travel was either along the almost obliterated wagon trail that led to Spring Wells, or upon the smooth, hard road-bed of the river ice.

The month of January was more than half over, when one afternoon, as Laurente MacIntosh stepped out of Madam Brush's house, prepared for a promenade in the town, she saw Wealthy, the black, hobbling up the street as fast as his rheumatic limbs could carry him.

"Oh, little mam'selle, stop a minute!" he called, gesticulating with both arms; "ole Wealthy's got a message to transfer to you."

So grotesque was his appearance that Laurente broke into a gay laugh.

"Oh, little mam'selle," he repeated, as, short of breath, he at last reached her side, "some one what done lubs you is a sighin' like one ob de Savoyard's big iron stoves, an' all for de sight ob your pretty face. He sends you word to say he'll be in the proximity ob de Labadie farm 'bout sundown, an' he hopes no misfortune will resent his seeing you."

Laurente laughed again, while her spirits mounted higher and higher.

"You are not far wrong, Wealthy," she said. "Of late, fortune has seemed rather to resent our past happiness. But how is it that you bring me this strange message, — what have you seen?"

"A sight for sore eyes, ma Sugar Honey," chuckled Wealthy, unclosing his clenched fist and extending his hand toward her.

In his dark palm lay one half of a shining yellow pistole.

The girl drew back astonished. In the first days of the American occupation of the territory, the larger gold and silver Mexican pieces were often cut into halves and quarters to eke out the supply of small coin. But where had the grizzled slave obtained this gold?

"One ole Wyandotte squaw done gib it to me," he explained glibly. "She done mak' me swar by de Red Dwarf to bring you de message wid all perdition. So here I is, come as straight as de road runs."

"Did she mention no name?"

"No, little mam'selle," answered Wealthy, hugging

the coin to his breast. "But yaller posies lak' dis yere ain't nebber been known to grow wild; an' only a gran' gem'man ob de right sort, or a fool, 'ud sow gold half-pistoles in de woods."

Ordinarily, Laurente would have persisted in her inquiries, would have reflected, and taken counsel of Madam Brush before pursuing this mysterious matter further. But Dame Adelaide was gone to care for a sick child at the other end of the town.

The girl was lonely, and weary with longing and waiting for news of her lover. She had heard nothing of him since the day of the surrender of Detroit, five months ago, when he shouldered a trunk and walked out of the gate of the stockade. Who but he could have sent the half-pistole to Wealthy, with instructions to let her know he was in the vicinity?

There was in Pierre's nature more of the generous "noblesse oblige" of his French forbear, the Chevalier Labadie, Seigneur de la Chausselière, than of the thrift of his Yankee ancestors on the distaff side of the house. That the message was vague, troubled her not at all. The friends of a proscribed man do not whisper his name even on the open prairie, or more than hint at his return.

"He would be at the Labadie farm." The words meant plainly, that, if she would go down to visit the Labadies, she would there find her soldier lover.

Who was the squaw that brought the message? Wealthy could not tell. But the Indian women were friendly to the whites, and especially to the French. How many a gallant "pale face" did they save from the stake, or the almost equally cruel death by

the gauntlet, during these wars between their own people and the new settlers in their country! No doubt this Wyandotte had proved herself a friend to Pierre.

Laurente was well satisfied, nevertheless, with the black's assurance that the stranger was not young. As they grew older, the daughters of the forest became square of feature, squat of figure, and shrill-toned. But how often had the dark beauty of an Indian maid, the music of her soft, low voice, awakened in the heart of the white captive a sentiment so much stronger than gratitude that, bewitched by their sweet sorcery, he lingered, content with his adoption as a warrior of her tribe.

Miss MacIntosh felt a sharp pang of jealousy as she thought of the possibility of Pierre's falling thus under the spell of the forest.

"Wealthy, fetch my snowshoes," she commanded.

The old man limped into the house, brought out the shoes, and strapped them on her little fur-encased feet.

"Wealthy," she said, taking a few steps to test them, "when Madam Brush returns, tell her I have gone to visit Mademoiselle Catishe Labadie. The way is safe enough, since the redskins, having stolen nearly all we possessed, have betaken themselves elsewhere; and the British soldiers do not care to risk a meeting with Jean Baptiste on the cote. Say that if I am not back by nightfall, I will thank her to let you come for me with the cariole."

"Sartain shuah, sartain shuah," agreed the old negro; "Time is not tied to a post like a horse to de

manger, but dis ole black Wealthy 'll go for you, don' you be afeard."

This point being decided, Laurente set out boldly. The British had built a palisade around the town, but the gates stood open during the day. The French and Yankees still permitted to reside within the boundaries or along the margin of the river, were wont to pass in and out at will.

She was, therefore, soon speeding along on her snowshoes toward Spring Wells. Her heart thrilled with happiness at the anticipation of so soon seeing her lover, and her surroundings seemed in accord with her joy.

In the sunshine, the snow-covered prairie was transformed to a scene more splendid than that historic field which a French king caused to be carpeted with cloth of gold in honor of his royal brother of England. The rugged orchard-trees, wreathed with hoarfrost, might be compared to gaunt, dark warriors decked with necklaces of wampum and silver chains. The snowbirds, tiny, feathered "coureurs-de-bois," congregated, now here, now there, in some sheltered spot, chattering and chirping with as gay an abandon as the care-free creole ranger of the woods, —

"That wild troubadour, with his joy-loving crew,
Who sings as he paddles his birchen canoe,
And thinks all the hardships that fall to his lot
Are richly made up at the platter and pot."

A long walk lay before Laurente, and in her eagerness she had not noticed how late it was when she started. Now, engrossed by pleasant thoughts, she

did not remark that the sunlight on the prairie changed from golden to argent, and was gradually withdrawn, like a shimmering veil, from the white, cold face of the landscape; that a mist, creeping up from Lake Erie, bade fair to surround the c^ote with a cordon of fleecy clouds.

The deepening shadows could not remain unheeded, however, and presently the girl discovered with dismay that the early winter twilight was setting in, and she had still nearly a mile to travel to the Labadie homestead.

She strove to hurry on, but the strap of one of her snowshoes was loose.

She stopped, and, bending down, endeavored to fasten the leather thong which secured the shoe.

Hark, what was that? The sound of hoof-beats? Or was it the throbbing of her own heart? She was not afraid; were not the homes of the habitants within hail all along the way?

She stood erect. Yes, some one was certainly riding at full tilt up the ice road of the river. Of course it was Pierre coming to meet her.

Her pulses quickened; she felt the hot tide of crimson mounting to her brow; she clasped her hands to her breast in an instinctive effort to control her emotion. In another moment Pierre would be with her, would clasp her in his arms, would say again, "Laurente, I love you."

In joyful suspense, she waited; every second seemed an eternity.

Howbeit, after the lapse of but a few minutes, up the river bank, a short distance before her, plunged

a horse and rider, who bore down upon her so rapidly that, as she peered at him through the dusk, she grew bewildered and alarmed.

Alas, this was not Pierre! Of what folly she had been guilty in coming alone to the c^{ôte}!

Cruelly had she been decoyed. This rider in a dark surtout and blanket cloak, who scorned a chapeau and wore a hawk's feather in his long black hair, was the man of whom she was as much afraid as of Tecumseh and all his hosts, — the creole with a strain of the Indian nature, La Salle.

The spectre of fear seemed to clutch her by the throat and rendered her dumb.

As she attempted in vain to call for aid, the horseman was beside her. Without dismounting or even coming to a halt, he caught her up before him and thrust a gag into her mouth. By a motion as swift, he drew a knife from his belt and cut the thongs of her snowshoes, freeing her feet of them.

Then he whispered a word in his horse's ear, and the spirited animal bounded away, swift as the wind.

Laurente had fainted from terror. When she came to herself, it was to realize, in an agony of apprehension, that, mute and helpless, she was being carried away toward Frenchtown by James Blue Jacket.

More appalling than harshness, too, was the tenderness in his voice, as he said, in French, with a guttural laugh, —

“Ah, ha, Pahweetah, my pretty snowbird, you were easily snared. But do not fear. Have I not often told you that I love you? I shall not leave to the Long Knives, the Saganoth, or the French





any right to take you from me. You shall be bound to me by all the laws of church and territory. I am bringing you to my Indian mother; she will guard you well. I will not inflict my presence upon you, but I will have Père Richard intercepted in his mission rounds by a party of braves, and brought down to Frenchtown to marry us. As the wife of Blue Jacket you shall be, not only a forest princess, but the first lady of the town of the Strait."

"God help me!" mentally ejaculated the girl, as she shrank from her captor. Her eighteenth birthday was now passed. She might legally marry without the permission or contrary to the wishes of her father if she so willed. La Salle had only to gain her assent to his plan. Ah, but that she would never give!

She madly longed that some supernatural power might cause her to shrivel up, or change her into a bird or a squirrel that she might escape away from him. Since no guardian spirit of the wilderness intervened to save her, she would fain cast herself from the horse galloping along at extraordinary speed. Oh, if she could but tear the gag from her mouth and scream for succor! She strove to free her hands; but La Salle caught and held them more firmly. Then, with another triumphant laugh, bending down, he covered her brow and cheeks with kisses, every one of which was like an arrow in her heart.

She turned away her face. Now she blessed the gag, since it shielded her lips, which no lover but Pierre had ever pressed, — Pierre who was to be her husband.

For the present, escape was impossible, and to struggle further would but call forth another hated caress. She could only remain passive, and continue to pray for deliverance. Oh, where was Pierre; did he not hear her soul's appeal to him? Through the mysterious agency by which the thoughts of those who love are sometimes transmitted from one to the other to the annihilation of time and space, did he not know how greatly she needed the protection of his strong arm and faithful heart?

She was indeed like a snowbird in the rough clasp of the fowler, or a tender wind-flower rudely plucked from the prairie in the early spring.

Limp, and apparently lifeless, she leaned forward upon the horse's neck. At least she was not afraid of this beautiful Sans Souci, whom she had often fed with apples and maple sugar in the days before she grew to fear La Salle.

The warmth of the mare's silken coat, the softness of her thick mane, gave the girl a slight sense of comfort. She felt Sans Souci quiver beneath the touch of her throbbing and tired head. A subtle sympathy seemed established between the two young creatures whom Blue Jacket loved with all his fierce heart, yet to both of whom he had been on more than one occasion most cruel.

La Salle did not attempt to raise Laurente from the position she thus chose. He thought she had swooned again, and was content, since she no longer fought for her liberty.

Once more he spoke to Sans Souci. Whatever the influence exerted by the desolate girl upon the sen-

sitive nature of the spirited animal, the word of the master must be obeyed.

Onward rushed the mare down the frozen Strait. Had not Blue Jacket been known to boast, under the potent spell of the "liquenr de pêche," that his pony could clear at a bound cracks in the ice "twenty feet wide!"

The orchards and farmhouses of the côte had long been left far behind; the mists began to roll away again. In the wide prairie of the sky shone forth the glorious constellations, Orion, Cassiopeia, Ursa Major and Minor, — which the Indians believed to be the blazing camp-fires of the celestial hunting-grounds.

The great comet, the Arm of Tecumseh, was no longer to be seen in the heavens. The sign had disappeared, because the day of the princely leader was come. Had not the British General Brock returned to Montreal; and what was Proctor but the tool of the Springing Panther of the Shawanoes? So said the warriors of the many nations of redmen known to be still gathered in the vicinity of Fort Malden.

So reflected the almost despairing prisoner, as she was borne over the dreary waste whose silence was broken only by the thud of the mare's hoofs on the ice. Oh, if this treacherous ice road would but yawn beneath them, and engulf horse, and rider, and helpless captive in one com' on doom! Yes, death would set her free.

But now, as if to deprive her of this last chance of freedom, and dreading the fate which she would

have welcomed, La Salle turned from the river. In response to the rein, Sans Souci dashed across the frozen swamp below the salt beds of the Wyandotte village, and gained the trail that bordered the lower Strait.

From the ease with which the pony followed the road, it was evident that here the snow was well trodden. A body of troops must have recently passed this way.

Sans Souci still kept up her wonderful pace. But Laurente awoke from her stupor of misery, with senses alert. The plain seemed less desolate. Surely a horse was approaching from the opposite direction!

The girl was so long inanimate that La Salle had involuntarily relaxed his vice-like grasp upon her hands. Finding them released, she stealthily tugged at the gag, and succeeded in loosening it.

Nearer came the swift hoofs, nearer, until, under the starlight, she saw a dark mass like a shadow sweeping eastward over the prairie in Blue Jacket's very path.

Was it a spectral steed, or some habitant's racer stolen by Le Lutin, the horned goblin of the côte, for his wild flight through the night? Laurente made the sign of the cross upon her breast. Were the solitary rider the Red Dwarf himself, she would beseech him to save her from James La Salle.

At the latter's sharp command, Sans Souci altered her course in order to give the traveller a wide field.

Was Laurente to lose the opportunity of rescue apparently almost miraculously offered to her?

By a desperate effort, tearing away the gag, she shrieked aloud for help.

Such might have been the wail of the lost bride, carried off from her bridegroom by the amorous Loup Garou.

La Salle muttered a deep curse, and, pinioning his prisoner's arms, thrust the handkerchief into her mouth once more.

The other traveller had already turned and he now gave chase to the fleeing creole.

Fleet as was Sans Souci, she could not long keep in advance of the pursuer, and the two horses were soon abreast.

Laurente's fear was, however, more augmented than allayed by the discovery that the stranger was an Indian, feather-crested and arrayed in all the redman's trappings of war.

In the Shawanoe tongue the warrior called upon La Salle to halt, but, instead of complying, the latter drew his pistol. Laurente felt the cold steel against her brow. Was he going to kill her? She hoped he would.

In another instant there was a blinding flash, a sharp report. No, she was not hurt, but, manifestly, it was to be a duel to the death between Blue Jacket and his antagonist for the custody of the white captive. The brave was also armed with one of the weapons of the pale-face, and now it "spoke with fire" peremptorily, yet wide of the mark, for La Salle was unwounded.

Laurente would willingly have cast herself within the range of the bullets. But even had she not been

deterred by an intuitive knowledge that suicide is never justifiable, Blue Jacket held her fast, and wheeled the mare round and round, while he kept his own shoulder and strong arm ever as a shield before her.

His shot had told, for the left arm of the savage hung useless. Enraged, the Indian fired again, without effect, being evidently unaccustomed to the white man's weapon. Having exhausted its power, he flung it away, and, winding his long legs about the body of his horse, uttered a blood-curdling whoop.

At the same moment the animal plunged forward, carrying its savage rider brandishing a tomahawk.

Laurente closed her eyes. Surely this was the end!

But La Salle had discharged only one barrel of his pistol, and, when his opponent rode at him with the raised hatchet, his second shot sent the Indian reeling backwards. The redman's grip upon his horse relaxed; he fell to the ground. A convulsive shudder passed over his stalwart frame; then it grew horribly still, and he lay, apparently dead, upon the prairie.

James La Salle had shown that after all he possessed a degree of the courage and horsemanship of the Shawanoe chief from whom he claimed descent; while Sans Souci had nobly demonstrated the spirit and intelligence of the breed of half-Mexican, half-Norman ponies that were the pride of French-Canada. Nevertheless she quivered in every nerve with excitement, and Laurente had really lapsed into unconsciousness.

There being no immediate danger of further pursuit, La Salle continued his journey more slowly. He did not know what chief he had shot, but he

realized that, although he had come off victor in the contest, it was like to cost him dear.

Still he had kept his prize. No one should wrest away this treasure.

As the girl awoke from her insensibility, she again recoiled from his protecting arm, and trembled as the little snowbird flutters in the hand of the hunter. The perception that she still loathed him, although he had just saved her life, stung the creole's proud soul to the quick; but he controlled his anger, and spoke to her with gentleness.

Laurente was thankful that she could not answer, and La Salle's wooing had a far different effect than he intended. He sought to banish her fear of himself, for he was resolved not only to make her his wife, but to win her love. To the girl, his words brought more than reassurance however; they aroused in her heart a thrill of hope. Pierre would yet come to save her. She would pray with confidence; Divine Providence, mindful even of the little snowbird, would protect her, would not suffer her to be forced into this hateful marriage.

On ran Sans Souci through the starlight. The leafless forests, that extended down almost to the trail at the water's edge, seemed to the over-wrought girl like a vast horde of skeleton warriors. Were they the shades of the hosts of Pontiac, King of the Wilderness, whose spirit had again returned to earth, the Shawanoes claimed, in the person of Tecumseh?

The wind, sighing through the ice-covered boughs, seemed the din of a ghostly battle, the whistling of bullets, the ring of the tomahawk, the hoarse

cry of the victors, the death wail of the vanquished. The illusion passed. How much more fearful might be the reality! Creeping forth from these woods, as from beneath the winding sheets of the departed braves, a band of living savages might spring up and drag her down from Sans Souci. She shivered like one with the ague; but, although the night was very cold, her chill was due more to exhaustion than to the low temperature. La Salle wrapped his blanket around her.

"We have not much farther to go," he said.

Across the trail at last glistened the frozen coil of a broad stream that, reflecting light, as from millions of gleaming scales, wound away through the wilderness, beautiful as the serpent of Eden at its creation.

It was the Nummasepee, or "Stream of the Sturgeon," called by the French, because of the tangled masses of wild grape-vines that grow on its banks in summer, "La Rivière aux Raisins," the River of the Vineyards.

Sans Souci knew it as well as she knew her master. Beyond the stretch of silver lay rest after her hard run, a meal of oats, the shelter of a shed of fir boughs, and a bed of pine-needles.

With a joyful neigh, she rushed upon the ice. Her hoofs seemed scarce to touch the frozen surface of the river; yet betimes she scrambled up on the opposite bank, and came to a stop in front of the isolated La Salle homestead. Blue Jacket gave a whistle like the wild note of the heron. Then, leaping to the ground, he lifted his captive from the saddle, and carried her in his arms to the house.

The door opened at once, and, straightway, Laurente found herself gently placed upon a settle in the living-room, and free to speak if she wished. Benumbed and weeping from the tension of fright and weariness, she cast an anxious glance about her. The room was neat and spacious, like those of most of the farm-houses of the côte, and wore an appearance of rude comfort.

At a sign from La Salle, the woman who had admitted him, and to whom he bore a strong resemblance, approached the demoiselle. Kneeling before her she removed her fur moccasins, and began to chafe her little feet, at the same time murmuring in an unknown tongue words that were soothing in their soft cadence.

Another individual present was not so ready to wait upon the involuntary guest.

Before the fire, rigid as a statue, stood a beautiful half-breed girl, who appeared the personification of indomitable pride, as she met the gaze of La Salle.

"Matanah, serve us with supper," he ordered, brusquely.

With flashing eyes and heaving bosom she confronted him, and answered in an impetuous outburst, more French than Indian, —

"James Blue Jacket, I am neither your slave nor the slave of any milk-faced woman. The 'dame blanche' may starve before I bring her food."

Thereupon, darting toward Laurente a look of intense jealousy and hatred, she left the room with the air of an empress.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

SQUAW AND WHITE WOMAN

THE older woman set out the food; but Laurent declined to join La Salle at the table. Ignoring her scorn, he pretended to ascribe her refusal to weariness.

“Patience and time accomplish more than force and violence,” he reflected.

To hold her in bondage, and yet know she hated him, would be intolerable to his proud spirit. She had never given him an opportunity to woo her; now he possessed it. To win her love from Pierre Labadie, — this was the aim he put before himself, the triumph of which he dreamed. He had brought her where her friends could not follow. In her very loneliness would she not turn to him? If this valley should become a scene of strife, as from secret information he knew to be more than probable, would she not appeal to him to shield her? And, once a woman regards a man as her protector, is not her heart half won? Yes, surely she would soon assent to his bringing Père Richard to perform the marriage.

Reasoning thus, he bade his mother take some of the bread, and wine from the Raisin vintage, to the girl, where she sat on the settle in a corner at

the opposite side of the room from the chimney. Slightly withdrawn from the heat of the blaze, that she might not too suddenly feel the change from the outer air, and somewhat in the shadow, as she tasted the revivifying juice of the wild Catawba, and tried to eat a little of the bread, she watched Blue Jacket and the squaw, who were within the ring of the firelight.

The man was hungry, and he attacked his supper with the voracity of a wolf. The woman waited upon him with maternal alacrity, and, when she could do no more, stood submissively before him. She never thought of taking the vacant chair that had been placed for the guest, any more than she would have seated herself in the presence of her husband, La Salle the elder.

The paler light of the single candle set in the centre of the board played fitfully about the two, bringing out their likeness more strongly, although the son's complexion was sallow and his expression haughty, while the mother was dark-skinned and gentle.

