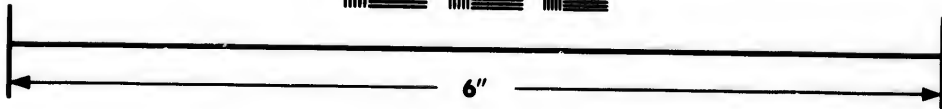
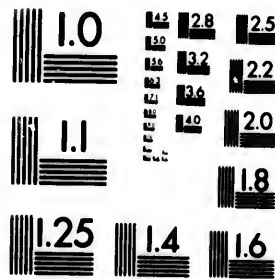


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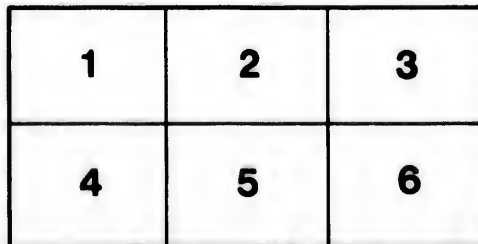
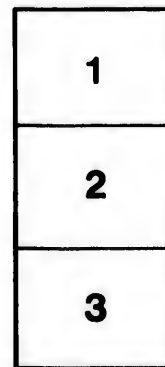
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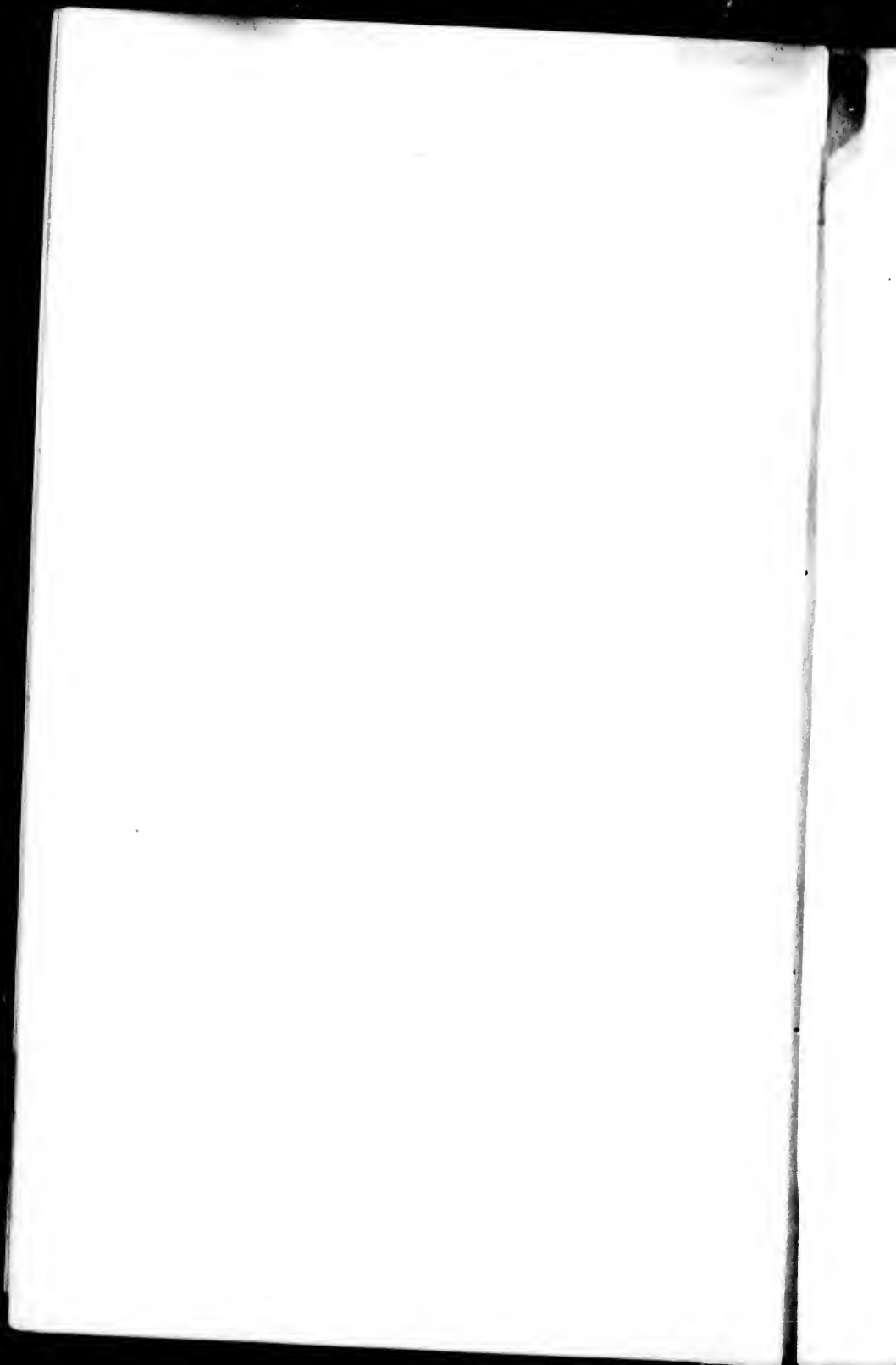
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WACOUSTA:

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OR

THE PROPHECY.

A TALE OF THE CANADAS.

—
"Vengeance is still alive; from her dark covert,
With all her snakes erect upon her crest,
She stalks in view, and fires me with her charms."
— *The Revenge.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ÉCARTÉ."

(*Richardson*)
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

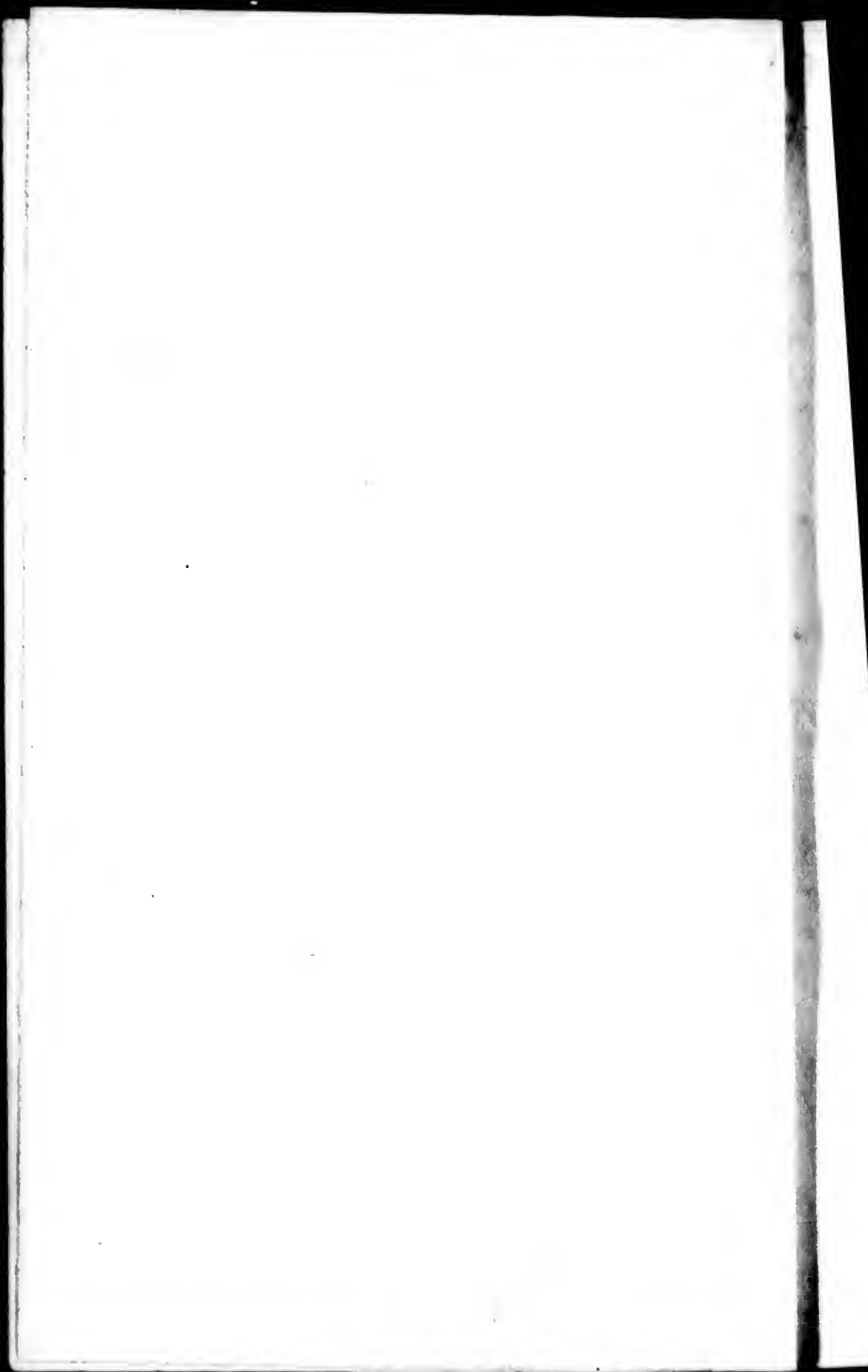
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1833.

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TO
HIS MAJESTY'S 41ST REGIMENT,
WHO BEAR ON THEIR COLOURS
THE "DETROIT,"
CONNECTED WITH WHICH ARE
THE PRINCIPAL INCIDENTS OF HIS TALE,
THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,
BY A ONCE SHARER IN THEIR SERVICE,
THE AUTHOR.

London, Dec. 1832



WACOUSTA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A few cursory remarks, illustrative of the general features of the country where the scene of the following events is laid, may not be misplaced at the opening of this volume.

Without entering into minute geographical detail, it may be necessary merely to state that the most distant of the northwestern settlements of America is Michillimackinac, a name given by the Indians, and preserved by the Americans, who possess the fort even to this hour. It is situated at the head of the Lakes Michigan and Huron, and adjacent to the Island of St. Joseph's, where, since the existence of the United States as an independent republic, an English garrison has been maintained, with a view of keeping the original fortress in check. From the lakes we descend into the River Sinclair, which, in turn, disembogues itself into the lake of the same name. This again renders tribute to the Detroit, a broad majestic river, not less than a mile in breadth at its source, and

progressively widening towards its mouth until it is finally lost in the beautiful Lake Erie. From the embouchure of this latter lake commences the Chippawa, better known from the celebrity of its stupendous falls of Niagara, which form an impassable barrier to the seaman, and, for a short space, sever the otherwise uninterrupted chain connecting the remote fortresses we have described with the Atlantic. At a distance of a few miles from the falls, the Chippawa finally empties itself into the Ontario, the most splendid of the gorgeous American lakes. At the opposite extremity of this magnificent and sea-like lake, the far-famed St. Lawrence takes its source; and after passing through a vast tract of country, connects itself with the Lake Champlain, celebrated, as well as Erie, for a signal defeat of the British flotilla during the late contest with the Americans.

The several forts and harbours established along the left bank of the St. Lawrence, and throughout that portion of the British possessions which is known as Lower Canada, are necessarily, from the improved condition and more numerous population of that province, on a larger scale and of better appointment; but in Upper Canada, where the traces of civilisation are less evident throughout, and become gradually more faint as we advance westward, the fortresses and harbours bear the same proportion in strength and extent to the scantiness of the population they are erected to protect.

At the epoch of our story, it will be borne in mind, the United States were the British colonies of America dependent on the mother country; while the Canadas, on the contrary, were, or had very recently been, under the dominion of France, from whom they had been wrested after a long struggle, greatly advanced in favour of England by the glorious battle fought on the plains of Abra-

ham, near Quebec, and celebrated for the defeat of Montcalm and the death of Wolfe.

The several attempts made to repossess themselves of the strong hold of Quebec having, in every instance, been met by discomfiture and disappointment, the French, in despair, relinquished the contest, and, by treaty, ceded their claims to the Canadas,—an event that was hastened by the capitulation of the garrison of Montreal, commanded by the Marquis de Vaudreuil, to the victorious arms of General Amherst. Still, though conquered as a people, many of the leading men in the country, actuated by that jealousy for which they were remarkable, contrived to oppose obstacles to the quiet possession of a conquest by those whom they seemed to look upon as their hereditary enemies; and in furtherance of this object, paid agents, men of artful and intriguing character, were dispersed among the numerous tribes of savages, with a view of exciting them to acts of hostility against their conquerors. The long and uninterrupted possession, by the French, of those countries immediately bordering on the hunting grounds and haunts of the natives, with whom they carried on an extensive traffic in furs, had established a communionship of interest between themselves and those savage and warlike people, which failed not to turn to account the vindictive views of the former. The whole of the province of Upper Canada at that time possessed but a scanty population, protected in its most flourishing and defensive points by stockade forts; the chief object of which was to secure the garrisons, consisting each of a few companies, from any sudden surprise on the part of the natives.

These stockade forts were never, at any one period, nearer to each other than from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles, so that, in the event of surprise or

alarm, there was little prospect of obtaining assistance from without. Each garrison, therefore, was almost wholly dependent on its own resources ; and, when surrounded unexpectedly by numerous bands of hostile Indians, had no other alternative than to hold out to the death. Capitulation was out of the question ; for, although the wile and artifice of the natives might induce them to promise mercy, the moment their enemies were in their power promises and treaties were alike broken, and indiscriminate massacre ensued. Communication by water was, except during a period of profound peace, almost impracticable ; for, although of late years the lakes of Canada have been covered with vessels of war, many of them of vast magnitude, and been the theatres of conflicts that would not have disgraced the salt waters of ocean itself, at the period to which our story refers the flag of England was seen to wave only on the solitary mast of some ill-armed and ill-manned gun boat, employed rather for the purpose of conveying despatches from fort to fort, than with any serious view to acts either of aggression or defence.

In proportion as the colonies of America, now the United States, pushed their course of civilisation westward, in the same degree did the numerous tribes of Indians, who had hitherto dwelt more seaward, retire upon those of their own countrymen, who, buried in vast and impenetrable forests, had seldom yet seen the face of the European stranger ; so that, in the end, all the more central parts of those stupendous wilds became doubly peopled. Hitherto, however, that civilisation had not been carried beyond the state of New York ; and all those countries which have, since the American revolution, been added to the Union under the names of Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, Michigan, &c., were, at the period em-

braced by our story, inhospitable and unproductive woods, subject only to the dominion of the native, and as yet unshorn by the axe of the cultivator. A few portions only of the opposite shores of Michigan were occupied by emigrants from the Canadas, who, finding no one to oppose or molest them, selected the most fertile spots along the banks of the river; and of the existence of these infant settlements, the English colonists, who had never ventured so far, were not even aware until after the conquest of Canada by the mother country. This particular district was the centre around which the numerous warriors, who had been driven westward by the colonists, had finally assembled; and rude villages and encampments rose far and near for a circuit of many miles around this infant settlement and fort of the Canadians, to both of which they had given the name of Detroit, after the river on whose elevated banks they stood. Proceeding westward from this point, and along the tract of country that diverged from the banks of the Lakes Huron, Sinclair, and Michigan, all traces of that partial civilisation were again lost in impervious wilds, tenanted only by the fiercest of the Indian tribes, whose homes were principally along the banks of Lake Superior, and in the country surrounding the isolated fort of Michillimackinac, the last and most remote of the European fortresses in Canada.

When at a later period the Canadas were ceded to Great Britain by France, those parts of the opposite frontier which we have just described became also tributary to the English crown, and were, by the peculiar difficulties that existed to communication with the more central and populous districts, rendered especially favourable to the exercise of hostile intrigue by the numerous active French emissaries every where dispersed

among the Indian tribes. Fired by their wily suggestions, the high and jealous spirit of the Indian chiefs took the alarm, and they beheld with impatience the "Red Coat," or "Saganaw,"* usurping, as they deemed it, those possessions which had so recently acknowledged the supremacy of the pale flag of their ancient ally. Such was the state of things in 1763, the period at which our story commences,—an epoch fruitful in designs of hostility and treachery on the part of the Indians. Several inferior forts situated on the Ohio had already fallen into their hands, when they summoned all their address and cunning to accomplish the fall of the two important though remote posts of Detroit and Michillimackinac. For a length of time they were baffled by the activity and vigilance of the respective governors of these forts, who had had too much fatal experience in the fate of their companions not to be perpetually on the alert against their guile; but when they had at length, in some degree, succeeded in lulling the suspicions of the English, they determined on a scheme, suggested by a leading chief, a man of more than ordinary character, which promised fair to rid them altogether of a race they so cordially detested. We will not, however, mar the interest of our tale, by anticipating, at this early stage, either the nature or the success of a stratagem which forms the essential groundwork of our story.

And now we have partially explained a course of events which were in some measure necessary to the full understanding of the country by the majority of our

* This word thus pronounced by themselves, in reference to the English soldiery, is, in all probability, derived from the original English settlers in Saganaw Bay.

readers, we shall, in furtherance of the same object, proceed to sketch a few of the most prominent scenes more immediately before us.

The fort of Detroit, as it was originally constructed by the French, stands in the middle of a common, or description of small prairie, bounded by woods, which were at that time untouched by the hand of civilisation. Erected at a distance of about half a mile from the banks of the river, which at that particular point are high and precipitous, it stood then just far enough from the woods that swept round it in a semicircular form to be secure from the rifle of the Indian; while from its batteries it commanded a range of country on every hand, which no enemy unsupported by cannon could traverse with impunity. Immediately in the rear, and on the skirt of the wood, the French had constructed a sort of bomb-proof, possibly intended to serve as a cover to the workmen originally employed in clearing the woods, but long since suffered to fall into decay. Without the fortification rose a strong and triple line of pickets, each of about two feet and a half in circumference, and so fitted into each other as to leave no other interstices than those which were perforated for the discharge of musketry. They were formed of the hardest and most knotted pines that could be procured; the sharp points of which were seasoned by fire until they acquired nearly the durability and consistency of iron. Beyond these firmly imbedded pickets was a ditch, encircling the fort, of about twenty feet in width, and of proportionate depth, the only communication over which to and from the garrison was by means of a drawbridge, protected by a strong chevaux-de-frise. The only gate with which the fortress was provided faced the river; on the more immediate banks of which, and to the left of the fort, rose the yet infant and straggling vil-

lage that bore the name of both. Numerous farm-houses, however, almost joining each other, contributed to form a continuity of many miles along the borders of the river, both on the right and on the left; while the opposite shores of Canada, distinctly seen in the distance, presented, as far as the eye could reach, the same enlivening character of fertility. The banks, covered with verdure on either shore, were more or less undulating at intervals; but in general they were high without being abrupt, and picturesque without being bold, presenting, in their partial cultivation, a striking contrast to the dark, tall, and frowning forests bounding every point of the perspective.

At a distance of about five miles on the left of the town the course of the river was interrupted by a small and thickly wooded island, along whose sandy beach occasionally rose the low cabin or wigwam, which the birch canoe, carefully upturned and left to dry upon the sands, attested to be the temporary habitation of the wandering Indian. That branch of the river which swept by the shores of Canada was (as at this day) the only navigable one for vessels of burden, while that on the opposite coast abounded in shallows and bars, affording passage merely to the light barks of the natives, which seemed literally to skim the very surface of its waves. Midway between that point of the continent which immediately faced the eastern extremity of the island we have just named and the town of Detroit, flowed a small tributary river, the approaches to which, on either hand, were over a slightly sloping ground, the view of which could be entirely commanded from the fort. The depth of this river, now nearly dried up, at that period varied from three to ten or twelve feet; and over this, at a distance of about twenty yards from the Detroit, into which it emptied itself, rose, communicating with the high road, a bridge,

which will more than once be noticed in the course of our tale. Even to the present hour it retains the name given to it during these disastrous times; and there are few modern Canadians, or even Americans, who traverse the "Bloody Bridge," especially at the still hours of advanced night, without recalling to memory the tragic events of those days, (handed down as they have been by their fathers, who were eye-witnesses of the transaction,) and peopling the surrounding gloom with the shades of those whose life-blood erst crimsoned the once pure waters of that now nearly exhausted stream; and whose mangled and headless corpses were slowly borne by its tranquil current into the bosom of the parent river, where all traces of them finally disappeared.

What Detroit was in 1763 it nearly is at the present day, with this difference, however, that many of those points which were then in a great degree isolated and rude are now redolent with the beneficent effects of improved cultivation; and in the immediate vicinity of that memorable bridge, where formerly stood merely the occasional encampment of the Indian warrior, are now to be seen flourishing farms and crops, and other marks of agricultural industry. At the final cession of the Canadas, the fort was delivered over to England, with whom it remained until the acknowledgment of the independence of the colonies by the mother country, when it hoisted the colours of the republic.

CHAPTER II.

It was during the midnight watch, late in September, 1763, that the English garrison of Detroit, was thrown into the utmost consternation by the sudden and mysterious introduction of a stranger within its walls. The circumstance at this moment was particularly remarkable; for the period was so fearful and pregnant with events of danger, the fort being assailed on every side by a powerful and vindictive foe, that a caution and vigilance of no common kind were unceasingly exercised by the prudent governor for the safety of those committed to his charge. A long series of hostilities had been pursued by the North American Indians against the subjects of England, within the few years that had succeeded to the final subjection of the Canadas to her victorious arms; and many and sanguinary were the conflicts in which the devoted soldiery were made to succumb to the cunning and numbers of their savage enemies. In those lone regions, both officers and men, in their respective ranks, were, by a communionship of suffering, isolation, and peculiarity of duty, drawn towards each other with feelings of almost fraternal affection; and the fates of those who fell were lamented with sincerity of soul, and avenged, when opportunity offered, with a determination prompted equally by indignation and despair. This sentiment of union, existing even between men and officers of different corps, was, with occasional exceptions, of course doubly strengthened among those

who fought under the same colours, and acknowledged the same head; and, as it often happened in Canada, during this interesting period, that a single regiment was distributed into two or three fortresses, each so far removed from the other that communication could with the utmost facility be cut off, the anxiety and uncertainty of these detachments became proportioned to the danger with which they knew themselves to be more immediately beset. The garrison of Detroit, at the date above named, consisted of a third of the —— regiment, the remainder of which occupied the forts of Michillimackinac and Niagara, and to each division of this regiment was attached an officer's command of artillery. It is true that no immediate overt act of hostility had for some time been perpetrated by the Indians, who were assembled in force around the former garrison; but the experienced officer to whom the command had been intrusted was too sensible of the craftiness of the surrounding hordes to be deceived, by any outward semblance of amity, into neglect of those measures of precaution which were so indispensable to the surety of his trust.

In this he pursued a line of policy happily adapted to the delicate nature of his position. Unwilling to excite the anger or wound the pride of the chiefs, by any outward manifestation of distrust, he affected to confide in the sincerity of their professions, and, by inducing his officers to mix occasionally in their councils, and his men in the amusements of the inferior warriors, contrived to impress the conviction that he reposed altogether on their faith. But, although these acts were in some degree coerced by the necessity of the times, and a perfect knowledge of all the misery that must accrue to them in the event of their provoking the Indians into acts of open hostility, the prudent governor took such

precautions as were deemed efficient to defeat any treacherous attempt at violation of the tacit treaty on the part of the natives. The officers never ventured out, unless escorted by a portion of their men, who, although appearing to be dispersed among the warriors, still kept sufficiently together to be enabled, in a moment of emergency, to afford succour not only to each other, but to their superiors. On these occasions, as a further security against surprise, the troops left within were instructed to be in readiness, at a moment's warning, to render assistance, if necessary, to their companions, who seldom, on any occasion, ventured out of reach of the cannon of the fort, the gate of which was hermetically closed, while numerous supernumerary sentinels were posted along the ramparts, with a view to give the alarm if any thing extraordinary was observed to occur without.

Painful and harassing as were the precautions it was found necessary to adopt on these occasions, and little desirous as were the garrison to mingle with the natives on such terms, still the plan was pursued by the governor from the policy already named: nay, it was absolutely essential to the future interests of England that the Indians should be won over by acts of confidence and kindness; and so little disposition had hitherto been manifested by the English to conciliate, that every thing was to be apprehended from the untameable rancour with which these people were but too well disposed to repay a neglect at once galling to their pride and injurious to their interests.

Such, for a term of many months, had been the trying and painful duty that had devolved on the governor of Detroit; when, in the summer of 1763, the whole of the western tribes of Indians, as if actuated by one common impulse, suddenly threw off the mask, and commenced

a series of the most savage trespasses upon the English settlers in the vicinity of the several garrisons, who were cut off in detail, without mercy, and without reference to either age or sex. On the first alarm the weak bodies of troops, as a last measure of security, shut themselves up in their respective forts, where they were as incapable of rendering assistance to others as of receiving it themselves. In this emergency the prudence and forethought of the governor of Detroit were eminently conspicuous; for, having long foreseen the possibility of such a crisis, he had caused a plentiful supply of all that was necessary to the subsistence and defence of the garrison to be provided at an earlier period, so that, if foiled in their attempts at stratagem, there was little chance that the Indians would speedily reduce them by famine. To guard against the former, a vigilant watch was constantly kept by the garrison both day and night, while the sentinels, doubled in number, were constantly on the alert. Strict attention, moreover, was paid to such parts of the ramparts as were considered most assailable by a cunning and midnight enemy; and, in order to prevent any imprudence on the part of the garrison, all egress or ingress was prohibited that had not the immediate sanction of the chief. With this view the keys of the gate were given in trust to the officer of the guard; to whom, however, it was interdicted to use them unless by direct and positive order of the governor. In addition to this precaution, the sentinels on duty at the gate had strict private instructions not to suffer any one to pass either in or out unless conducted by the governor in person: and this restriction extended even to the officer of the guard.

Such being the cautious discipline established in the fort, the appearance of a stranger within its walls at the

still hour of midnight could not fail to be regarded as an extraordinary event, and to excite an apprehension which could scarcely have been surpassed had a numerous and armed band of savages suddenly appeared among them. The first intimation of this fact was given by the violent ringing of an alarm bell; a rope communicating with which was suspended in the governor's apartments, for the purpose of arousing the slumbering soldiers in any case of pressing emergency. Soon afterwards the governor himself was seen to issue from his rooms into the open area of the parade, clad in his dressing-gown, and bearing a lamp in one hand and a naked sword in the other. His countenance was pale; and his features, violently agitated, betrayed a source of alarm which those who were familiar with his usual haughtiness of manner were ill able to comprehend.

"Which way did he go?—why stand ye here?—follow—pursue him quickly—let him not escape, on your lives!" These sentences, hurriedly and impatiently uttered, were addressed to the two sentinels who, stationed in front of his apartments, had, on the first sound of alarm from the portentous bell, lowered their muskets to the charge, and now stood immovable in that position.

"Who does your honour mane?" replied one of the men, startled, yet bringing his arms to recover, in salutation of his chief.

"Why, the man—the stranger—the fellow who has just passed you." "Not a living soul has passed us since our watch commenced, your honour," observed the second sentinel; "and we have now been here upwards of an hour."

"Impossible, sirs: ye have been asleep on your posts, or ye must have seen him. He passed this way, and

could not have escaped your observation had ye been attentive to your duty."

"Well, sure, and your honour knows bist," rejoined the first sentinel; "but so hilp me St. Patrick, as I have sirved man and boy in your honour's rigiment this twilve years, not even the fitch of a man has passed me this blisshed night. And here's my comrade, Jack Halford, who will take his Bible oath to the same, with all due difrince to your honour." The pithy reply to this eloquent attempt at exculpation was a brief "Silence, sirrah, walk about!"

The men brought their muskets once more, and in silence, to the shoulder, and, in obedience to the command of their chief, resumed their limited walk; crossing each other at regular intervals in the course that enfiladed, as it were, the only entrance to the governor's apartments.

Meanwhile every thing was bustle and commotion among the garrison, who, roused from sleep by the appalling sound of the alarm bell at that late hour, were hastily arming. Throughout the obscurity might be seen the fitting forms of men, whose already fully accoutred persons proclaimed them to be of the guard; while in the lofty barracks, numerous lights flashing to and fro, and moving with rapidity, attested the alacrity with which the troops off duty were equipping for some service of more than ordinary interest. So noiseless, too, was this preparation, as far as speech was concerned, that the occasional opening and shutting of pans, and ringing of ramrods to ascertain the efficiency of the muskets, might be heard distinctly in the stillness of the night at a distance of many furlongs.

He, however, who had touched the secret spring of all this picturesque movement, whatever might be his grati-

fiction and approval of the promptitude with which the summons to arms had been answered by his brave troops, was far from being wholly satisfied with the scene he had conjured up. Recovered from the first and irrepressible agitation which had driven him to sound the tocsin of alarm, he felt how derogatory to his military dignity and proverbial coolness of character it might be considered, to have awakened a whole garrison from their slumbers, when a few files of the guard would have answered his purpose equally well. Besides, so much time had been suffered to elapse, that the stranger might have escaped; and if so, how many might be disposed to ridicule his alarm, and consider it as emanating from an imagination disturbed by sleep, rather than caused by the actual presence of one endowed like themselves with the faculties of speech and motion. For a moment he hesitated whether he should not countermand the summons to arms which had been so precipitately given; but when he recollected the harrowing threat that had been breathed in his ear by his midnight visiter,—when he reflected, moreover, that even now it was probable he was lurking within the precincts of the fort with a view to the destruction of all that it contained,—when, in short, he thought of the imminent danger that must attend them should he be suffered to escape,—he felt the necessity of precaution, and determined on his measures, even at the risk of manifesting a prudence which might be construed unfavourably. On re-entering his apartments, he found his orderly, who, roused by the midnight tumult, stood waiting to receive the commands of his chief.

“ Desire Major Blackwater to come to me immediately.” The mandate was quickly obeyed. In a few se-

conds a short, thick set, and elderly officer made his appearance in a grey military undress frock.

"Blackwater, we have traitors within the fort. Let diligent search be made in every part of the barracks for a stranger, an enemy, who has managed to procure admittance among us: let every nook and cranny, every empty cask, be examined forthwith; and cause a number of additional sentinels to be stationed along the ramparts, in order to intercept his escape."

"Good heaven, is it possible?" said the major, wiping the perspiration from his brows, though the night was unusually chilly for the season of the year:—"how could he contrive to enter a place so vigilantly guarded?"

"Ask me not *how*, Blackwater," returned the governor, seriously; "let it suffice that he has been in this very room, and that ten minutes since he stood where you now stand."

The major looked aghast.—"God bless me, how singular! How could the savage contrive to obtain admittance? or was he in reality an Indian?" "No more questions, *Major Blackwater*. Hasten to distribute the men, and let diligent search be made every where; and recollect, neither officer nor man courts his pillow until dawn."

The "major" emphatically prefixed to his name was a sufficient hint to the stout officer that the doubts thus familiarly expressed were here to cease, and that he was now addressed in the language of authority by his superior, who expected a direct and prompt compliance with his orders. He therefore slightly touched his hat in salutation, and withdrew to make the dispositions that had been enjoined by his colonel.

On regaining the parade, he caused the men, already forming into companies and answering to the roll call of

their respective non-commissioned officers, to be wheeled into square, and then in a low but distinct voice stated the cause of alarm ; and, having communicated the orders of the governor, finished by recommending to each the exercise of the most scrutinising vigilance ; as on the discovery of the individual in question, and the means by which he had contrived to procure admission, the safety of the whole garrison, it was evident, must depend.

The soldiers now dispersed in small parties throughout the interior of the fort, while a select body were conducted to the ramparts by the officers themselves, and distributed between the sentinels already posted there, in such numbers, and at such distances, that it appeared impossible any thing wearing the human form could pass them unperceived, even in the obscurity that reigned around.

When this duty was accomplished, the officers proceeded to the posts of the several sentinels who had been planted since the last relief, to ascertain if any or either of them had observed aught to justify the belief that an enemy had succeeded in scaling the works. To all their enquiries, however, they received a negative reply, accompanied by a declaration, more or less positive with each, that such had been their vigilance during the watch, had any person come within their beat, detection must have been inevitable. The first question was put to the sentinel stationed at the gate of the fort, at which point the whole of the officers of the garrison were, with one or two exceptions, now assembled. The man at first evinced a good deal of confusion ; but this might arise from the singular fact of the alarm that had been given, and the equally singular circumstance of his being thus closely interrogated by the collective body of his officers :

he, however, persisted in declaring that he had been in no wise inattentive to his duty, and that no cause for alarm or suspicion had occurred near his post. The officers then, in order to save time, separated into two parties, pursuing opposite circuits, and arranging to meet at that point of the ramparts which was immediately in the rear, and overlooking the centre of the semicircular sweep of wild forest we have described as circumventing the fort.

"Well, Blessington, I know not what you think of this sort of work," observed Sir Everard Valletort, a young lieutenant of the —— regiment, recently arrived from England, and one of the party who now traversed the rampart to the right; "but confound me if I would not rather be a barber's apprentice in London, upon nothing, and find myself, than continue a life of this kind much longer. It positively quite knocks me up; for what with early risings, and watchings, (I had almost added prayings,) I am but the shadow of my former self."

"Hist, Valletort, hist! speak lower," said Captain Blessington, the senior officer present, "or our search must be in vain. Poor fellow!" he pursued, laughing low and good humouredly at the picture of miseries thus solemnly enumerated by his subaltern;—"how much, in truth, are you to be pitied, who have so recently basked in all the sunshine of enjoyment at home. For our parts, we have lived so long amid these savage scenes, that we have almost forgotten what luxury, or even comfort, means. Doubt not, my friend, that in time you will, like us, be reconciled to the change."

"Confound me for an idiot, then, if I give myself time," replied Sir Everard, affectedly. "It was only five minutes before that cursed alarm bell was sounded

in my ears, that I had made up my mind fully to resign or exchange the instant I could do so with credit to myself; and, I am sure, to be called out of a warm bed at this unseasonable hour offers little inducement for me to change my opinion."

"Resign or exchange with credit to yourself!" sullenly observed a stout tall officer of about fifty, whose spleen might well be accounted for in his rank of "Ensign" Delme. "Methinks there can be little credit in exchanging or resigning, when one's companions are left behind, and in a post of danger."

"By Jasus, and ye may say that with your own pritty mouth," remarked another veteran, who answered to the name of Lieutenant Murphy; "for it isn't now, while we are surrounded and bediviled by the savages, that any man of the —— regiment should be after talking of bating a retrate."

"I scarcely understand you, gentlemen," warmly and quickly retorted Sir Everard, who, with all his dandyism and effeminacy of manner, was of a high and resolute spirit. "Do either of you fancy that I want courage to face a positive danger, because I may not happen to have any particular vulgar predilection for early rising?"

"Nonsense, Valletort, nonsense," interrupted, in accents of almost feminine sweetness, his friend Lieutenant Charles de Haldimar, the youngest son of the governor: "Murphy is an eternal echo of the opinions of those who look forward to promotion; and as for Delme—do you not see the drift of his observation? Should you retire, as you have threatened, of course another lieutenant will be appointed in your stead; but, should you chance to lose your scalp during the struggle with the savages, the step goes in the regiment, and he, being the senior ensign, obtains promotion in consequence."

" Ah !" observed Captain Blessington, " this is indeed the greatest curse attached to the profession of a soldier. Even among those who most esteem, and are drawn towards each other as well by fellowship in pleasure as companionship in danger, this vile and debasing principle—this insatiable desire for personal advancement—is certain to intrude itself; since we feel that over the mangled bodies of our dearest friends and companions, we can alone hope to attain preferment and distinction."

This conversation, interrupted only by occasional questioning of the sentinels whom they passed in their circuit, was carried on in an audible whisper, which the close approximation of the parties to each other, and the profound stillness of the night, enabled them to hear with distinctness.

When the conversation dropped, the party pursued their course in silence. They had just passed the last sentinel posted in their line of circuit, and were within a few yards of the immediate rear of the fortress, when a sharp " Hist !" and sudden halt of their leader, Captain Blessington, threw them all into an attitude of the most profound attention.

" Did you hear ?" he asked in a subdued whisper, after a few seconds of silence, in which he had vainly sought to catch a repetition of the sound.

" Assuredly," he pursued, finding that no one answered, " I distinctly heard a human groan." " Where?—in what direction ?" asked Sir Everard and De Haldimar in the same breath.

" Immediately opposite to us on the common. But see, here are the remainder of the party stationary, and listening also."

They now stole gently forward a few paces, and were soon at the side of their companions, all of whom were

straining their necks and bending their heads in the attitude of men listening attentively.

"Have you heard any thing, Erskine?" asked Captain Blessington in the same low whisper, and addressing the officer who led the opposite party.

"Not a sound ourselves, but here is Sir Everard's black servant, Sambo, who has just riveted our attention, by declaring that *he* distinctly heard a groan towards the skirt of the common." "He is right," hastily rejoined Blessington; "I heard it also."

Again a death-like silence ensued, during which the eyes of the party were strained eagerly in the direction of the common. The night was clear and starry, yet the dark shadow of the broad belt of forest threw all that part of the waste which came within its immediate range into impenetrable obscurity.

"Do you see any thing?" whispered Valletort to his friend, who stood next him: "look—look!" and he pointed with his finger. "Nothing," returned De Haldimar, after an anxious gaze of a minute, "but that dilapidated old bomb-proof."

"See you not something dark, and slightly moving, immediately in a line with the left angle of the bomb-proof?" De Haldimar looked again. "I do begin to fancy I see something," he replied; "but so confusedly and indistinctly, that I know not whether it be not merely an illusion of my imagination. Perhaps it is a stray Indian dog devouring the carcass of the wolf you shot yesterday."