"Is it a servile wife, such this woman, that James La Salle would make of me?" reflected Laurente, with bitterness.

She understood it all now. This was the squaw who had sought out the old negro Wealthy and bribed him with a half-pistole to bring her the message which had led to her abduction.

Ah, the plot was warily laid! The mention of the Labadie farm, that she might suppose the word came from Pierre; the payment to the messenger of a

coin used only by the Americans and the French. Doubtless the black was told to show it to her. Had he exhibited an English half-sovereign, she would not have been for a moment deceived. But who would surmise that Blue Jacket had any American money, since he was in the employ of the British?

As she brooded upon the manner in which she had been enticed away, the dogged determination of this man, the blighting glance of animosity cast on her by the unknown Indian girl, the tears welled up in her eyes afresh.

She restrained them, however, her attention being quickly brought back to the two figures before the hearth.

Blue Jacket, having devoured bear's meat and praline, and every morsel that was served to him of the half-creole, half-Indian cookery, poured for himself a second draught of English milk (rum), and, turning sharply to his mother, addressed her in the Shawanoe tongue.

His query was evidently a demand to hear the news, for she answered in a hurried murmur, as though there was much to communicate.

As she, too, used the Indian language, her words were, of course, unintelligible to Laurente.

What had happened or was expected to happen which so engrossed the interest of La Salle that he shifted his position uneasily, and set down the liquor without having brought the cup to his lips? It must be something of moment to cause the woman to forget her subservience, her taciturnity, and speak

with a vehemence which recalled to the watcher the saying that fires long hidden are the most glowing.

Withered and masculine in appearance now, this daughter of the forest had once been comely. Yes, Laurente could see, in the lighting up of the erstwhile immobile features, traces of the beauty that fascinated the Frenchman La Salle, and led him to marry her before the altar of old Ste. Anne's. She was once as handsome as Matanah.

And her voice had plainly not lost its magic spell, for how powerful was its effect upon her son! Yet was it the voice after all, or what she had to tell?

Blue Jacket put to her several questions, or so might be inferred from the inflection of his tones. As she replied, he muttered an oath, drank off his liquor, and rose to his feet.

Laurente hastily closed her eyes, feigning to have fallen asleep.

He spoke again, and she instinctively felt it was to direct his mother to care for her.

Then, with another oath, he strode from the house; and a few moments later she heard his snowshoes crunching the snow as he hurried away.

The mother had followed him to the door. Now she came back, put a fresh log on the fire, crossed the room, and Laurente knew she stood looking fixedly at her. It was useless to feign unconsciousness under such close scrutiny. The girl opened her eyes.

"Ugh!" said the squaw, "my son is gone. He cannot be back until the day has dawned three times."

Laurente smiled. Her heavy eyelids drooped once more, and her pretty head sank against the soft beaver pelt that covered the back of the settle. Before many minutes, she had forgotten, for the time, her sorrow and anxiety.

"We sleep, but the loom of life never stops, and the pattern it was weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up again to-morrow."

Outside it was still dark, when Laurente awoke. The living-room was lighted only by the fire, but on the bear's pelt which served as a mat before the hearth, crouched the two women, Matanah, the nettle, and Wahtayah, the light, La Salle's mother. The elder sat with folded hands. The young one was eating hickory nuts, cracking them with her white teeth, nibbling the meat like a squirrel, and throwing the shells among the burning logs.

At first, to the tired prisoner, their subdued accents, as they chatted together, blended vaguely with the voice of the flames.

But as she lay motionless, and her senses became fully aroused, she realized that the conversation was being carried on in the patois of the Strait, because of Matanah's very limited knowledge of Shawanoe. Moreover, it touched upon matters of the utmost importance to the Americans and French of the vicinity.

It was well known at Detroit that in the summer, two days after General Hull's surrender, Frenchtown, which remained loyal to the "Stars and Stripes," was occupied by the English Indian agent, Colonel Elliott, with a force of Canadian militia and

savages. What was not known, Laurente gathered from the talk of the women.

Driven to desperation by the depredations and drunken excesses of the redmen, the inhabitants, early in this month of January, had despatched a messenger to General Harrison at the Maumee Rapids, asking for troops to protect them. He responded by sending seven hundred brave Kentuckians. Matanah waxed animated as she described them. Tall, strong men, with faces ruddy and bronzed like the cheek of a Normandy pear, and brown-haired, though here and there one might see a scalp having a glint of gold. Men clad in leather hunting shirts, blue trousers, and coonskin caps, and wearing crimson sashes about their waists, each white brave the very picture of a soldier.

They found the British quartered in and about the La Fontaine homestead, at the end of the long lane called Hull's Road, because by it the commander at Detroit planned to escape with his troops. Notwithstanding a rain of fire from great guns and little guns, the Kentuckians drove the Canadians and Indians away at the point of the bayonet, and caused them to flee toward Malden.

The Americans were in possession of the town. Oh, what glad news for Laurente! Friends and succor were but a stone's throw distant. And to think she had nearly lost hope a short while before! Why, Pierre himself might be here in the American camp! Perhaps within a few hours he would rescue her; they would be reunited.

"Ah, how truly 'patience is the door of joy,'"

sang her heart blithely; "there is happiness in store for us yet."

The talk ran on, and from it she learned further that only a day or two previous one General Winchester had arrived. The women were ready with the names; as events proved, they had been instructed to keep their ears open. The general's headquarters were at the fortified log-house of Colonel François Navarre. Laurente remembered it was to this house Madam Brush had come upon her visit of congratulation on the day when the old French settlement of Detroit was laid in ashes eight years before. And what now? She listened still more intently.

After the skirmish a party of habitants, to whom the British owed money for provisions, having gone to Malden to demand their pay, brought back word that Colonel Proctor was planning to sweep down on the Yankees with a great number of troops and Indians. General Winchester, knowing little of the people, had consulted La Salle the elder, who made pretence of being a good American; and La Salle roundly swore that Proctor would never dare make the attack.

But, "Ha, ha, ha!" Matanah's light laugh was like the ripple of a woodland stream, as her companion told the story; "La Salle the elder chose to serve the British, believing they would in the end be the conquerors. He was hanging about the Yankee camp as a spy, and at a message from him, delivered by Wahtayah, Blue Jacket had set off for Malden to tell Proctor that Winchester could be easily defeated."

This was the meaning of Blue Jacket's sudden departure. Was the price of Laurente's present security to be the lives of the gallant soldiers the glimmer of whose camp-fires she could see from the window near by, without so much as raising her head?

No, no, she must set her brain to work to outwit the La Salles, father and son. She lay with closed eyes, scarce daring to breathe, but storing in her memory every word uttered by the women.

At last their voices ceased, and they crept away to rest.

After they were gone, Laurente remained awake a long time, trying to devise some means to apprise the American general of the treachery of those in whom he trusted. Having finally settled upon a scheme which gave a faint promise of success, she yielded once more to her fatigue, and slept like a weary child.

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"Swing thee low in thy hammock soft,
 Deep in the dusky wood;
 Swing thee low, and swing aloft;
 Sleep as a papoose should.
 For safe, in this sheltered birchen nest,
 Quiet will come, and peace, and rest,
 If the little papoose is good.

"The coyote howls on the prairie cold,
 And the owlet hoots in the tree,
 And the big moon shines on the pretty child,
 As it slumbers peacefully.
 So swing thee high in thy birchen nest,
 And swing thee low and take the rest
 That the night wind brings to thee."¹

¹ E. D. Barker.

The soft air of the summer-time; a vine-grown bank beneath the interlacing boughs of great trees; the stir of their leaves in the wind; among the green branches, the flutter of birds whose song filled the wood with melody; the splash of limpid forest-springs; the fragrant breath of wild-flowers, — such was the scene to which Laurente was transported in the fairyland of dreams.

She awoke again to find La Salle's mother bending over her, and crooning in the familiar patois a lullaby wherewith the squaws were wont to beguile their children to rest.

There was something touching in the singer's attitude and the pathos of her voice. Her heart already yearned over the beautiful girl whom her first-born had brought home to take the place of her only daughter who, now the wife of an English officer, had grown to despise the squaw-mother. Laurente's resentment toward this woman who had done her so great a wrong softened a little.

The squaw spoke to her in the patois, but she feigned not to understand. As she sat up from her couch on the settle, the sunlight was streaming in through the windows of the room. Beyond them she could see the soldiers' tents on the snow-covered bank of the Raisin, and the river bed, solid as the esplanade of the fort at Detroit.

Wahtayah brought her a breakfast, dainty as any ever prepared by creole housewife, and having eaten so sparingly the evening before, she gladly took the fare now offered her. In the absence of Blue Jacket, her cheerfulness returned. Youth is

more inclined to believe good than ill of others. Surely this gentle attendant was so solicitous for her comfort had not meant to injure her! Blue Jacket had not told his mother the truth. She would explain that she was brought away against her will, and beg help to escape. Then, when free, she would hasten with her news to the Navarre house.

The woman drew nearer, and, squatting by the fire, busied herself in embroidering with porcupine quills a deerskin waistcoat, evidently intended for her son. The girl began her appeal in French, and exerted all her pretty arts of persuasion. But, like a reed which responds to every wind that blows, yet holds tenaciously to the soil of the river marsh, while Wahtayah showed a degree of tender emotion unusual in an Indian, to all Laurete's entreaties for aid to regain her liberty she remained obdurate.

"Pahweetah, little white snowbird, it cannot be," she said. "My son wishes to make you his wife. I dare not thwart his will. But why are you not content? Matanah here, my sister's child, would find her soul filled with joy had he chosen her. Blue Jacket is high in the councils of Tecumseh and the English."

Laurete desisted, in sheer despair of making any impression upon this forest woman, who plainly idolized her son, and was as inclined to palliate his faults as is the fashion of mothers the world over.

Conscious that her presence irritated the girl, Wahtayah betook herself to her household tasks.

Laurete breathed freer. To be prized next to liberty, was the boon of being alone.

But she was not long to enjoy it. As she sat, leaning forward with hands clasped upon her knees, gazing into the glowing depths of the chimney, reflecting upon the speedy failure of her girlish plan, and pondering what to do next, Matanah, the half-breed, entered the room and, advancing to the opposite side of the hearth, stood regarding her steadily.

With the words of La Salle's mother still ringing in her ears, Laurente comprehended the girl's hostility upon her arrival. Matanah loved Blue Jacket. Ah, if she, Laurente, could only transfer his love to this forest beauty! How strange that the cause of her unhappiness might be another's bliss! She already knew something of the apparent irony of fate.

The worthy Captain Muir had chosen her from among all the demoiselles of the Strait, and had she not fled from home to escape the marriage with him to which her father would have forced her! Now she was held a captive because La Salle was resolved she should be his wife; yet it was to Pierre Labadie she had plighted her troth. But, alas, Pierre was far away! Oh, if he would only come and take her home!

"The 'dame blanche' grows sad because her lover is absent," began Matanah in French, and with mock commiseration.

Laurente turned her head, and met the gaze of the half-breed with a quiet dignity.

For a moment the two girls remained thus, each looking unflinchingly into the eyes of the other.

Then Laurente said gently, —

"Matanah, if James La Salle is my lover, it is not

because I want his love. I pray that he may stay away forever from where I am."

Matanah drew back involuntarily. Despite her assumption of indifference, she was disconcerted by this unexpected answer.

"You do not love him?" she asked incredulously; "you were not glad to come with him? Le Père Richard is not to be brought down to marry you and Blue Jacket?"

"No, I do not love him; he decoyed me by a ruse, and I will never plight my marriage vows to him," declared Laurente, emphatically.

Matanah regarded her for a few moments in amazed silence. All at once a wave of passionate emotion swept over her dark features.

You hold his love lightly; then he will love you forever," she cried. "I hate you! I will kill you!"

With the swiftness of a wildcat, she leaped toward her rival, a hunting knife, which she had drawn from the folds of her dress, flashing in her hand.

At the same instant Laurente sprang to her feet.

With the courage of her grandfather, St. Martin, the noted Indian interpreter, of the long line of heroes of the Scotch house of Moy, she caught the arm of her assailant and warded off the blow.

"If you kill me, he will indeed love me forever," she cried, as they struggled for the possession of the knife; "he will crush you like a snake under his heel."

Matanah relaxed her grasp of the weapon, and it fell to the floor.

"What you say is true," she acknowledged, sul-

lenly; "I can safely leave your fate in the hands of my people."

Coupled with what Laurente had overheard concerning the projected attack from Fort Malden, these words bore a terrible and vindictive significance.

Nevertheless, she did not falter. If possible, she would avail herself of the girl's very hatred. Under pretence of inducing Matanah to get rid of her, she would send word to General Winchester of the intended movements of Proctor.

"Listen, Matanah," she said, "I have given my promise to another; it is his wife I wish to be. Shall I show you how you can cause Blue Jacket to forget me, how you can win his love?"

Matanah hesitated. The Indian superstition, which ascribes occult powers to the white race, swayed her. Could this beautiful stranger really reveal to her a way to gain her heart's desire?

"Show me," she pleaded, awed, yet with ill-concealed eagerness.

"And in return you will lend me your blanket cloak, that, disguised by it, I may pass the armed servants outside at the La Salle gate?"

"If I did so, Blue Jacket would kill me. For him I was reared. That I might be a fitting mate for him, my mother would not teach me the Shawanoe tongue and ways, but sent me here to my aunt, to learn to cook and sew like the white squaws."

"Eh, bien, I will show you, anyhow," said Laurente, affecting to yield. "In the first place, you must take a written message from me to the camp across the river. The Americans will come and set me free.

Blue Jacket shall never see me again, and before long he will turn to you; one love drives out another."

Was this the white woman's magic?

While Matanah deliberated, another scheme began to take form in her mind.

Since the days of Dollier and Galinée, the hardest work of the missionaries has ever been to induce the Indian to forgive a real or imagined injury. And was not Matanah half-Indian? She loved La Salle, as her savage soul understood love, but he had scorned her, and she would be revenged.

Yes, she would go to the camp of the Big Knives, under pretence of carrying the demoiselle's letter asking that a posse of soldiers be sent to release her. But she would demand to be conducted before the general; she would betray to him the plans of the English, of Blue Jacket, who had spurned her love for the sake of this milk-faced woman. She would foil and disappoint him, she whom he thought of so little account. He did not know with whom he had to reckon when he so lightly passed her by. His success or failure lay in the hollow of her hand. This time it should be failure; and she would blame it all on the white woman.

The features of the Indian girl were now an impenetrable mask, and gave no clue to the emotions that raged within her breast.

"Eh, bien," inquired Laurente, who awaited her answer with feverish anxiety.

"Eh, bien, mademoiselle. At dusk I will take your message," Matanah answered, and noiselessly stole away.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

BY THE RIVER OF THE VINEYARDS

MATANAH soon returned carrying between her pretty hands an earthen-ware bowl filled with bits of many-colored shells.

"With these you can spell out your message," she said, laconically.

Laurente stared at her in puzzled surprise.

"You do not know how to talk with shells?" exclaimed the half-breed, disdainful of her ignorance. "See, the white mean peace; the red, trouble. Here is the deerskin cord. You string the end of the message first, and put a knot when you change the theme. When you have done, you coil it up like 'Muncto,' a little snake, and he who receives the letter reads as he unfolds it."

The white girl's attention was for a moment caught by the ingenuity of the device for transmitting news, but now she turned away from the dish of wampum beads.

"Even if I knew how to tell my story in your Indian manner, the Long Knives could not read it from the string of shells," she rejoined; "give me a feather and a bit of birch-bark, and I will tell it in my own way."

Matanah brought a swan's quill, and for want of the bark, a scrap of deerskin dried almost to parchment.

An earthen jar filled with drinking water stood on the table. Laurente poured a few drops of the water into a birchen cup, mixed with it a small quantity of soot from the chimney, and began to write in English, because, of the La Salles, only Blue Jacket understood this language, and, according to Wahtayah, he could not return before three days.

"Ugh," commented Matanah under her breath; "the life of the heart and the life of the hearth-fire are the same. In taking from Blue Jacket's fire the means to set herself free, the 'dame blanche' takes a joy from his life. The fire will die upon his hearth, but when Saganosh and Long Knives are gone, and Tecumseh rules alone, my love shall kindle it again."

The letter had long been ready when the Indian girl came for it late in the evening, and Laurente's heart beat fast as, shortly afterwards, she saw Matanah pass out of the La Salle palisade and glide away into the gloom of the winter night.

An hour later, as the gaunt Kentucky sentry paced his beat before the Navarre house, he heard, close beside him in the darkness, a slight sound, like the stealing of some tiny creature of the woods across the snow.

"By George Washington, it is a musk-rat, and the *parlez-voos* hereabouts do say the critter makes a fine stew," he muttered, peering through the gloom in the hope of being able to bag his game alive. For hunger changes musk-rat to chicken, and the Yankees were none too well rationed.

In another moment a soft voice said almost in his ear, —

“Winchester! Winchester!”

The man was no coward in face of the English or even of Tecumseh's *Satanas*, or red devils, as he and his comrades called the Indians.

But of what use are powder and ball to defend even a general against the powers of the other world? And the dusky girl at his elbow seemed no less than an apparition.

Quickly recovering from the illusion, however, the soldier caught and held her fast.

“By George Washington, my forest fairy, I have taken a pretty prize,” he cried, and raising his voice, called lustily for the guard.

The latter appeared forthwith, and was disposed to march the prisoner off to the temporary guardhouse without delay.

“Winchester — Winchester,” she repeated persistently.

“Zounds! After all, she may have some information for the general; I will report the matter at once,” he decided.

In Madam Navarre's best parlor, General Winchester, Colonels Lewis and Allen, and Major Madison sat around her best polished table. They were playing cards and drinking claret. But only the general's hand was a trifle unsteady so that he spilled his wine, and when he set down his glass it marred, by a little unsightly rim, the shining surface of the mahogany.

Elderly, fat, fussy, aristocratic, and self-sufficient,

General Winchester was, like Hull, a revolutionary soldier who had been appointed to a prominent command in the present war because of his past services and without close consideration of his qualifications for leadership.

Engrossed with the chances of whist, the officers found it no welcome interruption when Hypolite, Colonel Navarre's Pani body-servant, poked his dark head in at the door and announced to his master, who was moodily pacing the apartment, —

"M'sieur François — M'sieur le Général, der guard ham brought hin one squaw what, hee saze, has one big piece news; hor, c'la Jaub, she hees one spy."

General Winchester raised his eyes from his cards.

"Why did not the blockhead lock her up until morning?" he muttered, but stopped short and frowned superciliously, as the guard entered the room with his captive, and saluted.

"Sirrah, how dare you force your way into my council chamber in this manner?" demanded the general.

The soldier's lips twitched nervously as his glance fell on the cards and the wine glowing ruby red in the crystal glasses, but he replied, with a gravity that spoke well for the discipline of his corps, —

"Your Excellency, the squaw has some kind of a letter, and she's kept a-sayin' your Excellency's name over and over. I thought maybe her news would n't keep till mornin'."

At this juncture Matanah stepped forward. Thrusting a hand in front of the guard, she opened and

closed her fingers before his face, — the Indian gesture of contempt. Then, turning to the commander, she inclined her head and threw back her blanket cloak in salutation.

Her disdain of the soldier amused the stout old general so that he laughed immoderately, a signal to the other officers, who promptly followed suit. Matanah's beauty and the fawn-like grace of her every motion awakened his interest.

"Well, well, what have we here?" he said, extending his hand for the little roll of deerskin.

She did not at once deliver it, but recognizing Colonel Navarre among the gentlemen, addressed him in the patois of the Strait, briefly telling of the treachery of La Salle the elder, his message to Blue Jacket, the latter's departure on an errand to Proctor, and the probability that an attacking party from Fort Malden would soon sweep down upon the American camp.

As she proceeded, Navarre sprang to his feet. When he had heard all, he repeated the tale to his chief, adding his own opinion that the enemy might appear at any time, and it would be well to prepare against surprise.

"My genial host," replied the general, sententiously, "have not the British already been driven from the banks of the Raisin? Why should they come back again? Soldier, lock up the prisoner."

But Matanah, divining that she was to be led away, thrust herself between the guard and the officers, and began to speak of the white captive at the house of La Salle, Navarre again acting as interpreter.

"On this piece of deerskin you will find written the white girl's prayer to you to set her free," she said in conclusion, stepping forward and offering Laurente's letter to the general.

As he read it, his features changed, he let fall an exclamation of surprise, and darted at the half-breed a searching glance.

"She says this contains only the white girl's appeal for aid," he asked of Navarre.

The latter replied in the affirmative.