"Be it dog or devil, here is for a trial of his vulnerability. Sambo, quick, my rifle."

The young negro landed to his master one of those long heavy rifles, which the Indians usually make choice of for killing the buffalo, elk, and other animals whose

wildness renders them difficult of approach. He then, unbidden, and as if tutored to the task, placed himself in a stiff upright position in front of his master, with every nerve and muscle braced to the most inflexible steadiness. The young officer next threw the rifle on the right shoulder of the boy for a rest, and prepared to take his aim on the object that had first attracted his attention.

"Make haste, massa,—him go directly,—Sambo see him get up."

All was breathless attention among the group of officers; and when the sharp ticking sound produced by the cocking of the rifle of their companion fell on their ears, they bent their gaze upon the point towards which the murderous weapon was levelled with the most aching and intense interest.

"Quick, quick, massa,—him quite up," again whispered the boy.

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when the crack of the rifle, followed by a bright blaze of light, sounded throughout the stillness of the night with exciting sharpness. For an instant all was hushed; but scarcely had the distant woods ceased to reverberate the spirit-stirring echoes, when the anxious group of officers were surprised and startled by a sudden flash, the report of a second rifle from the common, and the whizzing of a bullet past their ears. This was instantly succeeded by a fierce, wild, and prolonged cry, expressive at once of triumph and revenge. It was that peculiar cry which an Indian utters when the reeking scalp has been wrested from his murdered victim.

"Missed him, as I am a sinner," exclaimed Sir Everard, springing to his feet, and knocking the butt of his rifle on the ground with a movement of impatience. "Sambo, you young scoundrel, it was all your fault,—

you moved your shoulder as I pulled the trigger. Thank heaven, however, the aim of the Indian appears to have been no better, although the sharp whistling of his ball proves his piece to have been well levelled for a random shot.

His aim has been too true," faintly pronounced the voice of one somewhat in the rear of his companions. "The ball of the villain has found a lodgment in my breast. God bless ye all, my boys; may your fates be more lucky than mine!" While he yet spoke, Lieutenant Murphy sank into the arms of Blessington and De Haldimar, who had flown to him at the first intimation of his wound, and was in the next instant a corpse.

CHAPTER III.

"To your companies, gentlemen, to your companies on the instant. There is treason in the fort, and we had need of all our diligence and caution. Captain de Haldimar is missing, and the gate has been found unlocked. Quick, gentlemen, quick; even now the savages may be around us, though unseen."

"Captain de Haldimar missing!—the gate unlocked!" exclaimed a number of voices. "Impossible!—surely we are not betrayed by our own men." "The sentinel has been relieved, and is now in irons," resumed the communicator of this startling piece of intelligence. It was the adjutant of the regiment.

"Away, gentlemen, to your posts immediately," said Captain Blessington, who, aided by De Haldimar, hastened to deposit the stiffening body of the unfortunate Murphy, which they still supported, upon the rampart. Then addressing the adjutant, "Mr. Lawson, let a couple of files be sent immediately to remove the body of their officer."

"That shot which I heard from the common, as I approached, was not fired at random, then, I find," observed the adjutant, as they all now hastily descended to join their men, "Who has fallen?" "Murphy, of the grenadiers," was the reply of one near him.

"Poor fellow! our work commences badly," resumed Mr. Lawson: "Murphy killed, and Captain de Haldimar missing. We had few officers enough to spare before, and their loss will be severely felt; I greatly fear, too,

these casualties may have a tendency to discourage the men."

"Nothing more easy than to supply their place, by promoting some of our oldest sergeants," observed Ensign Delme, who, as well as the ill-fated Murphy, had risen from the ranks. "If they behave themselves well, the king will confirm their appointments."

"But my poor brother, what of him, Lawson? what have you learnt connected with his disappearance?" asked Charles de Haldimar with deep emotion. "Nothing satisfactory, I am sorry to say," returned the adjutant: "in fact, the whole affair is a mystery which no one can unravel; even at this moment the sentinel, Frank Halloway, who is strongly suspected of being privy to his disappearance, is undergoing a private examination by your father the governor."

"Frank Halloway!" repeated the youth with a start of astonishment; "surely Halloway could never prove a traitor,—and especially to my brother, whose life he once saved at the peril of his own."

The officers had now gained the parade, when the "Fall in, gentlemen, fall in," quickly pronounced by Major Blackwater, prevented all further questioning on the part of the younger De Haldimar. The scene, though circumscribed in limit, was picturesque in effect, and might have been happily illustrated by the pencil of the painter. The immediate area of the parade was filled with armed men, distributed into three divisions, and forming, with their respective ranks facing outwards, as many sides of a hollow square, the mode of defence invariably adopted by the governor in all cases of sudden alarm.

In a few minutes from the falling in of the officers with their respective companies, the clank of irons was

heard in the direction of the guard-room, and several forms were seen slowly advancing into the area already occupied as we have described. This party was preceded by the Adjutant Lawson, who, advancing towards Major Blackwater, communicated a message, that was followed by the command of the latter officer for the three divisions to face inwards. The officer of artillery also gave the word to his men to form lines of single files immediately in the rear of their respective guns, leaving space enough for the entrance of the approaching party, which consisted of half a dozen files of the guard, under a non-commissioned officer, and one whose manacled limbs, rather than his unaccoutred uniform, attested him to be not merely a prisoner, but a prisoner confined for some serious and flagrant offence.

This party now advanced through the vacant quarter of the square, and took their stations immediately in the centre. Here the countenances of each, and particularly that of the prisoner, who was, if we may so term it, the centre of that centre, were thrown into strong relief by the bright glare of the torches, so that the features of the prisoner stood revealed to those around as plainly as if it had been noon day. Not a sound, not a murmur, escaped from the ranks: but, though the etiquette and strict laws of military discipline chained all speech, the workings of the inward mind remained unchecked; and as they recognised in the prisoner Frank Halloway, one of the bravest and holdest in the field, and, as all had hitherto imagined, one of the most devoted to his duty, an irrepressible thrill of amazement and dismay crept throughout the frames, and for a moment blanched the cheeks of those especially who belonged to the same company. On being summoned from their fruitless search after the stranger, to fall in without delay, it had been whispered

among the men that treason had crept into the fort, and a traitor, partly detected in his crime, had been arrested and thrown into irons: but the idea of Frank Halloway being that traitor was the last that could have entered into their thoughts, and yet they now beheld him covered with every mark of ignominy, and about to answer his high offence, in all human probability, with his life.

With the officers the reputation of Halloway for courage and fidelity stood no less high; but, while they secretly lamented the circumstance of his defalcation, they could not disguise from themselves the almost certainty of his guilt, for each, as he now gazed upon the prisoner, recollected the confusion and hesitation of manner he had evinced when questioned by them preparatory to their ascending to the ramparts.

Once more the suspense of the moment was interrupted by the entrance of other forms into the area. They were those of the adjutant, followed by a drummer, bearing his instrument, and the governor's orderly, charged with pens, ink, paper, and a book which, from its peculiar form and colour, every one present knew to be a copy of the articles of war. A variety of contending emotions passed through the breasts of many, as they witnessed the silent progress of these preparations, rendered painfully interesting by the peculiarity of their position, and the wildness of the hour at which they thus found themselves assembled together. The prisoner himself was unmoved: he stood proud, calm, and fearless, amid the guard, of whom he had so recently formed one; and though his countenance was pale, as much, perhaps, from a sense of the ignominious character in which he appeared as from more private considerations, still there was nothing to denote either the abjectness of fear or the consciousness of merited disgrace. Once or twice a low

sobbing, that proceeded at intervals from one of the barrack windows, caught his ear, and he turned his glance in that direction with a restless anxiety, which he exerted himself in the instant afterwards to repress; but this was the only mark of emotion he betrayed.

The above dispositions having been hastily made, the adjutant and his assistants once more retired. After the lapse of a minute, a tall martial-looking man, habited in a blue military frock, and of handsome, though stern, haughty, and inflexible features, entered the area. He was followed by Major Blackwater, the captain of artillery, and Adjutant Lawson.

"Are the garrison all present, Mr. Lawson? are the officers all present?"

"All except those of the guard, sir," replied the adjutant, touching his hat with a submission that was scrupulously exacted on all occasions of duty by his superior.

The governor passed his hand for a moment over his brows. It seemed to those around him as if the mention of that guard had called up recollections which gave him pain; and it might be so, for his eldest son, Captain Frederick de Haldimar, had commanded the guard. Whither he had disappeared, or in what manner, no one knew.

"Are the artillery all present, Captain Wentworth?" again demanded the governor, after a moment of silence, and in his wonted firm authoritative voice.

"All present, sir," rejoined the officer, following the example of the adjutant, and saluting his chief.

"Then let a drum-head court-martial be assembled immediately, Mr. Lawson, and without reference to the roster let the senior officers be selected."

The adjutant went round to the respective divisions, and in a low voice warned Captain Blessington, and the

four senior subalterns, for that duty. One by one the officers, as they were severally called upon, left their places in the square, and sheathing their swords, stepped into that part of the area appointed as their temporary court. They were now all assembled, and Captain Blesington, the senior of his rank in the garrison, was preparing to administer the customary oaths, when the prisoner Halloway advanced a pace or two in front of his escort, and removing his cap, in a clear, firm, but respectful voice, thus addressed the governor :—

“Colonel de Haldimar, that I am no traitor, as I have already told you, the Almighty God, before whom I swore allegiance to his majesty, can bear me witness. Appearances, I own, are against me : but, so far from being a traitor, I would have shed my last drop of blood in defence of the garrison and your family. Colonel de Haldimar,” he pursued, after a momentary pause, in which he seemed to be struggling to subdue the emotion which rose, despite of himself, to his throat, “I repeat, I am no traitor, and I scorn the imputation—but here is my best answer to the charge. This wound, (and he unbuttoned his jacket, opened his shirt, and disclosed a deep scar upon his white chest,) this wound I received in defence of my captain’s life at Quebec. Had I not loved him, I should not so have exposed myself, neither but for that should I now stand in the situation of shame and danger, in which my comrades behold me.”

Every heart was touched by this appeal—this bold and manly appeal to the consideration of the governor. The officers, especially, who were fully conversant with the general merit of Halloway, were deeply affected, and Charles de Haldimar—the young, the generous, the feeling Charles de Haldimar,—even shed tears.

“What mean you, prisoner ?” interrogated the governor,

after a short pause, during which he appeared to be weighing and deducing inferences from the expressions just uttered. "What mean you, by stating, but for *that* (alluding to your regard for Captain de Haldimar) you would not now be in this situation of shame and danger?"

The prisoner hesitated a moment; and then rejoined, but in a tone that had less of firmness in it than before,— "Colonel de Haldimar, I am not at liberty to state my meaning; for, though a private soldier, I respect my word, and have pledged myself to secrecy."

"You respect your word, and have pledged yourself to secrecy! What mean you, man, by this rhodomontade? To whom can you have pledged yourself, and for what, unless it be to some secret enemy without the walls? Gentlemen, proceed to your duty: it is evident that the man is a traitor, even from his own admission. On my life," he pursued, more hurriedly, and speaking in an under tone, as if to himself, "the fellow has been bribed by, and is connected with ——." The name escaped not his lips; for, aware of the emotion he was betraying, he suddenly checked himself, and assumed his wonted stern and authoritative bearing.

Once more the prisoner addressed the governor in the same clear firm voice in which he had opened his appeal.

"Colonel de Haldimar, I have no connection with any living soul without the fort; and again I repeat, I am no traitor, but a true and loyal British soldier, as my services in this war, and my comrades, can well attest. Still, I seek not to shun that death which I have braved a dozen times at least in the —— regiment. All that I ask is, that I may not be tried—that I may not have the shame of hearing sentence pronounced against me *yet*; but if nothing should occur before eight o'clock to vindicate

my character from this disgrace, I will offer up no further prayer for mercy. In the name of that life, therefore, which I once preserved to Captain de Haldimar, at the price of my own blood, I entreat a respite from trial until then."

"In the name of God and all his angels, let mercy reach your soul, and grant his prayer!"

Every ear was startled—every heart touched by the plaintive, melancholy, silver tones of the voice that faintly pronounced the last appeal, and all recognised it for that of the young, interesting, and attached wife of the prisoner. Again the latter turned his gaze towards the window whence the sounds proceeded, and by the glare of the torches a tear was distinctly seen by many coursing down his manly cheek. The weakness was momentary. In the next instant he closed his shirt and coat, and resuming his cap stepped back once more amid his guard, where he remained stationary, with the air of one who, having nothing further to hope, has resolved to endure the worst that can happen with resignation and fortitude.

After the lapse of a few moments, again devoted to much apparent deep thought and conjecture, the governor once more, and rather hurriedly, resumed,—

"In the event, prisoner, of this delay in your trial being granted, will you pledge yourself to disclose the secret to which you have alluded? Recollect, there is nothing but that which can save your memory from being consigned to infamy for ever; for who, among your comrades, will believe the idle denial of your treachery, when there is the most direct proof against you? If your secret die with you, moreover, every honest man will consider it as having been one so infamous and injurious to your character, that you were ashamed to reveal it."

These suggestions of the colonel were not without their effect; for, in the sudden swelling of the prisoner's chest, as allusion was made to the disgrace that would attach to his memory, there was evidence of a high and generous spirit, to whom obloquy was far more hateful than even death itself.

"I do promise," he at length replied, stepping forward, and uncovering himself as before,—“if no one appear to justify my conduct at the hour I have named, a full disclosure of all I know touching this affair shall be made. And may God, of his infinite mercy, grant, for Captain de Haldimar's sake, as well as mine, I may not then be wholly deserted!”

There was something so peculiarly solemn and impressive in the manner in which the unhappy man now expressed himself, that a feeling of the utmost awe crept into the bosoms of the surrounding throng; and more than one veteran of the grenadiers, the company to which Halloway belonged, was heard to relieve his chest of the long pent-up sigh that struggled for release.

“Enough, prisoner,” rejoined the governor; “on this condition do I grant your request; but recollect,—your disclosure ensures no hope of pardon, unless, indeed, you have the fullest proof to offer in your defence. Do you perfectly understand me?”

“I do,” replied the soldier firmly; and again he placed his cap on his head, and retired a step or two back among the guard.

“Mr. Lawson, let the prisoner be removed, and conducted to one of the private cells. Who is the subaltern of the guard?”

“Ensign Fortescue,” was the answer.

“Then let Ensign Fortescue keep the key of the cell

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himself. Tell him moreover, I shall hold him individually responsible for his charge."

Once more the prisoner was marched out of the area; and, as the clanking sound of his chains became gradually fainter in the distance, the same voice that had before interrupted the proceedings, pronounced a "God be praised!—God be praised!" with such melody of sorrow in its intonations that no one could listen to it unmoved. Both officers and men were more or less affected, and all hoped—they scarcely knew why or what—but all hoped something favourable would occur to save the life of the brave and unhappy Frank Halloway.

Of the first interruption by the wife of the prisoner the governor had taken no notice: but on this repetition of the expression of her feelings he briefly summoned, in the absence of the adjutant, the sergeant-major of the regiment to his side.

"Sergeant-major Bletson, I desire that, in future, on all occasions of this kind, the women of the regiment may be kept out of the way. Look to it, sir!"

The sergeant-major, who had stood erect as his own halbert, which he held before him in a saluting position, during this brief admonition of his colonel, acknowledged, by a certain air of deferential respect and dropping of the eyes, unaccompanied by speech of any kind, that he felt the reproof, and would, in future, take care to avoid all similar cause for complaint. He then stalked stiffly away, and resumed, in a few hasty strides, his position in rear of the troops.

"Hard-hearted man!" pursued the same voice: "if my prayers of gratitude to heaven give offence, may the hour never come when my lips shall pronounce their bitterest curse upon your severity!"

There was something so painfully wild—so solemnly prophetic—in these sounds of sorrow as they fell faintly upon the ear, and especially under the extraordinary circumstances of the night, that they might have been taken for the warnings of some supernatural agency. During their utterance, not even the breathing of human life was to be heard in the ranks. In the next instant, however, Sergeant-major Bletson was seen repairing, with long and hasty strides, to the barrack whence the voice proceeded, and the interruption was heard no more.

Meanwhile the officers, who had been summoned from the ranks for the purpose of forming the court-martial, still lingered in the centre of the square, apparently waiting for the order of their superior, before they should resume their respective stations. As the quick and comprehensive glance of Colonel de Haldimar now embraced the group, he at once became sensible of the absence of one of the seniors, all of whom he had desired should be selected for the court-martial.

"Mr. Lawson," he remarked, somewhat sternly, as the adjutant now returned from delivering over his prisoner to Ensign Fortescue, "I thought I understood from your report the officers were all present!"

"I believe, sir, my report will be found perfectly correct," returned the adjutant, in a tone which, without being disrespectful, marked his offended sense of the implication.

"And Lieutenant Murphy ——"

"Is here, sir," said the adjutant, pointing to a couple of files of the guard, who were bearing a heavy burden, and following into the square. "Lieutenant Murphy," he pursued, "has been shot on the ramparts; and I have, as directed by Captain Blessington, caused the body

to be brought here, that I may receive your orders respecting the interment." As he spoke, he removed a long military grey cloak, which completely enshrouded the corpse, and disclosed, by the light of the still brightly flaming torches of the gunners, the features of the unfortunate Murphy.

"How did he meet his death?" enquired the governor; without, however, manifesting the slightest surprise, or appearing at all moved at the discovery.

"By a rifle shot fired from the common, near the old bomb proof;" observed Captain Blessington, as the adjutant looked to him for the particular explanation he could not render himself.

"Ah! this reminds me," pursued the austere commandant,—“there was a shot fired also from the ramparts. By whom, and at what?”

"By me, sir," said Lieutenant Valletort, coming forward from the ranks, "and at what I conceived to be an Indian, lurking as a spy upon the common."

"Then, Lieutenant Sir Everard Valletort, no repetition of these firings, if you please; and let it be borne in mind by all, that although, from the peculiar nature of the service in which we are engaged, I so far depart from the established regulations of the army as to permit my officers to arm themselves with rifles, they are to be used only as occasion may require in the hour of conflict, and not for the purpose of throwing a whole garrison into alarm by trials of skill and dexterity upon shadows at this unseasonable hour."

"I was not aware, sir," returned Sir Everard proudly, and secretly galled at being thus addressed before the men, "it could be deemed a military crime to destroy an enemy at whatever hour he might present himself,

and especially on such an occasion as the present. As for my firing at a shadow, those who heard the yell that followed the second shot, can determine that it came from no shadow, but from a fierce and vindictive enemy. The cry denoted even something more than the ordinary defiance of an Indian: it seemed to express a fiendish sentiment of personal triumph and revenge."

The governor started involuntarily. "Do you imagine, Sir Everard Valletort, the aim of your rifle was true—that you hit him?"

The question was asked so hurriedly, and in a tone so different from that in which he had hitherto spoken, that the officers around simultaneously raised their eyes to those of their colonel with an expression of undissembled surprise. He observed it, and instantly resumed his habitual sternness of look and manner.

"I rather fear not, sir," replied Sir Everard, who had principally remarked the emotion, "but may I hope (and this was said with emphasis), in the evident disappointment you experience at my want of success, my offence may be overlooked?"

The governor fixed his penetrating eyes on the speaker, as if he would have read his inmost mind; and then calmly, and even impressively observed,—

"Sir Everard Valletort, I do overlook the offence, and hope you may as easily forgive yourself. It were well, however, that your indiscretion, which can only find its excuse in your being so young an officer, had not been altogether without some good result. Had you killed or disabled the—the savage, there might have been a decent palliative offered; but what must be your feelings, sir, when you reflect, the death of yon officer," and he pointed to the corpse of the unhappy Murphy, "is, in a great

degree, attributable to yourself? Had you not provoked the anger of the savage, and given a direction to his aim by the impotent and wanton discharge of your own rifle, this accident would never have happened."

This severe reproving of an officer, who had acted from the most praiseworthy of motives, and who could not possibly have anticipated the unfortunate catastrophe that had occurred, was considered especially harsh and unkind by every one present; and a low and almost inaudible murmur passed through the company to which Sir Everard was attached. For a minute or two that officer also appeared deeply pained, not more from the reproof itself than from the new light in which the observation of his chief had taught him to view, for the first time, the causes that had led to the fall of Murphy. Finding, however, that the governor had no further remark to address to him, he once more returned to his station in the ranks.

"Mr. Lawson," resumed the commandant, turning to the adjutant, "let this victim be carried to the spot on which he fell, and there interred. I know no better grave for a soldier than beneath the sod that has been moistened with his blood. Recollect," he continued, as the adjutant once more led the party out of the area,—“no firing, Mr. Lawson. The duty must be silently performed, and without the risk of provoking a forest of arrows, or a shower of bullets, from the savages. Major Blackwater," he pursued, as soon as the corpse had been removed, "let the men pile their arms even as they now stand, and remain ready to fall in at a minute's notice. Should any thing extraordinary happen before the morning, you will, of course, apprise me." He then strode

out of the area with the same haughty and measured step that had characterised his entrance.

"Our colonel does not appear to be in one of his most amiable moods to-night," observed Captain Blessington, as the officers, after having disposed of their respective companies, now proceeded along the ramparts to assist at the last funeral offices of their unhappy associate. "He was disposed to be severe, and must have put you, in some measure, out of conceit with your favourite rifle, Valletort."

"True," rejoined the baronet, who had already rallied from the momentary depression of his spirits, "he hit me devilish hard, I confess, and was disposed to display more of the commanding officer than quite suits my ideas of the service. His words were as caustic as his looks; and could both have pierced me to the quick, there was no inclination on his part wanting. By my soul I could . . . but I forgive him. He is the father of my friend: and for that reason will I chew the cud of my mortification, nor suffer, if possible, a sense of his unkindness to rankle at my heart. At all events, Blessington, my mind is made up, and resign or exchange I certainly shall the instant I can find a decent loop-hole to creep out of."

Sir Everard fancied the ear of his captain was alone listening to these expressions of his feeling, or in all probability he would not have uttered them. As he concluded the last sentence, however, he felt his arm gently grasped by one who walked a pace or two silently in their rear. He turned, and recognised Charles de Hal-dimar.

"I am sure, Valletort, you will believe how much pained I have been at the severity of my father; but, in-

deed, there was nothing personally offensive intended. Blessington can tell you, as well as myself, it is his manner altogether. Nay, that although he is the first in seniority after Blackwater, the governor treats him with the same distance and hauteur he would use towards the youngest ensign in the service. Such are the effects of his long military habits, and his ideas of the absolutism of command. Am I not right, Blessington?"

"Quite right, Charles. Sir Everard may satisfy himself his is no solitary instance of the stern severity of your father. Still, I confess, notwithstanding the rigidity of manner which he seems, on all occasions, to think so indispensable to the maintenance of authority in a commanding officer, I never knew him so inclined to find fault as he is to-night."

"Perhaps," observed Valletort, good humouredly, "his conscience is rather restless; and he is willing to get rid of it and his spleen together. I would wager my rifle against the worthless scalp of the rascal I fired at to-night, that this same stranger, whose asserted appearance has called us from our comfortable beds, is but the creation of his disturbed dreams. Indeed, how is it possible any thing formed of flesh and blood could have escaped us with the vigilant watch that has been kept on the ramparts? The old gentleman certainly had that illusion strongly impressed on his mind when he so sapiently spoke of my firing at a shadow."

"But the gate," interrupted Charles de Haldimar, with something of mild reproach in his tones,— "you forget, Valletort, the gate was found unlocked, and that my brother is missing. *He*, at least, was flesh and blood, as you say, and yet he has disappeared. What more pro-

able, therefore, than that this stranger is at once the cause and the agent of his abduction?"

"Impossible, Charles," observed Captain Blessington; "Frederick was in the midst of his guard. How, therefore, could he be conveyed away without the alarm being given? Numbers only could have succeeded in so desperate an enterprise; and yet there is no evidence, or even suspicion, of more than one individual having been here."

"It is a singular affair altogether," returned Sir Everard, musingly. "Of two things, however, I am satisfied. The first is, that the stranger, whoever he may be, and if he really has been here, is no Indian; the second, that he is personally known to the governor, who has been, or I mistake much, more alarmed at his individual presence than if Pontiac and his whole band had suddenly broken in upon us. Did you remark his emotion, when I dwelt on the peculiar character of personal triumph and revenge which the cry of the lurking villain outside seem to express? and did you notice the eagerness with which he enquired if I thought I had hit him? Depend upon it, there is more in all this than is dreamt of in our philosophy."

"And it was your undisguised perception of that emotion," remarked Captain Blessington, "that drew down his severity upon your own head. It was, however, too palpable not to be noticed by all; and I dare say conjecture is as busily and as vaguely at work among our companions as it is with us. The clue to the mystery, in a great degree, now dwells with Frank Halloway; and to him we must look for its elucidation. His disclosure will be one, I apprehend, full of ignominy to himself but of the highest interest and importance to us all.

And yet I know not how to believe the man the traitor he appears."

"Did you remark that last harrowing exclamation of his wife?" observed Charles de Haldimar, in a tone of unspeakable melancholy. "How fearfully prophetic it sounded in my ears. I know not how it is," he pursued, "but I wish I had not heard those sounds; for since that moment I have had a sad strange presentiment of evil at my heart. Heaven grant my poor brother may make his appearance, as I still trust he will, at the hour Halloway seems to expect, for if not, the latter most assuredly dies. I know my father well; and, if convicted by a court martial, no human power can alter the destiny that awaits Frank Halloway."

"Rally, my dear Charles, rally," said Sir Everard, affecting a confidence he did not feel himself; "indulge not in these idle and superstitious fancies. I pity Halloway from my soul, and feel the deepest interest in his pretty and unhappy wife; but that is no reason why one should attach importance to the incoherent expressions wrung from her in the agony of grief."

"It is kind of you, Valletort, to endeavour to cheer my spirits, when, if the truth were confessed, you acknowledge the influence of the same feelings. I thank you for the attempt, but time alone can show how far I shall have reason, or otherwise, to lament the occurrences of this night."

They had now reached that part of the ramparts whence the shot from Sir Everard's rifle had been fired. Several men were occupied in digging a grave in the precise spot on which the unfortunate Murphy had stood when he received his death wound; and into this, when completed, the body, enshrouded in the cloak already alluded to, was deposited by his companions.

CHAPTER IV.

While the adjutant was yet reading, in a low and solemn voice, the service for the dead, a fierce and distant yell, as if from a legion of devils, burst suddenly from the forest, and brought the hands of the startled officers instinctively to their swords. This appalling cry lasted, without interruption, for many minutes, and was then, as abruptly checked as it had been unexpectedly delivered. A considerable pause succeeded, and then again it rose with even more startling vehemence than before. By one unaccustomed to those devilish sounds, no distinction could have been made in the two several yells that had been thus savagely pealed forth; but those to whom practice and long experience in the warlike habits and customs of the Indians had rendered their shouts familiar, at once divined, or fancied they divined, the cause. The first was, to their conception, a yell expressive at once of vengeance and disappointment in pursuit,—perhaps of some prisoner who had escaped from their toils; the second, of triumph and success,—in all probability, indicative of the recapture of that prisoner. For many minutes afterwards the officers continued to listen, with the most aching attention, for a repetition of the cry, or even fainter sounds, that might denote either a nearer approach to the fort, or the final departure of the Indians. After the second yell, however, the woods, in the heart of

which it appeared to have been uttered, were buried in as profound a silence as if they had never yet echoed back the voice of man; and all at length became satisfied that the Indians, having accomplished some particular purpose, had retired once more to their distant encampments for the night. Captain Erskine was the first who broke the almost breathless silence that prevailed among themselves.

“On my life, De Haldimar is a prisoner with the Indians. He has been attempting his escape,—has been detected,—followed, and again fallen into their hands. I know their infernal yells but too well. The last expressed their savage joy at the capture of a prisoner; and there is no one of us missing but De Haldimar.”

“Not a doubt of it,” said Captain Blessington; the cry was certainly what you describe it, and Heaven only knows what will be the fate of our poor friend.”

No other officer spoke, for all were oppressed by the weight of their own feelings, and sought rather to give indulgence to speculation in secret, than to share their impressions with their companions. Charles de Haldimar stood a little in the rear, leaning his head upon his hand against the box of the sentry, (who was silently, though anxiously, pacing his walk,) and in an attitude expressive of the deepest dejection and sorrow.

“I suppose I must finish Lawson’s work, although I am but a poor hand at this sort of thing,” resumed Captain Erskine, taking up the prayer book the adjutant had, in hastening on the first alarm to get the men under arms, carelessly thrown on the grave of the now unconscious Murphy.

He then commenced the service at the point where Mr. Lawson had so abruptly broken off, and went

through the remainder of the prayers. A very few minutes sufficed for the performance of this solemn duty, which was effected by the faint dim light of the at length dawning day, and the men in attendance proceeded to fill up the grave of their officer.

Gradually the mists, that had fallen during the latter hours of the night, began to ascend from the common, and disperse themselves in air, conveying the appearance of a rolling sheet of vapour retiring back upon itself, and disclosing objects in succession, until the eye could embrace all that came within its extent of vision. As the officers yet lingered near the rude grave of their companion, watching with abstracted air the languid and almost mechanical action of their jaded men, as they emptied shovel after shovel of the damp earth over the body of its new tenant, they were suddenly startled by an expression of exultation from Sir Everard Valletort.

“By Jupiter, I have pinked him,” he exclaimed triumphantly. “I knew my rifle could not err; and as for my sight, I have carried away too many prizes in target-shooting to have been deceived in that. How delighted the old governor will be, Charles, to hear this. No more lecturing, I am sure, for the next six months at least;” and the young officer rubbed his hands together, at the success of his shot, with as much satisfaction and unconcern for the future, as if he had been in his own native England, in the midst of a prize-ring.

Roused by the observation of his friend, De Haldimar quitted his position near the sentry box, and advanced to the outer edge of the rampart. To him, as to his companions, the outline of the old bomb-proof was now distinctly visible, but it was some time before they could discover, in the direction in which Valletort pointed, a dark

speck upon the common; and this so indistinctly, they could scarcely distinguish it with the naked eye.

"Your sight is quite equal to your aim, Sir Everard," remarked Licutenant Johnstone, one of Erskine's subalterns, "and both are decidedly superior to mine; yet I used to be thought a good rifleman too, and have credit for an eye no less keen than that of an Indian; you have the advantage of me, however; for I honestly admit I never could have picked off yon fellow in the dark as you have done."

As the dawn increased, the dark shadow of a human form, stretched at its length upon the ground, became perceptible; and the officers, with one unanimous voice, bore loud testimony to the skill and dexterity of him who had, under such extreme disadvantages, accomplished the death of their skulking enemy.

"Bravo, Valletort," said Charles de Haldimar, recovering his spirits, as much from the idea, now occurring to him, that this might indeed be the stranger whose appearance had so greatly disturbed his father, as from the gratification he felt in the praises bestowed on his friend. "Bravo, my dear fellow!" then approaching, and in a half whisper, "when next I write to Clara, I shall request her, with my cousin's assistance, to prepare a chaplet of bays, wherewith I shall myself crown you as their proxy. But what is the matter now, Valletort? Why stand you there gazing upon the common, as if the victim of your murderous aim was rising from his bloody couch, to reproach you with his death? Tell me, shall I write to Clara for the prize, or will you receive it from her own hands?"

"Bid her rather pour her curses on my head; and to those, De Haldimar, add your own," exclaimed Sir Eve-

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rard, at length raising himself from the statue-like position he had assumed. "Almighty God," he pursued, in the same tone of deep agony, "what have I done? Where, where shall I hide myself?"

As he spoke he turned away from his companions, and covering his eyes with his hand, with quick and unequal steps, even like those of a drunken man, walked, or rather ran, along the rampart, as if fearful of being overtaken. The whole group of officers, and Charles de Haldimar in particular, were struck with dismay at the language and action of Sir Everard; and for a moment they fancied that fatigue, and watching, and excitement, had partially affected his brain. But when, after the lapse of a minute or two, they again looked out upon the common, the secret of his agitation was too faithfully and too painfully explained.

What had at first the dusky and dingy hue of a half-naked Indian, was now perceived, by the bright beams of light just gathering in the east, to be the gay and striking uniform of a British officer. Doubt as to who that officer was there could be none, for the white sword-belt suspended over the right shoulder, and thrown into strong relief by the field of scarlet on which it reposed, denoted the wearer of this distinguishing badge of duty to be one of the guard.

If they could regret the loss of such a companion as Murphy, how deep and heartfelt must have been the sorrow they experienced when they beheld the brave, generous, manly, amiable, and highly-talented Frederick de Haldimar—the pride of the garrison, and the idol of his family—lying extended, a cold, senseless corpse, slain by the hand of the bosom friend of his brother!—Notwithstanding the stern severity and distance of the governor,

whom few circumstances, however critical or exciting, could surprise into relaxation of his habitual stateliness, it would have been difficult to name two young men more universally liked and esteemed by their brother officers than were the De Haldimars—the first for the qualities already named—the second, for those retiring, mild, winning manners, and gentle affections, added to extreme and almost feminine beauty of countenance for which he was remarkable. Alas, what a gloomy picture was now exhibited to the minds of all! Frederick de Haldimar a corpse, and slain by the hand of Sir Everard Valletort! What but disunion could follow this melancholy catastrophe? and how could Charles de Haldimar, even if his bland nature should survive the shock, ever bear to look again upon the man who had, however innocently or unintentionally, deprived him of a brother whom he adored?

These were the impressions that passed through the minds of the compassionating officers, as they directed their glance alternately from the common to the pale and marble-like features of the younger De Haldimar, who, with parted lips and stupid gaze, continued to fix his eyes upon the inanimate form of his ill-fated brother, as if the very faculty of life itself had been for a period suspended. At length, however, while his companions watched in silence the mining workings of that grief which they feared to interrupt by ill-timed observations, even of condolence, the death-like hue, which had hitherto suffused the usually blooming cheek of the young officer, was succeeded by a flush of the deepest dye, while his eyes, swollen by the tide of blood now rushing violently to his face, appeared to be bursting from their sockets. The shock was more than his delicate frame, exhausted as it

was by watching and fatigue, could bear. He tottered, reeled, pressed his hand upon his head, and before any one could render him assistance, fell senseless on the ramparts.

During the interval between Sir Everard Valletort's exclamation, and the fall of Charles de Haldimar, the men employed at the grave had performed their duty, and were gazing with mingled astonishment and concern, both on the body of their murdered officer, and on the dumb scene acting around them. Two of these were now despatched for a litter, with which they speedily reappeared. On this Charles de Haldimar, already delirious with the fever of intense excitement, was carefully placed, and, followed by Captain Blessington and Lieutenant Johnstone, borne to his apartment in the small range of buildings constituting the officers' barracks. Captain Erskine undertook the disagreeable office of communicating these distressing events to the governor; and the remainder of the officers once more hastened to join or linger near their respective companies, in readiness for the order which it was expected would be given to despatch a numerous party of the garrison to secure the body of Captain de Haldimar.

CHAPTER V.

The sun was just rising above the horizon, in all that peculiar softness of splendour which characterises the early days of autumn in America, as Captain Erskine led his company across the drawbridge that communicated with the fort. It was the first time it had been lowered since the investment of the garrison by the Indians; and as the dull and rusty chains performed their service with a harsh and grating sound, it seemed as if an earnest were given of melancholy boding. Although the distance to be traversed was small, the risk the party incurred was great; for it was probable the savages, ever on the alert, would not suffer them to effect their object unmolested. It was perhaps singular, and certainly contradictory, that an officer of the acknowledged prudence and forethought ascribed to the governor—qualities which in a great degree neutralised his excessive severity in the eyes of his troops—should have hazarded the chance of having his garrison enfeebled by the destruction of a part, if not of the whole, of the company appointed to this dangerous duty; but with all his severity, Colonel de Haldimar was not without strong affection for his children. The feelings of the father, therefore, in a great degree triumphed over the prudence of the commander; and to shield the corpse of his son from the indignities which he well

knew would be inflicted on it by Indian barbarity, he had been induced to accede to the earnest prayer of Captain Erskine, that he might be permitted to lead out his company for the purpose of securing the body. Every means were, however, taken to cover the advance, and ensure the retreat of the detachment. The remainder of the troops were distributed along the rear of the ramparts, with instructions to lie flat on their faces until summoned by their officers from that position; which was to be done only in the event of close pursuit from the savages. Artillerymen were also stationed at the several guns that flanked the rear of the fort, and necessarily commanded both the common and the outskirt of the forest, with orders to fire with grape-shot on a given signal. Captain Erskine's instructions were, moreover, if attacked, to retreat back under the guns of the fort slowly and in good order, and without turning his back upon the enemy.

Thus confident of support, the party, after traversing the drawbridge with fixed bayonets, inclined to the right, and following the winding of the ditch by which it was surrounded, made the semi-circuit of the rampart until they gained the immediate centre of the rear, and in a direct line with the bomb-proof. Here their mode of advance was altered, to guard more effectually against the enemy with whom they might possibly have to contend. The front and rear ranks of the company, consisting in all of ninety men, were so placed as to leave space in the event of attack, of a portion of each wheeling inwards so as to present in an instant three equal faces of a square. As the rear was sufficiently covered by the cannon of the fort to defeat any attempt to turn their flanks, the manœuvre was one that enabled them

to present a fuller front in whatever other quarter they might be attacked; and had this additional advantage, that in the advance by single files a narrower front was given to the aim of the Indians, who, unless they fired in an oblique direction, could only, of necessity, bring down two men (the leading files) at a time.

In this order, and anxiously overlooked by their comrades, whose eyes alone peered from above the surface of the rampart on which they lay prostrate, the detachment crossed the common; one rank headed by Captain Erskine, the other by Lieutenant Johnstone. They had now approached within a few yards of the unfortunate victim, when Captain Erskine commanded a halt of his party; and two files were detached from the rear of each rank, to place the body on a litter with which they had provided themselves. He and Johnstone also moved in the same direction in advance of the men, prepared to render assistance if required. The corpse lay on its face, and in no way despoiled of any of its glittering habiliments; a circumstance that too well confirmed the fact of De Haldimar's death having been accomplished by the ball from Sir Everard Valletort's rifle. It appeared, however, the ill-fated officer had struggled much in the agonies of death; for the left leg was drawn up into an unnatural state of contraction, and the right hand, closely compressed, grasped a quantity of grass and soil, which had evidently been torn up in a paroxysm of suffering and despair.

The men placed the litter at the side of the body, which they now proceeded to raise. As they were in the act of depositing it on this temporary bier, the plumed hat fell from the head, and disclosed, to the astonishment of all, the scalpless crown completely

saturated in its own clotted blood and oozing brains. An exclamation of horror and disgust escaped at the same moment from the lips of the two officers, and the men started back from their charge as if a basilisk had suddenly appeared before them. Captain Erskine pursued:—

“What the devil is the meaning of all this, Johnstone?” “What, indeed!” rejoined his lieutenant, with a shrug of his shoulders, that was intended to express his inability to form any opinion on the subject.

“Unless it should prove,” continued Erskine, “as I sincerely trust it may, that poor Valletort is not, after all, the murderer of his friend. It must be so. De Haldimar has been slain by the same Indian who killed Murphy. Do you recollect his scalp cry? He was in the act of despoiling his victim of this trophy of success, when Sir Everard fired. Examine the body well, Mitchell, and discover where the wound lies.”

The old soldier to whom this order was addressed now prepared, with the assistance of his comrades, to turn the body upon its back, when suddenly the air was rent with terrific yells, that seemed to be uttered in their very ears, and in the next instant more than a hundred dark and hideous savages sprang simultaneously to their feet within the bomb-proof, while every tree along the skirt of the forest gave back the towering form of a warrior. Each of these, in addition to his rifle, was armed with all those destructive implements of warfare which render the Indians of America so formidable and so terrible an enemy.

“Stand to your arms, men,” shouted Captain Erskine, recovering from his first and unavoidable, though but momentary, surprise. “First and fourth sections, on

your right and left backwards wheel:—Quick, men, within the square, for your lives.” As he spoke, he and Lieutenant Johnstone sprang hastily back, and in time to obtain admittance within the troops, who had rapidly executed the manœuvre commanded. Not so with Mitchell and his companions. On the first alarm they had quitted the body of the mutilated officer, and flown to secure their arms, but even while in the act of stooping to take them up, they had been grappled by a powerful and vindictive foe; and the first thing they beheld on regaining their upright position, was a dusky Indian at the side, and a gleaming tomahawk flashing rapidly round the head of each.

“Fire not, on your lives,” exclaimed Captain Erskine hastily, as he saw several of the men in front levelling, in the excitement of the moment, their muskets at the threatening savages. “Prepare for attack,” he pursued; and in the next instant each man dropped on his right knee, and a barrier of bristling bayonets seemed to rise from the very bowels of the earth. Attracted by the novelty of the sight, the bold and daring warriors, although still retaining their firm grasp of the unhappy soldiers, were for a moment diverted from their bloody purpose, and temporarily suspended the quick and rotatory motion of their weapons. Captain Erskine took advantage of this pause to seize the halbert of one of his sergeants, to the extreme point of which he hastily attached a white pocket handkerchief, that was loosely thrust into the breast of his uniform; this he waved on high three several times, and then relinquishing the halbert, dropped also on his knee within the square.

“The dog of a Saganaw asks for mercy,” said a voice from within the bomb-proof, and speaking in the dialect

of the Ottawas. "His pale flag bespeaks the quailing of his heart, and his attitude denotes the timidity of the hind. His warriors are like himself, and even now upon their knees they call upon their Manitou to preserve them from the vengeance of the red-skins. But mercy is not for dogs like these. Now is the time to make our tomahawks warm in their blood; and every head that we count shall be a scalp upon our war-poles."

As he ceased, one universal and portentous yell burst from the fiend-like band; and again the weapons of death were fiercely brandished around the heads of the stupified soldiers who had fallen into their power.

"What can they be about?" anxiously exclaimed Captain Erskine, in the midst of this deafening clamour, to his subaltern. "Quiet, man; damn you, quiet, or I'll cut you down," he pursued, addressing one of his soldiers, whose impatience caused him to bring his musket half up to the shoulder. And again he turned his head in the direction of the fort:—"Thank God, here it comes at last,—I feared my signal had not been noticed."

While he yet spoke, the loud roaring of a cannon from the ramparts was heard, and a shower of grape-shot passed over the heads of the detachment, and was seen tearing up the earth around the bomb-proof, and scattering fragments of stone and wood into the air. The men simultaneously and unbidden gave three cheers.

In an instant the scene was changed. As if moved by some mechanical impulse, the fierce band that lined the bomb-proof sank below the surface, and were no longer visible, while the warriors in the forest again sought shelter behind the trees. The captured soldiers

were also liberated without injury, so sudden and startling had been the terror produced in the savages by the lightning flash that announced its heavy messengers of destruction. Discharge after discharge succeeded without intermission; but the guns had been levelled so high, to prevent injury to their own men, they had little other effect than to keep the Indians from the attack. The rush of bullets through the close forest, and the crashing of trees and branches as they fell with startling force upon each other, were, with the peals of artillery, the only noises now to be heard; for not a yell, not a word was uttered by the Indians after the first discharge; and but for the certainty that existed in every mind, it might have been supposed the whole of them had retired.

"Now is your time," cried Captain Erskine; "bring in the litter to the rear, and stoop as much as possible to avoid the shot."

The poor half-strangled fellows, however, instead of obeying the order of their captain, looked round in every direction for the enemy by whom they had been so rudely handled, and who had glided from them almost as imperceptibly and swiftly as they had at first approached. It seemed as if they apprehended that any attempt to remove the body would be visited by those fierce devils with the same appalling and ferocious threatenings.

"Why stand ye there, ye dolts," continued their captain, "looking around as if ye were bewitched? Bring the litter in to the rear. Mitchell, you old fool, are you grown a coward in your age? Are you not ashamed to set such an example to your comrades?"

The doubt thus implied of the courage of his men, who, in fact, were morely stupefied with the scene they

had gone through, had, as Captain Erskine expected, the desired effect. They now bent themselves to the litter, on which they had previously deposited their muskets, and with a self-possession that contrasted singularly with their recent air of wild astonishment, bore it to the rear at the risk of being cut in two at every moment by the fire from the fort. One fierce yell, instinctively proffered by several of the lurking band in the forest, marked their disappointment and rage at the escape of their victims; but all attempt at uncovering themselves, so as to be enabled to fire, was prevented by the additional showers of grape which that yell immediately brought upon them.

The position in which Captain Erskine now found himself was highly critical. Before him, and on either flank, was a multitude of savages, who only awaited the cessation of the fire from the fort to commence their fierce and impetuous attack. That that fire could not long be sustained was evident, since ammunition could ill be spared for the present inefficient purpose, where supplies of all kinds were so difficult to be obtained; and, if he should attempt a retreat, the upright position of his men exposed them to the risk of being swept away by the ponderous metal, that already fanned their cheeks with the air it so rapidly divided. Suddenly, however, the fire from the batteries was discontinued, and this he knew to be a signal for himself. He gave an order in a low voice, and the detachment quitted their recumbent and defensive position, still remaining formed in square. At the same instant, a gun flashed from the fort; but not as before was heard the rushing sound of the destructive shot crushing the trees in its resistless course. The Indians took courage at this circum-

stance, for they deemed the bullets of their enemies were expended; and that they were merely discharging their powder to keep up the apprehension originally produced. Again they showed themselves, like so many demons, from behind their lurking places; and yells and shouts of the most terrific and threatening character once more rent the air, and echoed through the woods. Their cries of anticipated triumph were, however, but of short duration. Presently, a hissing noise was heard in the air; and close to the bomb-proof, and at the very skirt of the forest, they beheld a huge globe of iron fall perpendicularly to the earth, to the outer part of which was attached what they supposed to be a reed, that spat forth innumerable sparks of fire, without however, seeming to threaten the slightest injury. Attracted by the novel sight, a dozen warriors sprang to the spot, and fastened their gaze upon it with all the childish wonder and curiosity of men in a savage state. One, more eager and restless than his fellows, stooped over it to feel with his hand of what it was composed. At that moment it burst, and limbs, and head, and entrails, were seen flying in the air, with the fragments of the shell, and prostrate and struggling forms lay writhing on every hand in the last, fierce agonies of death.

A yell of despair and a shout of triumph burst at the same moment from the adverse parties. Taking advantage of the terror produced, by this catastrophe, in the savages, Captain Erskine caused the men bearing the corpse to retreat, with all possible expedition, under the ramparts of the fort. He waited until they got nearly half way, and then threw forward the wheeling sections, that had covered this movement, once more into single file, in which order he commenced his re-

Step by step, and almost imperceptibly, the men paced backwards, ready, at a moment's notice, to re-form the square. Partly recovered from the terror and surprise produced by the bursting of the shell, the Indians were quick in perceiving this movement: filled with rage at having been so long baulked of their aim, they threw themselves once more impetuously from their cover; and, with stimulating yells, at length opened their fire. Several of Captain Erskine's men were wounded by this discharge; when, again, and furiously the cannon opened from the fort. It was then that the superiority of the artillery was made manifest. Both right and left of the retreating files the ponderous shot flew heavily past, carrying death and terror to the Indians; while not a man of those who intervened was scathed or touched in its progress. The warriors in the forest were once more compelled to shelter themselves behind the trees; but in the bomb-proof, where they were more secure, they were also more bold. From this a galling fire, mingled with the most hideous yells, was now kept up; and the detachment, in their slow retreat, suffered considerably. Several men had been killed; and, about twenty, including Lieutenant Johnstone, wounded, when again, one of those murderous globes fell, hissing in the very centre of the bomb-proof. In an instant, the Indian fire was discontinued; and their dark and pliant forms were seen hurrying with almost incredible rapidity over the dilapidated walls, and flying into the very heart of the forest, so that when the shell exploded, a few seconds afterwards, not a warrior was to be seen. From this moment the attack was not renewed, and Captain Erskine made good his retreat without further molestation.

"Well, old buffers!" exclaimed one of the leading files, as the detachment, preceded by its dead and wounded, now moved along the moat in the direction of the draw-bridge, "how did you like the grip of them black savages?—I say, Mitchell, old Nick will scarcely know the face of you, it's so much altered by fright. Did you see," turning to the man in his rear, "how harum-scarum he looked, when the captain called out to him to come off?"

"Hold your clapper, you spooney, and be d——d to you!" exclaimed the angry veteran.—"Had the Ingian fastened his paw upon your ugly neck as he did upon mine, all the pitiful life your mother ever put into you would have been spirited away from very fear; so you needn't brag."

"Sure, and if any of ye had a grain of spunk, ye would have fired, and freed a fellow from the clutch of them Ingian thieves," muttered another of the men at the litter. "All the time, the devil had me by the throat, swinging his tommyhawk about my head, I saw ye dancing up and down in the heavens, instead of being on your marrow bones on the common."

"And didn't I want to do it?" rejoined the first speaker. "Ask Tom Winkler here, if the captain didn't swear he'd cut my head off if I even offered so much as to touch the trigger of my musket."

"Faith, and lucky he did," replied his covering man (for the ranks had again joined), "since but for that, there wouldn't be at this moment so much as a hair of the scalp of one of you left."

"By gracious," said a good-humoured, quaint looking Irishman, who had been fixing his eyes on the litter during this colloquy; "it sames to me, my boys, that

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ye have caught the wrong cow by the horns, and that all your pains has been for nothing at all, at all. By the pope, ye are all wrong; it's like bringing salt butter to Cork, or coals to your Newcastle, as ye call it. Who the devil ever heard of the officer wearing ammunition shoes?"

The men all turned their gaze on that part of the vestment of the corpse to which their attention had been directed by this remark, when it was at once perceived, although it had hitherto escaped the observation even of the officers, that, not only the shoes were those usually worn by the soldiers, and termed ammunition or store shoes, but also, the trowsers were of the description of coarse grey, peculiar to that class.

"By the piper and ye're right, Dick Doherty," exclaimed another Irishman; "sure, and it isn't the officer at all! Just look at the great black fist of him too, and never call me Phil Sheban, if it over was made for the handling of an officer's spit."

"What a set of hignoramuses ye must be," grunted old Mitchell, "not to see that the captain's hand is only covered with dirt; and as for the ammunition shoes and trowsers, why you know our officers wear any thing since we have been cooped up in this here fort."

"Yes, by the holy poker, off duty, if they like it," returned Phil Sheban; "but it isn't even the colonel's own born son that dare to do so while officer of the guard."

At this point of their conversation, one of the leading men at the litter, in turning to look at its subject, stumbled over the root of a stump that lay in his way, and fell violently forward. The sudden action destroyed the equilibrium of the corpse, which rolled off its tem-

porary bier upon the earth, and disclosed, for the first time, a face begrimed with masses of clotted blood, which had streamed forth from the scalped brain during the night.

"It's the divil himself," said Phil Sheban, making the sign of the cross, half in jest, half in earnest: "for it isn't the captin at all, and who but the divil could have managed to clap on his rigimintals?"

"No, it's an Ingian," remarked Dick Burford, sagaciously; "it's an Ingian that has killed the captain, and dressed himself in his clothes. I thought he smelt strong, when I helped to pick him up."

"What a set of prating fools ye are," interrupted the leading sergeant; "who ever saw an Ingian with light hair? and sure this hair in the neck is that of a Christian."

At that moment Captain Erskine, attracted by the sudden halt produced by the falling of the body, came quickly up to the front.

"What is the meaning of all this, Cassidy?" he sternly demanded of the sergeant; "why is this halt without my orders, and how comes the body here?"

"Carter stumbled against a root, sir, and the body rolled over upon the ground."

"And was the body to roll back again?" angrily rejoined his captain. "What mean ye, fellows, by standing there; quick, replace it upon the litter, and mind this does not occur again."

"They say, sir," said the sergeant, respectfully, as the men proceeded to their duty, "that it is not Captain de Haldimar after all, but an Ingian."

"Not Captain de Haldimar! are ye all mad? and have the Indians, in reality, turned your brains with fear?"

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What, however, was his own surprise, and that of Lieutenant Johnstone, when, on a closer examination of the corpse, which the men had now placed with its face uppermost, they discovered the bewildering fact that it was not, indeed, Captain de Haldimar who lay before them, but a stranger, dressed in the uniform of that officer.

There was no time to solve, or even to dwell on the singular mystery; for the Indians, though now retired, might be expected to rally and renew the attack. Once more, therefore, the detachment moved forward; the officers dropping as before to the rear, to watch any movements of the enemy should he re-appear. Nothing, however, occurred to interrupt their march; and in a few minutes the heavy clanking sound of the chains of the drawbridge, as it was again raised by its strong pullies, and the dull creaking sound of the rusty bolts and locks that secured the ponderous gate, announced the detachment was once more safely within the fort.

While the wounded men were being conveyed to the hospital, a group, comprising almost all the officers of the garrison, hastened to meet Captain Erskine and Lieutenant Johnstone. Congratulations on the escape of the one, and compliments, rather than condolences, on the accident of the other, which the arm *en ècharpe* denoted to be slight, were hastily and warmly proffered. These felicitations were the genuine ebullitions of the hearts of men who really felt a pride, unmixed with jealousy, in the conduct of their fellows; and so cool and excellent had been the manner in which Captain Erskine had accomplished his object, that it had claimed the undivided admiration of all who had been spectators of the affair,

and had, with the aid of their telescopes, been enabled to follow the minutest movements of the detachment.

"By heaven!" he at length replied, his chest swelling with gratified pride at the warm and generous approval of his companions; "this more than repays me for every risk. Yet, to be sincere, the credit is not mine, but Wentworth's. But for you, my dear fellow," grasping and shaking the hand of that officer, "we should have rendered but a Flemish account of ourselves. How beautifully those guns covered our retreat! and the first mortar that sent the howling devils flying in air like so many Will-o'-the-wisps, who placed that, Wentworth?"

"I did," replied the officer, with a quickness that denoted a natural feeling of exultation; "but Bombardier Kitson's was the most effective. It was his shell that drove the Indians finally out of the bomb-proof, and left the coast clear for your retreat."

"Then Kitson, and his gunners also, merit our best thanks," pursued Captain Erskine, whose spirits, now that his detachment was in safety, were more than usually exhilarated by the exciting events of the last hour; "and what will be more acceptable, perhaps, they shall each have a glass of my best old Jamaica before they sleep,—and such stuff is not to be met with every day in this wilderness of a country. But, confound my stupid head! where are Charles de Haldimar and Sir Everard Valletort?"

"Poor Charles is in a high fever, and confined to his bed," remarked Captain Blessington, who now came up adding his congratulations in a low tone, that marked the despondency of his heart; "and Sir Everard I have just left on the rampart with the company, looking, as he well may, the very image of despair."

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"Run to them, Sumners, my dear boy," said Erskine, hastily addressing himself to a young ensign who stood near him; "run quickly, and relieve them of their error. Say it is not De Haldimar who has been killed, therefore they need not make themselves any longer uneasy on that score." The officers gave a start of surprise. Sumners, however, hastened to acquit himself of the pleasing task assigned him, without waiting to hear the explanation of the singular declaration.

"Not De Haldimar!" eagerly and anxiously exclaimed Captain Blessington; "who then have you brought to us in his uniform, which I clearly distinguished from the rampart as you passed? Surely you would not tamper with us at such a moment, Erskine?"

"Who it is, I know no more than Adam," rejoined the other; "unless, indeed, it be the devil himself. All I *do* know, is, it is not our friend De Haldimar; although, as you observe, he most certainly wears his uniform. But you shall see and judge for yourselves, gentlemen. Sergeant Cassidy," he enquired of that individual, who now came to ask if the detachment was to be dismissed, "where have you placed the litter?"

"Under the piazza of the guard-room, sir," answered the sergeant. These words had scarcely been uttered, when a general and hasty movement of the officers, anxious to satisfy themselves by personal observation it was not indeed De Haldimar who had fallen, took place in the direction alluded to, and in the next moment they were at the side of the litter.

A blanket had been thrown upon the corpse to conceal the loathsome disfigurement of the face, over which masses of thick coagulated blood were laid in patches and streaks, that set all recognition at defiance. The

formation of the head alone, which was round and short, denoted it to be *not* De Haldimar's. Not a feature was left undefiled; and even the eyes were so covered, it was impossible to say whether their lids were closed or open. More than one officer's cheek paled with the sickness that rose to his heart as he gazed on the hideous spectacle; yet, as the curiosity of all was strongly excited to know who the murdered man really was who had been so unaccountably inducted in the uniform of their lost companion, they were resolved to satisfy themselves without further delay. A basin of warm water and a sponge were procured from the guard-room of Ensign Fortescue, who now joined them, and with these Captain Blessington proceeded to remove the disguise.

In the course of this lavation, it was discovered the extraordinary flow of blood and brains had been produced by the infliction of a deep wound on the back of the head, by the sharp and ponderous tomahawk of an Indian. It was the only blow that had been given; and the circumstance of the deceased having been found lying on his face, accounted for the quantity of gore, that, trickling downwards, had so completely disguised every feature. As the coat of thick encrusted matter gave way beneath the frequent application of the moistening sponge, the pallid hue of the countenance denoted the murdered man to be a white. All doubt, however, was soon at an end. The ammunition shoes, the grey trowsers, the coarse linen, and the stiff leathern stock encircling the neck, attested the sufferer to be a soldier of the garrison; but it was not until the face had been completely denuded of its unsightly covering, and every feature fully exposed, that that soldier was at length recognised to be

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Harry Donellan, the trusty and attached servant of Captain de Haldimar.

While yet the officers stood apart, gazing at the corpse, and forming a variety of conjectures, as vague as they were unsatisfactory, in regard to their new mystery, Sir Everard Valletort, pale and breathless with the speed he had used, suddenly appeared among them.

"God of heaven! can it be true—and is it really not De Haldimar whom I have shot?" wildly asked the agitated young man. "Who is this, Erskine?" he continued, glancing at the litter. "Explain, for pity's sake, and quickly."

"Compose yourself, my dear Valletort," replied the officer addressed. "You see this is not De Haldimar, but his servant Donellan. Neither has the latter met his death from your rifle; there is no mark of a bullet about him. It was an Indian tomahawk that did his business; and I will stake my head against a hickory nut the blow came from the same rascal at whom you fired, and who gave back the shot and the scalp halloo."

This opinion was unanimously expressed by the remainder of the officers. Sir Everard was almost as much overpowered by his joy, as he had previously been overwhelmed by his despair, and he grasped and shook the hand of Captain Erskine, who had thus been the means of relieving his conscience, with an energy of gratitude and feeling that almost drew tears from the eyes of that blunt but gallant officer.

"Thank God! thank God!" he fervently exclaimed: "I have not then even the death of poor Donellan to answer for;" and hastening from the guard-room, he pursued his course hurriedly and delightedly to the barrack-room of his friend.

CHAPTER VI.

The hour fixed for the trial of the prisoner Halloway had now arrived, and the officers composing the court were all met in the mess-room of the garrison, surrounding a long table covered with green cloth, over which were distributed pens, ink, and paper for taking minutes of the evidence, and such notes of the proceedings as the several members might deem necessary in the course of the trial. Captain Blessington presided; and next him, on either hand, were the first in seniority, the two junior occupying the lowest places. The demeanour of the several officers, serious and befitting the duty they were met to perform, was rendered more especially solemn from the presence of the governor, who sat a little to the right of the president, and without the circle, remained covered, and with his arms folded across his chest. At a signal given by the president to the orderly in waiting, that individual disappeared from the room, and soon afterwards Frank Halloway, strongly ironed, as on the preceding night, was ushered in by several files of the guard, under Ensign Fortescue himself.

The prisoner having been stationed a few paces on the left of the president, that officer stood up to administer the customary oath. His example was followed by the rest of the court, who now rose, and extending each his right hand upon the prayer book, repeated, after the pre-

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sident, the form of words prescribed by military law. They then, after successively touching the sacred volume with their lips, once more resumed their seats at the table.

The prosecutor was the Adjutant Lawson, who now handed over to the president a paper, from which the latter officer read, in a clear and distinct voice, the following charges, viz.—

“1st. For having on the night of the —th September 1763, while on duty at the gate of the Fortress of Detroit, either admitted a stranger into the garrison himself, or suffered him to obtain admission, without giving the alarm, or using the means necessary to ensure his apprehension, such conduct being treasonable, and in breach of the articles of war.

“2d. For having been accessory to the abduction of Captain Frederick de Haldimar and private Harry Donnellan, the disappearance of whom from the garrison can only be attributed to a secret understanding existing between the prisoner and the enemy without the walls, such conduct being treasonable, and in breach of the articles of war.”

“Private Frank Halloway,” continued Captain Blessington, after having perused these two short but important charges, “you have heard what has been preferred against you; what say you, therefore? Are you guilty, or not guilty?”

“Not guilty,” firmly and somewhat exultingly replied the prisoner, laying his hand at the same time on his swelling heart.

“Stay, sir,” sternly observed the governor, addressing the president; “you have not read *all* the charges.”

Captain Blessington took up the paper from the table, on which he had carelessly thrown it, after reading the

accusations above detailed, and perceived, for the first time, that a portion had been doubled back. His eye now glanced over a third charge, which had previously escaped his attention.

"Prisoner," he pursued, after the lapse of a minute, "there is a third charge against you, viz. for having, on the night of the —th Sept. 1763, suffered Captain de Haldimar to unclose the gate of the fortress, and, accompanied by his servant, private Harry Donellan, to pass your post without the sanction of the governor, such conduct being in direct violation of a standing order of the garrison, and punishable with death."

The prisoner started. "What!" he exclaimed, his cheek paling for the first time with momentary apprehension; "is this voluntary confession of my own to be turned into a charge that threatens my life? Colonel de Haldimar, is the explanation which I gave you only this very hour, and in private, to be made the public instrument of my condemnation? Am I to die because I had not firmness to resist the prayer of my captain and of your son, Colonel de Haldimar?"

The president looked towards the governor, but a significant motion of the head was the only reply; he proceeded,—

"Prisoner Halloway, what plead you to this charge? Guilty, or not guilty?"

"I see plainly," said Halloway, after the pause of a minute, during which he appeared to be summoning all his energies to his aid; "I see plainly that it is useless to strive against my fate. Captain de Haldimar is not here, and I must die. Still I shall not have the disgrace of dying as a traitor, though I own I have violated the orders of the garrison."

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"Prisoner," interrupted Captain Blessington, "whatever you may have to urge, you had better reserve for your defence. Meanwhile, what answer do you make to the last charge preferred?—Are you guilty, or not guilty?"

"Guilty," said Halloway, in a tone of mingled pride and sorrow, "guilty of having listened to the earnest prayer of my captain, and suffered him, in violation of my orders, to pass my post. Of the other charges I am innocent."

The court listened with the most profound attention and interest to the words of the prisoner, and they glanced at each other in a manner that marked their sense of the truth they attached to his declaration.

"Halloway, prisoner," resumed Captain Blessington, mildly, yet impressively; "recollect the severe penalty which the third charge, no less than the others, entails, and recall your admission. Be advised by me," he pursued, observing his hesitation. "Withdraw your plea, then, and substitute that of not guilty to the whole."

"Captain Blessington," returned the prisoner with deep emotion, "I feel all the kindness of your motive; and if any thing can console me in my present situation, it is the circumstance of having presiding at my trial an officer so universally beloved by the whole corps. Still," and again his voice acquired its wonted firmness, and his cheek glowed with honest pride, "still, I say, I scorn to retract my words. Of the two first charges I am as innocent as the babe unborn. To the last I plead guilty; and vain would it be to say otherwise, since the gate was found open while I was on duty, and I know the penalty attached to the disobedience of orders."

After some further but ineffectual remonstrances on

the part of the president, the pleas of the prisoner were recorded, and the examination commenced. Governor de Haldimar was the first witness.

That officer, having been sworn, stated, that on the preceding night he had been intruded upon in his apartment by a stranger, who could have obtained admission only through the gate of the fortress, by which also he must have made good his escape. That it was evident the prisoner had been in correspondence with their enemies; since, on proceeding to examine the gate it had been found unlocked, while the confusion manifested by him on being accused, satisfied all who were present of the enormity of his guilt. Search had been made every where for the keys, but without success.

The second charge was supported by presumptive evidence alone; for although the governor swore to the disappearance of his son, and the murder of his servant, and dwelt emphatically on the fact of their having been forcibly carried off with the connivance of the prisoner, still there was no other proof of this, than the deductions drawn from the circumstances already detailed. To meet this difficulty, however, the third charge had been framed.

In proof of this the governor stated, "that the prisoner, on being interrogated by him immediately subsequent to his being relieved from his post, had evinced such confusion and hesitation, as to leave no doubt whatever of his guilt; that, influenced by the half promise of communication, which the court had heard as well as himself, he had suffered the trial of the prisoner to be delayed until the present hour, strongly hoping he might then be induced to reveal the share he had borne in these unworthy and treasonable practices; that, with a view

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to obtain this disclosure, so essential to the safety of the garrison, he had, conjointly with Major Blackwater, visited the cell of the prisoner, to whom he related the fact of the murder of Donnellan, in the disguise of his master's uniform, conjuring him, at the same time, if he regarded his own life, and the safety of those who were most dear to him, to give a clue to the solution of this mysterious circumstance, and disclose the nature and extent of his connection with the enemy without; that the prisoner however resolutely denied, as before, the guilt imputed to him, but having had time to concoct a plausible story, stated, (doubtless with a view to shield himself from the severe punishment he well knew to be attached to his offence,) that Captain de Haldimar himself had removed the keys from the guard-room, opened the gate of the fortress, and accompanied by his servant, dressed in a coloured coat, had sallied forth upon the common. And this, emphatically pursued the governor, the prisoner admits he permitted, although well aware that, by an order of long standing for the security of the garrison, such a flagrant dereliction of his duty subjected him to the punishment of death.

Major Blackwater was the next witness examined. His testimony went to prove the fact of the gate having been found open, and the confusion manifested by the prisoner. It also substantiated that part of the governor's evidence on the third charge, which related to the confession recently made by Halloway, on which that charge had been framed.

The sergeant of the guard, and the governor's orderly having severally corroborated the first portions of Major Blackwater's evidence, the examination on the part of the prosecution terminated; when the president called

on the prisoner Halloway for his defence. The latter, in a clear, firm, and collected tone, and in terms that surprised his auditory, thus addressed the Court:—

“Mr. President, and gentlemen,—Although standing before you in the capacity of a private soldier, and, oh! bitter and humiliating reflection, in that most wretched and disgraceful of all situations, a suspected traitor, I am not indeed what I seem to be. It is not for me here to enter into the history of my past life; neither will I tarnish the hitherto unsullied reputation of my family by disclosing my true name. Suffice it to observe, I am a gentleman by birth; and although, of late years, I have known all the hardships and privations attendant on my fallen fortunes, I was once used to bask in the luxuries of affluence, and to look upon those who now preside in judgment over me as my equals. A marriage of affection,—a marriage with one who had nothing but her own virtues and her own beauty to recommend her, drew upon me the displeasure of my family, and, the little I possessed, independently of the pleasure of my relations, was soon dissipated. My proud soul scorned all thought of supplication to those who had originally spurned my wife from their presence; and yet my heart bled for the privations of her who, alike respectable in family, was, both from sex and the natural delicacy of her frame, so far less constituted to bear up against the frowns of adversity than myself. Our extremity had now become great,—too great for human endurance; when, through the medium of the public prints, I became acquainted with the glorious action that had been fought in this country by the army under General Wolfe. A new light burst suddenly upon my mind, and visions of after prosperity constantly presented themselves to

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my view. The field of honour was open before me, and there was a probability I might, by good conduct, so far merit the approbation of my superiors, as to obtain, in course of time, that rank among themselves to which by birth and education I was so justly entitled to aspire. Without waiting to consult my Ellen, whose opposition I feared to encounter until opposition would be fruitless, I hastened to Lieutenant Walgrave, the recruiting officer of the regiment,—tendered my services,—was accepted and approved,—received the bounty money,—and became definitely a soldier, under the assumed name of Frank Halloway.

“It would be tedious and impertinent, gentlemen,” resumed the prisoner, after a short pause, “to dwell on the humiliations of spirit to which both my wife and myself were subjected at our first introduction to our new associates, who, although invariably kind to us, were nevertheless, ill suited, both by education and habit, to awaken any thing like congeniality of feeling or similarity of pursuit. Still we endeavoured, as much as possible, to lessen the distance that existed between us; and from the first moment of our joining the regiment, determined to adopt the phraseology and manners of those with whom an adverse destiny had so singularly connected us. In this we succeeded; for no one, up to the present moment, has imagined either my wife or myself to be other than the simple unpretending Frank and Ellen Halloway.

“On joining the regiment in this country,” pursued the prisoner, after another pause, marked by much emotion, “I had the good fortune to be appointed to the grenadier company. Gentlemen, you all know the amiable qualities of Captain de Haldimar. But although,

unlike yourselves, I have learnt to admire that officer only at a distance, my devotion to his interests has been proportioned to the kindness with which I have ever been treated by him; and may I not add, after this avowal of my former condition, my most fervent desire has all along been to seize the first favourable opportunity of performing some action that would eventually elevate me to a position in which I might, without blushing for the absence of the ennobling qualities of birth and condition, avow myself his friend, and solicit that distinction from my equal which was partially extended to me by my superior? The opportunity I sought was not long wanting. At the memorable affair with the French general, Levi, at Quebec, in which our regiment bore so conspicuous a part, I had the good fortune to save the life of my captain. A band of Indians, as you all, gentlemen, must recollect, had approached our right flank unperceived, and while busily engaged with the French in front, we were compelled to divide our fire between them and our new and fierce assailants. The leader of that band was a French officer, who seemed particularly to direct his attempts against the life of Captain de Haldimar. He was a man of powerful proportions and gigantic stature——”

“Hold!” said the governor, starting suddenly from the seat in which he had listened with evident impatience to this long outline of the prisoner’s history. “Gentlemen,” addressing the court, “that is the very stranger who was in my apartment last night,—the being with whom the prisoner is evidently in treacherous correspondence, and all this absurd tale is but a blind to deceive your judgment, and mitigate his own punishment. Who is there to prove the man he has just described was

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the same who aimed at Captain de Haldimar's life at Quebec."

A flush of deep indignation overspread the features of the prisoner, whose high spirit, now he had avowed his true origin, could ill brook the affront thus put upon his veracity.

"Colonel de Haldimar!" he proudly replied, while his chains clanked with the energy and force with which he drew up his person into an attitude of striking dignity; "for once I sink the private soldier, and address you in the character of the gentleman and your equal. I have a soul, sir, notwithstanding my fallen fortunes, as keenly alive to honour as your own; and not even to save my wretched life, would I be guilty of the baseness you now attribute to me. You have asked," he pursued, in a more solemn tone, "what proof I have to show this individual to be the same who attempted the life of Captain de Haldimar. To Captain de Haldimar himself, should Providence have spared his days, I shall leave the melancholy task of bearing witness to all I here advance, when I shall be no more. Nay, sir," and his look partook at once of mingled scorn and despondency, "well do I know the fate that awaits me; for in these proceedings—in that third charge—I plainly read my death-warrant. But what, save my poor and wretched wife, have I to regret? Colonel de Haldimar," he continued, with a vehemence meant to check the growing weakness which the thought of his unfortunate companion called up to his heart, "I saved the life of your son, even by your own admission, no matter whose the arm that threatened his existence; and in every other action in which I have been engaged, honourable mention has ever been made of my conduct. Now, sir,

I ask what has been my reward? So far from attending to the repeated recommendations of my captain for promotion, even in a subordinate rank, have you once deemed it necessary to acknowledge my services by even a recognition of them in any way whatever?"

"Mr. President, Captain Blessington," interrupted the governor haughtily, are we met here to listen to such language from a private soldier? You will do well, sir, to exercise your prerogative, and stay such impertinent matter, which can have no reference whatever to the defence of the prisoner."

"Prisoner," resumed the president, who as well as the other members of the court, had listened with the most profound and absorbing interest to the singular disclosure of him whom they still only knew as Frank Halloway, "this language cannot be permitted; you must confine yourself to your defence."

"Pardon me, gentlemen," returned Halloway, in his usual firm but respectful tone of voice; pardon me, if, standing on the brink of the grave as I do, I have so far forgotten the rules of military discipline as to sink for a moment the soldier in the gentleman; but to be taxed with an unworthy fabrication, and to be treated with contumely when avowing the secret of my condition, was more than human pride and human feeling could tolerate."

"Confine yourself, prisoner, to your defence," again remarked Captain Blessington, perceiving the restlessness with which the governor listened to these bold and additional observations of Halloway.

Again the governor interposed:—"What possible connection can there be between this man's life, and the crime with which he stands charged? Captain Blessing-

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ton, this is trifling with the court, who are assembled to try the prisoner for his treason, and not to waste their time in listening to a history utterly foreign to the subject."

"The history of my past life—Colonel de Haldimar," proudly returned the prisoner, "although tedious and uninteresting to you, is of the utmost importance to myself; for on that do I ground the most essential part of my defence. There is nothing but circumstantial evidence against me on the two first charges; and as those alone can reflect dishonour on my memory, it is for the wisdom of this court to determine whether that evidence is to be credited in opposition to the solemn declaration of him, who, in admitting one charge, equally affecting his life with the others, repudiates as foul those only which would attain his honour. Gentlemen," he pursued, addressing the court, "it is for you to determine whether my defence is to be continued or not; yet, whatever be my fate, I would fain remove all injurious impression from the minds of my judges; and this can only be done by a simple detail of circumstances, which may, by the unprejudiced, be as simply believed."

Here the prisoner paused: when, after some low and earnest conversation among the members of the court, two or three slips of written paper were passed to the President. He glanced his eye hurriedly over them, and then directed Halloway to proceed with his defence.