"Humph!" continued Winchester. "She does not know, then, that Miss MacIntosh has set down, in broken sentences, the same story of a meditated attack upon our troops which she herself has just told. Colonel Navarre, we need not be over anxious. This is but hysterical tattle founded on one woman's jealousy and another's fears. The beautiful she-devil would like to set the world aflame because a *coureur-de-bois* has scorned her for the sake of a white woman; while, because Blue Jacket has run away from the American troops, the white girl thinks he has gone to bring the British about our ears. I shall not alter the disposition of my forces because of a three-cornered lover's quarrel."

"But you will permit me to lead a posse of soldiers to rescue Miss MacIntosh at once?" interposed Colonel Navarre.

"Um — To-morrow, my dear colonel. To-morrow we will send for her. Navarre, tell the half-breed she may go home, and bid her say to the white girl that we will set her free to-morrow."

When the general and his officers were again

alone, Colonel Navarre voiced the uneasiness of his brothers-in-arms.

"I would remind your Excellency," he said, "that the words of this strange messenger tally with the report brought in by a scout, who avers that the British have actually reached Stony Creek, but a few miles distant. I beg your Excellency to order the troops to sleep under arms to-night."

"D— your caution, sir," interrupted Winchester, his choler rising. "The men are already asleep, and it is nearly midnight. Be satisfied; to-morrow we will strengthen our defences."

He concluded with a yawn, and presently retired. Colonels Allen and Lewis and Major Madison returned to their commands and remained watchful for a time; but, as nothing happened to confirm the rumors they had heard, they at last sought their tents.

Upon Matanah's return to the La Salle house, Laurente received her message with misgivings. Why did the general delay to end her captivity, when half a score of brave men could effect a rescue? To one in prison every hour seems an eternity. And was not this house really a prison? Wahtayah had given her a little sleeping nook that adjoined the living-room, but the Indian woman remained on guard in the outer apartment.

Notwithstanding her disappointment, the girl's heart thrilled with unselfish thankfulness as she knelt at her window to pray before lying down to rest. General Winchester had received her letter; Matanah's description of the scene at Colonel

Navarre's was proof that the half-breed was not deceiving her. The American army was saved.

The La Salle house, being well built, had glass in the sashes. Such a window had always been Laurente's favorite *prie-dieu*.

As she looked forth to the sky stretching wide its arms, symbolic of an all-embracing Providence, or across the vast expanse of Strait and prairie, she felt her own nothingness. Her soul bowed down in adoration of the Creator, the God of the Universe whom Tecumseh worshipped as *Taren-ya-v-a-go*, the Holder of the Heavens, the breath of man's life and the fire of his heart. To-night the meadows of the sky were starless but pervaded by a white light, for, although in a chariot of clouds, the moon rode royally on her way.

From this little room Laurente could not see the frozen stream of the Raisin nor the cheering camp-fires on its banks. The outlook from her window revealed only the desolation of the wilderness.

How long she knelt, pouring out her maiden heart in prayer, she could not have told, but all at once she became conscious that the scene before her was not absolutely a solitude. Was that the swarlow of a tree waving in the wind, a breath of mist, or an Indian lurking at the edge of the wood?

Laurente rubbed her eyes and looked again. No, it was not a savage. From a thicket beyond the level stretch of ground issued a soldierly form that she vaguely recognized. It wheeled about and approached her window. Her heart beat faster.

Who was this crossing the unbroken snow without snowshoes yet striding on as if he trod the smooth surface of a ball-room floor? Was there an opening in the palisade yonder? If not, how had he gained admittance? For now he passed beneath the leafless boughs of the La Salle apple-trees.

Surely, she had lived through a similar experience. Ah, yes, once before she had seen him coming thus through the moonlight. But then, it was the summer-time, the orchard upon which her little room at home looked out was laden with foliage and fruit, and the grass under the trees was like a soft carpet. Then, he came with a song on his lips. Now— What could this be but an illusion? Laurente had never heard of the refraction of light, but she had an indistinct idea that perhaps the glass in the window helped to deceive her.

Noiselessly, so as not to arouse her drowsy jailer, Wahtayah, she raised the sash and slipped under it the block of wood used to keep it up.

The mysterious figure, clad in the uniform of an English officer, was but a few rods distant. He threw back his head; just now, the moon seemed to step forth from her cloud chariot, a ray of light fell full across his upturned face, and Laurente caught her breath in mingled joy and fear. The officer was Captain Muir.

Still she remained upon her knees as though held motionless by an invisible power. Another instant, and he was beside the window. He spoke her name in a tense whisper. Yes, it was his voice; yet it had a strange new note. Why was she afraid?

"Laurente," he said, "in the summer, when in the sky the fiery arm of Tecumseh alone challenged the moonlight, you bade me come again. I love you still; I am come to save you. The arm of Tecumseh is stretched out in vengeance. You chose Pierre Labadie, but he is not here to shield you. Come away with me, my love, while there is time! Come away!"

The girl had listened and prayed for rescue; why did she not seize upon the opportunity now offered to her? He stood before the Pani guards of the La Salle palisade, in the waning light of the moon, could he not take her away in the same manner?

Why did she hesitate and draw back in terror from this gallant young soldier? With him she had more than once sat in the low-recess of the living-room at Moy Hut watching the blaze of the hearth-fire; with him she had walked in her garden or beneath the apple-trees on the shore of the Strait. He was the soul of honor; she could trust him.

"Come away, Laurente, I ask nothing for myself; let me take you home," he urged; or was it the weird sigh of the wind through the La Salle orchard? Home! To her mother for whose love she longed; to her father who would forgive her flight from the shelter of his roof when he learned how much she had suffered! Yet —

"No, no, I cannot go with you," she faltered, finding voice at last. But the words fell from her lips in an awed and frightened cry.

He leaned toward her. His face was ghastly white, and in the moonlight he seemed clothed in silver.

"Then, Laurente, good-bye," he sighed mournfully. "I will love you forever, good-bye!"

He bent so close that she felt his breath upon her cheek. Why was it so icy cold? He kissed her hand as it rested on the window-ledge, and she shuddered, chilled to the heart. His form grew indistinct. What mystery was this?

She started to her feet; she tried to call out to him, to tell him she would accept his protection. But the cry was lost amid a great din that suddenly arose outside, where the Pani servants began to rush about, vociferating wildly.

The girl stood bewildered in the middle of the floor of her little room. Had she been asleep? If so, how came the window open? Was it only because she was cold that she trembled so like an aspen-tree? And what was the matter with her hand; was it touched by the frost?

She did not know what o'clock it was. At least there was no sign of dawn, and beyond the deserted hearth-room the house-door stood open. Amid the confusion she ran out into the yard, plunged her hand into a drift, and, drawing it forth, began to rub it with snow. She forgot even the stinging pain that followed this vigorous treatment, however,—forgot herself altogether, as the shouts of the slaves in their French patois became intelligible.

"The English, the Shawanoes have come! There will be a fight!"

The next moment, from the vicinity of the American camp, arose a blood-curdling war-whoop, which was quickly followed by a volley of musketry.

Another minute, and it was as if Abaddon, the evil angel of the bottomless pit, the devil of destruction, was abroad with all his fiendish host.

Laurente watched the scene in dazed horror until Wahtayah came and forced her to return to the house. Even then, she continued to gaze upon it from a window, unable to resist its terrible fascination.

The prairie was ablaze with a crimson glare whose thin curtain of smoke was pierced at short intervals by lightning flashes from field-pieces or a rain of musketry fire. And above all she heard the wild yells of savage warriors grown drunk with war. From them came no death cry, — fiends are immortal! But, now and again, above the noise of the battle, arose the shrieks of Saganosh and Long Knives in mortal agony.

Laurente clasped her hands and cried out to Heaven in a paroxysm of womanly pity, —

“May God have mercy upon them! May God have mercy upon the living and the dead! Ah, yes, the dead; for I know that there, lying beside the river amid the snows dyed red with his life-blood, is one whose friendship I prized. Captain Muir has fallen in this battle; it was his spirit that came to warn me. He loved me to the last; may his soul rest in peace.”

As she uttered her requiescat, she glanced half fearfully over her shoulder. However dear the memory of the friend who is gone, there is an uncanniness in the thought of his ghostly return.

In the room, in the house, there was no stir even of a living presence.

Where were Wahtayah and Matanah; where the servants who had raised such a hubbub? All had fled in terror to hide like squirrels in the woods. They had forgotten their prisoner. Laurente was free. What should she do?

For the better protection of the settlement, the American forces were divided in two camps on the opposite side of the Raisin from headquarters and at some distance down the river.

The small hours of the morning had passed in perfect quiet, but before it was yet daylight the sharp crack of a sentinel's musket broke the silence and re-echoed from the neighboring thickets.

At the Navarre house, General Winchester was awakened by the ringing voice of his host calling from the foot of the stairs and urging him to make all possible haste, for the enemy were come.

Confused at being so suddenly aroused, he and his aids while dressing clamored for their horses, but the servants were slow in equipping them.

"You were right, Navarre," cried the general, as he fumed at the delay. "Zounds! you were right."

"Take my mount, sir; it has been in readiness all night," was Colonel François' only reply.

A few minutes later he himself led up the horse. Winchester sprang to the saddle, waved his hand in thanks, and putting spurs to the fine animal set off to join his troops.

On the dark prairie the alarm was succeeded at frequent intervals by a luridly illuminating shower of shell and canister-shot from field-pieces and mor-

tars, the charge of soldiers invisible until they were almost face to face with the men still dazed with sleep, and the appalling shouts of savages.

The attack had been made all along the line, but Proctor soon led his redcoats particularly against the picketed encampment of Colonel Lewis. To cover their advance, they attempted to shatter the temporary stockade and destroy the houses of the little town with a small cannon placed at the edge of the thicket. But, as man after man essayed to load the gun, each in turn was picked off by the Kentuckians, until the detachment was compelled to fall back. Colonel Navarre and his brothers having taken possession of an old horse mill, did good service with their rifles during the engagement.

At the lower camp, near the La Fontaine house, the fortunes of the Americans had come to a very different pass. It was this part of the struggle that Laurente witnessed from the window of the La Salle living-room; although, happily, her range of vision could not take in all its terrible details.

Here the attack of the Indians under the redoubtable warriors, Roundhead and Splitlog, was so like a whirlwind, and the force of two hundred men so inadequate, that, notwithstanding their courage, they could not maintain their position. Colonel Wells sought to retreat in good order, but, as soon as his command began to give way, the savages redoubled their unearthly whoops, and fell upon them with such ferocity that the retreat became a rout.

As they fled panic-stricken, they were met by a detachment, led by Colonel Allen, to conduct them

to the upper camp. Despite his heroic efforts to restore discipline, they continued their frenzied flight, and, instead of taking a course toward the safety of the palisade, fled diagonally across the river and up the Hull Road in a blind endeavor to escape to Ohio.

Meanwhile, as General Winchester rode down the river on the ice, he overtook a man running in the same direction. It was Whitmore Knaggs, known also as Debendon. The general halted long enough to insist that the American Indian agent should get up behind him on the horse, and then, galloping on, soon fell in with a body of his fleeing soldiers.

He followed, shouting after, seeking to rally them and regain the day, but was intercepted by a party of seven Indians.

"General, we are lost," muttered Debendon; "the leaders of these savages are Jack Brandy, the Wyandotte, and Blue Jacket, the Shawanoe chief."

"My friend Knaggs, you are my prisoner," called Brandy, adding an oath.

With the odds so greatly against the two Americans they were forced to surrender.

Drawing his sabre, General Winchester handed it to Blue Jacket, saying curtly, —

"Sir, I make you a present of my sword."

La Salle demanded his pistols also. The weapons of both men having been given up, Brandy deprived them of their coats as well; and, after the lapse of some time, the prisoners were taken half frozen to Colonel Proctor.

On the prairie the flight of the troops had become a carnage. The Indians cried out in their own tongue

that the Long Knives were fleeing. The war-whoop was echoed by hordes of warriors who sprang from the woods and confronted the fugitives. Others followed in their tracks and from behind brained them with tomahawks; others, again, awaited them at the sides of the narrow road and shot them as they approached. Finally a body of redskins headed them off at Plum Creek, a small stream about a mile above the Raisin. Here the despairing soldiers, who had thrown away their arms to facilitate their flight, huddled together like sheep by their brutal foe, were remorselessly slaughtered. So closely were they hemmed in, that after the battle forty of the slain were found in a space two rods square. The savages tore away their scalps, and afterwards carried these to Malden to receive the prizes offered by the British commandant.

Several hours of daylight had now passed. The Americans at the upper camp, having driven away the Saganoshs, and being ignorant of the fate of their comrades, were breakfasting quietly when two men were seen approaching with a white flag.

Major Madison, supposing it was a flag of truce to enable the enemy to bury their dead, went out to meet it. To his astonishment, he found it borne by one of Wells' command, accompanied by Proctor himself.

"Major Madison," said the British colonel, haughtily, dispensing with all formalities, "I bring you an order from General Winchester, who is my prisoner. As you will see, it commands the unconditional surrender of all your troops."

"Colonel Proctor," rejoined the major with cool dignity, "I decline to accept any such order."

Somewhat crestfallen, Proctor returned to his camp, and sent Winchester in charge of Blue Jacket to Madison.

"Our position is hopeless, my gallant major," said the general, sadly, after he had informed him of the rout at Hull's Road. "The lives of all our remaining men depend upon a prompt surrender of them as prisoners of war."

"Sir, the disgrace of General Hull shall not be repeated," persisted Madison, bravely.

Resistance was, however, indeed useless. He had no strong fortifications, no fresh men, as was the case at Detroit.

"I will yield on condition that all private property shall be respected," he said at length; "that the sick and wounded shall be protected by a guard and removed on sledges to Malden; and that the officers' side arms shall be restored to them upon their arrival at the fort."

All this the British commander promised upon his honor; yet, scarce had the Americans given up their arms when the Indians began to plunder them. The next day the cruel victor started with his captives for Malden, but his promise of protection amounted to nothing. No means of conveyance was furnished for the wounded, but hundreds of reeling, drunken savages fell upon the helpless men, robbing, tomahawking, and scalping them without mercy.

The houses where some of the Long Knives had taken refuge were set on fire, and if any of those thus

imprisoned tried to crawl out of the doors or windows, they were thrust back into the flame with bayonets. Those who lay outside, bleeding and dying, were thrown into the midst of the conflagration. Of the sick and wounded not one escaped.

So perished many of Kentucky's noblest heroes. Little is known of the personal histories of these brave spirits, who traversed a wilderness of several hundred miles, and gave up their lives for their country. But they did not die in vain.

Although Proctor's sanguinary triumph gained for him promotion to the rank of general, it covered his name with obloquy. Among the Americans the memory of the intrepid soldiers slaughtered in the dreadful massacre nerved the arms of their comrades to avenge them, and the words "Remember the Raisin" became the war-cry destined to strike terror to the hearts of their enemies.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

THE GREAT SHAWANOE

ON the morning of this tragic 22d of January, when Laurente found herself alone, her first thought was to get away from the La Salle house. But she must guard, as far as possible, against the dangers of being overtaken.

Men like the La Salles doubtless had brandy and rum stored away, since these commodities formed their chief trade both with the Indians and the habitants.

"If the savages come and discover the liquor that they say is made of the tongues and hearts of men, what chance will any white man, woman, or child on the banks of the Raisin have for life?" exclaimed the girl, as, catching up a half-consumed brand from the hearth to give her light, she made her way to the cellar.

Yes, as she supposed, around the walls were ranged rows of barrels which gave forth a strong and sickening odor.

Thrusting the torch in a socket above her head, she seized a hatchet that lay on a heap of brushwood, and, going from cask to cask, knocked in the bung of each, letting the amber and red-gold fluid gush forth

until the floor was a little sea of fire-water from whose rising flood she fled.

This task accomplished, where should she go? Anywhere, even to death to escape from Blue Jacket. Yet she was already faint from hunger and horror.

A hasty forage of the pantry put her in possession of a loaf of rye bread. Then taking an Indian blanket from the settle, she drew it about her shoulders, squaw-fashion, and ran out of the house and through the open gateway of the palisade.

Fleeing from the vicinity of the river, she sought refuge and shelter among the underbrush of a pine grove about quarter of a mile distant.

The morning passed. The noise of the battle died away in the haunting death-cries of the routed troops as, in their stampede down the Hull Road, they were cut off by the savages.

These heart-rending sounds were succeeded by a silence for which the terrified girl was grateful, although she did not understand its meaning. It was the silence of the surrender.

The hours wore away. Laurente, still safe in her concealment, slept from sheer exhaustion. She awoke suddenly, trembling with foreboding. All around her was the gloom of the great trees; above them the sky was blue. It was still daylight. She must move about or she would succumb to the cold.

As she attempted to get upon her feet, a sound borne by the wind palsied her stiffened limbs and caused her heart almost to stop beating.

A party of Indians were approaching the grove. To seek to elude them by flight would be useless. All she could do was to crouch closer to the ground in the hope that their path might not lead them past the spot where she lay hidden.

On they came, fresh from their awful work at Plum Creek. They surrounded the grove. Among these shadows might be lurking defenceless Long Knives who, lacking the wisdom of babes, had trusted to the word of Colonel Proctor and given up their arms. The place must be searched.

Straightway the little wood became like the forest of the Inferno that Dante saw with unspeakable fear.

Painted savages clad in the hairy skins of the bear, the deer, and the fox, and glutted with slaughter trampled the fir shoots, shouting in an unintelligible tongue, hurling their tomahawks, or thrusting, where the shadows were deepest, the bayonets of the muskets they had wrested from the dying soldiers.

"Oh, that one such blow might transfix my heart," Laurente prayed in desperation.

But it was not to be. Before many minutes a horrible face smeared with ochre and vermilion bent above her, a yell of triumph rang among the trees, and the poor girl, more dead than alive, was dragged out to the open space beyond them.

A group of grinning warriors formed a line around her. Their war-dress was spattered with a red that was not paint; from their belts hung scalps freshly torn from the heads of their victims, and in the eyes of each was the ferocity of the wolf, which at the sight of blood grows mad.

And yet, how changeless was the calm of the sky as it looked down upon her; how soft were the rays of the afternoon sun as they shone upon the snow. The accord between Nature and human woe or happiness was broken at Eden's gate. By the strange quality of the mind which takes note of trifles in a supreme moment, Laurente was conscious of many details of her environment.

That she had but a few minutes more to live she did not doubt. Cowering, she glanced from one to another of the savages, wondering with a dumb terror who among them was chosen to strike the blow that would put her out of her misery.

A young buck began to gather wood for a fire. Merciful Heaven! was this to be her fate? Her brain reeled; she struggled against the physical weakness that threatened to rob her of consciousness.

And then a strange thing happened. The dark veil of faintness that hung before her eyes seemed lifted; the blood rushed back to her heart. There was no escape; she must die in any case, but why should she die like a coward? Why should she let them crush her as if she were only the little snow-bird La Salle had called her? The spirit of St. Martin the interpreter who, a score of times, had braved death at the hands of the redmen, of the MacIntosh who fought for the Stuart, quickened her pulses like wine.

She had been so passive none in the awful circle had thought to bind her. Therefore, the effect was electrical when now their hitherto unresisting prisoner broke from her captor. Springing to the centre



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of the wild ring of warriors, who, brandishing their tomahawks, had begun a death-dance around her, she cried aloud, in the patois which they well understood, —

“Essa! For shame! So many warriors fight one little squaw!”

Had Waubos, the timid hare, turned like a wolf upon the hunter, or Pahweetah, the dove, fought him like the eagle, these fierce redmen, reeking with the awful spoils of their warfare, could not have been more amazed. But courage is the one human quality which above all others impresses the Indian nature. The dancing warriors were already sated with cruelties, and the girl's daring defiance called from their savage throats a hoarse shout of applause.

“You are not warriors, you should wear squaw-petticoats,” shrilled Laurente, turning upon Splitlog, the leader of the band.

A yell of protest greeted this despairing shaft of sarcasm, and the chief fell back as if stung by a poisoned arrow.

Had she hastened or averted her fate?

Even at this crisis, Laurente felt a sense of incredulous astonishment as one of the most stalwart of her enemies leaped forward and took his stand for her defence.

To one who knew that every daub of paint on an Indian's face has a significance denoting honors, ancestry, or condition, it would have been plain enough that the heraldic device of this chief was the beaver, that he and his forbears were great trappers and hunters. Above his eyebrows were depicted in

vermilion the ears of the animal; on his cheeks, also in vermilion, the paws, in a position as though raised to the mouth; while, in criss-cross lines of yellow ochre, extending from the chin to the nose, was portrayed the tail, as though standing upright, the chin itself doing service as the beaver's body. To Laurente, however, the features of her unlooked-for champion were simply a hideous blur of red and yellow pigment most terrible to behold.