"I have stated," pursued the interesting soldier, "that the officer who led the band of Indians was a man of gigantic stature, and of apparently great strength. My attention was particularly directed to him from this circumstance, and as I was on the extreme flank of the grenadiers, and close to Captain de Haldimar, I had every oppor-

tunity of observing his movements principally pointed at that officer. He first discharged a carbine, the ball of which killed a man of the company at his (Captain de Haldimar's) side; and then, with evident rage at having been defeated in his aim, he took a pistol from his belt, and advancing with rapid strides to within a few paces of his intended victim, presented it in the most deliberate manner. At that moment, gentlemen, (and it was but the work of a moment,) a thousand confused and almost inexplicable feelings rose to my heart. The occasion I had long sought was at length within my reach; but even the personal considerations, which had hitherto influenced my mind, were sunk in the anxious desire I entertained to preserve the life of an officer so universally beloved, and so every way worthy of the sacrifice. While yet the pistol remained levelled, I sprang before Captain de Haldimar, received the ball in my breast, and had just strength sufficient to fire my musket at the formidable enemy, when I sank senseless to the earth.

"It will not be difficult for you, gentlemen, who have feeling minds, to understand the pleasurable pride with which, on being conveyed to Captain de Haldimar's own apartments in Quebec, I found myself almost overwhelmed by the touching marks of gratitude showered on me by his amiable relatives. Miss Clara de Haldimar, in particular, like a ministering angel, visited my couch of suffering at almost every hour, and always provided with some little delicacy, suitable to my condition, of which I had long since tutored myself to forget even the use. But what principally afforded me pleasure, was to remark the consolations which she tendered to my poor drooping Ellen, who, already more than half subdued by the melancholy change in our condition in life, frequently spent

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hours together in silent grief at the side of my couch, and watching every change in my countenance with all the intense anxiety of one who feels the last stay on earth is about to be severed for ever. Ah! how I then longed to disclose to this kind and compassionating being the true position of her on whom she lavished her attention, and to make her known not as the inferior honoured by her notice, but as the equal alike worthy of her friendship and deserving of her esteem; but the wide, wide barrier that divided the wife of the private soldier from the daughter and sister of the commissioned officer sealed my lips, and our true condition continued unrevealed.

"Gentlemen," resumed Halloway, after a short pause, "if I dwell on these circumstances, it is with a view to show how vile are the charges preferred against me. Is it likely, with all the incentives to good conduct I have named, I should have proved a traitor to my country? And, even if so, what to gain, I would ask; and by what means was a correspondence with the enemy to be maintained by one in my humble station? As for the second charge, how infamous, how injurious is it to my reputation, how unworthy to be entertained! From the moment of my recovery from that severe wound, every mark of favour that could be bestowed on persons in our situation had been extended to my wife and myself, by the family of Colonel de Haldimar; and my captain, knowing me merely as the simple and low born Frank Halloway, although still the preserver of his life, has been unceasing in his exertions to obtain such promotion as he thought my conduct generally, independently of my devotedness to his person, might claim. How these applications were met, gentlemen, I have already stated; but notwithstanding Colonel de Haldimar has never

deemed me worthy of the promotion solicited, that circumstance could in no way weaken my regard and attachment for him who had so often demanded it. How then, in the name of heaven, can a charge so improbable, so extravagant, as that of having been instrumental in the abduction of Captain de Haldimar, be entertained? and who is there among you, gentlemen, who will for one moment believe I could harbour a thought so absurd as that of lending myself to the destruction of one for whom I once cheerfully offered up the sacrifice of my blood? And now," pursued the prisoner, after another short pause, "I come to the third charge,—that charge which most affects my life, but impugns neither my honour nor my fidelity. That God, before whom I know I shall shortly appear, can attest the sincerity of my statement, and before him do I now solemnly declare what I am about to relate is true.

"Soon after the commencement of my watch last night, I heard a voice distinctly on the outside of the rampart, near my post, calling in a low and subdued tone on the name of Captain de Haldimar. The accents, hastily and anxiously uttered, were apparently those of a female. For a moment I continued irresolute how to act, and hesitated whether or not I should alarm the garrison; but, at length, presuming it was some young female of the village with whom my captain was acquainted, it occurred to me the most prudent course would be to apprise that officer himself. While I yet hesitated whether to leave my post for a moment for the purpose, a man crossed the parade a few yards in my front; it was Captain de Haldimar's servant, Donellan, then in the act of carrying some things from his master's apartment to the guard-room. I called to him, to say the sentinel at the

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gate wished to see the captain of the guard immediately. In the course of a few minutes he came up to my post, when I told him what I had heard. At that moment, the voice again repeated his name, when he abruptly left me and turned to the left of the gate, evidently on his way to the rampart. Soon afterwards I heard Captain de Haldimar immediately above me, sharply calling out 'Hist, hist!' as if the person on the outside, despairing of success, was in the act of retreating. A moment or two of silence succeeded, when a low conversation ensued between the parties. The distance was so great I could only distinguish inarticulate sounds; yet it seemed to me as if they spoke not in English, but in the language of the Ottawa Indians, a tongue with which, as you are well aware, gentlemen, Captain de Haldimar is familiar. This had continued about ten minutes when I again heard footsteps hastily descending the rampart, and moving in the direction of the guard-house. Soon afterwards Captain de Haldimar re-appeared at my post, accompanied by his servant Donellan; the former had the keys of the gate in his hand, and he told me that he must pass to the skirt of the forest on some business of the last importance to the safety of the garrison.

"At first I peremptorily refused, stating the severe penalty attached to the infringement of an order, the observation of which had so especially been insisted upon by the governor, whose permission, however, I ventured respectfully to urge, might, without difficulty, be obtained, if the business was really of the importance he described it. Captain de Haldimar, however, declared he well knew the governor would not accord that permission, unless he was positively acquainted with the nature and extent of the danger to be apprehended; and of

these, he said, he was not himself sufficiently aware. All argument of this nature proving ineffectual, he attempted to enforce his authority, not only in his capacity of officer of the guard, but also as my captain, ordering me, on pain of confinement, not to interfere with or attempt to impede his departure. This, however, produced no better result; for I knew that, in this instance, I was amenable to the order of the governor alone, and I again firmly refused to violate my duty.

“Finding himself thwarted in his attempt to enforce my obedience, Captain de Haldimar, who seemed much agitated and annoyed by what he termed my obstinacy, now descended to entreaty; and in the name of that life which I had preserved to him, and of that deep gratitude which he had ever since borne to me, conjured me not to prevent his departure. ‘Halloway,’ he urged, ‘your life, my life, my father’s life,—the life of my sister Clara perhaps, who nursed you in illness, and who has ever treated your wife with attention and kindness,—all these depend upon your compliance with my request. Hear me,’ he pursued, following up the impression which he clearly perceived he had produced in me by this singular and touching language: ‘I promise to be back within the hour; there is no danger attending my departure, and here will I be before you are relieved from your post; no one can know I have been absent, and your secret will remain with Donellan and myself. Do you think,’ he concluded, ‘I would encourage a soldier of my regiment to disobey a standing order of the garrison, unless there was some very extraordinary reason for my so doing? But there is no time to be lost in parley. Halloway! I entreat you to offer no further opposition to

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my departure. I pledge myself to be back before you are relieved.'

"Gentlemen," impressively continued the prisoner, after a pause, during which each member of the court seemed to breathe for the first time, so deeply had the attention of all been riveted by the latter part of this singular declaration, "how, under these circumstances, could I be expected to act? Assured by Captain de Haldimar, in the most solemn manner, that the existence of those most dear to his heart hung on my compliance with his request, how could I refuse to him, whose life I had saved, and whose character I so much esteemed, a boon so earnestly, nay, so imploringly solicited? I acceded to his prayer, intimating at the same time, if he returned not before another sentinel should relieve me, the discovery of my breach of duty must be made, and my punishment inevitable. His last words, however, were to assure me he should return at the hour he had named, and when I closed the gate upon him, it was under the firm impression his absence would only prove of the temporary nature he had stated.—Gentlemen," abruptly concluded Halloway, "I have nothing further to add; if I have failed in my duty as a soldier, I have, at least, fulfilled that of a man; and although the violation of the first entail upon me the punishment of death, the motives which impelled me to that violation will not, I trust, be utterly lost sight of by those by whom my punishment is to be awarded."

The candid, fearless, and manly tone in which Halloway had delivered this long and singular statement, however little the governor appeared to be affected by it, evidently made a deep impression on the court, who had listened with undiverted attention to the close. Some

conversation again ensued, in a low tone, among several members, when two slips of written paper were passed up, as before, to the president. These elicited the following interrogatories :—

“ You have stated, prisoner, that Captain de Haldimar left the fort accompanied by his servant Donellan. How were they respectively dressed ? ”

“ Captain de Haldimar in his uniform ; Donellan, as far as I could observe, in his regimental clothing also, with this difference, that he wore his servant’s round glazed hat and his grey great coat.”

“ How then do you account for the extraordinary circumstance of Donellan having been found murdered in his master’s clothes ? Was any allusion made to a change of dress before they left the fort ? ”

“ Not the slightest,” returned the prisoner ; “ nor can I in any way account for this mysterious fact. When they quitted the garrison, each wore the dress I have described.”

“ In what manner did Captain de Haldimar and Donellan effect their passage across the ditch ? ” continued the president, after glancing at the second slip of paper. “ The draw-bridge was evidently not lowered, and there were no other means at hand to enable him to effect his object with promptitude. How do you explain this, prisoner ? ”

When this question was put, the whole body of officers, and the governor especially, turned their eyes simultaneously on Halloway, for on his hesitation or promptness in replying seemed to attach much of the credit they were disposed to accord his statement. Halloway observed it, and coloured. His reply, however, was free, unfaltering, and unstudied.

"A rope with which Donellan had provided himself, was secured to one of the iron hooks that support the pulleys immediately above the gate. With this they swung themselves in succession to the opposite bank."

The members of the court looked at each other, apparently glad that an answer so confirmatory of the truth of the prisoner's statement, had been thus readily given.

"Were they to have returned in the same manner?" pursued the president, framing his interrogatory from the contents of another slip of paper, which, at the suggestion of the governor, had been passed to him by the prosecutor, Mr. Lawson.

"They were," firmly replied the prisoner. "At least I presumed they were, for, I believe in the hurry of Captain de Haldimar's departure, he never once made any direct allusion to the manner of his return; nor did it occur to me until this moment how they were to regain possession of the rope, without assistance from within."

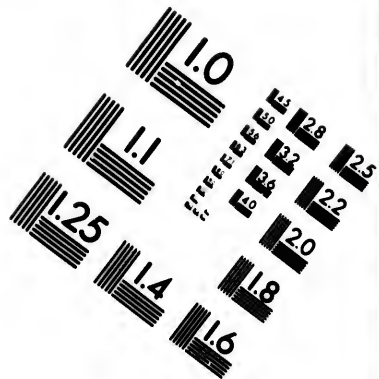
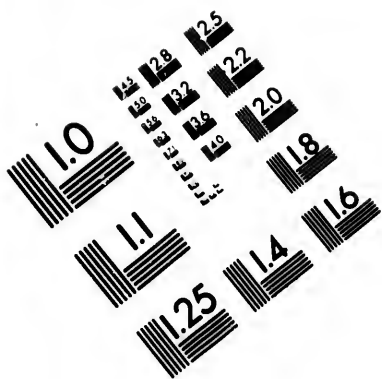
"Of course," observed Colonel de Haldimar, addressing the president, "the rope still remains. Mr. Lawson examine the gate, and report accordingly."

The adjutant hastened to acquit himself of this laconic order, and soon afterwards returned, stating not only that there was no rope, but that the hook alluded to had disappeared altogether.

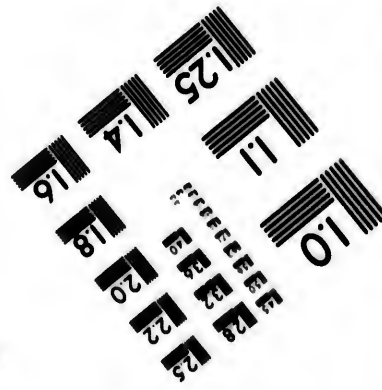
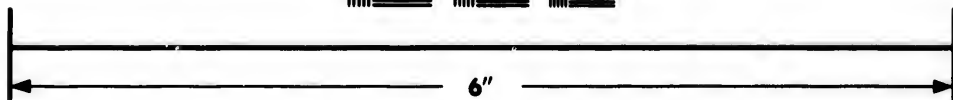
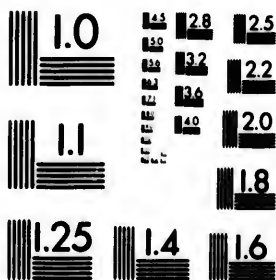
For a moment the check of the prisoner paled; but it was evidently less from any fear connected with his individual existence, than from the shame he felt at having been detected in a supposed falsehood. He however speedily recovered his self-possession, and exhibited the same character of unconcern by which his general bearing throughout the trial had been distinguished.

On this announcement of the adjutant, the governor





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betrayed a movement of impatience, that was meant to convey his utter disbelief of the whole of the prisoner's statement, and his look seemed to express to the court it should also arrive, and without hesitation, at the same conclusion. Even all authoritative as he was, however, he felt that military etiquette and strict discipline prevented his interfering further in this advanced state of the proceedings.

"Prisoner," again remarked Captain Blessington, "your statement in regard to the means employed by Captain de Haldimar in effecting his departure, is, you must admit, unsupported by appearances. How happens it the rope is no longer where you say it was placed? No one could have removed it but yourself. Have you done so? and if so, can you produce it, or say where it is to be found?"

"Captain Blessington," replied Halloway, proudly, yet respectfully, "I have already invoked that great Being, before whose tribunal I am so shortly to appear, in testimony of the truth of my assertion; and again, in his presence, do I repeat, every word I have uttered is true. I did not remove the rope, neither do I know what is become of it. I admit its disappearance is extraordinary, but a moment's reflection must satisfy the court, I would not have devised a tale, the falsehood of which could at once have been detected on an examination such as that which has just been instituted. When Mr. Lawson left this room just now, I fully expected he would have found the rope lying as it had been left. What has become of it, I repeat, I know not; but in the manner I have stated did Captain de Haldimar and Donellan cross the ditch. I have nothing further to add," he concluded once more, drawing up his fine tall person, the native

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elegance of which could not be wholly disguised even in the dress of a private soldier; "nothing further to disclose. Yet do I repel with scorn the injurious insinuation against my fidelity, suggested in these doubts. I am prepared to meet my death as best may become a soldier, and let me add, as best may become a proud and well born gentleman; but humanity and common justice should at least be accorded to my memory. I am an unfortunate man, but no traitor."

The members were visibly impressed by the last sentences of the prisoner. No further question however was asked, and he was again removed by the escort, who had been wondering spectators of the scene, to the cell he had so recently occupied. The room was then cleared of the witnesses and strangers, the latter comprising nearly the whole of the officers off duty, when the court proceeded to deliberate on the evidence, and pass sentence on the accused.

CHAPTER VII.

Although the young and sensitive De Haldimar had found physical relief in the summary means resorted to by the surgeon, the moral wound at his heart not only remained unsoothed, but was rendered more acutely painful by the wretched reflections, which now that he had full leisure to review the past, and anticipate the future in all the gloom attached to both, so violently assailed him. From the moment when his brother's strange and mysterious disappearance had been communicated by the adjutant in the manner we have already seen, his spirits had been deeply and fearfully depressed. Still he had every reason to expect, from the well-known character of Halloway, the strong hope expressed by the latter might be realised; and that, at the hour appointed for trial, his brother would be present to explain the cause of his mysterious absence, justify the conduct of his subordinate, and exonerate him from the treachery with which he now stood charged. Yet, powerful as this hope was, it was unavoidably qualified by dispiriting doubt; for a nature affectionate and bland, as that of Charles de Haldimar, could not but harbour distrust, while a shadow of uncertainty, in regard to the fate of a brother so tenderly loved, remained. He had forced himself to believe as much as possible what he wished, and the effort had, to a certain extent, succeeded; but there had been something

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so solemn and so impressive in the scene that had passed when the prisoner was first brought up for trial, something so fearfully prophetic in the wild language of his unhappy wife, he had found it impossible to resist the influence of the almost superstitious awe they had awakened in his heart.

What the feelings of the young officer were subsequently, when in the person of the murdered man on the common, the victim of Sir Everard Valletort's aim, he recognised that brother, whose disappearance had occasioned him so much inquietude, we shall not attempt to describe: their nature is best shown in the effect they produced—the almost overwhelming agony of body and mind, which had borne him, like a stricken plant, unresisting to the earth. But now that, in the calm and solitude of his chamber, he had leisure to review the fearful events conspiring to produce this extremity, his anguish of spirit was even deeper than when the first rude shock of conviction had flashed upon his understanding. A tide of suffering, that overpowered, without rendering him sensible of its positive and abstract character, had, in the first instance, oppressed his faculties, and obscured his perception; but now, slow, sure, stinging, and gradually succeeding each other, came every bitter thought and reflection of which that tide was composed; and the generous heart of Charles de Haldimar was a prey to feelings that would have wrung the soul, and wounded the sensibilities of one far less gentle and susceptible than himself.

Between Sir Everard Valletort and Charles de Haldimar, who, it has already been remarked, were lieutenants in Captain Blessington's company, a sentiment of friendship had been suffered to spring up almost from the moment

of Sir Everard's joining. The young men were nearly of the same age; and although the one was all gentleness, the other all spirit and vivacity, not a shade of disunion had at any period intervened to interrupt the almost brotherly attachment subsisting between them, and each felt the disposition of the other was the one most assimilated to his own. In fact, Sir Everard was far from being the ephemeral character he was often willing to appear. Under a semblance of affectation, and much assumed levity of manner, never, however, personally offensive, he concealed a brave, generous, warm, and manly heart, and talents becoming the rank he held in society, such as would not have reflected discredit on one numbering twice his years. He had entered the army, as most young men of rank usually did at that period, rather for the *agrémens* it held forth, than with any serious view to advancement in it as a profession. Still he entertained the praiseworthy desire of being something more than what is, among military men, emphatically termed a feather-bed soldier. Not that we mean, however, to assert he was not a feather-bed soldier in its more literal sense; in fact, his own observations, recorded in the early part of this volume, sufficiently prove his predilection for the indulgence of pressing his downy couch to what is termed a decent hour in the day.

We need scarcely state Sir Everard's theories on this important subject were seldom reduced to practice; for, even long before the Indians had broken out into open acts of hostility, when such precautions were rendered indispensable, Colonel de Haldimar had never suffered either officer or man to linger on his pillow after the first faint dawn had appeared. This was a system to which Sir Everard could never reconcile himself. "If the men

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must be drilled," he urged, "with a view to their health and discipline, why not place them under the direction of the adjutant or the officer of the day, whoever he might chance to be, and not unnecessarily disturb a body of gentlemen from their comfortable slumbers at that unconscionable hour?" Poor Sir Everard! this was the only grievance of which he complained, and he complained bitterly. Scarcely a morning passed without his inveighing loudly against the barbarity of such a custom; threatening at the same time, amid the laughter of his companions, to quit the service in disgust at what he called so ungentlemanly and gothic a habit; and, but for two motives, there is every probability he would have seriously availed himself of the earliest opportunity of retiring. The first of these was his growing friendship for the amiable and gentle Charles de Haldimar; the second, the secret, and scarcely to himself acknowledged, interest which had been created in his heart for his sister Clara; whom he only knew from the glowing descriptions of his friend, and the strong resemblance she was said to bear to him by the other officers.

Clara de Haldimar was the constant theme of her younger brother's praise. Her image was ever uppermost in his thoughts—her name ever hovering on his lips; and when alone with his friend Valletort, it was his delight to dwell on the worth and accomplishments of his amiable and beloved sister. Then, indeed, would his usually calm blue eye sparkle with the animation of his subject, while his colouring cheek marked all the warmth and sincerity with which he bore attestation to her gentleness and her goodness. The heart of Charles de Haldimar, soldier as he was, was pure, generous, and unsophisticated as that of the sister whom he so constantly

eulogised; and, while listening to his eloquent praises, Sir Everard learnt to feel an interest in a being whom all declared to be the counterpart of her brother, as well in personal attraction as in singleness of nature. With all his affected levity, and notwithstanding his early initiation into fashionable life—that matter-of-fact life which strikes at the existence of our earlier and dearer illusions—there was a dash of romance in the character of the young baronet which tended much to increase the pleasure he always took in the warm descriptions of his friend. The very circumstance of her being personally unknown to him, was, with Sir Everard, an additional motive for interest in Miss de Haldimar.

Imagination and mystery generally work their way together; and as there was a shade of mystery attached to Sir Everard's very ignorance of the person of one whom he admired and esteemed from report alone, imagination was not slow to improve the opportunity, and to endow the object with characteristics, which perhaps a more intimate knowledge of the party might have led him to qualify. In this manner, in early youth, are the silken and willing fetters of the generous and the enthusiastic forged. We invest some object, whose praises, whispered secretly in the ear, have glided imperceptibly to the heart, with all the attributes supplied by our own vivid and readily according imaginations; and so accustomed do we become to linger on the picture, we adore the semblance with an ardour which the original often fails to excite.

We do not say Clara de Haldimar would have fallen short of the highest estimate formed of her worth by the friend of her brother; neither is it to be understood, Sir Eve-

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rard suffered this fair vision of his fancy to lead him into the wild and labyrinthian paths of boyish romance.

Whatever were the impressions of the young baronet, and however he might have been inclined to suffer the fair image of the gentle Clara, such as he was perhaps wont to paint it, to exercise its spell upon his fancy, certain it is, he never expressed to her brother more than that esteem and interest which it was but natural he should accord to the sister of his friend. Neither had Charles de Haldimar, even amid all his warmth of commendation, ever made the slightest allusion to his sister, that could be construed into a desire she should awaken any unusual or extraordinary sentiment of preference. Much and fervently as he desired such an event, there was an innate sense of decorum, and it may be secret pride, that caused him to abstain from any observation having the remotest tendency to compromise the spotless delicacy of his adored sister; and such he would have considered any expression of his own hopes and wishes, where no declaration of preference had been previously made. There was another motive for this reserve on the part of the young officer. The baronet was an only child, and would, on attaining his majority, of which he wanted only a few months, become the possessor of a large fortune. His sister Clara, on the contrary, had little beyond her own fair fame and the beauty transmitted to her by the mother she had lost. Colonel de Haldimar was a younger son, and had made his way through life with his sword, and an unblemished reputation alone—advantages he had shared with his children, for the two eldest of whom his interest and long services had procured commissions in his own regiment.

But even while Charles de Haldimar abstained from all

expression of his hopes, he had fully made up his mind that Sir Everard and his sister were so formed for each other, it was next to an impossibility they could meet without loving. In one of his letters to the latter, he had alluded to his friend in terms of so high and earnest panegyric, that Clara had acknowledged, in reply, she was prepared to find in the young baronet one whom she should regard with partiality, if it were only on account of the friendship subsisting between him and her brother. This admission, however, was communicated in confidence, and the young officer had religiously preserved his sister's secret.

These and fifty other recollections now crowded on the mind of the sufferer, only to render the intensity of his anguish more complete; among the bitterest of which was the certainty that the mysterious events of the past night had raised up an insuperable barrier to this union; for how could Clara de Haldimar become the wife of him whose hands were, however innocently, stained with the life-blood of her brother! To dwell on this, and the loss of that brother, was little short of madness, and yet De Haldimar could think of nothing else; nor for a period could the loud booming of the cannon from the ramparts, every report of which shook his chamber to its very foundations, call off his attention from a subject which, while it pained, engrossed every faculty and absorbed every thought. At length, towards the close, he called faintly to the old and faithful soldier, who, at the foot of the bed, stood watching every change of his master's countenance, to know the cause of the cannonade. On being informed the batteries in the rear were covering the retreat of Captain Erskine, who, in his attempt to obtain the body, had been surprised by the Indians, a new di-

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rection was temporarily given to his thoughts, and he now manifested the utmost impatience to know the result.

In a few minutes Morrison, who, in defiance of the surgeon's strict order not on any account to quit the room, had flown to obtain some intelligence which he trusted might remove the anxiety of his suffering master, again made his appearance, stating the corpse was already secured, and close under the guns of the fort, beneath which the detachment, though hotly assailed from the forest, were also fast retreating.

"And is it really my brother, Morrison? Are you quite certain that it is Captain de Haldimar?" asked the young officer, in the eager accents of one who, with the fullest conviction on his mind, yet grasps at the faintest shadow of a consoling doubt. "Tell me that it is *not* my brother, and half of what I possess in the world shall be yours."

The old soldier brushed a tear from his eye. "God bless you, Mr. de Haldimar, I would give half my grey hairs to be able to do so; but it is, indeed, too truly the captain who has been killed. I saw the very wings of his regimentals as he lay on his face on the litter."

Charles de Haldimar groaned aloud. "Oh God! oh God! would I had never lived to see this day." Then springing suddenly up in his bed—"Morrison where are my clothes? I insist on seeing my slaughtered brother myself."

"Good Heaven, sir, consider," said the old man approaching the bed, and attempting to replace the covering which had been spurned to its very foot,—"*consider* you are in a burning fever, and the slightest cold may kill you altogether. The doctor's orders are, you were on no account to get up." The effort made by the un-

fortunate youth was momentary. Faint from the blood he had lost, and giddy from the excitement of his feelings, he sank back exhausted on his pillow, and wept like a child.

Old Morrison shed tears also; for his heart bled for the sufferings of one whom he had nursed and played with even in early infancy, and whom, although his master, he regarded with the affection he would have borne to his own child. As he had justly observed, he would have willingly given half his remaining years to be able to remove the source of the sorrow which so deeply oppressed him.

When this violent paroxysm had somewhat subsided, De Haldimar became more composed; but his was rather that composure which grows out of the apathy produced by overwhelming grief, than the result of any relief afforded to his suffering heart by the tears he had shed. He had continued some time in this faint and apparently tranquil state, when confused sounds in the barrack-yard, followed by the raising of the heavy drawbridge, announced the return of the detachment. Again he started up in his bed and demanded his clothes, declaring his intention to go out and receive the corpse of his murdered brother. All opposition on the part of the faithful Morrison was now likely to prove fruitless, when suddenly the door opened, and an officer burst hurriedly into the room.

"Courage! courage! my dear De Haldimar; I am the bearer of good news. Your brother is not the person who has been slain."

Again De Haldimar sank back upon his pillow, overcome by a variety of conflicting emotions. A moment afterwards, and he exclaimed reproachfully, yet almost gasping with the eagerness of his manner,—

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"For God's sake, Sumners—in the name of common humanity, do not trifle with my feelings. If you would seek to lull me with false hopes, you are wrong. I am prepared to hear and bear the worst at present; but to be undeceived again would break my heart."

"I swear to you by every thing I have been taught to revere as sacred," solemnly returned Ensign Sumners, deeply touched by the affliction he witnessed, "what I state is strictly true. Captain Erskine himself sent me to tell you."

"What, is he only wounded then?" and a glow of mingled hope and satisfaction was visible even through the flush of previous excitement on the cheek of the sufferer. "Quick, Morrison, give me my clothes. Where is my brother, Sumners?" and again he raised up his debilitated frame with the intention of quitting his couch.

"De Haldimar, my dear De Haldimar, compose yourself, and listen to me. Your brother is still missing, and we are as much in the dark about his fate as ever. All that is certain is, we have no positive knowledge of his death; but surely that is a thousand times preferable to the horrid apprehensions under which we have all hitherto laboured."

"What mean you, Sumners? or am I so bewildered by my sufferings as not to comprehend you clearly?—Nay, nay, forgive me; but I am almost heart-broken at this loss, and scarcely know what I say. But what is it you mean? I saw my unhappy brother lying on the common with my own eyes. Poor Valletort himself——" here a rush of bitter recollections flashed on the memory of the young man, and the tears coursed each other rapidly down his cheek. His emotion lasted for a few mo-

ments, and he pursued,—“Poor Valletort himself saw him, for he was nearly as much overwhelmed with affliction as I was; and even Morrison beheld him also, not ten minutes since, under the very walls of the fort; nay, distinguished the wings of his uniform: and yet you would persuade me my brother, instead of being brought in a corpse, is still missing and alive. This is little better than trifling with my wretchedness, Sumners,” and again he sank back exhausted on his pillow.

“I can easily forgive your doubts, De Haldimar,” returned the sympathising Sumners, taking the hand of his companion, and pressing it gently in his own; “for, in truth, there is a great deal of mystery attached to the whole affair. I have not seen the body myself; but I distinctly heard Captain Erskine state it certainly was not your brother, and he requested me to apprise both Sir Everard Valletort and yourself of the fact.”

“Who is the murdered man, then? and how comes he to be clad in the uniform of one of our officers? Pshaw! it is too absurd to be credited. Erskine is mistaken—he must be mistaken—it can be no other than my poor brother Frederick. Sumners, I am sick, faint, with this cruel uncertainty: go, my dear fellow, at once, and examine the body; then return to me, and satisfy my doubts, if possible.”

“Most willingly, if you desire it,” returned Sumners, moving towards the door; “but believe me, De Haldimar, you may make your mind tranquil on the subject—Erskine spoke with certainty.”

“Have you seen Valletort?” asked De Haldimar, while an involuntary shudder pervaded his frame.

“I have. He flew on the instant to make further enquiries; and was in the act of going to examine the body

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of the murdered man when I came here. But here he is himself, and his countenance is the harbinger of any thing but a denial of my intelligence."

"Oh, Charles, what a weight of misery has been removed from my heart!" exclaimed that officer, now rushing to the bedside of his friend, and seizing his extended hand,—“Your brother, let us hope, still lives.”

“Almighty God, I thank thee!” fervently ejaculated De Haldimar; and then, overcome with joy, surprise, and gratitude, he again sank back upon his pillow, sobbing and weeping violently.

Sumners had, with delicate tact, retired the moment Sir Everard made his appearance: for he, as well as the whole body of officers, was aware of the close friendship that subsisted between the young men.

We shall not attempt to paint all that passed between the friends during the first interesting moments of an interview which neither had expected to enjoy again, or the delight and satisfaction with which they congratulated themselves on the futility of those fears, which, if realised, must have embittered every future moment of their lives with the most harrowing recollections.

With that facility with which in youth the generous and susceptible are prone to exchange their tears for smiles, as some powerful motive for the reaction may prompt, the invalid had already, and for the moment, lost sight of the painful past in the pleasureable present, so that his actual excitement was strongly in contrast with the melancholy he had so recently exhibited. Never had Charles de Haldimar appeared so eminently handsome; and yet his beauty resembled that of a frail and delicate woman, rather than that of one called to the manly and arduous profession of a soldier. The large, blue, long,

dark-lashed eye, in which a shade of languor harmonised with the soft but animated expression of the whole countenance,—the dimpled mouth,—the small, clear, and even teeth,—all these now characterised Charles de Haldimar; and if to these we add a voice rich, full, and melodious, and a smile sweet and fascinating, we shall be at no loss to account for the readiness with which Sir Everard suffered his imagination to draw on the brother for those attributes he ascribed to the sister.

It was while this impression was strong upon his fancy, he took occasion to remark, in reply to an observation of De Haldimar's, alluding to the despair with which his sister would have been seized, had she known one brother had fallen by the hand of the friend of the other.

“The grief of my own heart, Charles, on this occasion, would have been little inferior to her own. The truth is, my feelings during the last three hours have let me into a secret, of the existence of which I was, in a great degree, ignorant until then: I scarcely know how to express myself, for the communication is so truly absurd and romantic you will not credit it.” He paused, hesitated, and then, as if determined to anticipate the ridicule he seemed to feel would be attached to his confession, with a forced half laugh pursued: “The fact is, Charles, I have been so much used to listen to your warm and eloquent praises of your sister, I have absolutely, I will not say fallen in love with (that would be going too far), but conceived so strong an interest in her, that my most ardent desire would be to find favour in her eyes. What say you, my friend? are you inclined to forward my suit; and if so, is there any chance for me, think you, with herself?”

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The breast of Charles de Haldimar, who had listened with deep and increasing attention to this avowal, swelled high with pleasureable excitement, and raising himself up in his bed with one hand, while he grasped one of Sir Everard's with the other, he exclaimed with a transport of affection too forcible to be controlled,—

“Oh, Valletort, Valletort ! this is, indeed, all that was wanting to complete my happiness. My sister Clara I adore with all the affection of my nature ; I love her better than my own life, which is wrapped up in hers. She is an angel in disposition,—all that is dear, tender, and affectionate,—all that is gentle and lovely in woman ; one whose welfare is dearer far to me than my own, and without whose presence I could not live. Valletort, that prize,—that treasure, that dearer half of myself, is yours,—yours for ever. I have long wished you should love each other, and I felt, when you met, you would. If I have hitherto forborne from expressing this fondest wish of my heart, it has been from delicacy—from a natural fear of compromising the purity of my adored Clara. Now, however, you have confessed yourself interested, by a description that falls far short of the true merit of that dear girl, I can no longer disguise my gratification and delight. Valletort,” he concluded, impressively, “there is no other man on earth to whom I would say so much ; but you were formed for each other, and you will, you must, be the husband of my sister.”

If the youthful and affectionate De Haldimar was happy, Sir Everard was no less so ; for already, with the enthusiasm of a young man of twenty, he painted to himself the entire fruition of those dreams of happiness that had so long been familiarised to his imagination.

A single knock was now heard at the door of the

apartment; it was opened, and a sergeant appeared at the entrance.

"The company are under arms for punishment parade, Lieutenant Valletort," said the man, touching his cap.

In an instant, the visionary prospects of the young men gave place to the stern realities connected with that announcement of punishment. The treason of Halloway,—the absence of Frederick de Haldimar,—the dangers by which they were beset,—and the little present probability of a re-union with those who were most dear to them,—all these recollections now flashed across their minds with the rapidity of thought; and the conversation that had so recently passed between them seemed to leave no other impression than what is produced from some visionary speculation of the moment.

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CHAPTER VIII.

As the bells of the fort tolled the tenth hour of morning, the groups of dispersed soldiery, warned by the rolling of the assembly drum, once more fell into their respective ranks in the order described in the opening of this volume. Soon afterwards the prisoner Halloway was reconducted into the square by a strong escort, who took their stations as before in the immediate centre, where the former stood principally conspicuous to the observation of his comrades. His countenance was paler, and had less, perhaps, of the indifference he had previously manifested ; but to supply this there was a certain subdued air of calm dignity, and a composure that sprang, doubtless, from the consciousness of the new character in which he now appeared before his superiors. Colonel de Haldimar almost immediately followed, and with him were the principal staff of the garrison, all of whom, with the exception of the sick and wounded and their attendants, were present to a man. The former took from the hands of the adjutant, Lawson, a large packet, consisting of several sheets of folded paper closely written upon. These were the proceedings of the court martial.

After enumerating the several charges, and detailing the evidence of the witnesses examined, the governor came at length to the finding and sentence of the court, which were as follows :—

"The court having duly considered the evidence adduced against the prisoner private Frank Halloway, together with what he has urged in his defence, are of opinion,—

"That with regard to the first charge, it is not proved.

"That with regard to the second charge, it is not proved.

"That with regard to the third charge, even by his own voluntary confession, the prisoner is guilty.

"The court having found the prisoner private Frank Halloway guilty of the third charge preferred against him, which is in direct violation of a standing order of the garrison entailing capital punishment, do hereby sentence him, the said prisoner, private Frank Halloway, to be shot to death at such time and place as the officer commanding may deem fit to appoint."

Although the utmost order pervaded the ranks, every breath had been suspended, every ear stretched during the reading of the sentence; and now that it came arrayed in terror and in blood, every glance was turned in pity on its unhappy victim. But Halloway heard it with the ears of one who has made up his mind to suffer; and the faint half smile that played upon his lip spoke more in scorn than in sorrow. Colonel de Haldimar pursued:—

"The court having found it imperatively incumbent on them to award the punishment of death to the prisoner, private Frank Halloway, at the same time gladly avail themselves of their privilege by strongly recommending him to mercy. The court cannot, in justice to the character of the prisoner, refrain from expressing their unanimous conviction, that notwithstanding the mysterious circumstances which have led to his confinement

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and trial, he is entirely innocent of the treachery ascribed to him. The court have founded this conviction on the excellent character, both on duty and in the field, hitherto borne by the prisoner,—his well known attachment to the officer with whose abduction he stands charged,—and the manly, open, and (as the court are satisfied) correct history given of his former life. It is, moreover, the impression of the court, that, as stated by the prisoner, his guilt on the third charge has been the result only of his attachment for Captain de Haldimar. And for this, and the reasons above assigned, do they strongly recommend the prisoner to mercy.

(Signed)

“NOEL BLESSINGTON,
Captain and President.

“Sentence approved and confirmed.

“CHARLES DE HALDIMAR,
Colonel Commandant.”

While these concluding remarks of the court were being read, the prisoner manifested the deepest emotion. If a smile of scorn had previously played upon his lip, it was because he fancied the court, before whom he had sought to vindicate his fame, had judged him with a severity not inferior to his colonel's; but now that, in the presence of his companions, he heard the flattering attestation of his services, coupled even as it was with the sentence that condemned him to die, tears of gratitude and pleasure rose despite of himself to his eyes; and it required all his self-command to enable him to abstain from giving expression to his feelings towards those who had so generously interpreted the motives of his dereliction from duty. But when the melancholy and startling

fact of the approval and confirmation of the sentence met his ear, without the slightest allusion to that mercy which had been so urgently recommended, he again overcame his weakness, and exhibited his wonted air of calm and unconcern.

"Let the prisoner be removed, Mr. Lawson," ordered the governor, whose stern and somewhat dissatisfied expression of countenance was the only comment on the recommendation for mercy.

The order was promptly executed. Once more Halloway left the square, and was reconducted to the cell he had occupied since the preceding night.

"Major Blackwater," pursued the governor, "let a detachment consisting of one half the garrison be got in readiness to leave the fort within the hour. Captain Wentworth, three pieces of field artillery will be required. Let them be got ready also." He then retired from the area, while the officers, who had just received his commands, prepared to fulfil the respective duties assigned them.

Since the first alarm of the garrison no opportunity had hitherto been afforded the officers to snatch the slightest refreshment. Advantage was now taken of the short interval allowed by the governor, and they all repaired to the mess-room, where their breakfast had long since been provided.

"Well, Blessington," remarked Captain Erskine, as he filled his plate for the third time from a large haunch of smoke-dried venison, for which his recent skirmish with the Indians had given him an unusual relish, "so it appears your recommendation of poor Halloway to mercy is little likely to be attended to. Did you remark how displeased the colonel looked as he bungled through it?"

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One might almost be tempted to think he had an interest in the man's death, so determined does he appear to carry his point."

Although several of his companions, perhaps, felt and thought the same, still there was no one who would have ventured to avow his real sentiments in so unqualified a manner. Indeed such an observation proceeding from the lips of any other officer would have excited the utmost surprise; but Captain Erskine, a brave, bold, frank, and somewhat thoughtless soldier, was one of those beings who are privileged to say any thing. His opinions were usually expressed without ceremony; and his speech was not the most circumspect *now*, as since his return to the fort he had swallowed, fasting, two or three glasses of a favourite spirit, which, without intoxicating, had greatly excited him.

"I remarked enough," said Captain Blessington, who sat leaning his head on one hand, while with the other he occasionally, and almost mechanically, raised a cup filled with a liquid of a pale blood colour to his lips,— "quite enough to make me regret from my very soul I should have been his principal judge. Poor Halloway, I pity him much; for, on my honour, I believe him to be the gentleman he represents himself."

"A finer fellow does not live," remarked the last remaining officer of the grenadiers. "But surely Colonel de Haldimar cannot mean to carry the sentence into effect. The recommendation of a court, couched in such terms as these, ought alone to have some weight with him."

"It is quite clear, from the fact of his having been remanded to his cell, the execution of the poor fellow will be deferred at least," observed one of Captain Erskine's

subalterns. "If the governor had intended he should suffer immediately, he would have had him shot the moment after his sentence was read. But what is the meaning and object of this new sortie? and whither are we now going? Do you know, Captain Erskine, our company is again ordered for this duty?"

"Know it, Leslie! of course I do; and for that reason am I paying my court to the more substantial part of the breakfast. Come, Blessington, my dear fellow, you have quite lost your appetite, and we may have sharp work before we get back. Follow my example: throw that nasty blood-thickening sassafras away, and lay a foundation from this venison. None sweeter is to be found in the forests of America. A few slices of that, and then a glass each of my best Jamaica, and we shall have strength to go through the expedition, if its object be the capture of the bold Pontecac himself."

"I presume the object is rather to seek for Captain de Haldimar," said Lieutenant Boyce, the officer of grenadiers; "but in that case why not send out his own company?"

"Because the colonel prefers trusting to cooler heads and more experienced arms," good-humouredly observed Captain Erskine. "Blessington is our senior, and his men are all old stagers. My lads, too, have had their mettle up already this morning, and there is nothing like that to prepare men for a dash of enterprise. It is with them as with blood horses, the more you put them on their speed the less anxious are they to quit the course. Well, Johnstone, my brave Scot, ready for another skirmish?" he asked, as that officer now entered to satisfy the cravings of an appetite little inferior to that of his captain.

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"With 'Nunquam non paratus' for my motto," gaily returned the young man, "it were odd, indeed, if a mere scratch like this should prevent me from establishing my claim to it by following wherever my gallant captain leads."

"Most courteously spoken, and little in the spirit of a man yet smarting under the infliction of a rifle wound, it must be confessed," remarked Lieutenant Leslie. "But, Johnstone, you should bear in mind a too close adherence to that motto has been, in some degree, fatal to your family."

"No reflections, Leslie, if you please," returned his brother subaltern, slightly reddening. "If the head of our family was unfortunate enough to be considered a traitor to England, he was not so, at least to Scotland; and Scotland was the land of his birth. But let his political errors be forgotten. Though the winged spur no longer adorn the booted heel of an earl of Annandale, the time may not be far distant when some liberal and popular monarch of England shall restore a title forfeited neither through cowardice nor dishonour, but from an erroneous sense of duty."

"That is to say," muttered Ensign Delme, looking round for approval as he spoke, "that our present king is neither liberal nor popular. Well, Mr. Johnstone, were such an observation to reach the ears of Colonel de Haldimar you would stand a very fair chance of being brought to a court martial."

"That is to say nothing of the kind, sir," somewhat fiercely retorted the young Scot; "but any thing I do say you are at liberty to repeat to Colonel de Haldimar, or whom you will. I cannot understand, Leslie, why you should have made any allusion to the misfortunes

of my family at this particular moment, and in this public manner. I trust it was not with a view to offend me;" and he fixed his large black eyes upon his brother subaltern, as if he would have read every thought of his mind.

"Upon my honour, Johnstone, I meant nothing of the kind," frankly returned Leslie. "I merely meant to hint that as you had had your share of service this morning, you might, at least, have suffered me to borrow your spurs, while you reposed for the present on your laurels."

"There are my gay and gallant Sects," exclaimed Captain Erskine, as he swallowed off a glass of the old Jamaica which lay before him, and with which he usually neutralised the acidities of a meat breakfast. "Settled like gentlemen and lads of spirit, as ye are," he pursued, as the young men cordially shook each other's hand across the table. "What an enviable command is mine, to have a company of brave fellows who would face the devil himself were it necessary; and two hot and impatient subs., who are ready to cut each other's throat for the pleasure of accompanying me against a set of savages that are little better than so many devils. Come, Johnstone, you know the colonel allows us but one sub. at a time, in consequence of our scarcity of officers, therefore it is but fair Leslie should have his turn. It will not be long, I dare say, before we shall have another brush with the rascals."

"In my opinion," observed Captain Blessington, who had been a silent and thoughtful witness of what was passing around him, "neither Leslie nor Johnstone would evince so much anxiety, were they aware of the true nature of the duty for which our companies have been ordered. Depend upon it, it is no search after

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Captain de Haldimar in which we are about to be engaged; for much as the colonel loves his son, he would on no account compromise the safety of the garrison, by sending a party into the forest, where poor De Haldimar, if alive, is at all likely to be found."

"Faith you are right, Blessington; the governor is not one to run these sort of risks on every occasion. My chief surprise, indeed, is, that he suffered me to venture even upon the common; but if we are not designed for some hostile expedition, why leave the fort at all?"

"The question will need no answer, if Halloway be found to accompany us."

"Psha! why should Halloway be taken out for the purpose? If he be shot at all, he will be shot on the ramparts, in the presence of, and as an example to, the whole garrison. Still, on reflection, I cannot but think it impossible the sentence should be carried into full effect, after the strong, nay, the almost unprecedented recommendation to mercy recorded on the face of the proceedings."

Captain Blessington shook his head despondingly. "What think you, Erskine, of the policy of making an example, which may be witnessed by the enemy as well as the garrison? It is evident, from his demeanour throughout, nothing will convince the colonel that Halloway is not a traitor, and he may think it advisable to strike terror in the minds of the savages, by an execution which will have the effect of showing the treason of the soldier to have been discovered."

In this opinion many of the officers now concurred; and as the fate of the unfortunate Halloway began to assume a character of almost certainty, even the spirit

of the gallant Erskine, the least subdued by the recent distressing events, was overclouded; and all sank, as if by one consent, into silent communion with their thoughts, as they almost mechanically completed the meal, at which habit rather than appetite still continued them. Before any of them had yet risen from the table, a loud and piercing scream met their ears from without; and so quick and universal was the movement it produced, that its echo had scarcely yet died away in distance, when the whole of the breakfast party had issued from the room, and were already spectators of the cause.

As the officers now passed from the mess-room nearly opposite to the gate, they observed, at that part of the barracks which ran at right angles with it, and immediately in front of the apartment of the younger De Haldimar, whence he had apparently just issued, the governor, struggling, though gently, to disengage himself from a female, who, with disordered hair and dress, lay almost prostrate upon the piazza, and clasping his booted leg with an energy evidently borrowed from the most rooted despair. The quick eye of the haughty man had already rested on the group of officers drawn by the scream of the suppliant. Numbers, too, of the men, attracted by the same cause, were collected in front of their respective block-houses, and looking from the windows of the rooms in which they were also breakfasting, preparatory to the expedition. Vexed and irritated beyond measure, at being thus made a conspicuous object of observation to his inferiors, the unbending governor made a violent and successful effort to disengage his leg; and then, without uttering a word, or otherwise noticing the unhappy being who lay extended at his feet, he stalked across the parade to his

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apartments at the opposite angle, without appearing to manifest the slightest consciousness of the scene that had awakened such universal attention.

Several of the officers, among whom was Captain Blesington, now hastened to the assistance of the female, whom all had recognised, from the first, to be the interesting and unhappy wife of Halloway. Many of the comrades of the latter, who had been pained and pitying spectators of the scene, also advanced for the same purpose; but, on perceiving their object anticipated by their superiors, they withdrew to the block-houses, whence they had issued. Never was grief more forcibly depicted, than in the whole appearance of this unfortunate woman; never did anguish assume a character more fitted to touch the soul, or to command respect. Her long fair hair, that had hitherto been hid under the coarse mob cap, usually worn by the wives of the soldiers, was now divested of all fastening, and lay shadowing a white and polished bosom, which, in her violent struggles to detain the governor, had burst from its rude but modest confinement, and was now displayed in all the dazzling delicacy of youth and sex. If the officers gazed for a moment with excited look upon charms that had long been strangers to their sight, and of an order they had little deemed to find in Ellen Halloway, it was but the involuntary tribute rendered by nature unto beauty. The depth and sacredness of that sorrow, which had left the wretched woman unconscious of her exposure, in the instant afterwards imposed a check upon admiration, which each felt to be a violation of the first principles of human delicacy, and the feeling was repressed almost in the moment that gave it birth.

They were immediately in front of the room occupied

by Charles de Haldimar, in the piazza of which were a few old chairs, on which the officers were in the habit of throwing themselves during the heat of the day. On one of these Captain Blessington, assisted by the officer of grenadiers, now seated the suffering and sobbing wife of Halloway. His first care was to repair the disorder of her dress; and never was the same office performed by man with greater delicacy, or absence of levity by those who witnessed it. This was the first moment of her consciousness. The inviolability of modesty for a moment rose paramount even to the desolation of her heart, and putting rudely aside the hand that reposed unavoidably upon her person, the poor woman started from her seat, and looked wildly about her, as if endeavouring to identify those by whom she was surrounded. But when she observed the pitying gaze of the officers fixed upon her, in earnestness and commiseration, and heard the benevolent accents of the ever kind Blessington exhorting her to composure, her weeping became more violent and her sobs more convulsive. Captain Blessington threw an arm round her waist to prevent her from falling; and then motioning to two or three women of the company to which her husband was attached, who stood at a little distance, in front of one of the block-houses, prepared to deliver her over to their charge.

"No, no, not yet!" burst at length from the lips of the agonised woman, as she shrank from the rude but well intentioned touch of the sympathising assistants, who had promptly answered the signal; then, as if obeying some new direction of her feelings, some new impulse of her grief, she liberated herself from the slight grasp of Captain Blessington, turned suddenly round, and, before any one could anticipate the movement, entered an open-

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ing on the piazza, raised the latch of a door situated at its extremity, and was, in the next instant, in the apartment of the younger De Haldimar.

The scene that met the eyes of the officers, who now followed close after her, was one well calculated to make an impression on the hearts even of the most insensible. In the despair and recklessness of her extreme sorrow, the young wife of Halloway had already thrown herself upon her knees at the bed side of the sick officer; and, with her hands upraised and firmly clasped together, was now supplicating him in tones, contrasting singularly in their gentleness with the depth of the sorrow that had rendered her thus regardless of appearances, and insensible to observation.

"Oh, Mr. de Haldimar!" she implored, "in the name of God and of our blessed Saviour, if you would save me from madness, intercede for my unhappy husband, and preserve him from the horrid fate that awaits him. You are too good, too gentle, too amiable, to reject the prayer of a heart-broken woman. Moreover Mr. de Haldimar," she proceeded, with deeper energy, while she caught and pressed, between her own white and bloodless hands, one nearly as delicate that lay extended near her. "consider all my dear but unfortunate husband has done for your family. Think of the blood he once spilt in the defence of your brother's life; that brother, through whom alone, oh God! he is now condemned to die. Call to mind the days and nights of anguish I passed near his couch of suffering, when yet writhing beneath the wound aimed at the life of Captain de Haldimar. Almighty Providence!" she pursued, in the same impassioned yet plaintive voice, "why is not Miss Clara here to plead the cause of the innocent, and to touch the stubborn heart of

her merciless father? She would, indeed, move heaven and earth to save the life of him to whom she so often vowed eternal gratitude and acknowledgment. Ah, she little dreams of his danger now; or, if prayer and intercession could avail, my husband should yet live, and this terrible struggle at my heart would be no more."

Overcome by her emotion, the unfortunate woman suffered her aching head to droop upon the edge of the bed, and her sobbing became so painfully violent, that all who heard her expected, at every moment, some fatal termination to her immoderate grief. Charles de Haldimar was little less affected; and his sorrow was the more bitter, as he had just proved the utter inefficacy of any thing in the shape of appeal to his inflexible father.

"Mrs. Halloway, my dear Mrs. Halloway, compose yourself," said Captain Blessington, now approaching, and endeavouring to raise her gently from the floor, on which she still knelt, while her hands even more firmly grasped that of De Haldimar. "You are ill, very ill, and the consequences of this dreadful excitement may be fatal. Be advised by me, and retire. I have desired my room to be prepared for you, and Sergeant Wilmot's wife shall remain with you as long as you may require it.

"No, no, no!" she again exclaimed with energy; "what care I for my own wretched life—my beloved and unhappy husband is to die. Oh God! to die without guilt—to be cut off in his youth—to be shot as a traitor—and that simply for obeying the wishes of the officer whom he loved!—the son of the man who now spurns all supplication from his presence. It is inhuman, it is unjust—and Heaven will punish the hard-hearted man who murders him—yes, murders him! for such a punishment for such an offence is nothing less than murder." Again

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she wept bitterly, and as Captain Blessington still essayed to soothe and raise her:—"No, no! I will not leave this spot," she continued; "I will not quit the side of Mr. de Haldimar, until he pledges himself to intercede for my poor husband. It is his duty to save the life of him who saved his brother's life; and God and human justice are with my appeal. Oh, tell me, then, Mr. de Haldimar,—if you would save my wretched heart from breaking,—tell me you will intercede for, and obtain the pardon of my husband!"

As she concluded this last sentence in passionate appeal, she had risen from her knees; and, conscious only of the importance of the boon solicited, now threw herself upon the breast of the highly pained and agitated young officer. Her long and beautiful hair fell floating over his face, and mingled with his own, while her arms were wildly clasped around him, in all the energy of frantic and hopeless adjuration.

"Almighty God!" exclaimed the agitated young man, as he made a feeble and fruitless effort to raise the form of the unhappy woman; "what shall I say to impart comfort to this suffering being? Oh, Mrs. Halloway," he pursued, "I would willingly give all I possess in this world to be the means of saving your unfortunate husband,—and as much for his own sake as for yours would I do this; but, alas! I have not the power. Do not think I speak without conviction. My father has just been with me, and I have pleaded the cause of your husband with an earnestness I should scarcely have used had my own life been at stake. But all my entreaties have been in vain. He is obstinate in the belief my brother's strange absence, and Donellan's death, are attributable only to the treason of Halloway. Still there is a hope.

A detachment is to leave the fort within the hour, and Halloway is to accompany them. It may be, my father intends this measure only with a view to terrify him into a confession of guilt; and that he deems it politic to make him undergo all the fearful preliminaries without carrying the sentence itself into effect."

The unfortunate woman said no more. When she raised her heaving chest from that of the young officer, her eyes, though red and shrunk to half their usual size with weeping, were tearless; but on her countenance there was an expression of wild woe, infinitely more distressing to behold, in consequence of the almost unnatural check so suddenly imposed upon her feelings. She tottered, rather than walked, through the group of officers, who gave way on either hand to let her pass; and rejecting all assistance from the women who had followed into the room, and who now, in obedience to another signal from Captain Blessington, hastened to her support, finally gained the door and quitted the apartment.

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CHAPTER IX.

The sun was high in the meridian, as the second detachment, commanded by Colonel de Haldimar in person, issued from the fort of Detroit. It was that soft and hazy season, peculiar to the bland and beautiful autumns of Canada, when the golden light of Heaven seems as if transmitted through a veil of tissue, and all of animate and inanimate nature, expanding and fructifying beneath its fostering influence, breathes the most delicious languor and voluptuous repose. It was one of those still, calm, warm, and genial days, which in those regions come under the vulgar designation of the Indian summer; a season that is ever hailed by the Canadian with a satisfaction proportioned to the extreme sultriness of the summer, and the equally oppressive rigour of the winter, by which it is immediately preceded and followed.

Such a day as that we have just described was the —of September, 1763, when the chief portion of the English garrison of Detroit issued forth from the fortifications in which they had so long been cooped up, and in the presumed execution of a duty undeniably the most trying and painful that ever fell to the lot of soldier to perform. The detachment wended its slow and solemn course, with a mournful pageantry of pre-

paration that gave fearful earnest to the tragedy expected to be enacted.

In front, and dragged by the hands of the gunners, moved two of the three three-pounders, that had been ordered for the duty. Behind these came Captain Blesington's company, and in their rear, the prisoner Halloy, divested of his uniform, and clad in a white cotton jacket, and cap of the same material. Six rank and file of the grenadiers followed, under the command of a corporal, and behind these again, came eight men of the same company; four of whom bore on their shoulders a coffin, covered with a coarse black pair that had perhaps already assisted at fifty interments; while the other four carried, in addition to their own, the muskets of their burdened comrades. After these, marched a solitary drummer-boy; whose tall bear-skin cap attested him to be of the grenadiers also, while his muffled instrument marked the duty for which he had been selected. Like his comrades, none of whom exhibited their scarlet uniforms, he wore the collar of his great coat closely buttoned beneath his chin, which was only partially visible above the stiff leathern stock that encircled his neck. Although his features were half buried in his huge cap and the high collar of his coat, there was an air of delicacy about his person that seemed to render him unsuited to such an office; and more than once was Captain Erskine, who followed immediately behind him at the head of his company, compelled to call sharply to the urchin, threatening him with a week's drill unless he mended his feeble and unequal pace, and kept from under the feet of his men. The remaining gun brought up the rear of the detachment, who marched with fixed bayonets and two balls in each musket; the whole pre-

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senting a front of sections, that completely filled up the road along which they passed. Colonel de Maldimar, Captain Wentworth, and the Adjutant Lawson followed in the extreme rear.

An event so singular as that of the appearance of the English without their fort, beset as they were by a host of fierce and dangerous enemies, was not likely to pass unnoticed by a single individual in the little village of Detroit. We have already observed, that most of the colonist settlers had been cruelly massacred at the very onset of hostilities. Not so, however, with the Canadians, who, from their anterior relations with the natives, and the mutual and tacit good understanding that subsisted between both parties, were suffered to continue in quiet and unmolested possession of their homes, where they preserved an avowed neutrality, never otherwise infringed than by the assistance secretly and occasionally rendered to the English troops, whose gold they were glad to receive in exchange for the necessaries of life.

Every dwelling of the infant town had commenced giving up its tenants, from the moment when the head of the detachment was seen traversing the drawbridge; so that, by the time it reached the highway, and took its direction to the left, the whole population of Detroit were already assembled in groups, and giving expression to their several conjectures, with a vivacity of language and energy of gesticulation that would not have disgraced the parent land itself. As the troops drew nearer, however, they all sank at once into a silence, as much the result of certain unacknowledged and undefined fears, as of the respect the English had ever been accustomed to exact.

At the further extremity of the town, and at a bend in the road, which branched off more immediately towards the river, stood a small public house, whose creaking sign bore three ill executed fleur-de-lis, apologetic emblems of the arms of France. The building itself was little more than a rude log hut, along the front of which ran a plank, supported by two stumps of trees, and serving as a temporary accommodation both for the traveller and the inmate. On this bench three persons, apparently attracted by the beauty of the day and the mildness of the autumnal sun, were now seated, two of whom were leisurely puffing their pipes, while the third, a female, was employed in carding wool, a quantity of which lay in a basket at her feet, while she warbled, in a low tone, one of the simple airs of her native land. The elder of the two men, whose age might be about fifty, offered nothing remarkable in his appearance; he was dressed in a coat made of the common white blanket, while his hair, cut square upon the forehead, and tied into a club of nearly a foot long, fell into the cape or hood attached to it.

His companion was habited in a still more extraordinary manner. His lower limbs were cased, up to the mid-thigh, in leathern leggings, the seam of which was on the outside, leaving a margin, or border, of about an inch wide, which had been slit into innumerable small fringes, giving them an air of elegance and lightness: a garter of leather, curiously wrought, with the stained quills of the porcupine, encircled each leg, immediately under the knee, where it was tied in a bow, and then suffered to hang pendant half way down the limb; to the fringes of the leggings, moreover, were attached numerous dark-coloured horny substances, emitting, as they

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rattled against each other, at the slightest movement of the wearer, a tinkling sound, resembling that produced by a number of small thin delicate brass bells; these were the tender hoofs of the wild deer, dried, scraped, and otherwise prepared for this ornamental purpose.

The form and face of this individual were in perfect keeping with the style of his costume, and the character of his equipment. His stature was beyond that of the ordinary race of men, and his athletic and muscular limbs united the extremes of strength and activity. His features, marked and prominent, wore a cast of habitual thought, strangely tinctured with ferocity; and the expression of his otherwise not unhandsome countenance was repellent and disdainful. At the first glance he might have been taken for one of the swarthy natives of the soil; but though time and constant exposure to scorching suns had given to his complexion a dusky hue, still there was wanting the quick, black, penetrating eye; the high cheek bone; the straight, coarse, shining black hair; the small bony hand and foot; and the placidly proud and serious air, by which the former is distinguished. His own eye was of a deep bluish gray; his hair short, dark, and wavy; his hands large and muscular; and so far from exhibiting any of the self-command of the Indian, the constant play of his features betrayed each passing thought with the same rapidity with which it was conceived. But if any doubt could have existed in the mind of him who beheld this strangely accoutred figure, it would have been instantly dispelled by a glance at his limbs. From his leggings to the hip, that portion of the lower limb was completely bare, and disclosed, at each movement of the garment that was suffered to fall loosely over it, not the swarthy and copper-coloured flesh of the Indian,

but the pale though sun-burnt skin of one of a more temperate clime. His age might be about forty-five.

At the moment when the English detachment approached the bend in the road, these two individuals were conversing earnestly together, pausing only to puff at intervals thick and wreathing volumes of smoke from their pipes, which were filled with a mixture of tobacco and odoriferous herbs. Presently, however, sounds that appeared familiar to his ear arrested the attention of the wildly accoutred being we have last described. It was the heavy roll of the artillery carriages already advancing along the road, and somewhat in the rear of the hut. To dash his pipe to the ground, seize and cock and raise his rifle to his shoulder, was but the work of a moment. Startled by the suddenness of the action, his male companion moved a few paces also from his seat, to discover the cause of this singular movement. The female, on the contrary, stirred not, but ceasing for a moment the occupation in which she had been engaged, fixed her dark and brilliant eyes upon the tall form of the rifleman, whose athletic limbs, thrown into powerful relief by the distention of each nerve and muscle, appeared to engross her whole admiration and interest, without any reference to the cause that had produced this abrupt and hostile change in his movements. It was evident that, unlike the other inhabitants of the town, this group had been taken by surprise, and were utterly unprepared to expect any thing in the shape of interruption.

For upwards of a minute, during which the march of the men became audible even to the ears of the female, the formidable warrior, for such his garb denoted him to be, continued motionless in the attitude he had at first

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assumed. No sooner, however, had the head of the advancing column come within sight, than the aim was taken, the trigger pulled, and the small and ragged bullet sped hissing from the grooved and delicate barrel. A triumphant cry was next pealed from the lips of the warrior,—a cry produced by the quickly repeated application and removal of one hand to and from the mouth, while the other suffered the butt end of the now harmless weapon to fall loosely upon the earth. He then slowly and deliberately withdrew within the cover of the hut.

This daring action, which had been viewed by the leading troops with astonishment not unmingled with alarm, occasioned a temporary confusion in the ranks, for all believed they had fallen into an ambuscade of the Indians. A halt was instantly commanded by Captain Blessington, in order to give time to the governor to come up from the rear, while he proceeded with one of the leading sections to reconnoitre the front of the hut. To his surprise, however, he found neither enemy, nor evidence that an enemy had been there. The only individuals visible were the Canadian, and the dark-eyed female. Both were seated on the bench;—the one smoking his pipe with a well assumed appearance of unconcern—the other carding her wool, but with a hand that by a close observer might be seen to tremble in its office, and a cheek that was paler than at the moment when we first placed her before the imagination of the reader. Both, however, started with unaffected surprise on seeing Captain Blessington and his little force turn the corner of the house from the main road; and certain looks of recognition passed between all parties, that proved them to be no strangers to each other.

“Ah, monsieur,” said the Canadian, in a mingled

dialect, neither French nor English, while he attempted an ease and freedom of manner that was too miserably affected to pass current with the mild but observant officer whom he addressed, "how much surprise I am, and glad to see you. It is a long times since you came out of de fort. I hope de gouverneur and de officir be all very well. I was tinkng to go to-day to see if you want any ting. I have got some nice rum of the Jamaique for Capitaine Erskine. Will you please to try some?" While speaking, the voluble host of the Fleur de lis had risen from his seat, laid aside his pipe, and now stood with his hands thrust into his pockets of his blanket coat.

"It is indeed a long time since we have been here, Master François," somewhat sarcastically and drily replied Captain Blessington; "and you have not visited us quite so often latterly yourself, though well aware we were in want of fresh provisions. I give you all due credit, however, for your intention of coming to-day, but you see we have anticipated you. Still this is not the point. Where is the Indian who fired at us just now? and how is it we find you leagued with our enemies?"

"What, sir, is it you say?" asked the Canadian, holding up his hands with feigned astonishment. "Me league myself with de savage. Upon my honour I did not see nobody fire, or I should tell you. I love de English too well to do dem harms."

"Come, come, François, no nonsense. If I cannot make you confess, there is one not far from me who will. You know Colonel de Haldimar too well to imagine he will be trifled with in this manner: if he detects you in a falsehood, he will certainly cause you to be hanged up at the first tree. Take my advice, therefore, and say

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where you have secreted this Indian ; and recollect, if we fall into an ambuscade, your life will be forfeited at the first shot we hear fired."

At this moment the governor, followed by his adjutant, came rapidly up to the spot. Captain Blessington communicated the ill success of his queries, when the former cast on the terrified Canadian one of those severe and searching looks which he so well knew how to assume.

"Where is the rascal who fired at us, sirrah? tell me instantly, or you have not five minutes to live."

The heart of mine host of the Fleur de lis quailed within him at this formidable threat; and the usually ruddy hue of his countenance had now given place to an ashy paleness. Still as he had positively denied all knowledge of the matter on which he was questioned, he appeared to feel his safety lay in adhering to his original statement. Again, therefore, he assured the governor, on his honour (laying his hand upon his heart as he spoke,) that what he had already stated was the fact.

"Your honour—you pitiful trading scoundrel—how dare you talk to me of your honour? Come, sir, confess at once where you have secreted this fellow, or prepare to die."

"If I may be so bold, your honour," said one of Captain Blessington's men, "the Frenchman lies. When the Indian fired among us, this fellow was peeping under his shoulder and watching us also. If I had not seen him too often at the fort to be mistaken in his person, I should have known him, at all events, by his blanket coat and red handkerchief."

This blunt statement of the soldier, confirmed as it was the instant afterwards by one of his comrades, was

damning proof against the Canadian, even if the fact of the rifle being discharged from the front of the hut had not already satisfied all parties of the falsehood of his assertion.

"Come forward, a couple of files, and seize this villain," resumed the governor with his wonted sternness of manner. "Mr. Lawson, see if his hut does not afford a rope strong enough to hang the traitor from one of his own apple trees."

Both parties proceeded at the same moment to execute the two distinct orders of their chief. The Canadian was now firmly secured in the grasp of the two men who had given evidence against him, when, seeing all the horror of the dreadful fate that awaited him, he confessed the individual who had fired had been sitting with him the instant previously, but that he knew no more of him than of any other savage occasionally calling at the Fleur de lis. He added, that on discharging the rifle he had bounded across the palings of the orchard, and fled in the direction of the forest. He denied all knowledge or belief of an enemy waiting in ambush; stating, moreover, even the individual in question had not been aware of the sortie of the detachment until apprised of their near approach by the heavy sound of the gun carriages.

"Here are undeniable proofs of the man's villany, sir," said the adjutant, returning from the hut and exhibiting objects of new and fearful interest to the governor. "This hat and rope I found secreted in one of the bedrooms of the auberge. The first is evidently Donellan's; and from the hook attached to the latter, I apprehend it to be the same stated to have been used by Captain de Haldimar in crossing the ditch."

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The governor took the hat and rope from the hands of his subordinate, examined them attentively, and after a few moments of deep musing, during which his countenance underwent several rapid though scarcely perceptible changes, turned suddenly and eagerly to the soldier who had first convicted the Canadian in his falsehood, and demanded if he had seen enough of the man who had fired to be able to give even a general description of his person.

"Why yes, your honour, I think I can; for the fellow stood long enough after firing his piece, for a painter to have taken him off from head to foot. He was a taller and larger man by far than our biggest grenadier, and that is poor Harry Donellan, as your honour knows. But as for his dress, though I could see it all, I scarcely can tell how to describe it. All I know is, he was covered with smoked deer skin, in some such fashion as the great chief Pontecac, only, instead of having his head bare and shaved, he wore a strange outlandish sort of a hat, covered over with wild birds' feathers in front."

"Enough," interrupted the governor, motioning the man to silence; then, in an under tone to himself,—“By heaven, the very same.” A shade of disappointment, and suppressed alarm, passed rapidly across his brow; it was but momentary. “Captain Blessington,” he ordered quickly and impatiently, “search the hut and grounds for this lurking Indian, who is, no doubt, secreted in the neighbourhood. Quick, quick, sir; there is no time to be lost.” Then in an intimidating tone to the Canadian, who had already dropped on his knees, supplicating mercy, and vociferating his innocence in the same breath,—“So, you infernal scoundrel, this is the manner in which you have repaid our confidence. Where

is my son, sir? Or have you already murdered him, as you did his servant? Tell me, you villain, what have you to say to these proofs of your treachery? But stay, I shall take another and fitter opportunity to question you. Mr. Lawson, secure this traitor properly, and let him be conveyed to the centre of the detachment."

The mandate was promptly obeyed; and in despite of his own unceasing prayers and protestations of innocence, and the tears and entreaties of his dark-eyed daughter Babette, who had thrown herself on her knees at his side, the stout arms of mine host of the Fleur de lis were soon firmly secured behind his back with the strong rope that had been found under such suspicious circumstances in his possession. Before he was marched off, however two of the men who had been sent in pursuit, returned from the orchard, stating that further search was now fruitless. They had penetrated through a small thicket at the extremity of the grounds, and had distinctly seen a man answering the description given by their comrades, in full flight towards the forest skirting the heights in front.

The governor was evidently far from being satisfied with the result of a search too late instituted to leave even a prospect of success. "Where are the Indians principally encamped, sirrah?" he sternly demanded of his captive; "answer me truly, or I will carry off this wench as well, and if a single hair of a man of mine be even singed by a shot from a skulking enemy, you may expect to see her bayoneted before your eyes."

"Ah, my God! Monsieur le Gouverneur," exclaimed the affrighted aubergiste, "as I am an honest man, I shall tell de truth, but spare my child. They are all in de forest, and half a mile from de little river dat runs between dis and de Pork Island."

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"Hog Island, I suppose you mean."

"Yes sir, de Hog Island is de one I means."

"Conduct him to the centre, and let him be confronted with the prisoner," directed the governor, addressing his adjutant; "Captain Blessington, your men may resume their stations in the ranks." The order was obeyed; and notwithstanding the tears and supplications of the now highly excited Babette, who flung herself upon his neck, and was only removed by force, the terrified Canadian was borne off from his premises by the troops.

CHAPTER X.

While this scene was enacting in front of the *Fleur de lis*, one of a far more touching and painful nature was passing in the very heart of the detachment itself. At the moment when the halt was ordered by Captain Blessington, a rumour ran through the ranks that they had reached the spot destined for the execution of their ill-fated comrade. Those only in the immediate front were aware of the true cause; but although the report of the rifle had been distinctly heard by all, it had been attributed by those in the rear to the accidental discharge of one of their own muskets. A low murmur, expressive of the opinion generally entertained, passed gradually from rear to front, until it at length reached the ears of the delicate drummer boy who marched behind the coffin. His face was still buried in the collar of his coat; and what was left uncovered of his features by the cap, was in some degree hidden by the forward drooping of his head upon his chest. Hitherto he had moved almost mechanically along, tottering and embarrassing himself at every step under the cumbrous drum that was suspended from a belt round his neck over the left thigh; but now there was a certain indescribable drawing up of the frame, and tension of the whole person, denoting a concentration of all the moral and physical energies,—a sudden working

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At the first halt of the detachment, the weary supporters of the coffin had deposited their rude and sombre burden upon the earth, preparatory to its being resumed by those appointed to relieve them. The dull sound emitted by the hollow fabric, as it touched the ground, caught the ear of him for whom it was destined, and he turned to gaze upon the sad and lonely tenement so shortly to become his final resting place. There was an air of calm composure and dignified sorrow upon his brow, that infused respect into the hearts of all who beheld him; and even the men selected to do the duty of executioners sought to evade his glance, as his steady eye wandered from right to left of the fatal rank. His attention, however, was principally directed towards the coffin, which lay before him; on this he gazed fixedly for upwards of a minute. He then turned his eyes in the direction of the fort, shuddered, heaved a profound sigh, and looking up to heaven, with the apparent fervour that became his situation, seemed to pray for a moment or two inwardly and devoutly. The thick and almost suffocating breathing of one immediately beyond the coffin, was now distinctly heard by all. Halloway started from his attitude of devotion, gazed earnestly on the form whence it proceeded, and then wildly extending his arms, suffered a smile of satisfaction to illumine his pale features. All eyes were now turned upon the drummer boy, who, evidently labouring under convulsive excitement of feeling, suddenly dashed his cap and instrument to the earth, and flew as fast as his tottering and uncertain steps would admit across the coffin, and into the arms extended to receive him.

"My Ellen! oh, my own devoted, but too unhappy Ellen!" passionately exclaimed the soldier, as he clasped the slight and agitated form of his disguised wife to his throbbing heart. "This, this, indeed, is joy even in death. I thought I could have died more happily without you, but nature tugs powerfully at my heart; and to see you once more, to feel you once more *here*," (and he pressed her wildly to his chest,) "is indeed a bliss that robs my approaching fate of half its terror."

"Oh Reginald! my dearly beloved, Reginald! my murdered husband!" shrieked the unhappy woman; "your Ellen will not survive you. Her heart is already broken, though she cannot weep; but the same grave shall contain us both. Reginald, do you believe me? I swear it; the same grave shall contain us both."

Exhausted with the fatigue and excitement she had undergone, the faithful and affectionate creature now lay, without sense or motion, in the arms of her wretched husband. Halloway bore her, unopposed, a pace or two in advance, and deposited her unconscious form on the fatal coffin.

No language of ours can render justice to the trying character of the scene. All who witnessed it were painfully affected, and over the bronzed cheek of many a veteran coursed a tear, that, like that of Sterne's recording angel, might have blotted out a catalogue of sins. Although each was prepared to expect a reprimand from the governor, for suffering the prisoner to quit his station in the ranks, humanity and nature pleaded too powerfully in his behalf, and neither officer or man attempted to interfere, unless with a view to render assistance. Captain Erskine, in particular, was deeply pained, and would have given any thing to recal the harsh language

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he had used towards the supposed idle and inattentive drummer boy. Taking from a pocket in his uniform a small flask of brandy, which he had provided against casualties, the compassionating officer slightly raised the head of the pale and unconscious woman with one hand, while with the other he introduced a few drops between her parted lips. Halloway knelt at the opposite side of the coffin; one hand searching, but in vain, the suspended pulse of his inanimate wife; the other, unbuttoning the breast of the drum-boy's jacket, which, with every other part of the equipment, she wore beneath the loose great coat so effectually accomplishing her disguise.