How great was her surprise, accordingly, when this dusky Shawanoe, this painted redman, flourishing his tomahawk as though it were a shillaleh, cried out, not in the patois, but in ready English enriched by a fine brogue, —

“By the powers, if any of yese lays a finger on the gurl, he's a dead man, bedad!”

Even Pierre Labadie's fervidly whispered “I love you” had scarce sounded sweeter in the long ago than did now this reassurance to the again drooping captive. For by the words, the tone, Laurente recognized McCartai, the Tawas, son of an Irish trapper and an Indian woman, a sachem said to be the most humane and generous among the followers of Tecumseh.

So much for the ubiquitous Irishman.

“If our brother claims the captive there is no more to be said,” sullenly declared Splitlog, uneasy lest he might have lost prestige by the incident, and eager to prove his prowess anew. “It is poor sport to torture a hare when we can hunt big game.”

Thereupon, he raised a war-whoop. The party were about to follow him in a wild rush over the

prairie, when the same brave who had started the fire cried out that a horseman was crossing the plain and making at full speed toward the grove.

McCartai, hastily turning to the girl, bade her not to fear, and promised to send her to her own people.

A few minutes more, and the rider reached the spot where they were. He wore a suit of buckskin; his face was unpainted, but upon his helmet of hawk's feathers gleamed and shimmered a disk of pearl, which implied that the Moon-goddess was his ancestress.

He did not dismount, but called to the band in Shawanoc, angrily pointing to the girl and uttering again and again the name of Tecumseh.

Laurente drew nearer to her late defender, choosing him for a protector rather than the other.

For the newcomer was Blue Jacket, who had been searching the woods for her.

He spoke forcibly. McCartai was inclined to dispute his authority, after the traditional fashion of the Irishman who prefers to fight first and explain afterwards; yet a moiety of the caution inherited from his Indian mother, and the frequent repetition of the name of the "Springing Panther," at length prevailed.

Evidently Laurente was the subject of contention, and now, to her dismay, McCartai consented to give up his prize to La Salle. A chorus of jeers arose from the other warriors as he yielded, but he eyed them to silence and, patting his hatchet, muttered again the magical name of Tecumseh.

Laurente vaguely comprehended that Blue Jacket had lied, saying she was his promised wife, and any

one who strove to take her from him would be punished by the leader of the Nations.

She had no chance to beg her recent champion not to abandon her cause. La Salle bending down lifted her to his saddle, as he had done that evening when he stole her away, and, putting spurs to his horse, galloped toward his father's house on the river bank, followed by the yelling Shawanoes.

If he meant to again make Wahtayah the jailer of Laurente and barricade the place, his plan was promptly frustrated by the savages. Reaching the house before he had time to enter it, they thronged into the living-room, slapping on the walls and ceiling the trophies of their victory at Plum Creek; or flinging them upon the table, until the reeking scalps were piled almost as high as the rafters.

Having disencumbered themselves for the time of their horrid adornments, they next made a rush for the cellar, where, finding the liquor in pools upon the floor, they lay on the ground, lapping up the drink like dogs.

"It is our opportunity," whispered La Salle to the girl, who in despair found herself again his prisoner. "I will take you to Proctor's camp. Under the protection of the banner of St. George you shall go with me to Malden."

The British were by this time encamped at Sandy Creek, three miles above Frenchtown. Upon learning that Laurente was a daughter of Angus MacIntosh who, sinking his past animosity, had contributed generously to ration the troops, Proctor assigned her to the care of Madam Navarre, that lady having

obtained permission to accompany her husband, Colonel François, in his captivity.

The women were treated with some slight degree of consideration; and when the troops began the march to the fort, two or three of the young officers would gladly have constituted themselves the escort of Miss MacIntosh. But Blue Jacket, having secured for her use Colonel Navarre's beautiful saddle-horse, upon which General Winchester had sought to escape, rode by her side and kept at a distance those who would gladly have beguiled her loneliness. In all other respects, he behaved toward her with the punctilious courtesy of a creole expectant bridegroom.

Yet, although she was safe from molestation, what tragedies were enacted around her; what piteous cries aroused her from sleep more than once during that dismal journey.

The hapless American soldiers were driven before the British and Indians like cattle.

Those who grew faint and weary on the way were tomahawked by the savages, scalped, and left to die by the roadside. Others were carried off toward Detroit. For more than two weeks after the massacre it was a familiar spectacle, in that town, to see a redman hawking a footsore and half-starved Kentuckian about the little streets, willing to sell him for any sum above the price that Proctor would pay for his scalp. If money was not forthcoming, blankets or provisions were readily accepted in exchange.

After three days the army reached Malden. Here Laurente found to her consternation that, instead of

being sent home, as Colonel Proctor had promised, she was detained a prisoner.

"I cannot now bring Le Père Richard; the parson at Sandwich shall marry us," La Salle said, a day or two after her arrival.

From that time she kept almost constantly at the side of Madam Navarre, fearing that if Blue Jacket discovered her alone he would again spirit her away. Was she after all to be forced to this marriage? Had she fled from a union with Captain Muir only to be compelled to pledge herself to Blue Jacket, according to the ceremonies of an alien creed? Among her people there was something of a slur upon such a marriage, even though it was admitted to be legal.

Ah, if Captain Muir were here at Malden he would help her, notwithstanding that she had rejected his love. But, unhappily, her strange premonition on the night of the attack upon Frenchtown had proved only too correct; the gallant and noble Muir was one of the first of the British to fall at the battle of the Raisin. To whom, then, could she turn for assistance in the camp, where she was so cruelly held a captive?

At the time of the final struggle between Great Britain and the United States for the supremacy of the Northwest, the site of Fort Malden was, as it is to-day, the loveliest spot on the Detroit River.

Situated at the point where the blue Strait pours its great flood of waters into the silver sea of Lake Erie, with the wooded island of Bois Blanc like a

sentinel on guard at its gate, it commanded the river, and formed a magnificent position of vantage, whence any approach from the lake might be ascertained while the ships or canoes were still at a distance.

In the late spring and summer, the green slopes of its earthworks were fair with wildflowers, as is a woman's tambour-frame. The birds built their nests and sang, as merrily as in their native woods, among the branches of the young English lime-trees, that now cast upon the velvet lawns the shade of a century of growth.

In winter, however, the place was bleak enough. To secure an open view from the fortress, the woods had been blazed except upon the island. The north winds swept over the plain with untempered severity, while the south breeze, blowing from the ice clogged margin of the Lake, was as brusque and bluff as old Kabibonokka¹ himself.

In this year, 1813, on Candlemas Day the traditional hedgehog crept out from his hiding-place, caught a glimpse of his own shadow as he frisked in the sunshine, and scampered back to his home underground. As a consequence of his wantonness, the winter bade fair to continue for many weeks.

To Miss MacIntosh, nevertheless, it seemed a light thing to brave cold and snows if by so doing she could gain her liberty. Once outside the stockade she could make her way to Moy Hall by short stages, finding refuge and shelter among the habitants and English settlers along the southern côte. Were McCartai now here she might ask his help. But the

¹ The Indian Spirit of the North Wind.

Tawas chief was gone to the Maumee valley upon another expedition against the Long Knives. Her plight appeared hopeless.

So reflected the girl as one morning she stood upon the embankment, vainly scanning the river and lake for some sign that General Harrison, the hero of Tippecanoe, was coming to storm the fort. With him would come her lover, Pierre Labadie, she felt sure; and when Pierre came, her anxiety and peril would be at an end.

But alas, after the massacre at Frenchtown, what capable general would lead an army into the wilderness in the dead of winter when the lake was stormy and the river was locked fast in ice?

"Jesu! Marie! help me," she exclaimed, now walking briskly up and down. As a matter of routine she took the air daily; to remain indoors would be to lose the physical strength that would be so essential, were an opportunity of escape offered.

The stone powder-house, which stands to-day a vine-grown ruin at the edge of the grassy stretch, once the old parade ground, was, at that time, a strong magazine stored with ammunition. As Laurente drew near it, she saw two figures coming down the esplanade from the commandant's quarters.

One was a redcoat officer, the other an Indian almost six feet tall and of a compact, muscular frame. A second glance showed her that the officer was General Proctor, and the redman none other than the great Tecumseh.

If she were met by them here, the guard might be punished for permitting her this semblance of free-

dom. She hastily fled to the shadow of the powder-house.

The two men came on, and began to pace the esplanade.

It was impossible for her to retreat, but very necessary that she should keep a sharp watch upon their every motion in order to avoid discovery.

They were engaged in some earnest discussion, and as they approached the magazine, Laurente, peering from her concealment, studied the face of the Springing Panther more closely than she had ever hitherto done. She noted the boldness of his forehead; that his nose was aquiline like that of the Cæsar's head on a Roman coin treasured by her father. His teeth were large and white, and his dark, penetrating eyes were overhung with heavy brows which increased the grave expression of his countenance.

The uniform of the English General was not neater than the Shawanoe's dress of deerskin, to which a dash of picturesqueness was added by fringed leggins embroidered with parti-colored porcupine's quills and a crimson sash. In his straight black hair he wore an eagle's feather.

This was the man whom both friend and foe acknowledged to be the noblest Indian who had ever summoned his people to join with him to save their hunting grounds from the "White Strangers." It was whispered among the American prisoners that had Tecumseh been at Frenchtown the massacre would have been averted. Upon learning of it he had gone down to the Raisin to protect the French habitants from the Indians and British who still

lingered there. Of him it was said that he never allowed a prisoner to be murdered if he could hold his warriors in check; that he was as humane and generous as Proctor was mean and cruel.

Now he spoke in English, with suppressed fire, and halted in his free stride but a few paces from the magazine.

General Proctor came to a pause also. Their discussion was not amicable and had plainly reached a climax.

"Palawah," said the chief, "at the Raisin, you let my warriors loose like wolves, and your soldiers outdid them in burning, plundering, and destroying. The white men who are left down there have no meal; no meat but the flesh of the musk-rat. Some of them are living on the grass of the prairie chopped fine. Such food did not suit my young men, so I took from one old habitant a yoke of steers he had in hiding, hoping with them to earn his bread in the spring. In exchange I gave him an order on your agent. The son of this old man Rivard has come to me; he says you refuse to pay for the steers. Is this true?"

"Yes," replied the general promptly. "My soldiers and allies are entitled to support from the country they have conquered."

"Palawah," broke out the great Shawanoe, only slightly raising his voice, "you must pay for the steers because I have promised it. You give salt meat to my warriors, while your soldiers have fresh beef. You are General Proctor and lead the army of the English King, but I am Tecumseh, and if I am not satisfied you will have to reckon with me."

"Indian panther, you threaten?" cried Proctor, giving way to his anger.

The chief showed no indication of anger other than his tense tone, but striking the hilt of Proctor's sword with his hand he then touched his own tomahawk and sternly added, —

"Before Tecumseh and his brothers came to fight the battles of the English king they had enough to eat, for which they had only to thank the Master of Life and their good rifles or the hunter's bow. They can return to their hunting-grounds and live as before."

This peremptory warning was not without effect. Proctor was well aware that the great Shawanoe could immediately withdraw all the nations of the redmen from the British service, and without them his soldiers would be nearly powerless on the frontier.

"Since Tecumseh has passed his word, I will pay for the oxen," he answered with as good a grace as he could muster.

"The Frenchman must have hard money, not the rag-money you call army bills," persisted the chief.

"Come to my quarters and I will give you the coin," said Proctor, sullenly; and they passed on together to the commandant's house.

"This is my chance to get back to my room with Madam Navarre," thought Laurent.

She had taken but a few steps toward the dilapidated building where the women were lodged, however, when a man sprang from around a corner of the powder-magazine and confronted her.

The girl recoiled from him indignantly.

"Must I always tell you to stand aside, James La Salle?" she cried. "Why do you continue to pester me with the sight of you?"

"Why, my pretty Pahweetah, my little snow-bird," he rejoined suavely, although in his voice she detected a ring of unalterable determination, "because I love you. Mademoiselle, I have been patient," he proceeded fiercely, coming a pace nearer to her. "I have sued for your love; I have asked you to go with me to be married, and you would not. Now I will take you for my wife before the great chief Tecumseh. This is the form of honorable marriage among my people, and even Holy Church seeks to protect the Indian wife. I have stolen you for my bride after the manner of a brave, and the Springing Panther will confirm my claim."

He caught the girl in his arms and bent his head to kiss her passionately.

"No, no," she faltered, struggling to free herself from his grasp. And obeying a sudden impulse, she screamed aloud the all-powerful name both with the Indians and the English, —

"Tecumseh! Tecumseh!"

La Salle laughed, and catching at her hands drew them down from her defiantly tearful face as he said derisively, —

"What! You, a prisoner, call upon the protection of your arch-enemy!"

In another moment there was a rustling sound like the swirl of the wind as it blows a branch of brushwood over the frozen ground. Before the astonished gaze of the Frenchman loomed up a tall form; a

brawny arm, stronger than the mailed hand that wielded the sword Excalibur, thrust at his chest, and straightway he was sprawling upon the snow. Over him stood a dark warrior so kingly, impious, and noble in appearance that he might have been taken for the manitou of the woods.

"Tecumseh," stammered Laurente, piteously, stretching out her hands to him to save her, while her tormentor lay dazed, staring helplessly at the deliverer who had so unexpectedly cut short his unwelcome wooing.

"Dog! get up," commanded the Shawanoe, rolling over the squirming half-breed with the toe of his moccasin.

La Salle wriggled out of its reach, slowly got upon his feet, and faced the chief.

"What! Blue Jacket!" exclaimed Tecumseh, looking him over with a scorn too intense to be expressed in words.

"The demoiselle is my captive. I have but now told her of my wish to take her for my wife," replied Blue Jacket, surlily.

"And what does the white woman say?" demanded Tecumseh, turning his gaze upon Laurente.

"That I am his captive is only too true," answered the girl, gathering courage from Tecumseh's aspect. "Blue Jacket has stolen me away from my people, but rather than become his wife, I will stand as a target for the arrows in the quiver upon your shoulder, or the pistols in your belt. Kill me, Tecumseh; for I would rather meet death by the weapon of a great warrior than live to be the bride of James La Salle."



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The shadow of a smile flitted over the face of Tecumseh. "The Springing Panther does not make war on squaws," he said, grimly. "Blue Jacket, the woman does not seem to love you; why do you pursue her?"

"Because I wish to break her spirit," returned La Salle. "Should a milk-faced woman be permitted to laugh at me?"

Tecumseh eyed him for some seconds in silence. "James La Salle," he said, at length, "if you want to have part with your mother's people, take for your bride a daughter of the forest. If you would remain among the pale faces, woo some demoiselle with whom you have found more favor than in the eyes of this girl. I have forbidden my warriors to carry off the white squaws. Tecumseh must be obeyed, M'sieur Blue Jacket."

"Tecumseh, may the Master of Life reward you!" cried Laurente, clasping her hands in gratitude. "My father, Angus MacIntosh, lives not twenty miles from here on the shore of the Detroit. You will send me home?"

Tecumseh shook his head.

"When the ice breaks in the Strait and the snows are gone, the squaw shall return to her people," he replied; "but until then she can wait with a quiet heart. Blue Jacket, *you* shall go on a journey. Come to my lodge to-night when the dark falls, and I will tell you what I have for *you* to do."

With a lordly wave of the hand he dismissed Laurente and stood guard over La Salle until she was safely out of sight.

Then he turned contemptuously upon his crest-fallen adversary.

"Dog of a half-breed," he muttered, gutterally, "I would have buried my tomahawk in your breast were it not that you can serve me. Remember, and be faithful; for upon your fidelity depends your life."

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

WITH TIPPECANOE AT FORT MEIGS

THE next day James La Salle disappeared from Malden, and before long Tecumseh and the bravest of his followers set out on another hostile expedition.

The Indians have a saying that in winter the sky is a vast dome of ice. A serpent manitou coils close to the dome and rubs his scales against it, causing the ice-dust to fall upon the earth in the form of snow.

"The manitou of the North shows himself in a snow-storm and has wolves for warriors," said the Pani woman who waited upon Madam Navarre and Laurente. "The manitou of the South commands the rain and thunder, and is aided by the crow and the plover. When the North god plans to have cold weather, he gives battle to his antagonist, and, if successful, fills the air with chill blasts, and the rivers and prairies become frozen. But if he is defeated, he is drowned in the storm sent by his enemy, and the crow and the plover peck the wolf-warriors to death. The breeze becomes warm and the earth blossoms. Before the manitous go forth to the conflict each leaves a young god in his lodge to succeed him in case he does not return."

At the Strait the latter part of the winter of 1812-1813 passed without incident, and when at last the Spring god began to prevail, his victory was hailed with delight by Laurente and Madam Navarre.

They did not know that the sudden breaking up of the ice had frustrated an American expedition which crept up near the Detroit to destroy the British ships blocked in the mouth of the Strait.

In April, however, there was a stir at Fort Malden, and the news soon came to the ears of the prisoners that the Canadian militia were being assembled at Sandwich, where Tecumseh had arrived with nearly a thousand of the fiercest aborigines of the region. The Prophet, who had just recovered from a wound received in a mysterious encounter, was also in the neighborhood.

On the 23d of the month the captives sadly watched the embarkation from Amherstburg of two thousand white and dusky troops on a brig, two smaller vessels, and two gun-boats, and saw General Proctor and the Great Shawanoc set off with this army down the lake.

Since the day when Pierre Labadie, shouldering a trunk apparently confiscated by a looting Britisher, walked out of the gate of Fort Detroit, nothing had been heard of him either by his friends or his sweetheart. Where was he during these long months? Was he so indifferent to the trials endured by Laurente, the perils by which she was encompassed, as events would have it seem? Or was it rather that the exigencies of war, the hardships of a soldier's lot,

kept him from her side, while untoward circumstances thwarted all communication between them?

With Laurente to love was to trust, and therefore notwithstanding his silence, she held fast to her faith in her lover.

He was, indeed, worthy of her loyalty. Pierre's love was like the star that guided him through the morass and forest when he led his men in the various scouting parties upon which he was sent by General Harrison. It spurred him ever to greater effort in the service of his country.

He had written more than once to Laurente. But the wood-ranger, to whom he committed his first message, was attacked and killed by Indians; a second deserted to the enemy, and the third reached Detroit a day or two after the girl was stolen away by Blue Jacket. It would have comforted her could she have known that a letter from Pierre was awaiting her in the care of Madam Brush, yet this letter she was destined not to receive until some time later. The war must be fought, that out of the conflict, as the phœnix from the fire, peace might arise; the peace that would, the brave lover hoped, reunite him to Laurente and join their lives.

After many adventures Labadie had arrived at St. Mary's, where General Harrison was mustering the gallant Kentuckians. The general made him a captain and employed him on several important commissions. The spring found him with the troops in the camp at the rapids of the Maumee, which the commander-in-chief had named Fort Meigs in honor of the martial governor of Ohio.

On all the frontier there was, perhaps, no lovelier scene than the valley of the Maumee as the warm rays of the sun shone upon it during the afternoon of the 29th of April, 1813.

The only point of the panorama that suggested the strenuous life of the wilderness was the strongly picketed camp on the right bank of the river just where the swirling waters, having gathered force in the struggle among the rocks, dashed onward with a mad rush.

Here in his tent, overlooking the rapids, sat an officer about forty years of age, absorbed in thought. The epaulettes and stripes of gold lace upon his blue coat proclaimed his rank to be that of a general. His lank frame, thin, strongly marked face, keen eyes and broad brow formed a portrait well known throughout the seventeen States of the Union. This man with the firm mouth and resolute air was William Henry Harrison, the idol of his soldiers, the hero of Tippecanoe, the commander of the Army of the Northwest.

The sun sank toward the green sea of the prairie as though seeking its kindred fires in the heart of the earth. The general aroused from his abstraction, and stood looking across the valley. He was not insensible to its beauty, but now he took no note of the charm of the landscape, for his attention became quickly fixed upon two objects that stood out like shadows against the disk of the setting sun.

He levelled his glass at what might have seemed to the unaided eye a mist rising from the swamp, and

presently lowering the lens, sharply rang the little gong that stood upon his table.

"Sergeant," he said to the orderly who promptly appeared, "tell the officer of the guard to fire at that dark spot yonder. And say to Captain Labadie that I desire to speak with him."

When Labadie reported, the general handed him the glass, saying, —

"Captain, you are familiar with the wilderness, what do you make of those forms yonder?"

Labadie studied them for a moment.

"Sir, they are horsemen who, from the other side of the river, appear to be taking a very deliberate survey of the fort," he at length answered.

"Humph, so I thought," rejoined Tippecanoc.

"Well, in a wild country strangers are considered enemies until they prove themselves friends. We will see how they receive our salute."

He was interrupted by the hoarse voice of a cannon demanding the business of the travellers. The latter did not wait to explain their presence, however, but swiftly galloped away.

If the gun had been charged with ball or shell, how different might have been the course of subsequent events! For, although the Americans were ignorant of the fact, the daring visitors were Proctor and Tecumseh.

Upon their disappearance Labadie withdrew. When the general was again alone his gaze swept the valley in every direction. Then he glanced from the western sky to the flagstaff of his little fort, and back at the sunset clouds.

"By my soul," he soliloquized, his stern features relaxing into a smile, "were I a poet like Freneau, I might see in the sunset's glowing bands of crimson, and the stars beginning to shine forth in the blue sky above, a semblance to the flag floating from the bastion there; our standard unfurled in the skies by a power mightier than the arm of Tecumseh! I might seize upon the circumstance as an omen of victory. Truly, a soldier's best omen is his courage and the strength of his sword. Nevertheless, this is an interesting coincidence."

The next morning, shortly after reveille, the officer on the ramparts discovered that during the night the British, who had been reported from Maumee Bay, had selected a position on the high bank of the river opposite old Fort Maumee, about two miles below Fort Meigs. Here they had succeeded in mounting several of their guns.

A fire was at once opened upon them, and this was so promptly returned as to cause uneasiness among the Americans, whose powder had only just been removed from the ammunition wagons to a block-house that was exposed to the red-hot balls of the enemy.

General Harrison, passing a group of soldiers, cried out, —

"Boys, who will volunteer to cover the magazine?"

Off started several of them, including Captain Labadie, who, on the way from the officers' mess, heard the call for volunteers.

The intrepid band had only just reached the

block-house, when a shell took off the head of one of the men. The others worked faster than they had ever done, but before they finished their hazardous task a bomb fell hissing on the roof of the magazine, and, lodging in one of the braces, spun round like a gigantic top.

Every soldier of the party fell flat on his face with breathless horror, awaiting the vast explosion that, it seemed, must inevitably follow.

A minute passed; then another, and still it did not come. Only Pierre Labadie quickly reasoned, that since the shell did not burst, it might be differently constructed from those which had preceded it.

If an explosion should occur, death was certain; to examine the bomb could but hasten his taking off but by a few seconds.

He sprang to his feet, seized a boat-hook that lay on the ground near by, and dragging the sizzling missile from the roof, jerked the smoking fuse from the socket and stamped it out.

His heroic act was greeted by a cheer that speedily brought the general to the spot. The shell was found to be filled with inflammable material which, if once ignited, would have wrapped the whole building in a sheet of flame.

This circumstance added wings to the spades of the laborers, and right glad they were when the commander said, at last, —

“Well done, my brave fellows! Go to your lines.”

During this attack on the fort, Jean Cécire, who, like Labadie, had escaped from the British and rejoined the army, stood on the embankment and fore-

warned his comrades, becoming so skillful as in almost every case to rightly predict the destination of each shell.

As soon as the smoke issued from the enemy's gun, he would cry out, —

"Bombe! Bullet de cannon!" Or, "Now eet ees de meat-house!" "Adieu, eef you will pass!" "V'la, ze big batterie!"

Finally, there came a shot that defied his calculations. He remained silent, perplexed. In another instant he would have been swept into eternity had not a gunner rushed forward and dragged him from his position. Philosopher Jean did not understand that when there was no smoke, either to the right or left, the ball would travel in a straight line.

The fire from the fort was so effective that the enemy's guns were dismantled and the British were forced to discontinue their work of erecting batteries. On this same evening General Harrison sent for Pierre Labadie.

"Captain," he said, when the officer entered his tent, "I have a perilous mission to offer you, but you are at liberty to decline it if you wish."

As he spoke, he narrowly watched the effect of his words.

Labadie never changed color, but responded without hesitation, —

"General, when am I to set out?"

The commander smiled, and nodded his head in approval.

"To-night," he said; and then added, "Captain Labadie, I commend your readiness. The selection

of one suited to this important trust was not to be lightly made. My messenger must be, not only devoted, prudent, and courageous, but familiar with Indian warfare and the character of the country hereabout. I did not long hesitate before choosing you for the service."

"Sir, I thank you for the honor you confer upon me, and I will do my best to prove worthy of your confidence," replied the young subaltern, kindling with a soldier's enthusiasm. "What am I to do?"

"Meet General Clay and repeat to him the instructions that I shall give you orally, since it is not safe to put them in writing," directed the commander-in-chief.

Labadie started, but this betrayal of his surprise was like the eager champ of the spirited charger, impatient to plunge into the dangers of the battle.

General Harrison daily looked for reinforcements, and these troops were, no doubt, pushing on through the wilderness from Kentucky. To find this little command; to inform its leader that the British and Indians were between them and the fort; to conduct them by a roundabout route to the relief of the place, — such was the desperate enterprise entrusted to Captain Labadie.

To succeed would be to win victory for the American arms, fame and a record for himself. To fail would mean perhaps the overthrow of General Harrison's entire plan of campaign; the almost certain sacrifice of the lives of the isolated garrison above the tossing rapids, that, like swaying Harpies, laughed below the river bank as though to mock his errand.

"Take with you two companions of your own choice and set out as soon as possible," continued the general; "you will say to General Clay —"

Here he added his instructions, and Labadie, after repeating the exact words to impress them indelibly upon his memory, retired to make the necessary preparations for his journey.

An hour later Captain Labadie, accompanied by Jean Cécire and James Knaggs, the famous American scout, brother of Debendon, set off in a boat up the river.

That they got away none too soon was quickly evident. The next day, despite the cannonade from the fort, the enemy continued the erection of their earthworks, and by the third morning the batteries were completed.

By this time, however, the Yankees had built a strong traverse across the highest ground of the camp, and all tents were either struck or removed behind it, the canvas houses, that had concealed the growth of the traverse from the view of the British, being thus in turn hidden by this great shield of earth.

Moreover, as each mess excavated suitable rooms under the embankment, the tents were abandoned. The new places of shelter were shot and bomb proof, except in the event of a shell falling at the mouth of a cave. The Saganosh had now faint prospect of "smoking the Long Knives out."

These defences were scarce finished when it was ascertained that the enemy, under cover of the night,

had erected batteries on a hill about two hundred and fifty yards from the fort, while the savages proceeded to beset the Americans on every side.

A large number of cannon-balls were thrown into the camp, and being short of a supply, General Harrison offered a gill of whiskey for every one of the enemy's balls delivered over to the magazine-keeper. Over a thousand gills were thus earned by the soldiers.

Heavy rains filled up the excavations in the embankment and forced the men to raise their tents once more. At frequent intervals during the following night they were aroused from sleep by the startling cry of "Bomb!" Rushing out, they watched the fiery messenger of death as it winged its way through the dark sky. If it fell near them, they cast themselves prone upon the ground; otherwise, they returned to their tents, only to be presently again awakened. So harassing was this, so accustomed to danger had the men become, and so overpowering was the desire for sleep, that many of them refused to respond to the call, declaring they "would not be disturbed if ten thousand bombs burst all around them."

On the third day the firing from the British batteries steadily continued until evening, when it ceased, and a redcoat bearing a white flag was seen approaching the stockade.

He was admitted, and, upon being conducted to headquarters, delivered to General Harrison a peremptory summons from General Proctor for the surrender of the garrison.

The hero of Tippecanoe only smiled at the demand. "Tell your general this post will not be surrendered on any terms," he satirically replied to the messenger. "If through the fortunes of war he ever obtains possession of Fort Meigs, it will be in a manner calculated to do him more honor, and give him a higher claim to the gratitude of his government, than he would gain by a capitulation."

Soon after the return of the envoy, the cannonading was resumed on both sides, and the British were finally driven from their position near the fort.

The "Stars and Stripes" still waved proudly above the rushing waters of the Maumee; the spirit of the officers and garrison was bold as ever. Nevertheless, in the American fort on the river bank there was an atmosphere of suspense and keen anxiety. Many times each day the officer of the guard scoured the valley with his glass in the hope of descrying some signal that promised relief to the troops besieged by an army that greatly outnumbered them. Still there was no sign of the reinforcements.

What was become of Captain Labadie? Had he failed in his attempt to reach General Clay?

Had he and his two companions been taken prisoners by Proctor's scouts, or were they lying, murdered and scalped, in the depths of the Ohio forest?

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH

WAR'S RED TOUCHSTONE

TO go back to the evening when, under cover of the darkness, the young officer guided by Knaggs, and followed by the creole sergeant, whose drollery was only exceeded by his stanch courage, set off in a canoe up the Maumee. The three were dressed and painted like Indians, and all during the night they plied their paddles as vigorously as any dusky voyageurs of the rivers and lakes.

When day broke, Jean Cécire, looking back along the water-way, descried afar off on its surface a black dot.

"V'la, monsieur le capitaine," he cried, "v'la les diables rouges, de red devils, dey gif' us chase."

Knaggs pointed the canoe across the current and with his companions watched the approaching shadow.

"We must make for the bushes," he said.

They put in to the shore, leaped from their boat, and dragged it up to the woods.

The other canoe came nearer. It was manned by four Indians who, when they reached a point almost opposite to where the white men lay hiding, also made for the strand.

"By Gar!" exclaimed Jean Cécire; "le Nain Rouge, de Red Dwarf, he must be one hof dem, hor else dey haf' de scent hof de fox."

The captain resolved to intercept them, since, if not in pursuit of his party, they had perhaps been sent to discover and spy upon the reinforcements.

As they gained the beach, he stepped forward in open view. Behind him the locks of his comrades' muskets cried, "Nick! Nick!" At the same moment he recognized the redmen. They were Shkotai, Walk-in-the-Water, and two other of the latter's sons who had aided Pierre's escape from the Strait.

"Nick! Nick!" whispered the fuses once more.

Were his forest benefactors to be shot down before his eyes? He raised a hand as a signal to his men not to fire. Without understanding, they obeyed, but rushed from their ambush, ready for the expected fight.

"Knaggs! Cécire! these are my friends," cried Labadie, springing forward and taking the old chief by the hand. "They fed me when I was hungry and tended me when I was ill. Had I been the son of this old man, he could not have treated me with greater kindness."

The hardy scout and the sergeant threw down their weapons and, advancing, greeted the strangers.

"We did not know it was you, our white brother, that Palawah sent us to tomahawk," said one of the young braves, turning to Pierre. "We cannot kill you since you have been adopted by our father. Neither can we go back and have the redcoat chief tell Tecumseh we have failed. What are we to do?"

"Brother," replied the officer, throwing an arm about the youth's neck, "Tecumseh is a great warrior, but Tippecanoe, who drove the redmen before him, has many soldiers at the fort of the Rapids, and another army is coming to help him. Remain in the woods until the strugg'e is over. Then, our Father of the Seventeen Fires¹ will not treat you as bad Indians; he will load you with presents."

"My son, we will stay in the forest," agreed the old chief. "Give me a half-pistole to buy whiskey."

Labadie's eyes twinkled with mirth, but he answered sternly, "My father, there is no whiskey in the woods; nor have I any money now. Come to Fort Meigs, after Palawah has been driven away, and I will give you a whole pistole."

The old chief grunted, kissed the captain on the cheek, and hugged him until Labadie was forced to return the compliment. The braves saluted him in the same fashion; then the four Indians raised the canoe on their shoulders and plunged into the heart of the forest.

Labadie, Knaggs, and Cécire continued their journey, and the next day, abandoning the river, took their course through the woods.

At the Rapids the cannonading continued daily, and the position of the besieged was becoming desperate. Had General Clay's brigade been attacked and cut to pieces by the enemy?

The evening of the fourth of May was overcast.

¹ The Seventeen States that at the time composed the Union. The President of the United States.

Shortly after midnight a sentinel on the ramparts of Fort Meigs, peering through the gloom, fancied he saw a boat in the river almost under the fortifications.

"Who goes there?" he cried, levelling his blunderbuss.

His inquiry meeting with no response, a bullet whizzed through the air, and, just missing the boat, struck the water with a seething sound.

"Who goes there?" he shouted again.

This time came the low answer, —

"A friend."

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"Fight on, soldier, but do not fight the general's messenger," called a cautious voice.

"Fight on," was the pass-word given to Labadie when he set out. This must be he.

Despite the usual vigilance of Tecumseh and the Shawanoes, Pierre landed his boat's-crew of fifteen men without discovery. The party, wading through a ravine that formed a natural moat for the fort, groped their way to one of the gates, and were promptly admitted.

The captain was conducted to the tent of General Harrison, whom he found up and dressed.

"I congratulate you upon your safe return, Captain Labadie," said the commander-in-chief.

"Your report?"

"Having come up with General Clay near Winchester, sir," began Labadie, "we guided his troops through the wilderness. After a hard march of over a month, they await your instructions at so short

a distance up the river that they can hear every cannon-shot fired from your guns or the enemy's batteries."

"Thank God they are so near," exclaimed Tippecanoe, with enthusiasm. "Now to get them into the fort! Captain Labadie, you shall be served with food and drink, and then you must go back at once. Bid General Clay in my name —"

Here he added his instructions, which he emphasized by frequent reference to the military map on the table before him.

Weary as Pierre was he lost no time, but within the hour set off up the Maumee with ten or twelve fresh men. He found the forces already embarked in open boats, and as soon as General Clay received the message he directed an advance down the river in the line of battle.

By order of Tippecanoe a division of the reinforcements was to land on the fort side of the stream and fight its way into the stockade through the cordon of Indians. This the men did after a desperate fight, in which they were aided by the sortie of a detachment from the fort.

Meantime, the remainder of the forces, under a gallant young Kentuckian, Colonel Dudley, and Major Isaac Shelby, had been commissioned to take the enemy's batteries on the opposite side of the river. It was not yet broad daylight when they gained the shore, and, guided by Labadie, marched across the plain to a hill clothed with timber.

The guns were at this time cannonading the fort, but the Yankees, rushing upon the gunners, carried

the batteries without the loss of a man, and cut down the enemy's flag.

At this, the garrison at Fort Meigs shouted for joy, and General Harrison signalled the detachment to return to their boats. Elated by victory, however, they remained quietly looking about them, neglecting to spike the cannon.

At this moment a straggling band of Indians fired upon them and fled. The Kentuckians, pleased at seeing them run, raised their terrible war-cry, "Remember the Raisin," and, headed by the colonel, gave chase to the savages. In vain Labadie, who knew the country and the tactics of the aborigines, cried out to the officers to recall their men.

Having enticed the Long Knives into the woods, the Shawanoes poured upon them from ambush a destructive fire. Several times Dudley led a charge against the redmen, but at length he ordered his men to fall back. It was too late! At the first sign of retreat, their foes of the forest fung themselves upon the Americans with yells of triumph; the troops broke ranks, and their leader, having been wounded, was overtaken and tomahawked.

Thus ended the soldierly career of the rash but heroic Dudley.

About this time Captain Labadie received a ball in his side. It struck him down with a deadening force, but he staggered to his feet, pulled off his waistcoat, and, finding that the shot had not passed through his body, ran on, fighting still.

As he emerged from the woods into an open space

near the battery, a British officer seized his sword, crying, —

"Sir, you are my prisoner."

Labadie looked about him, and, with astonishment, saw the ground covered with muskets.

"The Yankees have surrendered," said the red-coat, wrenching the sabre from the hand of the wounded man. "Go forward and join the others."

Faint from loss of blood, he complied.

It was a beautiful May morning. The sun shed a flood of golden radiance upon the valley, and, now that the sounds of strife had ceased, the birds could be heard singing in the trees. But the scene swam before Pierre's eyes as he came up to his comrades and found them all disarmed.

"By Gar, monsieur le capitaine, what for ces dis?" inquired a familiar voice.

Labadie summoned strength to answer.

"My brave Cécire, we are prisoners of war," he said dully.

The valiant Jean, with the idea that the Indians always treated best those who appeared fearless, returned the gaze of any savages whom he met with a haughty stare, which attracted no attention until he caught the eye of a stout warrior painted red. They glared at each other for a second. Then, as the luckless sergeant passed, the old chief raised his stick and dealt him a severe blow over the nose and cheekbone. After that, Cécire was careful to display as little hauteur as possible.

The Indians drove the Americans before them toward the British position, and upon reaching a point

of the road where there was a precipice to the right, formed at the left and compelled the captives to run the gauntlet, shooting, beating, or tomahawking them as they sped down the terrible line.

When Labadie reached the starting-place, he dashed off as fast as he was able, and ran near the muzzles of their guns, knowing they would have to shoot him while he was immediately in front, or let him pass. To turn their muskets up or down the curved ranks to fire would endanger themselves.

In this manner he escaped without injury, beyond several sickening blows from their gunsticks. As he entered the ditch that surrounded the garrison, the man ahead of him fell. He stumbled over him and the blocking of the way by those who fell over the two cost the lives of twenty or thirty.

The survivors finally reached the walls of old Fort Maumee. Labadie, now exhausted, cast himself upon the ground and lay with his head upon the knees of the loyal Cécire, who had also run the gauntlet with the swiftness of a young stag.

An Indian painted black mounted the crumbling flag-bastion and shot the prisoner nearest to him. He re-loaded his fusee and shot another. Next, waving his battle ax, as though the former means of destruction was too slow to suit his vengeance, he leaped down among the captives.

At first they had watched him with apathetic fascination, too weary and miserable to care whether they lived or died. But now the spell was broken; and seeking to escape this relentless executioner, they attempted to shield themselves behind their comrades.

The savage, having stopped to scalp his victims, was overborne by several other warriors, who compelled the prisoners to seat themselves in a circle on the grass. A tall Indian walked into the centre of the dismal ring and began whetting a long hunting-knife, while he debated upon which of the captives to wreak his vengeance.

His choice fell on Labadie. He sprang forward, and in another moment the suffering of the brave captain would have been over, and Laurette MacIntosh would have been left to mourn her hero lover. As the savage raised his knife, however, his arm was arrested by a voice which might have been that of the war-manitou thundering a command to the Shawanoes to desist from their barbarous work.

The next moment a kingly warrior upon a splendid horse galloped into the thick of the frenzied throng.

"Tecumseh! Oh, niehee wah,¹ it is Tecumseh!" vociferated the Indians in their own tongue, as they scattered to right and left.

Tecumseh in his rage would have ridden over them. Suddenly he drew rein, sprang from his beast, and, perceiving the plight of Labadie, caught by the throat the brave who stood above the captain, shook him as though he were a dog, and flung him to the earth.

Anon, drawing his tomahawk and scalping-knife, he ran in between the Americans and Indians with the fury of a madman, forbidding the hundreds of fierce warriors about him to slay another prisoner.

¹ "Oh, brothers, quit."

When he had put a stop to the massacre, his mood changed.

"What will become of my poor Shawanoes!" he exclaimed with pathetic earnestness.

His eagle glance travelled to the tent of General Proctor. There at the entrance stood the commander, coldly surveying the extraordinary spectacle.

Like a whirlwind the great Chief passed across the intervening space and was beside him.

"Palawah," he demanded sternly, "why did you not stop the killing of our prisoners of war? I wish to fight like the heroes among the Saganosh and the Long Knives."

The cowardly general shrank from the fierceness of his ally.

"'Pon my soul, brother, your wild followers cannot be restrained," he stammered with a harsh laugh.

"Bah!" retorted Tecumseh, as he thrust his hatchet again into his belt; "I conquer to save; you to murder."

Although the Shawanoe leader had shown his power, he could not interfere with the Indians' custom of carrying off captives to their villages. The soldiers, to avoid this new danger, crowded into the centre of their own band. Labadie, weak from his wound, felt the tension of his nerves give way in an inclination to laugh, as he saw Jean Cécire on hands and knees dash through the legs of his comrades, crying,—

"Root, leetler hog, hor die."

Having thus escaped, he came back, stripped off the captain's blood-stiffened shirt, and gave him his own hunting-blouse. A redman, seeing the act,

offered Labadie a piece of venison together with a knife to cut it.

Pierre divided the meat with the comrades who stood nearest to him, reserving a small portion for himself, more to satisfy the savage than to gratify any appetite he had for it. He then gave back the knife, and the Indian left him.

When it was nearly night the prisoners were taken down to the British ships at the mouth of the river. From this circumstance they knew that the day's fighting had saved Fort Meigs to the Americans.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH

SOULS MADE OF FIRE

A SHIP!" "A ship!"
The cry of the sentinels caused the heart of Laurete MacIntosh to beat faster as, one forenoon of mid-May, she walked on the flower-dotted ramparts of Fort Malden.

Glancing down the channel formed by the island of Bobelow (Bois Blanc) she beheld, against the horizon, the masts of a vessel, whose rigging gleamed like spars and ropes of gold in the sunlight, and whose sails, filled with the wind, might well have been compared by the Indians to the strong wings of Kenu, the war-eagle.