Such was the position of the chief actors in this truly distressing drama, at the moment when Colonel de Haldimar came up with his new prisoner, to mark what effect would be produced on Halloway by his unexpected appearance. His own surprise and disappointment may be easily conceived, when, in the form of the recumbent being who seemed to engross universal attention, he recognised, by the fair and streaming hair, and half exposed bosom, the unfortunate being whom, only two hours previously, he had spurned from his feet in the costume of her own sex, and reduced, by the violence of her grief, to almost infantine debility. Question succeeded question to those around, but without eliciting any clue to the means by which this mysterious disguise had been effected. No one had been aware, until the truth was so singularly and suddenly revealed, the supposed drummer was any other than one of the lads attached to the grenadiers; and as for the other facts, they spoke too plainly to the comprehension of the governor to need explanation. Once more, however, the detachment was called to order. Halloway struck his hand violently upon his

brow, kissed the wan lips of his still unconscious wife, breathing as he did so, a half murmured hope she might indeed be the corpse she appeared. He then raised himself from the earth with a light and elastic yet firm movement, and resumed the place he had previously occupied, where, to his surprise, he beheld a second victim bound, and, apparently, devoted to the same death. When the eyes of the two unhappy men met, the governor closely watched the expression of the countenance of each; but although the Canadian started on beholding the soldier, it might be merely because he saw the latter arrayed in the garb of death, and followed by the most unequivocal demonstrations of a doom to which he himself was, in all probability, devoted. As for Halloway, his look betrayed neither consciousness nor recognition; and though too proud to express complaint or to give vent to the feelings of his heart, his whole soul appeared to be absorbed in the unhappy partner of his luckless destiny. Presently he saw her borne, and in the same state of insensibility, in the arms of Captain Erskine and Lieutenant Leslie, towards the hut of his fellow prisoner, and he heard the former officer enjoin the weeping girl, Babette, to whose charge they delivered her over, to pay every attention to her her situation might require. The detachment then proceeded.

The narrow but deep and rapid river alluded to by the Canadian, as running midway between the town and Hog Island, derived its source far within the forest, and formed the bed of one of those wild, dark, and thickly wooded ravines so common in America. As it neared the Detroit, however, the abruptness of its banks was so considerably lessened, as to render the approach to it on the town side over an almost imperceptible slope. Within

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a few yards of its mouth, as we have already observed, a rude but strong wooden bridge, over which lay the high road, had been constructed by the French; and from the centre of this, all the circuit of intermediate clearing, even to the very skirt of the forest, was distinctly commanded by the naked eye. To the right, on approaching it from the town, lay the adjacent shores of Canada, washed by the broad waters of the Detroit, on which it was thrown into strong relief, and which, at the distance of about a mile in front, was seen to diverge into two distinct channels, pursuing each a separate course, until they again met at the western extremity of Hog Island. On the left, and in the front, rose a succession of slightly undulating hills, which, at a distance of little more than half a mile, terminated in an elevation considerably above the immediate level of the Detroit side of the ravine. That, again, was crowned with thick and overhanging forest, taking its circular sweep around the fort. The intermediate ground was studded over with rude stumps of trees, and bore, in various directions, distinct proofs of the spoliation wrought among the infant possessions of the murdered English settlers. The view to the rear was less open; the town being partially hidden by the fruit-laden orchards that lined the intervening high road, and hung principally on its left. This was not the case with the fort. Between these orchards and the distant forest lay a line of open country, fully commanded by its cannon, even to the ravine we have described, and in a sweep that embraced every thing from the bridge itself to the forest, in which all traces of its source was lost.

When the detachment had arrived within twenty yards of the bridge, they were made to file off to the left, until the last gun had come up. They were then fronted; the

rear section of Captain Erskine's company resting on the road, and the left flank, covered by the two first guns pointed obliquely, both in front and rear, to guard against surprise, in the event of any of the Indians stealing round to the cover of the orchards. The route by which they had approached this spot was upwards of two miles in extent; but, as they now filed off into the open ground, the leading sections observed, in a direct line over the cleared country, and at the distance of little more than three quarters of a mile, the dark ramparts of the fortress that contained their comrades, and could even distinguish the uniforms of the officers and men drawn up in line along the works, where they were evidently assembled to witness the execution of the sentence on Halloway.

Such a sight as that of the English so far from their fort, was not likely to escape the notice of the Indians. Their encampment, as the Canadian had truly stated, lay within the forest, and beyond the elevated ground already alluded to; and to have crossed the ravine, or ventured out of reach of the cannon of the fort, would have been to have sealed the destruction of the detachment. But the officer to whom their security was entrusted, although he had his own particular views for venturing thus far, knew also at what point to stop; and such was the confidence of his men in his skill and prudence, they would have fearlessly followed wherever he might have chosen to lead. Still, even amid all the solemnity of preparation attendant on the duty they were out to perform, there was a natural and secret apprehensiveness about each, that caused him to cast his eyes frequently and fixedly on that part of the forest which was known to afford cover to their merciless foes. At times they fancied they beheld the dark and fitting forms of men gliding from

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tree to tree along the skirt of the wood; but when they gazed again, nothing of the kind was to be seen, and the illusion was at once ascribed to the heavy state of the atmosphere, and the action of their own precautionary instincts.

Meanwhile the solemn tragedy of death was preparing in mournful silence. On the centre of the bridge, and visible to those even within the fort, was placed the coffin of Holloway, and at twelve paces in front were drawn up the six rank and file on whom had devolved, by lot, the cruel duty of the day. With calm and fearless eye the prisoner surveyed the preparations for his approaching end; and whatever might be the inward workings of his mind, there was not among the assembled soldiery one individual whose countenance betrayed so little of sorrow and emotion as his own. With a firm step, when summoned, he moved towards the fatal coffin, dashing his cap to the earth as he advanced, and baring his chest with the characteristic contempt of death of the soldier. When he had reached the centre of the bridge, he turned facing his comrades, and knelt upon the coffin. Captain Blessington, who, permitted by the governor, had followed him with a sad heart and heavy step, now drew a prayer-book from his pocket, and read from it in a low voice. He then closed the volume, listened to something the prisoner earnestly communicated to him, received a small packet which he drew from the bosom of his shirt, shook him long and cordially by the hand, and then hastily resumed his post at the head of the detachment.

The principal inhabitants of the village, led by curiosity, had followed at a distance to witness the execution of the condemned soldier; and above the heads of the line, and crowning the slope, were collected groups of

both sexes and of all ages, that gave a still more imposing character to the scene. Every eye was now turned upon the firing party, who only awaited the signal to execute their melancholy office, when suddenly, in the direction of the forest, and upon the extreme height, there burst the tremendous and deafening yells of more than a thousand savages. For an instant Halloway was forgotten in the instinctive sense of individual danger, and all gazed eagerly to ascertain the movements of their enemy. Presently a man, naked to the waist, his body and face besmeared with streaks of black and red paint, and his whole attitude expressing despair and horror, was seen flying down the height with a rapidity proportioned to the extreme peril in which he stood. At about fifty paces in his rear followed a dozen bounding, screaming Indians, armed with uplifted tomahawks, whose anxiety in pursuit lent them a speed that even surpassed the efforts of flight itself. It was evident the object of the pursued was to reach the detachment, that of the pursuers to prevent him. The struggle was maintained for a few moments with equality, but in the end the latter were triumphant, and at each step the distance that separated them became less. At the first alarm, the detachment, with the exception of the firing party, who still occupied their ground, had been thrown into square, and, with a gun planted in each angle, awaited the attack momentarily expected. But although the heights were now alive with the dusky forms of naked warriors, who, from the skirt of the forest, watched the exertions of their fellows, the pursuit of the wretched fugitive was confined to these alone. Foremost of the latter, and distinguished by his violent exertions and fiendish cries, was the tall and wildly attired warrior of the Fleur de lis. At every

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bound he gained upon his victim. Already were they descending the nearest of the undulating hills, and both now became conspicuous objects to all around; but principally the pursuer, whose gigantic frame and extraordinary speed riveted every eye, even while the interest of all was excited for the wretched fugitive alone.

At that moment Halloway, who had been gazing on the scene with an astonishment little inferior to that of his comrades, sprang suddenly to his feet upon the coffin, and waving his hand in the direction of the pursuing enemy, shouted aloud in a voice of mingled joy and triumph,—

“Ha! Almighty God, I thank thee! Here, here comes one who alone has the power to snatch me from my impending doom.”

“By Heaven, the traitor confesses, and presumes to triumph in his guilt,” exclaimed the voice of one, who, while closely attending to every movement of the Indians, was also vigilantly watching the effect likely to be produced on the prisoner by this unexpected interruption. “Corporal, do your duty.”

“Stay, stay—one moment stay!” implored Halloway with uplifted hands.

“Do your duty, sir,” fiercely repeated the governor.

“Oh stop—for God’s sake, stop! Another moment and he will be here, and I——”

He said no more—a dozen bullets penetrated his body—one passed directly through his heart. He leaped several feet in the air, and then fell heavily, a lifeless bleeding corpse, across the coffin.

Meanwhile the pursuit of the fugitive was continued, but by the warrior of the Fleur de lis alone. Aware of their inefficiency to keep pace with this singular being,

his companions had relinquished the chase, and now stood resting on the brow of the hill where the wretched Holloway had first recognised his supposed deliverer, watching eagerly, though within musket shot of the detachment, the result of a race on which so much apparently depended. Neither party, however, attempted to interfere with the other, for all eyes were now turned on the flying man and his pursuer with an interest that denoted the extraordinary efforts of the one to evade and the other to attain the accomplishment of his object. The immediate course taken was in a direct line for the ravine, which it evidently was the object of the fugitive to clear at its nearest point. Already had he approached within a few paces of its brink, and every eye was fastened on the point where it was expected the doubtful leap would be taken, when suddenly, as if despairing to accomplish it at a bound, he turned to the left, and winding along its bank, renewed his efforts in the direction of the bridge. This movement occasioned a change in the position of the parties, which was favourable to the pursued. Hitherto they had been so immediately on a line with each other, it was impossible for the detachment to bring a musket to bear upon the warrior, without endangering him whose life they were anxious to preserve. For a moment or two his body was fairly exposed, and a dozen muskets were discharged at intervals from the square, but all without success. Recovering his lost ground, he soon brought the pursued again in a line between himself and the detachment, edging rapidly nearer to him as he advanced, and uttering terrific yells, that were echoed back from his companions on the brow of the hill. It was evident, however, his object was the recapture, not the destruction, of the flying man, for more

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than once did he brandish his menacing tomahawk in rapid sweeps around his head, as if preparing to dart it, and as often did he check the movement. The scene at each succeeding moment became more critical and intensely interesting. The strength of the pursued was now nearly exhausted, while that of his formidable enemy seemed to suffer no diminution. Leap after leap he took with fearful superiority, sideling as he advanced. Already had he closed upon his victim, while with a springing effort a large and bony hand was extended to secure his shoulder in his grasp. The effort was fatal to him; for in reaching too far he lost his balance, and fell heavily upon the sward. A shout of exultation burst from the English troops, and numerous voices now encouraged the pursued to renew his exertions. The advice was not lost; and although only a few seconds had elapsed between the fall and recovery of his pursuer, the wretched fugitive had already greatly increased the distance that separated them. A cry of savage rage and disappointment burst from the lips of the gigantic warrior; and concentrating all his remaining strength and speed into one final effort, he bounded and leapt like a deer of the forest whence he came. The opportunity for recapture, however, had been lost in his fall, for already the pursued was within a few feet of the high road, and on the point of turning the extremity of the bridge. One only resource was now left: the warrior suddenly checked himself in his course, and remained stationary; then raising and dropping his glittering weapon several times in a balancing position, he waited until the pursued had gained the highest point of the open bridge. At that moment the glittering steel, aimed with singular accuracy and precision, ran whistling through the air, and with

such velocity of movement as to be almost invisible to the eyes of those who attempted to follow it in its threatening course. All expected to see it enter into the brain against which it had been directed; but the fugitive had marked the movement in time to save himself by stooping low to the earth, while the weapon, passing over him, entered with a deadly and crashing sound into the brain of the weltering corpse. This danger passed, he sprang once more to his feet, nor paused again in his flight until, faint and exhausted, he sank without motion under the very bayonets of the firing party.

A new direction was now given to the interest of the assembled and distinct crowds that had witnessed these startling incidents. Scarcely had the wretched man gained the protection of the soldiery, when a shriek divided the air, so wild, so piercing, and so unearthly, that even the warrior of the Fleur de lis seemed to lose sight of his victim, in the harrowing interest produced by that dreadful scream. All turned their eyes for a moment in the quarter whence it proceeded; when presently, from behind the groups of Canadians crowning the slope, was seen flying, with the rapidity of thought, one who resembled rather a spectre than a being of earth;—it was the wife of Halloway. Her long fair hair was wild and streaming—her feet, and legs, and arms were naked—and one solitary and scanty garment displayed rather than concealed the symmetry of her delicate person. She flew to the fatal bridge, threw herself on the body of her bleeding husband, and imprinting her warm kisses on his bloody lips, for a moment or two presented the image of one whose reason has fled for ever. Suddenly she started from the earth; her face, her hands, and her garment so saturated with the blood of her husband, that a

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feeling of horror crept throughout the veins of all who beheld her. She stood upon the coffin, and across the corpse—raised her eyes and hands imploringly to Heaven—and then, in accents wilder even than her words, uttered an imprecation that sounded like the prophetic warning of some unholy spirit.

“Inhuman murderer!” she exclaimed, in tones that almost paralysed the ears on which it fell, “if there be a God of justice and of truth, he will avenge this devilish deed. Yes, Colonel de Haldimar, a prophetic voice whispers to my soul, that even as I have seen perish before my eyes all I loved on earth, without mercy and without hope, so even shall you witness the destruction of your accursed race. Here—here—here,” and she pointed downwards, with singular energy of action, to the corpse of her husband, “here shall their blood flow till every vestige of his own is washed away, and oh, if there be spared one branch of thy detested family, may it be only that they may be reserved for some death too horrible to be conceived!”

Overcome by the frantic energy with which she had uttered these appalling words, she sank backwards, and fell, uttering another shriek, into the arms of the warrior of the Fleur de lis, who bore off his prize in triumph, and fled, with nearly the same expedition he had previously manifested, in the direction of the forest, before any one could recover sufficiently from the effect of the scene to think even of interfering.

CHAPTER XI.

It was on the evening of that day, so fertile in melancholy incident, to which the previous pages have been devoted, that the drawbridge of Detroit was, for the third time since the investment of the garrison, lowered; not, as previously, with a disregard of the intimation that might be given to those without by the sullen and echoing rattle of its ponderous chains, but with a caution attesting how much secrecy of purpose was sought to be preserved. There was, however, no array of armed men within the walls, that denoted an expedition of a hostile character. Overcome with the harassing duties of the day, the chief portion of the troops had retired to rest, and a few groups of the guard alone were to be seen walking up and down in front of their post, apparently with a view to check the influence of midnight drowsiness, but, in reality, to witness the result of certain preparations going on by torchlight in the centre of the barrack square.

In the midst of an anxious group of officers, comprising nearly all of that rank within the fort, stood two individuals, attired in a costume having nothing in common with the gay and martial habiliments of the former. They were tall, handsome young men, whose native elegance of carriage was but imperfectly hidden under

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an equipment evidently adopted for, and otherwise fully answering, the purpose of disguise. A blue cotton shell jacket, closely fitting to the person, trowsers of the same material, a pair of strong deer-skin moccasins, and a coloured handkerchief tied loosely round the collar of a checked shirt, the whole surmounted by a rough blanket coat, formed the principal portion of their garb. Each, moreover, wore a false *queue* of about nine inches in length, the effect of which was completely to change the character of the countenance, and lend to the features a Canadian-like expression. A red worsted cap, resembling a *bonnet de nuit*, was thrown carelessly over the side of the head, which could, at any moment, when deeper disguise should be deemed necessary, command the additional protection of the rude hood that fell back upon the shoulders from the collar of the coat to which it was attached. Into a broad belt, that encircled the jacket of each, were thrust a brace of pistols and a strong dagger; the whole so disposed, however, as to be invisible when the outer garment was closed: this, again, was confined by a rude sash of worsted of different colours, not unlike, in texture and quality, what is worn by our sergeants at the present day. They were otherwise armed, however, and in a less secret manner. Across the right shoulder of each was thrown a belt of worsted also, to which were attached a rude powder horn and shot pouch, with a few straggling bullets, placed there as if rather by accident than design. Each held carelessly in his left hand, and with its butt resting on the earth, a long gun; completing an appearance, the attainment of which had, in all probability, been sedulously sought,—that of a Canadian duck-hunter.

A metamorphosis so ludicrously operated in the

usually elegant costume of two young English officers, —for such they were,—might have been expected to afford scope to the pleasantry of their companions, and to call forth those sallies which the intimacy of friendship and the freemasonry of the profession would have fully justified. But the events that had occurred in such rapid succession, since the preceding midnight, were still painfully impressed on the recollection of all, and some there were who looked as if they never would smile again; neither laugh nor jeering, therefore, escaped the lips of one of the surrounding group. Every countenance wore a cast of thought,—a character of abstraction, ill suited to the indulgence of levity; and the little conversation that passed between them was in a low and serious tone. It was evident some powerful and absorbing dread existed in the mind of each, inducing him rather to indulge in communion with his own thoughts and impressions, than to communicate them to others. Even the governor himself had, for a moment, put off his usual distance, to assume an air of unfeigned concern, and it might be dejection, contrasting strongly with his habitual haughtiness. Hitherto he had been walking to and fro, a little apart from the group, and with a hurriedness and indecision of movement that betrayed to all the extreme agitation of his mind. For once, however, he appeared to be, if not insensible to observation, indifferent to whatever comments might be formed or expressed by those who witnessed his emotion. He was at length interrupted by the adjutant, who communicated something in a low voice.

“Let him be brought up, Mr. Lawson,” was the reply. Then advancing into the heart of the group, and addressing the two adventurers, he enquired, in a tone that

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startled from its singular mildness, "if they were provided with every thing they required."

An affirmative reply was given, when the governor, taking the taller of the young men aside, conversed with him earnestly, and in a tone of affection strangely blended with despondency. The interview, however, was short, for Mr. Lawson now made his appearance, conducting an individual who has already been introduced to our readers. It was the Canadian of the Fleur de lis. The adjutant placed a small wooden crucifix in the hands of the governor.

"François," said the latter, impressively, "you know the terms on which I have consented to spare your life. Swear, then, by this cross; that you will be faithful to your trust; that neither treachery nor evasion shall be practised; and that you will, to the utmost of your power, aid in conveying these gentlemen to their destination. Kneel and swear it."

"I do swear it!" fervently repeated the aubergiste, kneeling and imprinting his lips with becoming reverence on the symbol of martyrdom. "I swear to do what I shall engage, and may de bon Dieu have mercy to my soul as I shall fulfil my oath."

"Amen," pronounced the governor, "and may Heaven deal by you even as you deal by us. Bear in mind, moreover, that as your treachery will be punished, so also shall your fidelity be rewarded. But the night wears apace, and ye have much to do." Then turning to the young officers who were to be his companions,—
"God bless you both; may your enterprise be successful! I fear," offering his hand to the younger, "I have spoken harshly to you, but at a moment like the present

you will no longer cherish a recollection of the unpleasant past."

The only answer was a cordial return of his own pressure. The Canadian in his turn now announced the necessity for instant departure, when the young men, following his example, threw their long guns carelessly over the left shoulder. Low, rapid, and fervent adieus were uttered on both sides; and although the hands of the separating parties met only in a short and hurried grasp, there was an expression in the touch of each that spoke to their several hearts long after the separation had actually taken place.

"Stay one moment!" exclaimed a voice, as the little party now moved towards the gate-way; "ye are both gallantly enough provided without, but have forgotten there is something quite as necessary to sustain the inward man. Duck shooting, you know, is wet work. The last lips that were moistened from this," he proceeded, as the younger of the disguised men threw the strap of the proffered canteen over his shoulder, "were those of poor Ellen Halloway."

The mention of that name, so heedlessly pronounced by the brave but inconsiderate Erskine, produced a startling effect on the taller of the departing officers. He struck his brow violently with his hand, uttered a faint groan, and bending his head upon his chest, stood in an attitude expressive of the deep suffering of his mind. The governor, too, appeared agitated: and sounds like those of suppressed sobs came from one who lingered at the side of him who had accepted the offer of the canteen. The remainder of the officers preserved a deep and mournful silence.

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Canadian, "or we shall be taken by de daylight before we can clear de river."

This intimation once more aroused the slumbering energies of the taller officer. Again he drew up his commanding figure, extended his hand to the governor in silence, and turning abruptly round, hastened to follow close in the footsteps of his conductor.

"You will not forget all I have said to you," whispered the voice of one who had reserved his parting for the last, and who now held the hand of the younger adventurer closely clasped in his own. "Think, oh, think how much depends on the event of your dangerous enterprise."

"When you behold me again," was the reply, "it will be with smiles on my lip and gladness in my heart; for if we fail, there is that within me, which whispers I shall never see you more. But keep up your spirits and hope for the best. We embark under cheerless auspices, it is true; but let us trust to Providence for success in so good a cause,—God bless you!"

In the next minute he had joined his companions; who, with light and noiseless tread, were already pursuing their way along the military road that led to the eastern extremity of the town. Soon afterwards, the heavy chains of the drawbridge were heard grating on the ear, in despite of the evident caution used in restoring it to its wonted position, and all again was still.

It had at first been suggested their course should be held in an angular direction across the cleared country alluded to in our last chapter, in order to avoid all chance of recognition in the town; but as this might have led them into more dangerous contact with some of the outlying parties of Indians, who were known to

prowl around the fort at night, this plan had been abandoned for the more circuitous and safe passage by the village. Through this our little party now pursued their way, and without encountering aught to impede their progress. The simple mannered inhabitants had long since retired to rest, and neither light nor sound denoted the existence of man or beast within its precincts. At length they reached that part of the road which turned off abruptly in the direction of the Fleur de lis. The rude hut threw its dark shadows across their path, but all was still and deathlike as in the village they had just quitted. Presently, however, as they drew nearer, they beheld, reflected from one of the upper windows, a faint light that fell upon the ground immediately in front of the auberge; and, at intervals, the figure of a human being approaching and receding from it as if in the act of pacing the apartment.

An instinctive feeling of danger rose at the same moment to the hearts of the young officers; and each, obeying the same impulse, unfastened one of the large horn buttons of his blanket coat, and thrust his right hand into the opening.

"Francois, recollect your oath," hastily aspirated the elder as he grasped the hand of their conductor rather in supplication than in threat; "if there be aught to harm us here, your own life will most assuredly pay the forfeit of your faith."

"It is nothing but a woman," calmly returned the Canadian; "it is my Babette who is sorry at my loss. But I shall come and tell you directly."

He then stole gently round the corner of the hut, leaving his anxious companions in the rear of the little building, and completely veiled in the obscurity pro-

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duced by the mingling shadows of the hut itself, and a few tall pear trees that overhung the paling of the orchard at some yards from the spot on which they stood.

They waited some minutes to hear the result of the Canadian's admittance into his dwelling ; but although each with suppressed breathing sought to catch those sounds of welcome with which a daughter might be supposed to greet a parent so unexpectedly restored, they listened in vain. At length, however, while the ears of both were on the rack to drink in the tones of a human voice, a faint scream floated on the hushed air, and all again was still.

"Good!" whispered the elder of the officers; "that scream is sweeter to my ear than the softest accents of woman's love. It is evident the ordinary tones of speech cannot find their way to us here from the front of the hut. The faintness of yon cry, which was unquestionably that of a female, is a convincing proof of it."

"Hist!" urged his companion, in the same almost inaudible whisper, "what sound was that?"

Both again listened attentively, when the noise was repeated. It came from the orchard, and resembled the sound produced by the faint crash of rotten sticks and leaves under the cautious but unavoidably rending tread of a human foot. At intervals it ceased, as if the person treading, alarmed at his own noise, was apprehensive of betraying his approach ; and then recommenced, only to be checked in the same manner. Finally it ceased altogether. For upwards of five minutes the young men continued to listen for a renewal of the sound, but nothing was now audible, save the short and fitful gusts of a rising wind among the trees of the orchard.

"It must have been some wild animal in search of its

prey," again whispered the younger officer; "had it been a man, we should have heard him leap the paling before this."

"By Heaven, we are betrayed,—here he is," quickly rejoined the other, in the same low tone. "Keep close to the hut, and stand behind me. If my dagger fail, you must try your own. But fire not, on your life, unless there be more than two, for the report of a pistol will be the destruction of ourselves and all that are dear to us." Each with uplifted arm now stood ready to strike, even while his heart throbbed with a sense of danger, that had far more than the mere dread of personal suffering or death to stimulate to exertion in self-defence. Footsteps were now distinctly heard stealing round that part of the hut which bordered on the road; and the young men turned from the orchard, to which their attention had previously been directed, towards the new quarter whence they were intruded upon.

It was fortunate this mode of approach had been selected. That part of the hut which rested on the road was so exposed as to throw the outline of objects into strong relief, whereas in the direction of the thickly wooded orchard all was impenetrable gloom. Had the intruder stolen unannounced upon the alarmed but determined officers by the latter route, the dagger of the first would in all probability have been plunged to its hilt in his bosom. As it was, each had sufficient presence of mind to distinguish, as it now doubled the corner of the hut, and reposed upon the road, the stout square-set figure of the Canadian. The daggers were instantly restored to their sheaths, and each, for the first time since the departure of their companion, respired freely. "It is quite well," whispered the latter

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as he approached. "It was my poor Babette, who thought I was gone to be kill. She scream so loud, as if she had seen my ghost. But we must wait a few minute in de house, and you shall see how glad my girl is to see me once again."

"Why this delay, François? why not start directly?" urged the taller officer; "we shall never clear the river in time; and if the dawn catches us in the waters of the Detroit we are lost for ever."

"But you see I am not quite prepare yet," was the answer. "I have many tings to get ready for de canoe, which I have not use for a long times. But you shall not wait ten minute, if you do not like. Dere is a good fire, and Babette shall give you some ting to eat while I get it all ready."

The young men hesitated. The delay of the Canadian, who had so repeatedly urged the necessity for expedition while in the fort, had, to say the least of it, an appearance of incongruity. Still it was evident, if disposed to harm them he had full opportunity to do so without much risk of effectual opposition from themselves. Under all circumstances, therefore, it was advisable rather to appear to confide implicitly in his truth, than, by manifesting suspicion, to pique his self-love, and neutralise whatever favourable intentions he might cherish in their behalf. In this mode of conduct they were confirmed, by a recollection of the sacredness attached by the religion of their conductor to the oath so solemnly pledged on the symbol of the cross, and by a conviction of the danger of observation to which they stood exposed, if, as they had apprehended, it was actually a human footstep they had heard in the orchard. This last recollection suggested a remark.

"We heard a strange sound within the orchard, while waiting here for your return," said the taller officer; "it was like the footstep of a man treading cautiously over rotten leaves and branches. How do you account for it?"

"Oh, it was my pigs," replied the Canadian, without manifesting the slightest uneasiness at the information. "They run about in de orchard for de apples what blows down wid de wind."

"It could not be a pig we heard," pursued his questioner; "but another thing, François, before we consent to enter the hut,—how will you account to your daughter for our presence? and what suspicion may she not form at seeing two armed strangers in company with you at this unseasonable hour?"

"I have tell her," replied the Canadian, "dat I have bring two friends, who go wid me in de canoe to shoot de ducks for two tree days. You know, sir, I go always in de fall to kill de ducks wid my friends, and she will not tink it strange."

"You have managed well, my brave fellow; and now we follow you in confidence. But in the name of Heaven, use all possible despatch, and if money will lend a spur to your actions, you shall have plenty of it when our enterprise has been accomplished."

Our adventurers followed their conductor in the track by which he had so recently rejoined them. As they turned the corner of the hut, the younger, who brought up the rear, fancied he again heard a sound in the direction of the orchard, resembling that of one lightly leaping to the ground. A gust of wind, however, passing rapidly at the moment through the dense foliage, led him to believe it might have been produced by the sullen fall of one of the heavy fruits it had detached in its course.

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Unwilling to excite new and unnecessary suspicion in his companion, he confined the circumstance to his own breast, and followed into the hut.

After ascending a flight of about a dozen rude steps, they found themselves in a small room, furnished with no other ceiling than the sloping roof itself, and lighted by an unwieldy iron lamp, placed on a heavy oak table, near the only window with which the apartment was provided. This latter had suffered much from the influence of time and tempest; and owing to the difficulty of procuring glass in so remote a region, had been patched with slips of paper in various parts. The two corner and lower panes of the bottom sash were out altogether, and pine shingles, such as are used even at the present day for covering the roofs of dwelling houses, had been fitted into the squares, excluding air and light at the same time. The centre pane of this tier was, however, clear and free from flaw of every description. Opposite to the window blazed a cheerful wood fire, recently supplied with fuel; and at one of the inner corners of the room was placed a low uncurtained bed, that exhibited marks of having been lain in since it was last made. On a chair at its side were heaped a few dark-looking garments, the precise nature of which were not distinguishable at a cursory and distant glance.

Such were the more remarkable features of the apartment into which our adventurers were now ushered. Both looked cautiously around on entering, as if expecting to find it tenanted by spirits as daring as their own; but, with the exception of the daughter of their conductor, whose moist black eyes expressed, as much by tears as by smiles, the joy she felt at this unexpected return of her parent, no living object met their enquiring glance.

The Canadian placed a couple of rush-bottomed chairs near the fire, invited his companions to seat themselves until he had completed his preparation for departure, and then, desiring Babette to hasten supper for the young hunters, quitted the room and descended the stairs.

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CHAPTER XII.

The position of the young men was one of embarrassment; for while the daughter, who was busied in executing the command of her father, remained in the room, it was impossible they could converse together without betraying the secret of their country, and, as a result of this, the falsehood of the character under which they appeared. Long residence in the country had, it is true, rendered the patois of that class of people whom they personated familiar to one, but the other spoke only the pure and native language of which it was a corruption. It might have occurred to them at a cooler moment, and under less critical circumstances, that, even if their disguise had been penetrated, it was unlikely a female, manifesting so much lively affection for her parent, would have done aught to injure those with whom he had evidently connected himself. But the importance attached to their entire security from danger left them but little room for reflections of a calming character, while a doubt of that security remained.

One singularity struck them both. They had expected the young woman, urged by a natural curiosity, would have commenced a conversation, even if they did not; and he who spoke the patois was prepared to sustain it as well as his anxious and overcharged spirit would enable him; and as he was aware the morning had furnished

sufficient incident of fearful interest, he had naturally looked for a verbal re-enactment of the harrowing and dreadful scene. To their surprise, however, they both remarked that, far from evincing a desire to enter into conversation, the young woman scarcely ever looked at them, but lingered constantly near the table, and facing the window. Still, to avoid an appearance of singularity on their own parts, as far as possible, the elder of the officers motioned to his companion, who, following his example, took a small pipe and some tobacco from a compartment in his shot pouch, and commenced puffing the wreathing smoke from his lips,—an occupation, more than any other, seeming to justify their silence.

The elder officer sat with his back to the window, and immediately in front of the fire; his companion, at a corner of the rude hearth, and in such a manner that, without turning his head, he could command every part of the room at a glance. In the corner facing him stood the bed already described. A faint ray of fire-light fell on some minute object glittering in the chair, the contents of which were heaped up in disorder. Urged by that wayward curiosity, which is sometimes excited, even under circumstances of the greatest danger and otherwise absorbing interest, the young man kicked the hickory log that lay nearest to it with his mocassined foot, and produced a bright crackling flame, the reflection of which was thrown entirely upon the object of his gaze; it was a large metal button, on which the number of his regiment was distinctly visible. Unable to check his desire to know further, he left his seat, to examine the contents of the chair. As he moved across the room, he fancied he heard a light sound from without; his companion, also, seemed to manifest a similar impression by

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an almost imperceptible start ; but the noise was so momentary, and so fanciful, neither felt it worth his while to pause upon the circumstance. The young officer now raised the garments from the chair : they consisted of a small grey great-coat, and trowsers, a waistcoat of coarse white cloth, a pair of worsted stockings, and the half-boots of a boy ; the whole forming the drum-boy's equipment worn by the wretched wife of Halloway when borne senseless into the hut on that fatal morning. Hastily quitting a dress that called up so many dreadful recollections, and turning to his companion with a look that denoted apprehension, lest he too should have beheld these melancholy remembrances of the harrowing scene, the young officer hastened to resume his seat. In the act of so doing, his eye fell upon the window, at which the female still lingered. Had a blast from heaven struck his sight, the terror of his soul could not have been greater. He felt his cheek to pale, and his hair to bristle beneath his cap, while the checked blood crept slowly and coldly, as if its very function had been paralysed ; still he had presence of mind sufficient not to falter in his step, or to betray, by any extraordinary movement, that his eye had rested on any thing hateful to behold.

His companion had emptied his first pipe, and was in the act of refilling it, when he resumed his seat. He was evidently impatient at the delay of the Canadian, and already were his lips ready to give utterance to his disappointment, when he felt his foot significantly pressed by that of his friend. An instinctive sense of something fearful that was to ensue, but still demanding caution on his part, prevented him from turning hastily round to know the cause. Satisfied, however, there was danger, though not of an instantaneous character, he put his

pipe gently by, and stealing his hand under his coat, again grasped the hilt of his dagger. At length he slowly and partially turned his head, while his eyes enquiringly demanded of his friend the cause of this alarm. Partly to aid in concealing his increasing paleness, and partly with a view to render it a medium for the conveyance of subdued sound, the hand of the latter was raised to his face in such a manner that the motion of his lips could not be distinguished from behind.

"We are betrayed," he scarcely breathed. "If you can command yourself, turn and look at the window; but for God's sake arm yourself with resolution, or look not at all: first draw the hood over your head, and without any appearance of design. Our only chance of safety lies in this,—that the Canadian may still be true, and that our disguise may not be penetrated."

In despite of his native courage,—and this had often been put to honourable proof,—he, thus mysteriously addressed, felt his heart to throb violently. There was something so appalled in the countenance of his friend—something so alarming in the very caution he had recommended—that a vague dread of the horrible reality rushed at once to his mind, and for a moment his own cheek became ashy pale, and his breathing painfully oppressed. It was the natural weakness of the physical man, over which the moral faculties, had, for an instant, lost their directing power. Speedily recovering himself, the young man prepared to encounter the alarming object which had already so greatly intimidated his friend. Carefully drawing the blanket hood over his head, he rose from his seat, and, with the energetic movement of one who has formed some desperate determination, turned his back to the fire-place, and threw his eyes

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rapidly and eagerly upon the window. They fell only on the rude patchwork of which it was principally composed. The female had quitted the room.

"You must have been deceived," he whispered, keeping his eye still bent upon the window, and with so imperceptible a movement of the lips that sound alone could have betrayed he was speaking,—“I see nothing to justify your alarm. Look again.”

The younger officer once more directed his glance towards the window, and with a shuddering of the whole person, as he recollected what had met his eye when he last looked upon it. “It is no longer there, indeed,” he returned in the same scarcely audible tone. “Yet I could not be mistaken; it was between those two corner squares of wood in the lower sash.”

“Perhaps it was merely a reflection produced by the lamp on the centre pane,” rejoined his friend, still keeping his eye riveted on the suspicious point. “Impossible! but I will examine the window from the spot on which I stood when I first beheld it.”

Again he quitted his seat, and carelessly crossed the room. As he returned he threw his glance upon the pane, when, to his infinite horror and surprise, the same frightful vision presented itself.

“God of heaven!” he exclaimed aloud, and unable longer to check the ebullition of his feelings,—“what means this?—Is my brain turned? and am I the sport of my own delusive fancy—Do you not see it *now*?”

No answer was returned. His friend stood mute and motionless, with his left hand grasping his gun, and his right thrust into the waist of his coat. His eye grew upon the window, and his chest heaved, and his cheek paled and flushed alternately with the subdued emotion

of his heart. A human face was placed close to the unblemished glass, and every feature was distinctly revealed by the lamp that still lay upon the table. The glaring eye was fixed on the taller of the officers; but though the expression was unfathomably guileful, there was nothing that denoted any thing like a recognition of the party. The brightness of the wood fire had so far subsided as to throw the interior of the room into partial obscurity, and under the disguise of his hood it was impossible for one without to distinguish the features of the taller officer. The younger, who was scarcely an object of attention, passed comparatively unnoticed.

Fatigued and dimmed with the long and eager tension of its nerves, the eye of the latter now began to fail him. For a moment he closed it; and when again it fell upon the window; it encountered nothing but the clear and glittering pane. For upwards of a minute he and his friend still continued to rivet their gaze, but the face was no longer visible.

Why is it that what is called the "human face divine," is sometimes gifted with a power to paralyse, that the most loathsome reptile in the creation cannot attain? Had a cougar of the American forest, roaring for prey, appeared at that window, ready to burst the fragile barrier, and fasten its talons in their hearts, its presence would not have struck such sickness to the soul of our adventurers as did that human face. It is, that man, naturally fierce and inexorable, is alone the enemy of his own species. The solution of this problem—this glorious paradox in nature, we leave to profounder philosophers to resolve. Sufficient for us be it to know, and to deplore that it is so.

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officers, aroused to a full sense of their danger, hastily and silently prepared themselves for the encounter. "Drop a bullet into your gun," whispered the elder, setting the example himself. "We may be obliged to have recourse to it at last. Yet make no show of hostility unless circumstances satisfy us we are betrayed; then, indeed, all that remains for us will be to sell our lives as dearly as we can. Hist! he is here."