The old officer who had been left in command of the garrison came out on the bastion to view the ship through his lens. Even the prisoners aroused from the apathy of their long captivity and rushed to the embankment.

What if the brig should prove to be one of the gunboats that, rumor said, a young commander of the American navy, Oliver Perry, had early in the year been sent to build at the lower end of this inland sea?

Alas for their hopes! Word was soon passed that the British squadron was returning from the Maumee.

Two hours later the schooners Queen Charlotte, Lady Prevost, Little Belt, and Chippewa and the brigantine Hunter, sailed into the bay with flying colors, accompanied by a great number of birch-bark skiffs.

From an upright pole in the bow of each canoe waved fantastic decorations, soon discerned to be strings of human scalps, each scalp being stretched over a hoop about four inches in diameter, and the under side painted red.

When Laurente caught sight of these awful ensigns of savage warfare, she fled and hid herself in the dilapidated log-house where the women were lodged. But ill news travels fast. Outside her window a cockney settler, who had been forced into the militia, called lustily to a comrade, —

“Zounds, 'arry, did the general and Tecumseh drive the Hamericans into the lake?”

“Naw, not by ha long shot,” was the drawling answer; “but 'is Nibbs hand that red devil, the great Shawanoe, 'ave bagged a good lot hof game.”

The girl's heart ached with pity for the prisoners thus unfeelingly designated. She ran out again to the bluff.

A group of unarmed men had been landed on the beach below and were being conducted to the fort, while a fifer of the military band played “Yankee Doodle” in derision of their misfortunes.

Laurente reached the parade just as they started across it. A sorry spectacle they presented. All were bareheaded; many had been stripped of their shirts. The ships had lain at anchor for several

days at Maumee Bay, yet the prisoners had not been given an opportunity to wash the smoke of battle from their brows, which, in many instances, were further disfigured by a ruddy stain.

As Miss MacIntosh stood with Madam Navarre and a little group of the wives of the British soldiers compassionately watching the forlorn band, the bearing of one of the captives attracted her attention.

Surely there was something familiar in that poise of the head, though she had never seen a more miserable object than this poor man clad in elkskin trousers and crimson daubed hunting-blouse.

And the face! Colorless as it was, save where begrimed with the mud flung at him, and shaded by a mass of matted hair, — surely she knew that face well!

He came nearer, her gaze met his; he started in uncomprehending wonder; then his eyes flashed to hers a quick recognition. Her brain reeled, and she felt a sharp pain like a sword-thrust at her heart.

A wild cry arose from among the spectators gathered ostensibly to greet the return of the troops. The next moment the dreary procession was unavoidably brought to a stop by a young woman who, breaking away from the detaining grasp of a matron, dashed forward and fell on the neck of one of the prisoners, sobbing, —

“O Pierre, Pierre!”

Captain Labadie folded her in his arms.

“My poor Laurente,” he murmured, as he tenderly kissed again and again the sweet lips that had so piteously proclaimed her loyalty and her great love.

"My poor Laurente!"

But so extraordinary a proceeding as the halting of the march was not to be tolerated.

A redcoat sergeant strode forward, laid a rude hand on Laurente's shoulder, and, separating her from her lover, forced her back among the women.

"Forward," he cried harshly; and the wretched parade was resumed, while Laurente, with senses benumbed, was led away by Madam Navarre.

So this was the realization of the hope that had helped to sustain her during all her trials. Pierre and she had met again. How often she had pictured to herself his return. "Having fought and helped to win the battles of his country, he will come back and save me from James La Salle," she had said. "He will restore me to the arms of my mother, whom I forsook for conscience' sake."

Never, despite the hazards of war, had she imagined a reunion like this. Pierre was her hero; therefore in fancy she saw him always victorious. He would look so handsome in his military uniform; he would be so brave and strong, and the stroke of his sword would scatter her enemies right and left.

It was a young girl's day-dream; how different the reality. He was come, but he was a prisoner, weak and wounded, unkempt and utterly miserable. How could she endure this terrible awakening?

In her cheerless room she sobbed out the torrent of her grief upon Madam Navarre's motherly breast. But as the storm gave place to a despairing calm, the voice of Pierre, brave, although unsteady from

emotion and physical weakness, rang again in her ears.

"My poor Laurente!"

The girl withdrew herself from the soothing caresses of her friend and dried her eyes.

"How selfish I am!" she exclaimed. "How unworthy of Pierre's love! He forgot his own misery to comfort me. He has come back to me defeated, wounded, yet is he not more a hero than if he had, unharmed, gained an easy triumph? More honorable to the soldier even than his well-earned laurels are the scars of the wounds received in battle. His country can bestow upon him no prouder decorations than these badges of courage conferred by the enemy. Pierre is come. I shall be able to care for him; to lighten the burden of his captivity. Oh, thank God, thank God!"

Animated by this thought, Laurente waited upon General Proctor and begged the favor of an interview with her lover, for the captives were to be confined in the block-house.

She found the commander hard as adamant. His rebuff did not, however, disconcert her. Linger- ing about the esplanade until Tecumseh came forth from his tent, she stepped before him and besought him to use his influence in her behalf.

"Ugh," muttered the great Shawanoe. "The white squaw loves this French Long Knife? The white squaw love a good warrior. She shall bind his wounds if she will. The wine of her love shall give him strength, for it is well to save the life of a brave man."

At her request, Tecumseh sent the British surgeon to Pierre and his companions. Shortly afterwards, Laurente, accompanied by Madam Navarre, visited the prison; and while the older lady drew from the ill-fated Americans the story of the fight at the Maumee Rapids, Captain Labadie and the devoted girl plighted their troth anew.

From this time the two women were permitted to bring clothing and food to the Yankee soldiers, with medicines and cooling drinks for those suffering from their wounds or from the dreaded swamp-fever so prevalent on the frontier during the war.

"Ma foi! love is a plaster for every hurt," ejaculated the droll sergeant, Jean Cécire, when his own broken head was nearly mended. "Monsieur le capitaine, he waxes strong. If Cupid, he ees one blind gunner, he hit ze mark; he hit ze mark! Ze courtin' eet ess like ze dyin', aivery man he must do eet for heeself."

The fête of St. Jean Baptiste came and passed.

In the early mornings and evenings of the hot summer days the prisoners-of-war were sometimes permitted to take the air, and Laurente occasionally had the happiness of walking on the ramparts with her captain.

Very dear to both of them were these brief half-hours. But, although love can make any place agreeable, a soldier who is a lover does not thereby cease to be a soldier. When Pierre saw the British preparing for another expedition, he chafed at his own inaction.

Then, like a thunderbolt from a sunlit sky, came

an order from General Proctor for the removal to Detroit of the American officers who had refused to give their parole.

Laurente again sought an audience with the general, and once more entreated him to send her up the river also, to her father's house. But Proctor had long ago decided that so ardent a partisan of the Americans had best not be returned to her relatives on the Canada shore. He now lent but a deaf ear to her petition, therefore, and as obdurately refused to restore her to the care of Madam Brush.

Neither was Madam Navarre permitted to accompany her husband.

Never did the birds sing more sweetly in the lime-trees at the edge of the parade; never was the sky brighter, the river more like a flood of molten silver, than upon the beautiful July morning when the prisoners were brought down to be embarked.

"Cheer up, dear one," said Labadie, taking a last leave of his sweetheart as she stood upon the beach; "cheer up! We, Long Knives, shall find our difficulties but whetstones to exertion. Before long, God willing, I will return a free man, and will convoy you home."

With this farewell he took his place in the pirogue with the other passengers.

The next moment the half-breed crew put off, and Laurente was left to keep as brave a heart as she could, and to pray that the faint hope of release held out to her by her lover's parting words might be speedily realized.

One day, a few weeks after the transfer of the

American officers to the upper fort, at Malden, Miss MacIntosh sat before the door of the women's quarters engaged in the prosaic occupation of revamping socks for the Yankee soldiers who were still detained at this post. For cotton, as well as wool, was scarce and costly, outworn knitted garments being frequently unravelled to obtain the precious yarn.

Behind her, the green prairie stretched away to the fringe of woods afar off. Beyond the bluff, the Strait on this fair afternoon gave back the opalescent light of the clouds, justifying its aboriginal name, "the sky-tinted river."

But the worker did not know that the beauty of the scene had cheered her loneliness, until a shadow fell upon her work. Looking up with a nervous shudder, she beheld, standing in the path of the sunshine, and almost at her elbow, the motionless figure of an Indian girl.

"Matanah!" ejaculated Laurente, starting to her feet.

"Yes," said the Shawanoe woman, with cool insolence, as her black eyes bent upon her rival an eager, yet scornful scrutiny. "The little spirits who carry the news say Pierre Labadie has returned, and that you love him. If this is the truth, give me back the heart of the warrior whom you bewitched. Blue Jacket loved me when, as children, we played together in the forest. I thought when you were gone he would love me again. But he is cold, and if he knew I betrayed his plans to the Long Knives he would kill me."

This outburst, begun with such assurance, ended

with a smothered sob that touched the heart of the girl to whom it was addressed.

"Matanah, though it was only to thrust me aside, you did me a good turn in carrying my message to General Winchester," Laurente said, striving to speak gently. "Perhaps, too, it was not all an impulse of revenge, but rather a womanly longing to avert the fate of the unhappy Kentuckians that led you to tell your story, which, alas, was so little heeded. Had I the power, I would gladly help you now. Go home, pray to 'le bon Saint Antoine,' who makes happy marriages, and trust to the good saint to obtain for you your heart's desire."

"Go home!" echoed Matanah, opening and closing her fingers as a sign of her disdain; "Pawetah, you are only a pretty snow-bird. A 'dame-blanche' sits at home and prays for her lover, but an Indian woman follows along the war-trail to care for her warrior if he is wounded in battle. For your sake, Blue Jacket fought with and nearly killed a chief near the Ecorse. I follow La Salle to save him from the vengeance of that chief. His enemy is Elskwatawa, the Prophet. The Wise Woman of the Prairie has disappeared from her lodge near your father's house, so you, who are a witch, must give me a charm to help me. Is this your room here? What is that bright thing upon the chimney-shelf? Give it to me!"

As she peered through a nearby window, her glance had fallen upon a little mirror which Laurente with feminine vanity, and because it was the only one she possessed that could be easily carried, had thrust

into her bodice when she left home. On the day she went down the côte to meet Pierre, she had carried it with her, coquettishly thinking, perhaps, to prepare for the interview by a stolen glance into it at the last.

It was the unique oriental mirror from which Abigail Hunt had jestingly attempted to read the future on the evening of the "bal paré."

Anxious to be rid of her visitor, Miss MacIntosh stepped indoors, caught up the trinket, and, returning, placed it in the hands of the Indian, —

"Take it," she said; "it is held to be a magic glass, and indeed, more than once it has shown me the unwelcome face of James La Salle."

Matanah bent over the shining disk of jade. Was it due to some trick of the eastern goldsmith that beside her own features a dark visage looked out at her, taking character both in type and individuality from her imagination?

"It is not Blue Jacket, it is Elskwatawa," she cried, hastily covering the surface with her hand. "But while I hold his spirit form he is in my power. I will keep the picture-glass."

And, concealing the mirror in the folds of her blouse, she sped down the bank, pushed a canoe from among the reeds of the swamp, sprang into it, and paddled away.

Her coming and going were not unknown to the sentry who paced the bluff. But, beguiled by a soft word and the gift of a small moccock of blackberries, and believing her one of the women from the Shawanoe encampment on the island opposite, he had let her pass.

When the Indian girl was gone, Laurente resumed her place on the bench at the door of the house and continued her knitting. Madam Navarre and the other women had carried some simple comforts they had made up to the building where the prisoners dined in common, for it was again the festival of "Our Lady of the Harvest."

Here it was very quiet. The westering sun sank lower, until at last it touched the waters of the lake and set them all aflame.

When the stillness was broken by the report of the gun on the flag-bastion, Miss MacIntosh ceased to knit and sat watching the sunset clouds and the shimmering sea. But the twilights were growing shorter, and she soon started up from her reverie.

Through the gathering dusk she could see the point that marked the end of the sentry's beat, and she carelessly noted that the guard was being changed.

As she turned to go into the house, her attention was attracted by a shadow close to the outer wall. She sprang forward to cross the threshold, hoping to bar the door and shut out any possible intruder; but in the passage a dark form, wrapped in an Indian blanket, arose before her, cutting off her escape in either direction.

Was this James La Salle, come back to menace her with his fierce love-making? Had Matanah tracked him to this vicinity, and was the half-breed beauty's abrupt departure caused by the smouldering passion of her jealous rage? Or were the two in league against the white girl, and had Matanah come at the command of Blue Jacket?

Laurente tried to cry out, but fright choked her, fortunately, as it happened, for a tense voice said, in an imploring whisper, —

"Be silent, mademoiselle, my life is in your hands."

"Who are you?" she asked, hardly above her breath, as she recoiled from the stranger.

"An American in search of news for Tippecanoe," came the scarce audible answer. "I am nearly famished. For God's sake get me something to eat and hide me for a few hours. I had a hard time dodging the squaw and the sentinels."

Peering into the painted face, Laurente repressed an exclamation of astonishment. Beneath the disguise of a complexion darkened by the juices of forest plants and bedaubed with ochre and vermilion, a feather head-dress and dishevelled locks, she recognized the features of James Knaggs, whose brother Debendon was the husband of Josette Labadie.

"Ma foi, Kaugwadwa,"¹ she faltered, unconsciously giving him his Indian name.

"You here, a spy!" she would have added, but dared not frame the word.

"Where can I hide you?" she exclaimed instead. "Ah yes, the garret; it is a lumber room, seldom visited. The way is in the corner there, and the door is fastened only by a rusty lock. Break it open and conceal yourself. I will bring you supper in half an hour."

"Grâce à Ste. Anne! And, since it will be dinner and breakfast as well, bring good measure," chuckled

¹ The Questioner.

Knaggs, as he sprang up the ladder that led to the loft.

Laurente ran out again, banging the house-door after her to drown the thud of the yielding wood above, for the new sentry was approaching the building.

As he came up to her, Laurente, with as inscrutable an air as that required of him by his military duty, crossed the parade to the pavilion where the prisoners' meals were served.

A word aside to Madam Navarre, and the two women managed to slip the portions of meat allotted to them between the thick slices of rye bread, and to transfer these to their capacious pockets. For drink, their guest must be content with a draught of the river water. Liquor in abundance had been given the Yankee officers, perhaps from a crafty design to deaden their wits; but to seek to obtain a gill of it for the spent wood-ranger would be sure to awaken suspicion.

Returning to their lodging before the other women, Madam Navarre and Laurente mounted to the garret, bringing the food they had saved.

As they paused before the door of the loft, Laurente held her candle higher and called softly.

In response the American rose to his feet from behind a pile of empty grain sacks.

Laurente marvelled that she had even for an instant mistaken him for La Salle, since he was a very Hercules in size and strength, straight as an arrow, and so tall that as he stood erect his head nearly touched the apex of the garret roof.

His restless manner betrayed that he was active as a wild-cat, and as the light of the taper shone upon his face it showed that his blue eyes were instinct with intelligence and mental force.

"Ha, ha, mademoiselle, if you have brought me but a crust it will be as welcome as though it were a banquet prepared for King George," he said, coming toward her with a wide laugh which revealed the most singular feature of his appearance, and one that led many of his Indian antagonists to consider him as other than an ordinary man. He had a double row of teeth, both in the lower and the upper jaw, and he was wont to boast that from the growth of the second set in his boyhood he had never lost a tooth.

Such was the noted creole, James Knaggs; a man who hated his country's foes with fiery intensity; a swift and clever *coureur-de-bois*; a champion wrestler; in woodcraft acute as any savage; in war courageous, resourceful, and audacious; in peace a farmer of untiring energy and industry.

Having somewhat appeased the sharpness of his hunger, and with a grimace quenched his thirst from the jug of water, he took time to answer the eager inquiries of the two women as to what had happened since the day, almost a month before, when General Proctor and Tecumseh had again set sail down the bay, this time with a great number of British and Indians.

"They attacked Fort Meigs once more with shot and shell, but our troops were resolved to blow up the magazine rather than yield," he began, pausing in his attention to the trencher duty for which he was so well equipped. "Tecumseh tried to deceive the

garrison by a sham battle with supposed reinforcements, but the ruse was discovered, and Proctor returned to his ships with his white soldiers, while the Indians made off through the forest. Before long a party of Shawanoes led by James Blue Jacket appeared in the neighborhood of Fort Stephenson. General Harrison, who was at Seneca, hearing of this, sent word to the boy-commander, Lieutenant Croghan, to abandon the stockade. But Croghan returned the bold answer, 'We have decided to hold the place, and by Heaven we can!'

"Bless his rashness," exclaimed Laurente, kindling, "yet — did it cost him his commission?"

"Nearly; but you see he expected his reply to fall into the hands of the enemy, so it was meant as a challenge to them," explained Knaggs. "This the boy made clear when he was summoned across the hostile stretch of country to the camp of Tippecanoe, who allowed him to return and carry out his plan of defence. Scarce had he gained the fort when Proctor appeared in Sandusky Bay with his gun-boats, and a horde of red devils under Tecumseh gathered in the woods to cut off all chance of help. Proctor threatened a massacre if surrender was refused. Croghan defied him, and on the first day of August there was a battle during a thunder storm. The British fought well; but, to the rage of the great Shawanoe, his Indians fled from the fire of our single cannon (old Betsey Croghan, the soldiers call the gun), and the young commander held the fort with one hundred and sixty-seven men against an army of five thousand."

Madam Navarre laughed low.

"Not the least of General Proctor's mortifications must be that he was baffled by a youth who has not reached his twenty-first year," she said.

"For this gallant defence the brave lieutenant deserves the thanks of the nation," cried Laurente.

"Aye, and he is like to receive them, for Tippecanoe is loud in his praise," rejoined Knaggs. "Now it is my turn to ask questions. I have ventured here to examine the strength of this fort; I need information from you only upon one or two small points."

The two women, so unjustly detained as prisoners, were not deterred by foolish scruples from complying with his request. Still, they dared not linger long to talk with him, and before an hour had passed, they descended the ladder, encouraged to endure their captivity with greater patience by the cheery "au revoir" of his leave-taking.

He had told them also that Colonel Cass, now a brigadier general, had joined General Harrison at Seneca. Governor Shelby of Kentucky had taken the field in person, and Commander Perry at Presque Isle¹ was only waiting to man his ships in order to give battle to the British fleet.

In the morning Knaggs was gone, having no doubt escaped as he had come, by being mistaken for one of Tecumseh's Shawanoes who were wont to prowl about the camp. A sentry would be vigilant, indeed, to stop a savage ally of the size and build of the stalwart wood-ranger.

¹ Erie, Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH

THE BAND PLAYED "YANKEE DOODLE"

THE September breezes covered Lake Erie with crested waves, and as far as the eye could reach a host of white-clad Naiades seemed dancing on the blue waters. From the lime-trees at Malden a russet or yellow leaf fluttered down now and then to the sward, and in the marsh below the bluff the reed-mace flaunted their green flags, like a pigmy army of brown Puk-Pudjies advancing upon the moat.

In the morning there had been a calm over the lake, and a slight rain, but a wind had sprung up, and the afternoon was filled with the sunlit splendor of early autumn.

Its beauty was, however, scarce noticed at the fort, to which Proctor and Tecumseh had returned after their fruitless summer expedition.

Since noon the boom of heavy ordnance from across the water, and clouds of smoke at the skyline, had told the general, his Shawanoe ally, and all the anxious watchers here, that the British fleet and Perry's ships were at last engaged in a great contest. Since noon Proctor and his officers had scanned the horizon for some signal from Commodore Barclay, commander of the squadron; and,

from the beach of Bois Blanc Island, Tecumseh had listened to the ominous voices of the great guns.

Since noon Laurente MacIntosh and Madam Navarre had at frequent intervals told their rosaries for the success of the Americans. They could not sit quietly sewing or knitting before their door as was their custom, but set out earlier than usual upon their visits of mercy to the sick soldier-prisoners.

Shortly after three o'clock the firing ceased. The battle of Lake Erie had been fought and won. At sunset an express was riding through the Ohio forests, carrying in the breast of his blouse an old letter on the back of which was pencilled Perry's historic message to General Harrison, "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

Yet, although Malden was within thirty miles of the fighting ships, not until the second night after the conflict did Proctor receive news of the defeat and capture of the British fleet. In his anxiety to keep the knowledge of it from Tecumseh, he had the messenger, James Blue Jacket, speedily locked in the guard-house.

But the splash of a paddle in the darkness had been heard by the Indian sentinels at Bois Blanc, and the next morning Tecumseh and several of his warriors came across from the island. The braves lounged about the fort, but their chief demanded an interview with the general.

The two leaders met on the esplanade. The wide waters formed a background to the scene, and the

morning sun shone full upon the martial figure of the redman whose bearing was that of an emperor, upon the officer, the bravery of whose gold-laced coat hid an uneasy heart.

"Palawah, where are now the big canoes of your King?" began the Shawanoe. "We know they have fought, but we know nothing of what has happened to our father of the one arm.¹ A runner whom I sent out has brought back word that many ships are lying at Put-in-Bay, and a band of Long Knives are hiding in the great cave that leads under the lake, — the cave which could shelter an army. A messenger came to you last night?"

Proctor avoided the glance of the chief, wheeled about, took a few paces, and returning, faced him. He had already decided upon a story to deceive this monarch of the woods, and wanted only a moment to assume an appearance of candor.

"Tecumseh, you are right," he said. "A messenger has come and gone on to Detroit. Commodore Barclay has been beaten by the Long Knives and he has taken his ships into Put-in-Bay to refit them. They will be here before the moon wanes."

But Tecumseh, on his way from the strand, had observed many things that might have escaped an eye less keen.

"Palawah," he protested, with a gesture of command, "our great father the King is the head, and you stand here in his place. Last summer you gave us the tomahawk, and told us if we helped you to beat the Long Knives we should have all the lands of the

¹ Commodore Barclay had lost an arm in his European service.

Strait; that you would give me General Harrison to be burned at the stake if such should be my will. You told us to bring our wives and children here and they should want for nothing. We were to fight the Long Knives on the prairie; you, to drive out their garrisons. At the Rapids and Sandusky, it is true, we gave you little help, but it is hard to fight men who live like ground-hogs. Now, your ships have gone one way and we see you tying up everything to run away the other, though you said you would never draw back your foot from British ground."

"Tush, tush, Tecumseh," interrupted Proctor. "I am only sending my specie and a part of the stores up the Thames River for greater safety."

"Palawah, you do not speak the truth," declared the Shawanoe, with a shrug of his broad shoulders. "Give us the muskets and powder and shot sent by the King to his red children. Our lives are in the keeping of the Breath Master; we will defend our lands or leave our bones upon them. Ha, ha, for shame, my father, you are like a raging turkey that ruffles his feathers! You are like a fat dog that carries his tail on his back when all goes well, but when chased he drops it between his legs in fear and runs fast."

Tecumseh's infrequent laugh rang out with savage harshness, and was like the sharp cut of a lash upon the cowardly soul of Proctor. Yet now, less than at any time during the war, could he afford to despise the aid of his savage allies.

"Listen, brother," he said, controlling his anger and speaking in a tone of injured forbearance.

"Here I cannot give you the food and clothing you need for the winter. But if you and your warriors will come with me to the Thames, and bring your wives and children, you will find there all you require, and a reinforcement of redcoat soldiers from Michilimackinac or the east. Will you come?"

"I will talk to my warriors and will let you know their answer," the great chief rejoined. And there-with he strode away.

The sun rose red over the prairies of Le Détroit and the tossing waters of Lake Erie on the second morning after this conference.

It was not the arrows of Keesahthwah,¹ ambushed behind the haze of the autumnal atmosphere, however, that, shortly after reveille, caused a fluttering reflection upon one of the outer walls of the commandant's quarters at Fort Malden.

A glint of light like a glittering lizard crept up the wall. Glowing sparks uncoiled like snakes among the thatch of the roof; and like a pack of ravenous wolves fallen upon their victim, shining tongues began to lap and crunch at the foundations.

Every moment the savage flames gathered strength, yet no alarm was sounded. Was it the wind that so quickly carried the brands, causing the fierce gleam that now leaped forth from the barracks, followed by a thick smoke?

Under the tranquil sky of the radiant September morning, from one building to another crept the flames with a strange likeness to the half-brutal, half-

¹ The Sun.

human malice of the loup-garou, the werewolf. A crimson glow lit up the old house near the esplanade and shone into the room where Laurente MacIntosh and Madam Navarre lay still asleep and almost smothered by the heavy air.

A sharp banging at the house-door, and the voice of Jean Cécire calling outside, aroused the younger and stronger woman from this perilous unconsciousness. Although it was broad day, she could see nothing distinctly; the room was pervaded by a gray mist.

Laurente groped her way to a window and threw it open; but, instead of a cool, refreshing breeze, there rolled in a billow of smoke that filled her eyes and lungs, and for a moment confused her utterly.

The banging continued.

"You are free! Save yourselves; the fort is on fire! Do you hear?" shouted creole Jean, as he was named by his captors.

"Yes, yes," she gasped, still bewildered.

"The fort is on fire," he repeated as he passed on, crying his warning to the other prisoners, until the sound of his voice was lost amid the mutterings of the flames that had now attacked a building only a stone's throw from this old log-house.

"Madam! Madam! The fort is on fire!" wildly reiterated the girl, awakening her friend with a vigorous shake. "We must flee for our lives!"

Having closed the window as promptly as she had opened it, Laurente dashed water from the ewer into Madam Navarre's face and her own.

The two women hurriedly dressed and, without

waiting to gather their scanty belongings, rushed out on the parade ground.

Where were the garrison, the redcoat officers? Why was there no call for volunteers to fight the blaze, no summons to the men who at this time should be on duty? The fortifications were as desolate as a cleared spot in the forest surrounded by burning timber.

Laurente covered her eyes to shut out the lurid scene. But she could not blot from her mind the picture it recalled, and which had been impressed upon it in childhood with sharp distinctness, the memory of the devastating conflagration that laid in ashes the old French town of Detroit.

The prisoners came running or hobbling out of their quarters, all save one poor fellow who was carried out by his comrades.

"M'sieur Jean Bull set fire to zee fort, and 'alors!' Phouff, he run away! Gone up in zee smoke, ha, ha," laughed Sergeant Cécire, as he constituted himself master of the situation.

Yes, Proctor and his army had evacuated the place, abandoning their captives, who, losing no time lest their escape should be cut off by the flames, fled through the gate to the little settlement of Amherstburg, just beyond the earthworks.

The news of Perry's brilliant capture of the British fleet with all its officers was now generally known along the shores of the Detroit, and the people of this village were ready enough to seek immunity for themselves by sheltering the liberated Americans.

As Laurente and Madam Navarre reached a group

of white-washed cottages, a thin, middle-aged woman, with a cadaverous face and high cheek-bones, ran out of the smallest of these houses and called to the ladies, half in broad Scotch, half in English, —

"Puir bodies, you're welcome to what comfort this bit shealing and Janet Frazer can gie, gin ye'll bide wi' me."

Grateful for the invitation, Miss MacIntosh and her companion gladly took shelter in the cosy living-room.

"Draw up near the spunk o' fire and break your fast wi' a dish o' porridge," urged their hostess. "At blink o' day the sodgers and a'most a' the men o' the village, my gudeman wi' the rest, went strealin' away toward Sandwich. The reveille was sounded by a mounted trooper to rout up the prisoners and gie them a chance for life. Aweel, aweel, there has come a turn in the tide o' war."

Half an hour later the gudewife summoned her guests to the house-door.

"Look yonder," she said, pointing with her long forefinger to where the river widens before mingling its waters with those of the lake.

A canoe was struggling across the mouth of the Strait from the distant American shore.

"Is some voyageur hastening to warn us of the coming of a band of Indians?" exclaimed Madam Navarre, wringing her hands. "While held captive by the British we were at least safe from the savages."

"Hearten up, madam," said Janet Frazer. "A' the redskins hereabout ha' gone wi' General Proctor."

Tossed by the wind and beaten back by the cur-

rent, the canoe yet came nearer. Now they could distinguish its occupants; a half-breed boy who plied the paddle as one to the manner born, and a spare, black-robed figure, whose wide-brimmed, low-crowned cloth hat was of the shape worn by the clergy in Paris at the time of the French Revolution.

"Grâce à Dieu, it is Le Père Richard!" cried Laurente, shading her eyes with her hands.

The prisoners, who by this time had gathered on the shore, set up a shout.

Without waiting for the paddler to beach his craft, they waded into the shallow water, dragged the canoe up on the sands, and assisted the priest to alight, joyously vociferating, —

"Père Gabriel! Père Gabriel! Le bon père has come to us!"

They crowded around him as he stood upon the strand, — the men of New England ancestry, soldiers from Kentucky and Ohio, and those whose forbears came to New France with Frontenac, — and all were alike glad in their greeting.

For a moment Père Richard was silent from emotion. Many of the faces before him were wan from the ravages of the fever of the marshes; some of the men carried their arms in slings, and others walked with difficulty.

"My children! My children!" he said at length, in a voice that trembled with the tenderness of a strong nature, as he extended his hands as if to embrace all the motley company.

"Père Gabriel, ze British, zay hav' decamped and lef' zair prisonairs," called Jean Cécire.

"I surmised the truth," replied the missionary. "The blaze of the burning fort lighted my way as I was returning from a journey to the Raisin. Many times I sent to General Proctor, begging permission to visit you, but my petition was always refused."

"Miss MacIntosh," he continued, catching sight of the women who had joined the throng, "your father has often pleaded in vain for your release. Madam Navarre, your husband is escaped and has joined General Harrison."

"O Père Richard, take me up the river in your skiff, my only wish is to be in my father's house again," stammered Laurente.

"Your only wish?" echoed le bon père, with a twinkle in his kind eyes. "Have patience a little longer, my daughter. The British are still between you and Moy Hall, but before long you may be escorted up the côte by the triumphant American army."

His gentle jest, which yet embodied the assurance that such a return to their homes was possible for all, raised a buoyant laugh from those who overheard. And amid rejoicings the throng led "le bon père" up to the village.

Late in the afternoon, after having cheered and encouraged and brought good news to all, he returned to the "côte-du-nord."

It was the twenty-ninth of September. Lake Erie and the Strait gleamed like a sea of gold and mother-of-pearl beneath the sunlight. About Amherstburg and the ruins of Fort Malden the prairie was still green, save for bare or withered patches where the

foraging redcoats and the savages had despoiled the fields before the ears of the maize were full or the pumpkins firm, and had made off with the products of the kitchen-gardens ere the leeks and kale and cabbages could be gathered by the farmers.

Notwithstanding the visits of these predatory harvesters, amid the dark foliage of orchard boughs "pommes de neige" glowed red as pomegranates, and gnarled trees of yellow pippins, standing out against the white, sunlit clouds of the horizon, showed "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

About noon gray sails were descried on the lake, and within half an hour three trig little battle-ships were seen beating up against the wind toward the entrance to the river.

Scarce had the first commotion caused by their appearance passed, when a British scout rushed into the settlement, crying, —

"The Yankees! The Yankees, led by Tippecanoe, are coming up the river road."

The wives and children of the absconded settlers sought hiding in the houses and cattle sheds, but the Americans rushed down the village street with shouts of joy.

The branches of the maple and beech trees that lined the way waved like banners, and an army of birds, mustering for their flight to the south, ceased their clamorous twitter, silenced by a sound borne up the côte on the breeze.

The little throng of men and women waiting by the wagon trail heard it too, — the sound of martial music.

BAND PLAYED "YANKEE DOODLE" 315

Soon the spirited tune could be distinguished. It was the homely melody of "Yankee Doodle," so often played by the enemy in derision of their prisoners, but now, as in the days of the War of Independence, become the triumphant measure of the victor's march.

"Yankee Doodle's come to town,
Yankee Doodle dandy,"

sang the fifes in shrill exultation.

"Yankee Doodle's come to town," laughed the rich voices of the drums.

"Yankee Doodle's come to town," said the steady tramp of marching men, as they kept time to the rollicking air.

At the repetition of the refrain, the soldiers who had been held captive at Malden since midsummer, growing almost delirious with rapture, sped away in the direction from which the cheery strains proceeded.

Miss MacIntosh and Madam Navarre followed, until in stentorian tones Jean Cécire called, "Stand back! Stand back! Ees eet zat you wish to be trampled under ze feet of ze troops?"

How the drums chuckled over the song, —

"And there I see a little keg,
Its heads were made of leather;
They knocked upon 't with little sticks
To call the folk together.

"And then they'd fife away like mad,"

piped the flageolets,

"And play on cornstalk fiddles;
And some had ribbons red as blood
All wound about their middles."

Thus, marching up the corduroy road to the inspiring rhythm, the Army of the Frontier came into view.

"Dree chairs for ze 'Stars and Stripes,'" yelled Cécire, plucking wildly at his hair, since he had no cap to fling toward the sky.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" broke from half a hundred throats.

"Three cheers for the flag! Three cheers for Tippecanoe! Three cheers for Commander Perry!"

Many among the little band of loyal spectators laughed aloud in their delight, but tears coursed down the bearded cheeks of some of the men who shouted most jubilantly.

Laurente and Madam Navarre fell upon their knees and wept unrestrainedly.

No one among the watching throng needed to be told that the soldier leader was General Harrison; that among these ill-clad troops who had invaded Canada without horses, tents, or baggage, were heroes of Forts Meigs and Stephenson; that these dust-covered militia men were resolved to settle the contest with the enemy by land as Perry had settled it on the lake.

"Dree chairs for General Cass and Colonel Navarre," yelled Cécire, recognizing the familiar figures among the officers. The next moment, and just as Laurente uttered a glad little cry, he added, as his glance passed down the line, —

"Dree chairs for Captain Labadie."

Yes, there was Pierre with his company; Pierre, free and strong once more, for youth and his iron

constitution had triumphed over the ill effects of fever, and poor food, and the hardships of his prisoner's lot.

Laurent's heart thrilled with fervent gratitude to God, while every breath she drew was a prayer of thanksgiving.

And Pierre saw her. Their eyes met and exchanged a greeting of love.

When General Harrison understood that the disreputable-looking rabble screaming themselves hoarse by the roadside were the American captives left behind by the British, he cried a halt, gave the order, "Present arms!" as a salute to the prisoners, and called the latter around him while the troops rested.

The affecting interview between the men and their old officers and comrades was cut short, however, by the appearance of a throng of the wives and children of the Canadian settlers, who shrilly implored the mercy and protection of the general.

"Do not be afraid, good people," Tippecanoe replied to their appeal with kindly impatience, "we do not make war on women and their little ones."

Then, at his word, the advance was sounded, and the troops marched on, to encamp for the night upon the lately deserted esplanade of Fort Malden.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH

LOVE AND GLORY

HALF an hour later Captain Labadie, at last off duty, strode in haste down the road to the spot where he had seen Laurente standing under the beeches.

The girl was not there. Having beheld her lover at the head of his men, she had, prompted by her native coquetry, run away from him.

In the first days of her betrothal to Pierre she had been frankly happy. When he was a prisoner at Malden she had consoled and cheered him by affording him many glimpses of her innocent heart, wherein, like the flame of a little alabaster lamp in a votive chapel, burned the fire of her love for him.

But, now that he was restored to health and was marching on to honor and fame in the fore of Tippecanoe's army, she felt a strange diffidence of herself, and before the shrine of her affection would fain have built an altar-screen of maidenly reserve.

Yet, though she retreated to the arbor overgrown with wild grape-vines that formed a pleasant shade in the garden beside Gudewife Frazer's cottage, Labadie, directed by the kindly officious Jean Cécire, promptly found her.

"Dear love," he said, as he clasped the smiling, tearful girl in his arms, and kissed her with the ardor of a bridegroom who has travelled far to meet his bride, and has won her only after long and earnest effort, "heart's dearest, we are reunited in happiness at last."

Laurente hid her happy face upon his breast.

"O Pierre, God has been very good to us," she faltered; "my love, my love!"

At first, in their joy, they could think and speak only of the present. But after a while Laurente wished to know what had happened to her captain since he was taken away, a captive, from Malden; and how he came to have the good fortune to be again with General Harrison.

As they sat together in the arbor, the sunlight wove the open roof above them into a lattice-work of gold, changed the clusters of purple Catawbas to pendant jewels, and stole through the withered foliage of the vines to shine upon the lovers.

"When the news of the battle of Lake Erie reached Detroit, it was kept secret by the British officer in command. The soldiers of the garrison were engaged in preparations for flight, however, and the prisoners of war were thus allowed more liberty than usual," said Labadie, beginning the story of his adventures.

"James Knaggs, having contrived to be captured by a foraging party, brought word of the victory to the townspeople, and in council with them it was decided that James and I must escape if possible, and carry a message to Commander Perry, or commodore as he will be ere long.

"Two nights ago we got away in a canoe with six townsmen, and paddled swiftly down the river and far out upon the lake. We passed no ships, but as we floated on in the gloom, suddenly ahead of us we heard the dip of oars. The next moment a light flashed just beyond the prow of our pirogue and the report of a musket arrested our paddles.

"'Boat ahoy!' I shouted. My comrades had made me their leader, and since the strangers might be Indians or spies of Proctor's, I quickly resolved to gain whatever advantage might come from being beforehand. 'Boat ahoy!'

"'Ariel! What boat is that?' was the peremptory answer.

"How our spirits rose as it rang out over the surging waters.

"'A canoe from Detroit with a greeting to Commander Perry,' I replied.

"Thereupon, the Ariel's boat came alongside us, and its officer flashed the rays of a lantern in our faces.

"By the same light we saw he was a youth, or, rather, a handsome lad in the uniform of the navy; but he commanded his boat's crew with the decision of an admiral. We afterwards learned that he was the commander's midshipman brother, who had shown extraordinary bravery during the action. He took our canoe in tow and brought us to Perry's ship. We all went aboard, and the hero of the battle received us on the quarter-deck.

"'Commander Perry,' I said, saluting, 'the inhabitants of Detroit have sent us to beg you to come to their aid as soon as may be.'

"Not content with this, Knaggs, who, for all his fighting qualities has never been amenable to military discipline, spoke up, crying, —

"'Commodore, they want you to have a chance to give the garrison a broadside before the redcoats take to the woods.'

"Perry smiled indulgently.

"'God willing, I shall lose no time before sailing up the river,' he responded, with the terse simplicity of a great man who has no need of ostentation.

"He then engaged the rest of our party to accompany him up the Strait. But this morning he sent Knaggs and myself to join General Harrison, who was debarking his troops at Hartley's Point.

"So, heart's dearest, I am come, and yonder are Perry's ships beating up the bay. Within an hour he will land here at Amherstburg to confer with Tippecanoe. And by to-morrow evening, doubtless, the Ariel, the Scorpion, and the Caledonia will lie before Detroit, where the birch-bark flotilla of the *Sieur de Cadillac* once breasted the current."

"Thank God, the heroism of the intrepid commander of our fleet has wiped out the reproach of the fort's inglorious surrender," exclaimed Laurente, with spirit.

"And now, dearest," continued Pierre, returning to the subject of which lovers never tire, namely, their love for each other, "I have the general's permission to marry; Father Richard is on board the Ariel; he went out to the ships to visit the men who were wounded in the battle. I had but a few moments with *le bon père*, but I told him of my hope to win

your assent to my plan. Say yes, Laurente! Tell me that when he comes I may ask him to marry us to-morrow!"

"To-morrow!" she repeated, drawing back in shy astonishment.

"Yes, heart of my heart! Why should we delay longer? God has given us this tryst at the most critical time of the war. Père Gabriel is at hand to perform the wedding ceremony and receive our vows to be true to each other. You are of age and thus free to decide as you wish. But even if this were not so, while I was a prisoner at Detroit your father sent me word that if I would bring you back to Moy Hall he would not refuse his sanction to our marriage. I am, of course, to go on with Tippecanoe, and he will follow Proctor to Montreal if necessary in order to force him to a decisive battle. Give me the joy of calling you my wife! Afterwards, if it is my fate to fall, I yet shall feel that, in your wifely love, my life has been crowned with happiness."

His arm stole around her, and he bent his head, awaiting her answer.

The girl averted her face.

"Since Providence has commissioned me as Monsieur Labadie's lieutenant, 'sans doute,' I must share his fortunes," she stammered at length, in the laughing fashion of the time, when, care-free, she danced at her birthday ball at Moy Hall.

"Then, my brave lieutenant, I direct you to salute your superior officer," enjoined Labadie, with more of eagerness than a captain usually betrays to his subaltern.





Laurente, being well trained to military discipline, obeyed without demur. And the salute was as promptly returned.

While Pierre Labadie and his sweetheart planned for their wedding, the American squadron reached the anchorage in the river, before the ruins of Fort Malden, and now the little cannon which the artillery had dragged up from Hartley's Point boomed forth a salvo of greeting.

Laurente started to her feet.

"I forgot about the ships," she admitted in blushing confusion, and straightway ran out of the arbor and along the bluff.