The door opened! and at the entrance, which was already filled up in the imaginations of the young men with a terrible and alarming figure, appeared one whose return had been anxiously and long desired. It was a relief, indeed, to their gallant but excited hearts to behold another than the form they had expected; and although, for the moment, they knew not whether the Canadian came in hostility or in friendship, each quitted the attitude of caution into which he had thrown himself, and met him midway in his passage through the room. There was nothing in the expression of his naturally open and good-humoured countenance to denote he was at all aware of the causes for alarm that had operated so powerfully on themselves. He announced with a frank look and unfaltering voice every thing was in readiness for their departure.

The officers hesitated; and the taller fixed his eyes upon those of mine host, as if his gaze would have penetrated to the innermost recesses of his heart. Could this be a refinement of his treachery? and was he really ignorant of the existence of the danger which threatened them? Was it not more probable his object was to disarm their fears, that they might be given unprepared and, therefore, unresisting victims to the ferocity of their enemies? Aware as he was, that they were both well

provided with arms, and fully determined to use them with effect, might not his aim be to decoy them to destruction without, lest the blood spilt under his roof, in the desperation of their defence, should hereafter attest against him, and expose him to the punishment he would so richly merit? Distracted by these doubts, the young men scarcely knew what to think or how to act; and anxious as they had previously been to quit the hut, they now considered the moment of their doing so would be that of their destruction. The importance of the enterprise on which they were embarked was such as to sink all personal considerations. If they had felt the influence of intimidation on their spirits, it arose less from any apprehension of consequences to themselves, than from the recollection of the dearer interests involved in their perfect security from discovery.

"François," feelingly urged the taller officer, again adverting to his vow, "you recollect the oath you solemnly pledged upon the cross of your Saviour. Tell me, then, as you hope for mercy, have you taken that oath only that you might the more securely betray us to our enemies? What connection have you with them at this moment? and who is *he* who stood looking through that window not ten minutes since?"

"As I shall hope for mercy in my God," exclaimed the Canadian with unfeigned astonishment, "I have not seen anybody. But what for do you think so? It is not just. I have given my oath to serve you, and I shall do it."

There was candour both in the tone and countenance of the man as he uttered these words, half in reproach, half in justification; and the officers no longer doubted.

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the present," soothingly observed the younger; "yet, François, your daughter saw and exchanged signals with the person we mean. She left the room soon after he made his appearance. What has become of her?"

The Canadian gave a sudden start, looked hastily round, and seemed to perceive for the first time the girl was absent. He then put a finger to his lip to enjoin silence, advanced to the table, and extinguished the light. Desiring his companions, in a low whisper, to tread cautiously and follow, he now led the way with almost noiseless step to the entrance of the hut. At the threshold of the door were placed a large well-filled sack, a light mast and sail, and half a dozen paddles. The latter burden he divided between the officers, on whose shoulders he carefully balanced them. The sack he threw across his own; and, without expressing even a regret that an opportunity of bidding adieu to his child was denied him, hastily skirted the paling of the orchard until, at the further extremity, he had gained the high road. The heavens were obscured by passing clouds driven rapidly by the wind, during the short pauses of which our adventurers anxiously and frequently turned to listen if they were pursued. Save the rustling of the trees that lined the road, and the slight dashing of the waters on the beach, however, no sound was distinguishable. At length they gained the point whence they were to start. It was the fatal bridge, the events connected with which were yet so painfully fresh in their recollection.

"Stop one minutes here," whispered the Canadian, throwing his sack upon the sand near the mouth of the lesser river; "my canoe is chain about twenty yards up de bridge. I shall come to you directly." Then cautioning the officers to keep themselves concealed under the

bridge, he moved hastily under the arch, and disappeared in the dark shadow which it threw across the rivulet.

The extremities of the bridge rested on the banks of the little river in such a manner as to leave a narrow passage along the sands immediately under the declination of the arch. In accordance with the caution of their conductor, the officers had placed themselves under it; and with their backs slightly bent forward to meet the curvature of the bridge, so that no ray of light could pass between their bodies and the fabric itself, now awaited the arrival of the vessel on which their only hope depended. We shall not attempt to describe their feelings on finding themselves, at that lone hour of the night, immediately under a spot rendered fearfully memorable by the tragic occurrences of the morning. The terrible pursuit of the fugitive, the execution of the soldier, the curse and prophecy of his maniac wife, and, above all, the forcible abduction and threatened espousal of that unhappy woman by the formidable being who seemed to have identified himself with the evils with which they stood menaced,—all rushed with rapid tracery on the mind, and excited the imagination, until each, filled with a sentiment not unallicd to superstitious awe, feared to whisper forth his thoughts, lest in so doing he should invoke the presence of those who had principally figured in the harrowing and revolting scene.

“Did you not hear a noise?” at length whispered the elder, as he leaned himself forward, and bent his head to the sand, to catch more distinctly a repetition of the sound.

“I did; there again! It is upon the bridge, and not unlike the step of one endeavouring to tread lightly. It may be some wild beast, however.”

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"We must not be taken by surprise," returned his companion. "If it be a man, the wary tread indicates consciousness of our presence. If an animal, there can be no harm in setting our fears at rest." Cautiously stealing from his lurking-place, the young officer emerged into the open sands, and in a few measured noiseless strides gained the extremity of the bridge. The dark shadow of something upon its centre caught his eye, and a low sound like that of a dog lapping met his ear. While his gaze yet lingered on the shapeless object, endeavouring to give it a character, the clouds which had so long obscured it passed momentarily from before the moon, and disclosed the appalling truth. It was a wolf-dog lapping up from the earth, in which they were encrusted, the blood and brains of the unfortunate Frank Halloway.

Sick and faint at the disgusting sight, the young man rested his elbow on the railing that passed along the edge of the bridge, and, leaning his head on his hand for a moment, forgot the risk of exposure he incurred, in the intenseness of the sorrow that assailed his soul. His heart and imagination were already far from the spot on which he stood, when he felt an iron hand upon his shoulder. He turned, shuddering with an instinctive knowledge of his yet unseen visitant, and beheld standing over him the terrible warrior of the Fleur de lis.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the savage, in a low triumphant tone, "the place of our meeting is well timed, though somewhat singular, it must be confessed. Nay," he fiercely added, grasping as in a vice the arm that was already lifted to strike him, "force me not to annihilate you on the spot. Ha! hear you the cry of my wolf-dog?" as that animal now set up a low but fearful howl; "it is for your blood he asks, but your hour is not yet come."

"No, by heaven, is it not!" exclaimed a voice; a rapid and rushing sweep was heard through the air for an instant, and then a report like a stunning blow. The warrior released his grasp—placed his hand upon his tomahawk, but without strength to remove it from his belt tottered a pace or two backwards—and then fell, uttering a cry of mingled pain and disappointment, at his length upon the earth. "Quick, quick to our cover!" exclaimed the young officer, as a loud shout was now heard from the forest in reply to the yell of the fallen warrior. "If François come not, we are lost: the howl of that wolf-dog alone will betray us, even if his master should be beyond all chance of recovery."

"Desperate diseases require desperate remedies," was the reply; "there is little glory in destroying a helpless enemy, but the necessity is urgent, and we must leave nothing to chance." As he spoke, he knelt upon the huge form of the senseless warrior, whose scalping knife he drew from its sheath, and striking a firm and steady blow, quitted not the weapon until he felt his hand reposing on the chest of his enemy. The howl of the wolf-dog, whose eyes glared like two burning coals through the surrounding gloom, was now exchanged to a fierce and snappish bark. He made a leap at the officer while in the act of rising from the body; but his fangs fastened only in the chest of the shaggy coat, which he wrung with the strength and fury characteristic of his peculiar species. This new and ferocious attack was fraught with danger little inferior to that which they had just escaped, and required the utmost promptitude of action. The young man seized the brute behind the neck in a firm and vigorous grasp, while he stooped upon the motionless form over which this novel

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struggle was maintained, and succeeded in making himself once more master of the scalping knife. Half choked by the hand that unflinchingly grappled with him, the savage animal quitted his hold and struggled violently to free himself. This was the critical moment. The officer drew the heavy sharp blade, from the handle to the point, across the throat of the infuriated beast, with a force that divided the principal artery. He made a desperate leap upwards, spouting his blood over his destroyer, and then fell gasping across the body of his master. A low growl, intermingled with faint attempts to bark, which the rapidly oozing life rendered more and more indistinct, succeeded; and at length nothing but a gurgling sound was distinguishable.

Meanwhile the anxious and harassed officers had regained their place of concealment under the bridge, where they listened with suppressed breathing for the slightest sound to indicate the approach of the canoe. At intervals they fancied they could hear a noise resembling the rippling of water against the prow of a light vessel, but the swelling cries of a band of Indians, becoming at every instant more distinct, were too unceasingly kept up to admit of their judging with accuracy.

They now began to give themselves up for lost, and many and bitter were the curses they inwardly bestowed on the Canadian, when the outline of a human form was seen advancing along the sands, and a dark object upon the water. It was their conductor, dragging the canoe along, with all the strength and activity of which he was capable.

What the devil have you been about all this time, François?" exclaimed the taller officer, as he bounded to meet him. "Quick, quick, or we shall be too late.

Hear you not the blood-hounds on their scent?" Then seizing the chain in his hand, with a powerful effort he sent the canoe flying through the arch to the very entrance of the river. The burdens that had been deposited on the sands were hastily flung in, the officers stepping lightly after. The Canadian took the helm, directing the frail vessel almost noiselessly through the water, and with such velocity, that when the cry of the disappointed savages was heard resounding from the bridge, it had already gained the centre of the Detroit.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Two days had succeeded the departure of the officers from the fort, but unproductive of any event of importance. About daybreak, however, on the morning of the third, the harassed garison were once more summoned to arms, by an alarm from the sentinels planted in rear of the works; a body of Indians they had traced and lost at intervals, as they wound along the skirt of the forest, in their progress from their encampment, were at length developing themselves in force near the bomb-proof. With a readiness which long experience and watchfulness had rendered in some degree habitual to them, the troops flew to their respective posts; while a few of the senior officers, among whom was the governor, hastened to the ramparts to reconnoitre the strength and purpose of their enemies. It was evident the views of these latter were not immediately hostile; for neither were they in their war paint, nor were their arms of a description to carry intimidation to a disciplined and fortified soldiery. Bows, arrows, tomahawks, war clubs, spears, and scalping knives, constituted their warlike equipments, but neither rifle nor fire-arms of any kind were discernible. Several of their leaders, distinguishable by a certain haughty carriage and commanding gesticulation, were collected within the elevated bomb-proof, apparently holding a short but important conference apart from

their people, most of whom stood or lay in picturesque attitudes around the ruin. These also had a directing spirit. A tall and noble looking warrior, wearing a deer skin hunting frock closely girded around his loins, appeared to command the deference of his colleagues, claiming profound attention when he spoke himself, and manifesting his assent or dissent to the apparently expressed opinions of the lesser chiefs merely by a slight movement of the head.

"There he is indeed!" exclaimed Captain Erskine, speaking as one who communes with his own thoughts, while he kept his telescope levelled on the form of the last warrior: "looking just as noble as when, three years ago, he opposed himself to the progress of the first English detachment that had ever penetrated to this part of the world. What a pity such a fine fellow should be so desperate and determined an enemy!"

"True: you were with Major Rogers on that expedition," observed the governor, "I have often heard him speak of it. You had many difficulties to contend against, if I recollect." "We had indeed, sir," returned the frank-hearted Erskine, dropping the glass from his eye. "So many, in fact, that more than once, in the course of our progress through the wilderness, did I wish myself at head-quarters with my company. Never shall I forget the proud and determined expression of Pontec's countenance, when he told Rogers, in his figurative language, 'he stood in the path in which he travelled.'"

"Thank heaven, he at least stands not in the path in which *others* travel," musingly rejoined the governor. "But what sudden movement is that within the ruin?"

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shouted an artillery man from his station in one of the embrasures below.

The governor and his officers received this intelligence without surprise : the former took the glass from Captain Erskine, and coolly raised it to his eye. The consultation had ceased ; and the several chiefs, with the exception of their leader and two others, were now seen quitting the bomb-proof to join their respective tribes. One of those who remained, sprang upon an elevated fragment of the ruin, and uttered a prolonged cry, the purport of which,—and it was fully understood from its peculiar nature,—was to claim attention from the fort. He then received from the hands of the other chief a long spear, to the end of which was attached a piece of white linen. This he waved several times above his head ; then stuck the barb of the spear firmly into the projecting fragment. Quitting his elevated station, he next stood at the side of the Ottawa chief, who had already assumed the air and attitude of one waiting to observe in what manner his signal would be received.

“A flag of truce in all its bearings, by Jupiter!” remarked Captain Erskine. “Pontecac seems to have acquired a few lessons since we first met.”

“This is evidently the suggestion of some European,” observed Major Blackwater ; “for how should he understand any thing of the nature of a white flag ? Some of these vile spics have put him up to this.”

“True enough, Blackwater ; and they appear to have found an intelligent pupil,” observed Captain Wentworth.

“I was curious to know how he would make the attempt to approach us ; but certainly never once dreamt of his having recourse to so civilised a method. Their plot

works well, no doubt ; still we have the counter-plot to oppose to it."

"We must foil them with their own weapons," remarked the governor, "even if it be only with a view to gain time. Wentworth, desire one of your bombardiers to hoist the large French flag on the staff." The order was promptly obeyed. The Indians made a simultaneous movement expressive of their satisfaction ; and in the course of a minute, the tall warrior, accompanied by nearly a dozen inferior chiefs, was seen slowly advancing across the common, towards the group of officers.

"What generous confidence the fellow has for an Indian !" observed Captain Erskine, who could not dissemble his admiration of the warrior. "He steps as firmly and as proudly within reach of our muskets, as if he was leading in the war-dance."

"How strange," mused Captain Blessington, "that one who meditates so deep a treachery, should have no apprehension of it in others !"

"It is a compliment to the honour of our flag," observed the governor, "which it must be our interest to encourage. If, as you say, Erskine, the man is really endowed with generosity, the result of this affair will assuredly call it forth."

"If it prove otherwise, sir," was the reply, "we must only attribute his perseverance to the influence which that terrible warrior of the Fleur de lis is said to exercise over his better feelings. By the by, I see nothing of him among this flag of truce party. It could scarcely be called a violation of faith to cut off such a rascally renegade. Were he of the number of those advancing, and Valletort's rifle within my reach, I know not what use I might not be tempted to make of the last."

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Poor Erskine was singularly infelicitous in touching, and ever unconsciously, on a subject sure to give pain to more than one of his brother officers. A cloud passed over the brow of the governor, but it was one that originated more in sorrow than in anger. Neither had he time to linger on the painful recollections hastily and confusedly called up by the allusion made to this formidable and mysterious being, for the attention of all was now absorbed by the approaching Indians. With a bold and confiding carriage the fierce Pontecac moved at the head of his little party, nor hesitated one moment in his course, until he got near the brink of the ditch, and stood face to face with the governor, at a distance that gave both parties not only the facility of tracing the expression of each other's features, but of conversing without effort. There he made a sudden stand, and thrusting his spear into the earth, assumed an attitude as devoid of apprehension as if he had been in the heart of his own encampment.

"My father has understood my sign," said the haughty chief. "The warriors of a dozen tribes are far behind the path the Ottawa has just travelled; but when the red skin comes unarmed, the hand of the Saganaw is tied behind his back."

"The strong hold of the Saganaw is his safeguard," replied the governor, adopting the language of the Indian. "When the enemies of his great father come in strength, he knows how to disperse them; but when a warrior throws himself unarmed into his power, he respects his confidence, and his arms hang rusting at his side."

"The talk of my father is big," replied the warrior, with a scornful expression that seemed to doubt the fact

of so much indifference as to himself; but when it is a great chief who directs the nations, and that chief his sworn enemy, the temptation to the Saganaw may be strong."

"The Saganaw is without fear," emphatically rejoined the governor; "he is strong in his own honour; and he would rather die under the tomahawk of the red skin, than procure a peace by an act of treachery."

The Indian paused; cold, calm looks of intelligence passed between him and his followers, and a few indistinct and guttural sentences were exchanged among themselves.

"But our father asks not why our mocassins have brushed the dew from off the common," resumed the chief; "and yet it is long since the Saganaw and the red skin have spoken to each other, except through the war whoop. My father must wonder to see the great chief of the Ottawas without the hatchet in his hand."

"The hatchet often wounds those who use it unskillfully," calmly returned the governor. "The Saganaw is not blind. The Ottawas and the other tribes find the war paint heavy on their skins. They see that my young men are not to be conquered, and they have sent the great head of all the nations to sue for peace."

In spite of the habitual reserve and self-possession of his race, the haughty warrior could not repress a movement of impatience at the bold and taunting language of his enemy, and for a moment there was a fire in his eye that told how willingly he would have washed away the insult in his blood. The same low guttural exclamations that had previously escaped their lips, marked the sense entertained of the remark by his companions.

"My father is right," pursued the chief, resuming his

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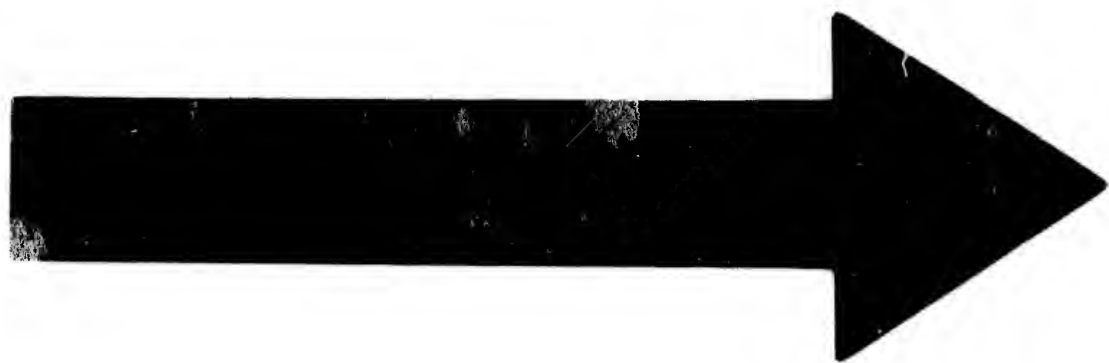
self-command; "the Ottawas, and the other tribes, ask for peace, but not because they are afraid of war. When they strike the hatchet into the war post, they leave it there until their enemies ask them to take it out."

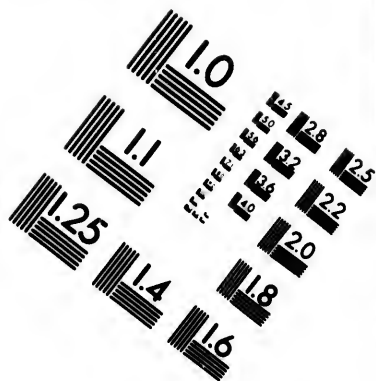
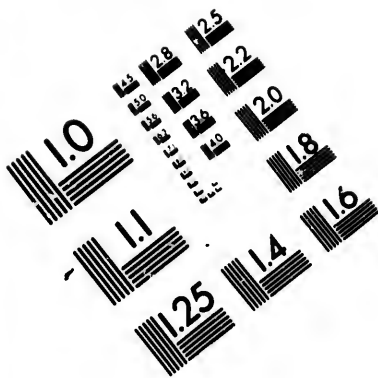
"Why come they now, then, to ask for peace?" was the cool demand. The warrior hesitated, evidently at a loss to give a reply that could reconcile the palpable contradiction of his words. "The rich furs of our forests have become many," he at length observed, "since we first took up the hatchet against the Saganaw; and every bullet we keep for our enemies is a loss to our trade. We once exchanged furs with the children of our father of the pale flag. They gave us, in return, guns, blankets, powder, ball, and all that the red man requires in the hunting season. These are all expended; and my young men would deal with the Saganaw as they did with the French."

"Good; the red skins would make peace; and although the arm of the Saganaw is strong, he will not turn a deaf ear to their desire."

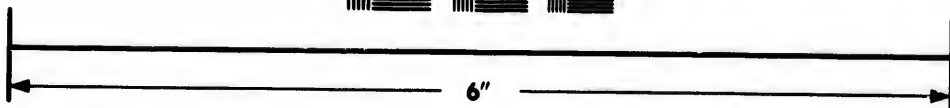
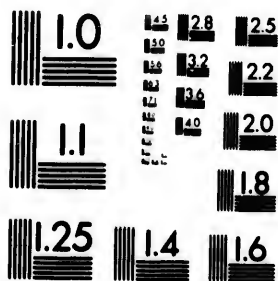
"All the strong holds of the Saganaw, except two, have fallen before the great chief of the Ottawas!" proudly returned the Indian, with a look of mingled scorn and defiance. "They, too, thought themselves beyond the reach of our tomahawks; but they were deceived. In less than a single moon nine of them have fallen, and the tents of my young warriors are darkened with their scalps; but this is past. If the red skin asks for peace, it is because he is tired of seeing the blood of the Saganaw on his tomahawk. Does my father hear?"

"We will listen to the great chief of the Ottawas, and hear what he has to say," returned the governor, who, as well as the officers at his side, could with difficulty con-





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ceal their disgust and sorrow at the dreadful intelligence thus imparted of the fates of their companions. "But peace," he pursued with dignity, "can only be made in the council room, and under the sacred pledge of the calumet. The great chief has a wampum belt on his shoulder, and a calumet in his hand. His aged warriors, too, are at his side. What says the Ottawa? Will he enter? If so, the gate of the Saganaw shall be open to him." The warrior started; and for a moment the confidence that had hitherto distinguished him seemed to give place to an apprehension of meditated treachery. He, however, speedily recovered himself, and observed emphatically, "It is the great head of all the nations whom my father invites to the council seat. Were he to remain in the hands of the Saganaw, his young men would lose their strength. They would bury the hatchet for ever in despair, and hide their faces in the laps of their women."

"Does the Ottawa chief see the pale flag on the strong hold of his enemies. While that continues to fly, he is safe as if he were under the cover of his own wigwam. If the Saganaw could use guile like the fox," (and this was said with marked emphasis,) "what should prevent him from cutting off the Ottawa and his chiefs, even where they now stand?" A half smile of derision passed over the dark cheek of the Indian. "If the arm of an Ottawa is strong," he said, "his foot is not less swift. The short guns of the chiefs of the Saganaw" (pointing to the pistols of the officers) "could not reach us; and before the voice of our father could be raised, or his eye turned, to call his warriors to his side, the Ottawa would be already far on his way to the forest."

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the Saganaw," returned the governor. "He shall see that his young men are ever watchful at their posts:—Up, men, and show yourselves." A second or two sufficed to bring the whole of Captain Erskine's company, who had been lying flat on their faces, to their feet on the rampart. The Indians were evidently taken by surprise, though they evinced no fear. The low and guttural "ugh!" was the only expression they gave to their astonishment, not unmingled with admiration.

But, although the chiefs preserved their presence of mind, the sudden appearance of the soldiers had excited alarm among their warriors, who, grouped in and around the bomb-proof, were watching every movement of the conferring parties, with an interest proportioned to the risk they conceived their head men had incurred in venturing under the very walls of their enemies. Fierce yells were uttered; and more than a hundred dusky warriors, brandishing their tomahawks in air, leaped along the skirt of the common, evidently only awaiting the signal of their great chief, to advance and cover his retreat. At the command of the governor, however, the men had again suddenly disappeared from the surface of the rampart; so that when the Indians finally perceived their leader stood unharmed and unmolested, on the spot he had previously occupied, the excitement died away, and they once more assumed their attitude of profound attention.

"What thinks the great chief of the Ottawas now?" asked the governor;—"did he imagine that the young white men lie sleeping like beavers in their dams, when the hunter sets his traps to catch them?—did he imagine that they foresee not the designs of their enemies?"

and that they are not always on the watch to prevent them?"

"My father is a great warrior," returned the Indian; "and if his arm is full of strength, his head is full of wisdom. The chiefs will no longer hesitate;—they will enter the strong hold of the Saganaw, and sit with him in the council." He next addressed a few words, and in a language not understood by those upon the walls, to one of the younger of the Indians. The latter acknowledged his sense and approbation of what was said to him by an assentient and expressive "ugh!" which came from his chest without any apparent emotion of the lips, much in the manner of a modern ventriloquist. He then hastened, with rapid and lengthened boundings, across the common towards his band. After the lapse of a minute or two from reaching them, another simultaneous cry arose, differing in expression from any that had hitherto been heard. It was one denoting submission to the will, and compliance with some conveyed desire, of their superior.

"Is the gate of the Saganaw open?" asked the latter, as soon as his ear had been greeted with the cry we have just named. "The Ottawa and the other great chiefs are ready;—their hearts are bold, and they throw themselves into the hands of the Saganaw without fear."

"The Ottawa chief knows the path," drily rejoined the governor: "when he comes in peace, it is ever open to him; but when his young men press it with the tomahawk in their hands, the big thunder is roused to anger, and they are scattered away like the leaves of the forest in the storm. Even now," he pursued, as the little band of Indians moved slowly round the walls, "the gate of the Saganaw opens for the Ottawa and the other chiefs."

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"Let the most vigilant caution be used every where along the works, but especially in the rear," continued the governor, addressing Captain Blessington, on whom the duty of the day had devolved. "We are safe, while their chiefs are with us; but still it will be necessary to watch the forest closely. We cannot be too much on our guard. The men had better remain concealed, every twentieth file only standing up to form a look-out chain. If any movement of a suspicious nature be observed, let it be communicated by the discharge of a single musket, that the drawbridge may be raised on the instant." With the delivery of these brief instructions he quitted the rampart with the majority of his officers. Meanwhile, hasty preparations had been made in the mess-room to receive the chiefs. The tables had been removed, and a number of clean rush mats, manufactured after the Indian manner, into various figures and devices, spread carefully upon the floor. At the further end from the entrance was placed a small table and chair, covered with scarlet cloth. This was considerably elevated above the surface of the floor, and intended for the governor. On either side of the room near these, were ranged a number of chairs for the accommodation of the inferior officers.

Major Blackwater received the chiefs at the gate. With a firm, proud step, rendered more confident by his very unwillingness to betray any thing like fear, the tall, and, as Captain Erskine had justly designated him, the noble-looking Pontecac trod the yielding planks that might in the next moment cut him off from his people for ever. The other chiefs, following the example of their leader, evinced the same easy fearlessness of demeanour, nor glanced once behind them to see if there

was any thing to justify the apprehension of hidden danger.

The Ottawa was evidently mortified at not being received by the governor in person. "My father is not here!" he said fiercely to the major:—"how is this? The Ottawa and the other chiefs are kings of all their tribes. The head of one great people should be received only by the head of another great people!"

"Our father sits in the council-hall," returned the major. "He has taken his seat that he may receive the warriors with becoming honour. But I am the second chief, and our father has sent me to receive them." To the proud spirit of the Indian this explanation scarcely sufficed. For a moment he seemed to struggle, as if endeavouring to stifle his keen sense of an affront put upon him. At length he nodded his head haughtily and condescendingly, in token of assent; and gathering up his noble form, and swelling out his chest, as if with a view to strike terror as well as admiration into the hearts of those by whom he expected to be surrounded, stalked majestically forward at the head of his confederates.

An indifferent observer, or one ignorant of these people, would have been at fault; but those who understood the workings of an Indian's spirit could not have been deceived by the tranquil exterior of these men. The rapid, keen, and lively glance—the suppressed sneer of exultation—the half start of surprise—the low, guttural, and almost inaudible "ugh!"—all these indicated the eagerness with which, at one sly but compendious view, they embraced the whole interior of a fort which it was of such vital importance to their future interests they should become possessed of, yet which they had so long and so unsuccessfully attempted to subdue. As they ad-

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vanced into the square, they looked around, expecting to behold the full array of their enemies ; but, to their astonishment, not a soldier was to be seen. A few women and children only, in whom curiosity had overcome a natural loathing and repugnance to the savages, were peeping from the windows of the block-houses. Even at a moment like the present, the fierce instinct of these latter was not to be controlled. One of the children, terrified at the wild appearance of the warriors, screamed violently, and clung to the bosom of its mother for protection. Fired at the sound, a young chief raised his hand to his lips, and was about to peal forth his terrible war whoop in the very centre of the fort, when the eye of the Ottawa suddenly arrested him.

CHAPTER XIV.

There were few forms of courtesy observed by the warriors towards the English officers on entering the council room. Pontecac, who had collected all his native haughtiness into one proud expression of look and figure, strode in without taking the slightest notice even of the governor. The other chiefs imitated his example, and all took their seats upon the matting in the order prescribed by their rank among the tribes, and their experience in council. The Ottawa chief sat at the near extremity of the room, and immediately facing the governor. A profound silence was observed for some minutes after the Indians had seated themselves, during which they proceeded to fill their pipes. The handle of that of the Ottawa chief was decorated with numerous feathers fancifully disposed.

"This is well," at length observed the governor. "It is long since the great chiefs of the nations have smoked the sweet grass in the council hall of the Saganaw. What have they to say, that their young men may have peace to hunt the beaver, and to leave the print of their mocassins in the country of the buffalo?—What says the Ottawa chief?"

"The Ottawa chief is a great warrior," returned the other, haughtily; and again repudiating, in the indomitableness of his pride, the very views that a more artful

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policy had first led him to avow. "He has already said that, within a single moon, nine of the strong holds of the Saganaw have fallen into his hands, and that the scalps of the white men fill the tents of his warriors. If the red skins wish for peace, it is because they are sick with spilling the blood of their enemies. Does my father hear?"

"The Ottawa has been cunning, like the fox," calmly returned the governor. "He went with deceit upon his lips, and said to the great chiefs of the strong holds of the Saganaw,—' You have no more forts upon the lakes; they have all fallen before the red skins: they gave themselves into our hands; and we spared their lives, and sent them down to the great towns near the salt lake.' But this was false: the chiefs of the Saganaw believing what was said to them, gave up their strong holds; but their lives were not spared, and the grass of the Canadas is yet moist with their blood. Does the Ottawa hear?"

Amazement and stupefaction sat for a moment on the features of the Indians. The fact was as had been stated; and yet, so completely had the several forts been cut off from all communication, it was deemed almost impossible one could have received tidings of the fate of the other, unless conveyed through the Indians themselves.

"The spies of the Saganaw have been very quick to escape the vigilance of the red skins," at length replied the Ottawa; "yet they have returned with a lie upon their lips. I swear by the Great Spirit, that nine of the strong holds of the Saganaw have been destroyed. How could the Ottawa go with deceit upon his lips, when his words were truth?"

"When the red skins said so to the warriors of the last forts they took, they said true; but when they went to the first, and said that all the rest had fallen, they used deceit. A great nation should overcome their enemies like warriors, and not seek to beguile them with their tongues under the edge of the scalping knife!"

"Why did the Saganaw come into the country of the red skins?" haughtily demanded the chief. "Why did they take our hunting grounds from us? Why have they strong places encircling the country of the Indians, like a belt of wampum round the waist of a warrior?"

"This is not true," rejoined the governor. "It was not the Saganaw, but the warriors of the pale flag, who first came and took away the hunting grounds, and built the strong places. The great father of the Saganaw had beaten the great father of the pale flag quite out of the Canadas, and he sent his young men to take their place and to make peace with the red skins, and to trade with them, and to call them brothers."

"The Saganaw was false," retorted the Indian.— "When a chief of the Saganaw came for the first time with his warriors into the country of the Ottawas, the chief of the Ottawas stood in his path, and asked him why, and from whom, he came? That chief was a bold warrior, and his heart was open, and the Ottawa liked him; and when he said he came to be friendly with the red skins, the Ottawa believed him, and he shook him by the hand, and said to his young men, 'Touch not the life of a Saganaw; for their chief is the friend of the Ottawa chief, and his young men shall be the friends of the red warriors.' Look," he proceeded, marking his sense of the discovery by another of those ejaculatory "ughs!" so expressive of surprise in an Indian, "at the

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right hand of my father I see a chief," pointing to Captain Erskine, "who came with those of the Saganaw who first entered the country of the Detroit;—ask that chief if what the Ottawa says is not true. When the Saganaw said he came only to remove the warriors of the pale flag, that he might be friendly and trade with the red skins, the Ottawa received the belt of wampum he offered, and smoked the pipe of peace with him, and he made his men bring bags of parched corn to his warriors who wanted food, and he sent to all the nations on the lakes, and said to them, 'The Saganaw must pass unhurt to the strong hold on the Detroit.' But for the Ottawa, not a Saganaw would have escaped; for the nations were thirsting for their blood, and the knives of the warriors were eager to open their scalps. Ask the chief who sits at the right hand of my father," he again energetically repeated, "if what the Ottawa says is not true."

"What the Ottawa says is true," rejoined the governor; "for the chief who sits on my right hand has often said that, but for the Ottawa, the small number of the warriors of the Saganaw must have been cut off; and his heart is big with kindness to the Ottawa for what he did. But if the great chief meant to be friendly, why did he declare war after smoking the pipe of peace with the Saganaw? Why did he destroy the wigwams of the settlers, and carry off the scalps even of their weak women and children? All this has the Ottawa done; and yet he says that he wished to be friendly with my young men. But the Saganaw is not a fool. He knows the Ottawa chief had no will of his own. On the right hand of the Ottawa sits the great chief of the Delawares, and on his left the great chief of the Shawanees. They have long been the sworn enemies of the Saganaw; and

they came from the rivers that run near the salt lake to stir up the red skins of the Detroit to war. They whispered wicked words in the ear of the Ottawa chief, and he determined to take up the bloody hatchet. This is a shame to a great warrior. The Ottawa was a king over all the tribes in the country of the fresh lakes, and yet he weakly took council like a woman from another."

"My father lies!" fiercely retorted the warrior, half springing to his feet, and involuntarily putting his hand upon his tomahawk. "If the settlers of the Saganaw have fallen," he resumed in a calmer tone, while he again sank upon his mat, "it is because they did not keep their faith with the red skins. When they came weak, and were not yet secure in their strong holds, their tongues were smooth and full of soft words; but when they became strong under the protection of their thunder, they no longer treated the red skins as their friends, and they laughed at them for letting them come into their country. "But," he pursued, elevating his voice, "the Ottawa is a great chief, and he will be respected." Then adverting in bitterness to the influence supposed to be exercised over him—"What my father has said is false. The Shawances and the Delawares are great nations; but the Ottawas are greater than any, and their chiefs are full of wisdom. The Shawances and the Delawares had no talk with the Ottawa chief to make him do what his own wisdom did not tell him."

"Then, if the talk came not from the Shawances and the Delawares, it came from the spies of the warriors of the pale flag. The great father of the French was angry with the great father of the Saganaw, because he conquered his warriors in many battles; and he sent wicked men to whisper lies of the Saganaw into the ears of the

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red skins, and to make them take up the hatchet against them. There is a tall spy at this moment in the camp of the red skins," he pursued with earnestness, and yet paling as he spoke. "It is said he is the bosom friend of the great chief of the Ottawas. But I will not believe it. The head of a great nation would not be the friend of a spy—of one who is baser than a dog. His people would despise him; and they would say, 'Our chief is not fit to sit in council, or to make war; for he is led by the word of a pale face who is without honour.'"

The swarthy cheek of the Indian reddened, and his eye kindled into fire. "There is no spy, but a great warrior in the camp of the Ottawas," he fiercely replied. "Though he came from the country that lies beyond the salt lake, he is now a chief of the red skins, and his arm is mighty, and his heart is big. Would my father know why he has become a chief of the Ottawas?" he pursued with scornful exultation. "When the strong holds of the Saganaw fell, the tomahawk of the 'white warrior' drank more blood than that of a red skin, and his tent is hung round with poles bending under the weight of the scalps he has taken. When the great chief of the Ottawas dies, the pale face will lead his warriors, and take the first seat in the council. The Ottawa chief is his friend."

"If the pale face be the friend of the Ottawa," pursued the governor, in the hope of obtaining some particular intelligence in regard to this terrible and mysterious being, "why is he not here to sit in council with the chiefs? Perhaps," he proceeded tauntingly, as he fancied he perceived a disinclination on the part of the Indian to account for the absence of the warrior, "the pale face is not worthy to take his place among the head

men of the council. His arm may be strong like that of a warrior, but his head may be weak like that of a woman; or, perhaps, he is ashamed to show himself before the pale faces, who have turned him out of their tribe."

"My father lies!" again unceremoniously retorted the warrior. "If the friend of the Ottawa is not here, it is because his voice cannot speak. Does my father recollect the bridge on which he killed his young warrior? Does he recollect the terrible chase of the pale face by the friend of the Ottawa? Ugh!" he continued, as his attention was now diverted to another object of interest. "that pale face was swifter than any runner among the red skins, and for his fleetness he deserved to live to be a great hunter in the Canadas; but fear broke his heart—fear of the friend of the Ottawa chief. The red skins saw him fall at the feet of the Saganaw without life, and they saw the young warriors bear him off in their arms. Is not the Ottawa right?" The Indian paused, threw his eye rapidly along the room, and then, fixing it on the governor, seemed to wait with deep but suppressed interest for his reply.

"Peace to the bones of a brave warrior!" seriously and evasively returned the governor: "the pale face is no longer in the land of the Canadas, and the young warriors of the Saganaw are sorry for his loss; but what would the Ottawa say of the bridge? and what has the pale warrior, the friend of the Ottawa, to do with it?"