Labadie strode after, too happy to let her out of his sight. They had not gone more than a few rods when James Knaggs with a band of scouts passed them, singing with rollicking glee a witty play upon words written by a poetaster soldier, and already popular among his comrades and the sailors of the fleet.

" Bold Barclay one day to Proctor did say,
I'm tired of Jamaica and sherry ;
So let us go down to that new floating town
And get some American Perry.¹
Oh, cheap American Perry ;
Most pleasant American Perry !
We need only bear down, knock and call,
And we 'll have the American Perry.

" All ready for play, they got under way,
With hearts light and right voluntary ;
But when they came there they quickly did stare,
At the taste of American Perry.

¹ Perry, pear cider.

Oh, this fiery American Perry !
Such hot distillation
Would fuddle a nation,
Should it taste this American Perry.

" On American ground, where such spirit is found,
Let us toast deep the heroes of Erie ;
And never forget those whose life's sun did set
By the side of their Commodore Perry.
Oh, brave American Perry !
Triumphant American Perry.
Let us ever remember the tenth of September,
When a fleet struck to Commodore Perry."

As small boats put off from the ships, a tumultuous cheer broke from the army encamped on the esplanade. At every turn Larente heard the soldiers who were off duty repeating to the townspeople incidents of the great naval conflict, and anecdotes of the courage, kindness, and generosity of the valiant Perry. How, at the height of the engagement, he crossed from one ship to another in an open boat, which for a quarter of an hour was the target of the enemy's fire. How he cared, with the greatest solicitude, not only for the injured among his men, but for the disabled Commodore Barclay, and the wounded British. How he had been merciful even to the Indian sharpshooters caught in the top-yards of the enemy's flagship, who expected scalping, but were fed instead.

Now, on the strand below, the boats were beached, and, with a gesture of disclaimer waving back the throng, who would have raised him upon their shoulders, the manly figure in the bow of the fore-

most skiff leaped ashore, being closely followed by the occupants of the other boats.

They were welcomed by General Harrison and his staff, and the hero of Tippecanoe and the hero of Lake Erie marched up the hill side by side. Before them were borne the starry standard and the blue banner blazoned with the last words of Admiral Lawrence, which Perry had nailed to the masthead of his flagship as the signal to lead on to victory.

The military band played "Hail Columbia," "the Stars and Stripes" floated to the breeze, and on the azure field of Perry's pennon the brave motto, "Don't give up the ship!" stood out in proud, white letters.

On came the simple procession, escorting the young naval commander, who was noble in bearing as was ever knight of old, of splendid physique, and with the head and face of the Greek Apollo.

With him were those of his officers who had withstood, unscathed or with slight injury, the fire of the battle. And yes, there too was Father Richard, as Pierre had said.

As they advanced, the throng of free lances, scouts, loyal Indians, liberated prisoners, women and children, who lined the way, raised cheer after cheer, until the air rang with acclaim.

Laurente with the naïve ardor of her nature cried out with the rest, and catching the blue kerchief from her neck, fluttered it gaily.

So pleasing a picture did she make, as, in her light-colored frock, and bare-headed, with her brown curls blown by the wind, she stood beside her captain, that the glance of Perry was attracted to them both.

Reading their little romance, he smiled in the ready sympathy with love and lovers which overflows from a heart that loves and is secure in the joy of a good woman's devotion.

And so he went on to the parade ground of Fort Malden, where the army of Tippecanoe was drawn up to receive him.

The Moon of the Maize that shone full upon the conquering and the captured squadron as they sailed into Put-in-Bay had waned and died; but now a new moon, like the bow of Hiawatha, the all-powerful Indian hunter, hung in the western sky. The stars came forth in the white heavens, and the blaze of a great camp-fire lighted the esplanade at Malden, where, in front of their canvas head-quarters, General Harrison and his distinguished guest, on the evening of the latter's arrival, held an informal reception.

When Laurete's turn came to be presented, Captain Labadie led her forward with the pride of a soldier who has won the prize for which he has struggled.

"Ah, this is our fair bride to be," exclaimed the courteous sailor-hero, as she blushingly swept him a curtsey. "Miss MacIntosh, I have received through Father Richard your invitation to assist at your marriage to-morrow morning. I now take the opportunity to ask as a favor that you and Captain Labadie will make your wedding journey to Detroit with me on my good ship Ariel. Is it a promise?"

"Sir, you do us too much honor," answered Laurete, blushing again with happiness; while to Labadie this mark of thoughtful condescension on the part

of the commander was a distinction to be forever proudly remembered.

"Ah, captain," continued Perry, with characteristic directness, "in joining your life to that of this sweet girl you are buckling on a strong armor. It has pleased the Almighty to give the United States a great victory on Lake Erie, but I believe I have come through the battle unharmed because of the prayers of my own dear wife. Miss MacIntosh let me present my young brother. He, I dare say, has some schoolgirl sweetheart praying for him now. For the rascal is unharmed, though during the engagement two musket-balls passed through his hat; his clothes were tattered by splinters, and he was struck down by a hammock which a cannon-ball tore from its nettings."

The little midshipman kissed the hand of the bridellect with a chivalrous grace, and said, boyishly, as he patted the head of a curly black spaniel that had made its way to him and thrust its nose under his palm, —

"Madam, I must share whatever credit is given me with the commander's dog, Ponto, here. So enraged was he at every shot from the enemy's swivels, I was forced to lock him in the cabin of the Lawrence; and when a cannon-ball tore a hole in the bulkhead, he at once thrust his head through the opening, barking and yelping for release. Now what do you think of old Ponto; was he foolhardy or a hero?"

"I think that to be near Commander Perry in battle would inspire even a spaniel with the courage of a lion," replied the girl.

And while the lad's treble laugh rang out mirthfully at this sally, she passed on.

Half an hour later, Pierre bade her a lingering good-night at the door of Janet Frazer's cottage.

The sun never shone on a fairer bride than was Laurente MacIntosh the next morning in her white dimity frock set off by a veil of creamy English lace found by gudewife Janet in her old-country chest. Had the girl been arrayed in all the silken splendor her mother would have wished for her, she could not have been more beautiful. At least, so thought Pierre Labadie, as, with General Cass for his groomsmen, he stood before Père Richard at the end of a cordoned space on the parade, and saw her coming to meet him on the arm of General Harrison, who had claimed the privilege of giving the bride away.

And when he took her hand in his and knew that with it she gave her heart forever, what were the perils of war to him? With his soldier laurels was woven the myrtle crown of a true woman's love.

The words of the marriage vow were soon spoken; the nuptial blessing was given with a fervor that came from the heart of Père Gabriel. Then, as Laurente, radiant and white as a lily, and Labadie, erect and triumphant, turned to walk together down between the double line of officers drawn up in military file, a hundred strong arms flashed across a hundred brave breasts; with a rattle of steel a hundred sabres gleamed forth, and beneath an arch of swords Pierre and Laurente Labadie passed to the end of the esplanade.

They were followed by all the company to the house of Janet Frazer, where the gudewife and Madam Navarre had prepared a wedding feast.

Scarce was it over when the troops broke camp and began their march up the côte.

An hour before noon the bride and bridegroom and Madam Navarre went on board the Ariel with Commander Perry. Soon afterwards the squadron weighed anchor, sailed up the river, and, touching at Sandwich only to take on board General Harrison, Colonel Navarre, and six hundred men, proceeded to the fort of the Strait.

Thus did Laurente, whose girlish espousal of the American cause had led to her being stolen away by Blue Jacket, return to Detroit in the flagship of the noble conqueror; a happy bride under the protection of "the Stars and Stripes," and of her husband Pierre Labadie, the hero of her loyal woman's heart.

General Proctor had evacuated the post and withdrawn beyond Lake Ste. Claire, accompanied by Tecumseh, who, for the sake of the Chippewas and Sioux, had decided not to desert him.

The little cannon of Yorktown and Saratoga, twice surrendered by the British, boomed forth a joyous welcome to the victorious Perry. The townspeople, men, women, and children, in the best holiday attire the hard times had left them, crowded down to the water-gate, cheering and clamoring.

The women waved their kerchiefs, red, white, and blue; the men and boys tossed their caps in the air, while now and again some one unfurled a pennant;

and others, breaking branches from the trees, flaunted them as banners.

Again the band played "Yankee Doodle," as Perry and Tippecanoc, and Cass and Shelby, marched up to old Fort Lernoult and took possession of the stockade and town in the name of the United States.

The people shouted and cheered anew. The women and many of the men wept like children; and the children felt their hearts stirred with the love of country that is a nation's strongest defence.

There among her neighbors, at the side of the street leading to the stockade, lingered Madam Brush; sad, because while the other officers returned in triumph, her husband was, she feared, still a wanderer for his country's sake, but dignified as a Roman matron of old, and with the light of a pathetic patience shining in her fine eyes.

Beside her stood a tall lad, hurraing with all the strength of his young lungs.

"Look, mother," he cried abruptly, when the heroes of the hour and the military had passed, and the crowd was lessening. "Look!"

And before the astonished mother could check him, Edmond dashed across the street and flung his arms around the neck of a pretty girl in a plain gray frock and a hat woven of river grasses.

But the girl who smiled so gaily and kissed the child on both cheeks? Her escort, the handsome officer, who affectionately clapped the boy on the shoulder? Madam Brush drew a hand before her eyes; no, she was not dreaming; there but a few paces distant stood Laurente and — Pierre Labadie.

With a quick step she made her way to them; she heard Labadie say, "Madam, my wife," — and Laurente was clasped in her embrace.

As the four walked together toward the Brush house, Edmond broke into another hurrah.

"See 'old Glory,'" he shouted, pointing upward. From the window of the loft his small brother and sister were waving an American flag, the finest seen in Detroit that day.

"We found it in the garret," they cried. "We remembered Laurente hid it away saying we must keep it until our soldiers should come back to the fort. Why, there are Laurente and Captain Labadie with you!"

The next moment the bobbing heads were withdrawn, and the merry young folk came pell-mell down the stairs to greet the happy bride and her worthy husband.

Warned by the glad outcry, Ursule also hastened to the door. And when the welcome guests entered the hearth-room, there was old Wealthy who, as he recognized them, uttered an exclamation half of delight, half of grief, and falling upon his knees kissed the hem of Laurente's frock, sobbing, "Oh, little Mam'selle, is it your own sel' or your speerit dat's dun come to ha'nt dis wicked ole fool nigger? Oh, Sugar Honey, trample on me wi' your pretty feet; crush de life out en dis black hulk, eff you will, but believe him! Indeed, indeedy, dis ole Wealthy thought the message he dun brought you was from your true iub', Captain Labadie thar! 'For' de Lawd, he did!"

"I do believe you, Wealthy," said Laurente, in

token of forgiveness extending to him her hand which he covered with respectful and penitent kisses.

"Here is a letter for you, Laurente," interposed Madam Brush, taking Pierre's long waiting missive from behind the mirror of the best parlor, "and here is another to me, which you will like to read. For it is from our dear Abigail and was written at Boston, where Mr. Snelling was permitted to reside on parole until exchanged by the British. He has recently rejoined the American troops."

While the little party were discussing Madam Snelling's letter, the sunlight shining through the open doorway was suddenly intercepted.

On the threshold stood a gaunt man, at sight of whom the strong and resolute Madam Brush sank fainting to the floor. But the children rushed into his outstretched arms, crying, —

"Father! Father!"

Elijah Brush, having after many adventures reached Fort Stephenson before the fight, had arrived at Sandwich with the Kentucky militia who followed the other troops, bringing the horses and baggage. From this point he had come up the river in a canoe.

The one time mayor of Detroit, United States attorney, and colonel of the legionary corps, had returned to wife and children, broken in health, but in spirit dauntless as ever.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST

THE PASSING OF THE SHAWANOE

AN hour later Captain Labadie and his wife embarked in a canoe at the water-gate. In another moment their light craft shot into the current, and, while Pierre paddled with the skill of his boyhood, Laurente sat in the bow of the skiff chatting merrily, and well content to be there.

And thus, as upon the evening long ago, when the town of Detroit lay in ruin after the great fire, Pierre Labadie took her home to her father's house.

Jean Cécire had volunteered to apprise the dear ones at Moy Hall of their coming, and Angus MacIntosh was accordingly prepared to receive his daughter with something of the feudal state of his Scotch ancestors.

The servants drawn up along the road, from the beach to the gallery of the house, raised a cry of welcome as she stepped from the pirogue onto the little wharf. An old regimental piper left by Proctor played "The Flowers of Edinburgh" and "The Scolding Wives of Abertarff" with a spirit that out-rivalled the most accomplished performance of black Wealthy with his fiddle, while Sandy, the laird's major-domo, bent almost double in his attempt to make a profound bow, and began a set speech.

But Laurente pushed past him and hurried up the walk.

At the house-door waited mother and father, — the latter grown feeble since Proctor had roughly told him he was too old to command a regiment of Canadian militia, — Angus MacIntosh, who at sight of his daughter forgot his pride and the formality with which he had chosen to surround himself.

"Father! Father, forgive and forget," cried Laurente, springing toward him.

The laird folded her in his arms.

"I was too hard on ye, lassie; yet I lo'ed ye well," he said, and held out a hand to Labadie.

"Oui, oui, chérie. When you were gone away we all found out how much we loved you," added "la bonne mère," as, weeping happy tears, she drew the girl to her heart.

"Ma foi, Laurente," she continued in an undertone, while MacIntosh and Pierre re-established their old amicable relations, "had you married the suitor your father selected, you would now be coming home a widow instead of with a fine, handsome husband. You know, Pierre was always my choice for you."

"Ah, 'ma mère,'" rejoined Laurente, with a laugh, as she kissed her. "When 'le bon Dieu' and a girl's mother favor a marriage it is as good as made. But Captain Muir was a gallant gentleman, God rest his soul."

Two days afterwards General Harrison led his eager troops over the route taken by Proctor, across the marshes, and into the Canadian forest.

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With them went Pierre Labadie as a staff-officer, an honor he shared with the gallant Commander Perry and General Cass, who volunteered as aids.

The pursuit was short. At the end of a week Tippecanoe and his army returned to Detroit in triumph, having routed the British and Indians in a desperate encounter at the Moravian towns on the Thames.

When all the inhabitants along the American shore were rejoicing over the victory, Laurette could not wait at Moy Hall to greet her husband, but, crossing the Strait in a canoe with old Sandy, she sent word to Pierre that he would find her with Madam Brush.

So it was in the hearth-room of the house where she had found shelter, when she cast her lot with Labadie's friends, that she welcomed home her soldier hero.

"And now, Pierre, tell me about the battle," she said, when, after the first blissful moments of reunion, he unbuckled his sword-belt and placed his sheathed sabre in her hands.

"The battle, heart's dearest, was a resistless dash over the field on the part of our troops, like a fire sweeping across the prairie; a gray sea of smoke pierced by shrieking shells, and men stricken down as by the Fiery Arm we saw for so long in the sky. An elkskin-clad warrior seemed to be everywhere, like the spirit of war itself, and fought with determined courage; but he was at last shot down by our Kentucky colonel, and fell with upraised tomahawk. The indomitable chief was Tecumseh."

"The Shawanoe was a generous foe," sighed Laurente, remembering how he had stood her protector on the esplanade of Malden.

"He was the greatest chief of his race," admitted Labadie, heartily. "His love of country made him a statesman and a patriot, and had he succeeded in driving the white settlers back over the Alleghanies, he might have founded a government stronger than the Indian empires of Mexico and Peru. I have something more to tell you. As we fought our way through a party of savages, I found my bridle grasped by a half-breed. Loath to gratify my hatred by killing the fellow, I beat him off with the butt of my pistol, for the man was James Blue Jacket. The tide of the struggle separated us, yet involuntarily I followed him with my eyes. His capture by our brave fellows seemed certain, when, like a fiend from the Inferno, a tall chief crowned with eagle's feathers leaped from the edge of a neighboring beech grove. Disregarding the white men as though they were the withered leaves from the trees, he dashed toward La Salle with demoniacal fury and hurled his tomahawk. Before it struck, however, from the grasses of the swamp, like a wild and beautiful lynx, a young Indian in war-dress arose between the two men and received the fatal blow.

"A horde of Shawanoes rallied round the sachem; but he rushed from the field, followed by their hoarse cry of, 'Elskwatawa, Elskwatawa!'

"Blue Jacket, after bending to see if the lithe brave was indeed dead, caught a riderless horse as it galloped near, and rode off like the wind. When the

battle was over, James Knaggs and I went back to the place. We found that the young Shawanoe, who had saved La Salle from the vengeance of the Prophet, was not a youth but a girl. It was Matanah the Nettle, who gave her life for love's sake."

"Poor Matanah," said Laurente, pityingly. "Had La Salle loved her, many things might have been different. How true it is that love can neither be forced nor cajoled; yet its only price is love!"

"Yes, heart of my heart," answered Pierre, as, with a lover's tenderness, he kissed his young wife. "And though love thrives in war, it is the guerdon of peace. Let us thank God that this fifteen minutes' battle of the Thames has ended the war here on the frontier."

Through the fleetness of their horses, Proctor, Blue Jacket, and a band of redcoats and Indians escaped to Niagara.

About the middle of October, General Harrison, having accomplished the object of his expedition, sailed away down Lake Erie with Commander Perry, and, soon after, an express from Washington brought to General Cass the appointment of governor of the territory of Michigan.

Of the other prominent members of the company who gathered around the hospitable board of Angus MacIntosh on the evening of the "bal paré," Angus himself, having inherited the lands of the earldom of Moy, departed for Scotland with his family to live on his ancestral estates.

Although the fortunes of war called Aleck Macomb far from the Strait, his bravery on the Niagara frontier,

and his brilliant victory as commander at Plattsburg, rendered him Detroit's most distinguished hero of the struggle of 1812, and won for him not only the rank of major-general, but the thanks of Congress. His friend, handsome Charles Larned, who was conspicuous in the war, was made a general by President John Quincy Adams.

Captain Snelling fought at Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, and Fort Erie. Later, he was sent into the wilderness, where, far in the Northwest, on the high bluff overlooking the Falls of St. Anthony and the present sites of the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, he built the fort that now bears his name.

Here for a long period his devoted wife Abigail, by her gracious manners and womanly tact, held in check the gayeties, the dissipations, and the rival factions of the isolated post. Here her presence by the side of the White Chief often aided him in the negotiation of treaties with the Indians, especially when, with the grace of a princess, she thanked them in their native tongues for their gifts of wampum, moccasins, and beaded ornaments.

General Hull was court-martialed in 1814, found guilty of neglect of duty in the surrender of Detroit, and condemned to be shot, but because of his advanced age and past services President Madison remitted the execution of his sentence. Posterity has judged him more leniently than did his contemporaries, believing that though he failed in the promptness and intrepidity necessary to a commander, his course was actuated solely by the wish to avert the horrors of an Indian massacre.

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General Isaac Brock, as noble a foe as Proctor was harsh and cruel, fell, fighting valiantly for his cause, in the battle of Queenstown, Oct. 13, 1812.

The printing-press of Father Richard published far and wide the glorious news of the success of the American arms, which restored to the United States all the territory that had been included in the surrender.

So greatly was "le bon Père Gabriel" esteemed by the community that in 1823 he was elected to Congress as the first representative from Michigan, and he served for two years to the satisfaction of the people. When, in 1832, Detroit was visited by the Asiatic cholera, amid the dangers and heart-rending scenes of the plague Father Richard moved, calm and helpful as, after the Great Fire, he had passed among the ruins of the old French settlement.

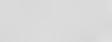
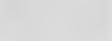
But his arduous labors told upon his strength at last. And thus, at the age of seventy-five, like a soldier at the post of duty, he laid down his life. Of him Daniel Webster said, "He was so clever a Frenchman that he did not need to be made over to become a Yankee," — "le bon Père Richard," who wherever his name is spoken is honored as a missionary, an educator, a *littérateur*, and a patriot. With him, as he had foretold, the scourge passed.

Captain Labadie saw service in the campaign of 1814, but at the ratification of the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain he returned to Detroit. During the cholera siege he was as efficient an aid to Father Gabriel as he had been in the war to General Harrison, while Laurente proved



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her courage anew by her ministrations to those stricken with the plague.

The brave captain and his good wife lived many years in the old Labadie homestead on the "côte-du-nord." When they too became old, often, on St. Andrew's night, or the "Jour de l'An," their children's children gathered about them before the fire in the great chimney, pleading for stories of their youth.

At these times they spoke of the threatening Arm of Tecumseh, of Tippecanoe, and Perry. Then also they told of the sweet days before the war, when they learned to love each other with a love that grew stronger through perils, and trials, and joys, until —

The twilight glow of their autumn path
And the golden sheen of Life's aftermath,
Were bright as the spring-time's budding flowers
The balmy airs, and the sunlit showers
Of the long years ago.

THE END

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