A gleam of satisfaction pervaded the countenance of the Indian, as he eagerly bent his ear to receive the assurance that the fugitive was no more; but when allusion was again made to the strange warrior, his brow became overcast, and he replied with mingled haughti-

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ness and anger,—“ Does my father ask ? He has dogs of spies among the settlers of the pale flag, but the tomahawk of the red skins will find them out, and they shall perish even as the Saganaw themselves. Two nights ago, when the warriors of the Ottawas were returning from their scout upon the common, they heard the voice of Onondato, the great wolf-dog of the friend of the Ottawa chief. The voice came from the bridge where the Saganaw killed his young warrior, and it called upon the red skins for assistance. My young men gave their war cry, and ran like wild deer to destroy the enemies of their chief; but when they came the spies had fled, and the voice of Onondato was low and weak as that of a new fawn; and when the warriors came to the other end of the bridge, they found the pale chief lying across the road and covered over with blood. They thought he was dead, and their cry was terrible; for the pale warrior is a great chief, and the Ottawas love him; but when they looked again, they saw that the blood was the blood of Onondato, whose throat the spies of the Saganaw had cut, that he might not hunt them and give them to the tomahawk of the red skins.”

Frequent glances, expressive of their deep interest in the announcement of this intelligence, passed between the governor and his officers. It was clear the party who had encountered the terrible warrior of the Fleur de lis were not spies (for none were employed by the garrison), but their adventurous companions who had so recently quitted them. This was put beyond all doubt by the night, the hour, and the not less important fact of the locality; for it was from the bridge described by the Indian, near which the Canadian had stated his canoe to

be chained, they were to embark on their perilous and uncertain enterprise. The question of their own escape from danger in this unlooked for collision with so powerful and ferocious an enemy, and of the fidelity of the Canadian, still remained involved in doubt, which it might be imprudent, if not dangerous, to seek to have resolved by any direct remark on the subject to the keen and observant warrior. The governor removed this difficulty by artfully observing,—“The great chief of the Ottawas has said they were the spies of the Saganaw who killed the pale warrior. His young men has found them, then; or how could he know they were spies?”

“Is there a warrior among the Saganaw who dares to show himself in the path of the red skins, unless he come in strength and surrounded by his thunder?” was the sneering demand. “But my father is wrong if he supposes the friend of the Ottawa is killed. No,” he pursued fiercely, “the dogs of spies could not kill him; they were afraid to face so terrible a warrior. They came behind him in the dark, and they struck him on the head like cowards and foxes as they were. The warrior of the pale face, and the friend of the Ottawa chief, is sick, but not dead. He lies without motion in his tent, and his voice cannot speak to his friend to tell him who were his enemies, that he may bring their scalps to hang up within his wigwam. But the great chief will soon be well, and his arm will be stronger than ever to spill the blood of the Saganaw as he has done before.”

“The talk of the Ottawa chief is strange,” returned the governor, emphatically and with dignity. “He says he comes to smoke the pipe of peace with the Saganaw, and yet he talks of spilling their blood as if it was water

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from the lake. What does the Ottawa mean?" "Ugh!" exclaimed the Indian, in his surprise. "My father is right, but the Ottawa and the Saganaw have not yet smoked together. When they have, the hatchet will be buried for ever. Until then, they are still enemies."

During this long and important colloquy of the leading parties, the strictest silence had been preserved by the remainder of the council. The inferior chiefs had continued deliberately puffing the smoke from their curled lips, as they sat cross-legged on their mats, and nodding their heads at intervals in confirmation of the occasional appeal made by the rapid glance of the Ottawa, and uttering their guttural "Ugh!" whenever any observation of the parlant parties touched their feelings, or called forth their surprise. The officers had been no less silent and attentive listeners, to a conversation on the issue of which hung so many dear and paramount interests. A pause in the conference gave them an opportunity of commenting in a low tone on the communication made, in the strong excitement of his pride, by the Ottawa chief, in regard to the terrible warrior of the Fleur de lis; who, it was evident, swayed the councils of the Indians, and consequently exercised an influence over the ultimate destinies of the English, which it was impossible to contemplate without alarm. It was evident to all, from whatsoever cause it might arise, this man cherished a rancour towards certain individuals in the fort, inducing an anxiety in its reduction scarcely equalled by that entertained on the part of the Indians themselves. Beyond this, however, all was mystery and doubt; nor had any clue been given to enable them to arrive even at a well founded apprehension of the motives which had given birth to the vindictive-

ness of purpose, so universally ascribed to him even by the savages themselves.

The chiefs also availed themselves of this pause in the conversation of the principals, to sustain a low and animated discussion. Those of the Shawance and Delaware nations were especially earnest; and, as they spoke across the Ottawa, betrayed, by their vehemence of gesture, the action of some strong feeling upon their minds, the precise nature of which could not be ascertained from their speech at the opposite extremity of the room. The Ottawa did not deign to join in their conversation, but sat smoking his pipe in all the calm and forbidding dignity of a proud Indian warrior conscious of his own importance.

"Does the great chief of the Ottawas, then, seek for peace in his heart at length?" resumed the governor; "or is he come to the strong hold of Detroit, as he went to the other strong holds, with deceit on his lips?" The Indian slowly removed the pipe from his mouth, fixed his keen eye searchingly on that of the questioner for nearly a minute, and then briefly and haughtily said, "The Ottawa chief has spoken."

"And do the great chiefs of the Shawances, and the great chiefs of the Delawares, and the great chiefs of the other nations, ask for peace also?" demanded the governor. "If so, let them speak for themselves, and for their warriors."

We will not trespass on the reader by a transcript of the declarations of the inferior chiefs. Each in his turn avowed motives similar to those of the Ottawa for wishing the hatchet might be buried for ever, and that their young men should mingle once more in confidence, not only with the English troops, but with the settlers, who

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would again be brought into the country at the cessation of hostilities. When each had spoken, the Ottawa passed the pipe of ceremony, with which he was provided, to the governor. The latter put it to his lips, and commenced smoking. The Indians keenly, and half furtively, watched the act; and looks of deep intelligence, that escaped not the notice of the equally anxious and observant officers, passed among them.

"The pipe of the great chief of the Ottawas smokes well," calmly remarked the governor; "but the Ottawa chief, in his hurry to come and ask for peace, has made a mistake. The pipe and all its ornaments are red like blood: it is the pipe of war, and not the pipe of peace. The great chief of the Ottawas will be angry with himself; he has entered the strong hold of the Saganaw, and sat in the council, without doing any good for his young men. The Ottawa must come again."

A deep but subdued expression of disappointment passed over the features of the chiefs. They watched the countenances of the officers, to see whether the substitution of one pipe for the other had been attributed, in their estimation, to accident or design. There was nothing, however, to indicate the slightest doubt of their sincerity.

"My father is right," replied the Indian, with an appearance of embarrassment, which, whether natural or feigned, had nothing suspicious in it. "The great chief of the Ottawas has been foolish, like an old woman. The young chiefs of his tribe will laugh at him for this. But the Ottawa chief will come again, and the other chiefs with him, for, as my father sees, they all wish for peace; and that my father may know all the nations wish for peace, as well as their head men, the warriors of the

Ottawa, and of the Shawanee, and of the Delaware, shall play at ball upon the common, to amuse his young men, while the chiefs sit in council with the chiefs of the Saganaw. The red skins shall come naked, and without their rifles and their tomahawks; and even the squaws of the warriors shall come upon the common, to show the Saganaw they may be without fear. Does my father hear?"

"The Ottawa chief says well," returned the governor; "but will the pale friend of the Ottawa come also to take his seat in the council hall? The great chief has said the pale warrior has become the second chief among the Ottawas; and that when he is dead, the pale warrior will lead the Ottawas, and take the first seat in the council. He, too, should smoke the pipe of peace with the Saganaw, that they may know he is no longer their enemy."

The Indian hesitated, uttering merely his quick ejaculatory "Ugh!" in expression of his surprise at so unexpected a requisition. "The pale warrior, the friend of the Ottawa, is very sick," he at length said; "but if the Great Spirit should give him back his voice before the chiefs come again to the council, the pale face will come too. If my father does not see him then, he will know the friend of the Ottawa chief is very sick."

The governor deemed it prudent not to press the question too closely, lest in so doing he should excite suspicion, and defeat his own object. "When will the Ottawa and the other chiefs come again?" he asked; "and when will their warriors play at ball upon the common, that the Saganaw may see them and be amused?" "When the sun has travelled so many times," replied Pontecac, holding up three fingers of his left hand. "Then will

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the Ottawa and the other chiefs bring their young warriors and their women."

"It is too soon," was the reply; "the Saganaw must have time to collect their presents, that they may give them to the young warriors who are swiftest in the race, and the most active at the ball. The great chief of the Ottawas, too, must let the settlers of the pale flag, who are the friends of the red skins, bring in food for the Saganaw, that a great feast may be given to the chiefs, and to the warriors, and that the Saganaw may make peace with the Ottawas and the other nations as becomes a great people. In twice so many days," holding up three of his fingers in imitation of the Indian, "the Saganaw will be ready to receive the chiefs in council, that they may smoke the pipe of peace, and bury the hatchet for ever. What says the great chief of the Ottawas?"

"It is good," was the reply of the Indian, his eye lighting up with deep and exulting expression. "The settlers of the pale flag shall bring food to the Saganaw. The Ottawa chief will send them, and he will desire his young men not to prevent them. In so many days, then," indicating with his fingers, "the great chiefs will sit again in council with the Saganaw, and the Ottawa chief will not be a fool to bring the pipe he does not want."

With this assurance the conference terminated. Pontec raised his tall frame from the mat on which he had been squatted, nodded condescendingly to the governor, and strode haughtily into the square or area of the fort. The other chiefs followed his example; and to Major Blackwater was again assigned the duty of accompanying them without the works. The glance of the savages, and that of Pontec in particular, was less wary than at

their entrance. Each seemed to embrace every object on which the eye could rest, as if to fix its position indelibly in his memory. The young chief, who had been so suddenly and opportunely checked while in the very act of pealing forth his terrible war whoop, again looked up at the windows of the block-house, in quest of those whom his savage instinct had already devoted in intention to his tomahawk, but they were no longer there. Such was the silence that reigned every where, the fort appeared to be tenanted only by the few men of the guard, who lingered near their stations, attentively watching the Indians, as they passed towards the gate. A very few minutes sufficed to bring the latter once more in the midst of their warriors, whom, for a few moments, they harangued earnestly, when the whole body again moved off in the direction of their encampment.

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CHAPTER XV.

The week that intervened between the visit of the chiefs and the day appointed for their second meeting in council, was passed by the garrison in perfect freedom from alarm, although, as usual, in diligent watchfulness and preparations for casualties. In conformity with his promise, the Indian had despatched many of the Canadian settlers, with such provisions as the country then afforded, to the governor, and these, happy to obtain the gold of the troops in return for what they could conveniently spare, were not slow in availing themselves of the permission. Dried bear's meat, venison, and Indian corn, composed the substance of these supplies, which were in sufficient abundance to produce a six weeks' increase to the stock of the garrison. Hitherto they had been subsisting, in a great degree, upon salt provisions; the food furtively supplied by the Canadians being necessarily, from their dread of detection, on so limited a scale, that a very small portion of the troops had been enabled to profit by it. This, therefore, was an important and unexpected benefit, derived from the falling in of the garrison with the professed views of the savages; and one which, perhaps, few officers would, like Colonel de Haldimar, have possessed the forethought to have secured. But although it served to relieve the animal wants of the

man, there was little to remove his moral inquietude. Discouraged by the sanguinary character of the warfare in which they seemed doomed to be for ever engaged, and harassed by constant watchings,—seldom taking off their clothes for weeks together,—the men had gradually been losing their energy of spirit, in the contemplation of the almost irremediable evils by which they were beset; and looked forward with sad and disheartening conviction to a fate, that all things tended to prove to them was unavoidable, however the period of its consummation might be protracted. Among the officers, this dejection, although proceeding from a different cause, was no less prevalent; and notwithstanding they sought to disguise it before their men, when left to themselves, they gave unlimited rein to a despondency hourly acquiring strength, as the day fixed on for the second council with the Indians drew near.

At length came that terrible and eventful day, and, as if in mockery of those who saw beauty in its golden beams, arrayed in all the gorgeous softness of its autumnal glory. Sad and heavy were the hearts of many within that far distant and isolated fort, as they rose, at the first glimmering of light above the horizon, to prepare for the several duties assigned them. All felt the influence of a feeling that laid prostrate the moral energies even of the boldest: but there was one young officer in particular, who exhibited a dejection, degenerating almost into stupefaction; and more than once, when he received an order from his superior, hesitated as one who either heard not, or, in attempting to perform it, mistook the purport of his instructions, and executed some entirely different duty. The countenance of this officer, whose attenuated person otherwise bore traces of lau-

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guor and debility, but too plainly marked the abstractedness and terror of his mind, while the set stiff features and contracted muscles of the face contributed to give an expression of vacuity, that one who knew him not might have interpreted unfavourably. Several times, during the inspection of his company at the early parade, he was seen to raise his head, and throw forward his ear, as if expecting to catch the echo of some horrible and appalling cry, until the men themselves remarked, and commented, by interchange of looks, on the singular conduct of their officer, whose thoughts had evidently no connection with the duty he was performing, or the spot on which he stood.

When this customary inspection had been accomplished,—how imperfectly, has been seen,—and the men dismissed from their ranks, the same young officer was observed, by one who followed his every movement with interest, to ascend that part of the rampart which commanded an unbroken view of the country westward, from the point where the encampment of the Indians was supposed to lie, down to the bridge on which the terrible tragedy of Halloway's death had been so recently enacted. Unconscious of the presence of two sentinels, who moved to and fro near their respective posts, on either side of him, the young officer folded his arms, and gazed in that direction for some minutes, with his whole soul riveted on the scene. Then, as if overcome by recollections called up by that on which he gazed, he covered his eyes hurriedly with his hands, and betrayed, by the convulsed movement of his slender form, he was weeping bitterly. This paroxysm past, he uncovered his face, sank with one knee upon the ground, and upraising his clasped hands, as if in appeal to his God,

seemed to pray deeply and fervently. In this attitude he continued for some moments, when he became sensible of the approach of an intruder. He raised himself from his knee, turned, and beheld one whose countenance was stamped with a dejection scarcely inferior to his own. It was Captain Blessington.

"Charles, my dear Charles!" exclaimed the latter hurriedly, as he laid his hand upon the shoulder of the emaciated De Haldimar, "consider you are not alone. For God's sake, check this weakness! There are men observing you on every side, and your strange manner has already been the subject of remark in the company."

"When the heart is sick, like mine," replied the youth, in a tone of fearful despondency, "it is alike reckless of forms, and careless of appearances. I trust, however," and here spoke the soldier, "there are few within this fort who will believe me less courageous, because I have been seen to bend my knee in supplication to my God. I did not think that *you*, Blessington, would have been the first to condemn the act."

"I condemn it, Charles! you mistake me, indeed you do," feelingly returned his captain, secretly pained at the mild reproach contained in the concluding sentence; "but there are two things to be considered. In the first instance, the men, who are yet in ignorance of the great evils with which we are threatened, may mistake the cause of your agitation; you were in tears just now, Charles, and the sentinels must have remarked it as well as myself. I would not have them to believe that one of their officers was affected by the anticipation of coming disaster, in a way their own hearts are incapable of estimating. You understand me, Charles? I would not

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"I *do* understand you, Blessington," and a forced and sickly smile played for a moment over the wan yet handsome features of the young officer; "you would not have me appear a weeping coward in their eyes."

"Nay, dear Charles, I did not say it."

"But you meant it, Blessington; yet, think not,"—and he warmly pressed the hand of his captain,—“think not, I repeat, I take your hint in any other than the friendly light in which it was intended. That I have been no coward, however, I hope I have given proof more than once before the men, most of whom have known me from my very cradle; yet, whatever they may think, is to me, at this moment, a matter of utter indifference. Blessington," and again the tears rolled from his fixed eyes over his cheek, while he pointed with his finger to the western horizon, "I have neither thought nor feeling for myself; my whole heart lies buried there. Oh, God of Heaven!" he pursued, after a pause, and again raising his eyes in supplication, "avert the dreadful destiny that awaits my beloved sister."

"Charles, Charles, if only for that sister's sake, then, calm an agitation which, if thus indulged in, will assuredly destroy you. All will yet be well. The delay obtained by your father has been sufficient for the purpose proposed. Let us hope for the best: if we are deceived in our expectation, it will then be time enough to indulge in a grief, which could scarcely be exceeded, were the fearful misgivings of your mind to be realised before your eyes."

"Blessington," returned the young officer,—and his features exhibited the liveliest image of despair,—“all

hope has long since been extinct within my breast. See you yon theatre of death?" he mournfully pursued, pointing to the fatal bridge, which was thrown into full relief against the placid bosom of the Detroit: "recollect you the scene that was acted on it? As for me, it is ever present to my mind,—it haunts me in my thoughts by day, and in my dreams by night. I shall never forget it while memory is left to curse me with the power of retrospection. On the very spot on which I now stand was I borne in a chair, to witness the dreadful punishment; you see the stone at my feet, I marked it by that. I saw you conduct Halloway to the centre of the bridge; I beheld him kneel to receive his death; I saw, too, the terrible race for life, that interrupted the proceedings; I marked the sudden up-spring of Halloway to his feet upon the coffin, and the exulting waving of his hand, as he seemed to recognise the rivals for mastery in that race. Then was heard the fatal volley, and I saw the death-struggle of him who had saved my brother's life. I could have died, too, at that moment; and would to Providence I had! but it was otherwise decreed. My aching interest was, for a moment, diverted by the fearful chase now renewed upon the height; and, in common with those around me, I watched the efforts of the pursuer and the pursued with painful earnestness and doubt as to the final result. Ah, Blessington, why was not this all? The terrible shriek, uttered at the moment when the fugitive fell, apparently dead, at the feet of the firing party, reached us even here. I felt as if my heart must have burst, for I knew it to be the shriek of poor Ellen Halloway,—the suffering wife,—the broken-hearted woman who had so recently in all the wild abandonment of her grief, wetted my pillow, and even my cheek, with her

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burning tears, while supplicating an intercession with my father for mercy, which I knew it would be utterly fruitless to promise. The discovery of her exchange of clothes with one of the drum boys of the grenadiers was made soon after you left the fort. I saw her leap upon the coffin, and, standing over the body of her unhappy husband, raise her hands to heaven in adjuration, and my heart died within me. I recollected the words she had spoken on a previous occasion, during the first examination of Halloway, and I felt it to be the prophetic denunciation, then threatened, that she was now uttering on all the race of De Haldimar. I saw no more, Blessington. Sick, dizzy, and with every faculty of my mind annihilated, I turned away from the horrid scene, and was again borne to my room."

Captain Blessington was deeply affected; for there was a solemnity in the voice of the young officer that carried conviction to the heart.

The attention of both was diverted by the report of a musket from the rear of the fort. Presently afterwards, the word was passed along the chain of sentinels upon the ramparts, that the Indians were issuing in force from the forest upon the common near the bomb-proof. Then was heard, as the sentinel at the gate delivered the password, the heavy roll of the drum summoning to arms.

"Ha! here already!" said Captain Blessington, as, glancing towards the forest, he beheld the skirt of the wood now alive with dusky human forms: "Pontecac's visit is earlier than we had been taught to expect; but we are as well prepared to receive him now, as later; and, in fact, the sooner the interview is terminated, the sooner we shall know what we have to depend upon. Come, Charles, we must join the company, and let me

entreat you to evince less despondency before the men. It is hard, I know, to sustain an artificial character under such disheartening circumstances; still, for example's sake, it must be done."

"What I can I will do, Blessington," rejoined the youth, as they both moved from the ramparts; "but the task is, in truth, one to which I find myself wholly unequal. How do I know that, even at this moment, my defenceless, terrified, and innocent sister may not be invoking the name and arm of her brother to save her from destruction."

"Trust in Providence, Charles. Even although our worst apprehensions be realised, as I fervently trust they will not, your sister may be spared. The Canacian could not have been unfaithful, or we should have learnt something of his treachery from the Indians. Another week will confirm us in the truth or fallacy of our impressions. Until then, let us arm our hearts with hope. Trust me, we shall yet see the laughing eyes of Clara fill with tears of affection, as I recount to her all her too sensitive and too desponding brother has suffered for her sake."

De Haldimar made no reply. He deeply felt the kind intention of his captain, but was far from cherishing the hope that had been recommended. He sighed heavily, pressed the arm, on which he leaned, in gratitude for the motive, and moved silently with his friend to join their company below the rampart.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Meanwhile the white flag had again been raised by the Indians upon the bomb-proof; and this having been readily met by a corresponding signal from the fort, a numerous band of savages now issued from the cover with which their dark forms had hitherto been identified, and spread themselves far and near upon the common. On this occasion they were without arms, offensive or defensive, of any kind, if we may except the knife which was always carried at the girdle, and which constituted a part rather of their necessary dress than of their warlike equipment. These warriors might have been about five hundred in number, and were composed chiefly of picked men from the nations of the Ottawas, the Delawares, and the Shawances; each race being distinctly recognisable from the others by certain peculiarities of form and feature which individualised, if we may so term it, the several tribes. Their only covering was the legging before described, composed in some instances of cloth, but principally of smoked deerskin, and the flap that passed through the girdle around the loins, by which the straps attached to the leggings were secured. Their bodies, necks, and arms were, with the exception of a few slight ornaments, entirely naked; and even the blanket, that served them as a couch by night and a covering by day,

had, with one single exception, been dispensed with, apparently with a view to avoid any thing like encumbrance in their approaching sport. Each individual was provided with a stout sapling of about three feet in length, curved, and flattened at the root extremity, like that used at the Irish hurdle; which game, in fact, the manner of ball-playing among the Indians in every way resembled.

Interspersed among these warriors were a nearly equal number of squaws. These were to be seen lounging carelessly about in small groups, and were of all ages; from the hoary-headed, shrivelled-up hag, whose eyes still sparkled with a fire that her lank and attenuated frame denied, to the young girl of twelve, whose dark and glowing cheek, rounded bust, and penetrating glance, bore striking evidence of the precociousness of Indian beauty. These latter looked with evident interest on the sports of the younger warriors, who, throwing down their hurdles, either vied with each other in the short but incredibly swift foot-race, or indulged themselves in wrestling and leaping; while their companions, abandoned to the full security they felt to be attached to the white flag waving on the fort, lay at their lazy length upon the sward, ostensibly following the movements of the several competitors in these sports, but in reality with heart and eye directed solely to the fortification that lay beyond. Each of these females, in addition to the machecoti, or petticoat, which in one solid square of broad-cloth was tightly wrapped around the loins, also carried a blanket loosely thrown around the person, but closely confined over the shoulders in front, and reaching below the knee. There was an air of constraint in their movements, which accorded ill with the occasion of festivity for which they were assembled; and it was remarkable, whether it arose

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from deference to those to whom they were slaves, as well as wives and daughters, or from whatever other cause it might be, none of them ventured to recline themselves upon the sward in imitation of the warriors.

When it had been made known to the governor that the Indians had begun to develop themselves in force upon the common unarmed, yet redolent with the spirit that was to direct their meditated sports, the soldiers were dismissed from their respective companies to the ramparts; where they were now to be seen, not drawn up in formidable and hostile array, but collected together in careless groups, and simply in their side-arms. This reciprocation of confidence on the part of the garrison was acknowledged by the Indians by marks of approbation, expressed as much by the sudden and classic disposition of their fine forms into attitudes strikingly illustrative of their admiration and pleasure, as by the interjectional sounds that passed from one to the other of the throng. From the increased alacrity with which they now lent themselves to the preparatory and inferior amusements of the day, it was evident their satisfaction was complete.

Hitherto the principal chiefs had, as on the previous occasion, occupied the bomb-proof; and now, as then, they appeared to be deliberating among themselves, but evidently in a more energetic and serious manner. At length they separated, when Pontecac, accompanied by the chiefs who had attended him on the former day, once more led in the direction of the fort. The moment of his advance was the signal for the commencement of the principal game. In an instant those of the warriors who lay reclining on the sward sprang to their feet, while the wrestlers and racers resumed their hurdles, and prepared them-

selves for the trial of mingled skill and swiftness. At first they formed a dense group in the centre of the common; and then, diverging in two equal files both to the right and to the left of the immediate centre, where the large ball was placed, formed an open chain, extending from the skirt of the forest to the commencement of the village. On the one side were ranged the Delawares and the Shawanees, and on the other the more numerous nation of the Ottawas. The women of these several tribes, apparently much interested in the issue of an amusement in which the manliness and activity of their respective friends were staked, had gradually and imperceptibly gained the front of the fort, where they were now huddled in groups, at about twenty paces from the draw-bridge, and bending eagerly forward to command the movements of the ball-players.

In his circuit round the walls, Pontecac was seen to remark the confiding appearance of the unarmed soldiery with a satisfaction that was not sought to be disguised; and from the manner in which he threw his glance along each face of the rampart, it was evident his object was to embrace the numerical strength collected there. It was moreover observed, when he passed the groups of squaws on his way to the gate, he addressed some words in a strange tongue to the elder matrons of each.

Once more the dark warriors were received at the gate, by Major Blackwater; and, as with firm but elastic tread, they moved across the square, each threw his fierce eyes rapidly and anxiously around, and with less of concealment in his manner than had been manifested on the former occasion. On every hand the same air of nakedness and desertion met their gaze. Not even a soldier of the guard was to be seen; and when they cast their eyes

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upwards to the windows of the block-houses, they were found to be tenantless as the area through which they passed. A gleam of fierce satisfaction pervaded the swarthy countenances of the Indians; and the features of Pontecac, in particular, expressed the deepest exultation. Instead of leading his party, he now brought up the rear; and when arrived in the centre of the fort, he, without any visible cause for the accident, stumbled, and fell to the earth. The other chiefs for a moment lost sight of their ordinary gravity, and marked their sense of the circumstance by a prolonged sound, partaking of the mingled character of a laugh and a yell. Startled at the cry, Major Blackwater, who was in front, turned to ascertain the cause. At that moment Pontecac sprang lightly again to his feet, responding to the yell of his confederates by another even more startling, fierce, and prolonged than their own. He then stalked proudly to the head of the party, and even preceded Major Blackwater into the council room.

In this rude theatre of conference some changes had been made since their recent visit, which escaped not the observation of the quick-sighted chiefs. Their mats lay in the position they had previously occupied, and the chairs of the officers were placed as before, but the room itself had been considerably enlarged. The slight partition terminating the interior extremity of the mess-room, and dividing it from that of one of the officers, had been removed; and midway through this, extending entirely across, was drawn a curtain of scarlet cloth, against which the imposing figure of the governor, elevated as his seat was above those of the other officers, was thrown into strong relief. There was another change, that escaped not the observation of the Indians, and that was,

not more than one half of the officers who had been present at the first conference being now in the room. Of these latter, one had, moreover, been sent away by the governor the moment the chiefs were ushered in.

"Ugh!" ejaculated the proud leader, as he took his seat unceremoniously, and yet not without reluctance, upon the mat. "The council-room of my father, is bigger than when the Ottawa was here before, yet the number of his chiefs is not so many."

"The great chief of the Ottawas knows that the Saganaw has promised the red skins a feast," returned the governor. "Were he to leave it to his young warriors to provide it, he would not be able to receive the Ottawa like a great chief, and to make peace with him as he could wish."

"My father has a great deal of cloth, red, like the blood of a pale face," pursued the Indian, rather in demand than in observation, as he pointed with his finger to the opposite end of the room. "When the Ottawa was here last, he did not see it."

"The great chief of the Ottawas knows that the great father of the Saganaw has a big heart to make presents to the red skins. The cloth the Ottawa sees there is sufficient to make leggings for the chiefs of all the nations."

Apparently satisfied with this reply, the fierce Indian uttered one of his strong guttural and assentient "ugh," and then commenced filling the pipe of peace, correct on the present occasion in all its ornaments, which was handed to him by the Delaware chief. It was remarked by the officers this operation took up an unusually long portion of his time, and that he frequently turned his ear, like a horse stirred by the huntsman's horn, with quick and irrepressible eagerness towards the door.

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"The pale warrior, the friend of the Ottawa chief, is not here," said the governor, as he glanced his eye along the semicircle of Indians. "How is this? Is his voice still sick, that he cannot come; or has the great chief of the Ottawas forgotten to tell him?"

"The voice of the pale warrior is still sick, and he cannot speak," replied the Indian. "The Ottawa chief is very sorry; for the tongue of his friend the pale face is full of wisdom."

Scarcely had the last words escaped his lips, when a wild shrill cry from without the fort rang on the ears of the assembled council, and caused a momentary commotion among the officers. It arose from a single voice, and that voice could not be mistaken by any who had heard it once before. A second or two, during which the officers and chiefs kept their eyes intently fixed on each other, passed anxiously away, and then nearer to the gate, apparently on the very drawbridge itself, was pealed forth the wild and deafening yell of a legion of devilish voices. At that sound, the Ottawa and the other chiefs sprang to their feet, and their own fierce cry responded to that yet vibrating on the ears of all. Already were their gleaming tomahawks brandished wildly over their heads, and Pontecac had even bounded a pace forward to reach the governor with the deadly weapon, when at the sudden stamping of the foot of the latter upon the floor, the scarlet cloth in the rear was thrown aside, and twenty soldiers, their eyes glancing along the barrels of their levelled muskets, met the startled gaze of the astonished Indians.

An instant was enough to satisfy the keen chief of the true state of the case. The calm composed mien of the officers, not one of whom had even attempted to quit his

seat, amid the din by which his ears were so alarmingly assailed,—the triumphant, yet dignified, and even severe expression of the governor's countenance; and, above all, the unexpected presence of the prepared soldiery,—all these at once assured him of the discovery of his treachery, and the danger that awaited him. The necessity for an immediate attempt to join his warriors without, was now obvious to the Ottawa; and scarcely had he conceived the idea before it was sought to be executed. In a single spring he gained the door of the mess-room, and, followed eagerly and tumultuously by the other chiefs, to whose departure no opposition was offered, in the next moment stood on the steps of the piazza that ran along the front of the building whence he had issued.

The surprise of the Indians on reaching this point was now too powerful to be dissembled; and, incapable either of advancing or receding, they remained gazing on the scene before them with an air of mingled stupefaction, rage, and alarm. Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since they had proudly strode through the naked area of the fort, and yet, even in that short space of time, its appearance had been entirely changed. Not a part was there now of the surrounding buildings that was not redolent with human life, and hostile preparation. Through every window of the officers' low rooms, was to be seen the dark and frowning muzzle of a field-piece, bearing upon the gateway; and behind these were artillerymen, holding their lighted matches, supported again by files of bayonets, that glittered in their rear. In the block-houses the same formidable array of field-pieces and muskets was visible; while from the four angles of the square, as many heavy guns, that had been artfully masked at the entrance of the chiefs, seemed ready to

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sweep away every thing that should come before them. The guard-room near the gate presented the same hostile front. The doors of this, as well as of the other buildings, had been firmly secured within; but from every window affording cover to the troops, gleamed a line of bayonets rising above the threatening field-pieces, pointed, at a distance of little more than twelve feet, directly upon the gateway. In addition to his musket, each man of the guard moreover held a hand grenade, provided with a short fuze that could be ignited in a moment from the matches of the gunners, and with immediate effect. The soldiers in the block-houses were similarly provided.

Almost magic as was the change thus suddenly effected in the appearance of the garrison, it was not the most interesting feature in the exciting scene. Choking up the gateway, in which they were completely wedged, and crowding the drawbridge, a dense mass of dusky Indians were to be seen casting their fierce glances around; yet paralysed in their movements by the unlooked-for display of a resisting force, threatening instant annihilation to those who should attempt either to advance or to recede. Never, perhaps, was astonishment and disappointment more forcibly depicted on the human countenance, than as they were now exhibited by these men, who had already, in imagination, secured to themselves an easy conquest. They were the warriors who had so recently been engaged in the manly yet innocent exercise of the ball; but, instead of the harmless hurdle, each now carried a short gun in one hand and a gleaming tomahawk in the other. After the first general yelling heard in the council-room, not a sound was uttered. Their burst of rage and triumph had evidently been checked by the unexpected manner of their reception, and they now stood

on the spot on which the further advance of each had been arrested, so silent and motionless, that, but for the rolling of their dark eyes, as they keenly measured the insurmountable barriers that were opposed to their progress, they might almost have been taken for a wild group of statuary.

Conspicuous at the head of these was he who wore the blanket; a tall warrior, on whom rested the startled eye of every officer and soldier who was so situated as to behold him. His face was painted black as death; and as he stood under the arch of the gateway, with his white turbaned head towering far above those of his companions, this formidable and mysterious enemy might have been likened to the spirit of darkness presiding over his terrible legions.

In order to account for the extraordinary appearance of the Indians, armed in every way for death, at a moment when neither gun nor tomahawk was apparently within miles of their reach, it will be necessary to revert to the first entrance of the chiefs into the fort. The fall of Pontiac had been the effect of design; and the yell pealed forth by him, on recovering his feet, as if in taunting reply to the laugh of his comrades, was in reality a signal intended for the guidance of the Indians without. These, now following up their game with increasing spirit, at once changed the direction of their line, bringing the ball nearer to the fort. In their eagerness to effect this object, they had overlooked the gradual secession of the unarmed troops, spectators of their sport, from the ramparts, until scarcely more than twenty stragglers were left. As they neared the gate, the squaws broke up their several groups, and, forming a line on either hand of the road leading to the drawbridge, appeared to separ-

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rate solely with a view not to impede the action of the players. For an instant a dense group collected around the ball, which had been driven to within a hundred yards of the gate, and fifty hurdles were crossed in their endeavours to secure it, when the warrior, who formed the solitary exception to the multitude, in his blanket covering, and who had been lingering in the extreme rear of the party, came rapidly up to the spot where the well-affected struggle was maintained. At his approach, the hurdles of the other players were withdrawn, when, at a single blow from his powerful arm, the ball was seen flying into the air in an oblique direction, and was for a moment lost altogether to the view. When it again met the eye, it was descending perpendicularly into the very centre of the fort.

With the fleetness of thought now commenced a race that had ostensibly for its object the recovery of the lost ball; and in which, he who had driven it with such resistless force, outstripped them all. Their course lay between the two lines of squaws; and scarcely had the head of the bounding Indians reached the opposite extremity of those lines, when the women suddenly threw back their blankets, and disclosed each a short gun and a tomahawk. To throw away their hurdles and seize upon these, was the work of an instant. Already, in imagination, was the fort their own; and, such was the peculiar exultation of the black and turbaned warrior, when he felt the planks of the drawbridge bending beneath his feet, all the ferocious joy of his soul was pealed forth in the terrible cry which, rapidly succeeded by that of the other Indians, had resounded so fearfully through the council room. What their disappointment was, when, on

gaining the interior, they found the garrison prepared for their reception, has already been shown.

"Secure that traitor, men!" exclaimed the governor, advancing into the square, and pointing to the black warrior, whose quick eye was now glancing on every side, to discover some assailable point in the formidable defences of the troops.

A laugh of scorn and derision escaped the lips of the warrior. "Is there a man—are there any ten men, even with Governor de Haldimar at their head, who will be bold enough to attempt it?" he asked. "Nay!" he pursued, stepping boldly a pace or two in front of the wondering savages,—“here I stand singly, and defy your whole garrison!"

A sudden movement among the soldiers in the guard-room announced they were preparing to execute the order of their chief. The eye of the black warrior sparkled with ferocious pleasure; and he made a gesture to his followers, which was replied to by the sudden tension of their hitherto relaxed forms into attitudes of expectance and preparation.

"Stay, men; quit not your cover for your lives!" commanded the governor, in a loud deep voice:—"keep the barricades fast, and move not."

A cloud of anger and disappointment passed over the features of the black warrior. It was evident the object of his bravado was to draw the troops from their defences, that they might be so mingled with their enemies as to render the cannon useless, unless friends and foes (which was by no means probable) should alike be sacrificed. The governor had penetrated the design in time to prevent the mischief.

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rior aimed his tomahawk at the head of the governor. The latter stepped lightly aside, and the steel sank with such force into one of the posts supporting the piazza, that the quivering handle snapped close off at its head. At that moment, a single shot, fired from the guard-house, was drowned in the yell of approbation which burst from the lips of the dark crowd. The turban of the warrior was, however, seen flying through the air, carried away by the force of the bullet which had torn it from his head. He himself was unharmed.

"A narrow escape for us both, Colonel de Haldimar," he observed, as soon as the yell had subsided, and with an air of the most perfect unconcern. "Had my tomahawk obeyed the first impulse of my heart, I should have cursed myself and died: as it is, I have reason to avoid all useless exposure of my own life, at present. A second bullet may be better directed; and to die, robbed of my revenge, would ill answer the purpose of a life devoted to its attainment. Remember my pledge!"

At the hasty command of the governor, a hundred muskets were raised to the shoulders of his men; but, before a single eye could glance along the barrel, the formidable and active warrior had bounded over the heads of the nearest Indians into a small space that was left unoccupied; when, stooping suddenly to the earth, he disappeared altogether from the view of his enemies. A slight movement in the centre of the numerous band crowding the gateway, and extending even beyond the bridge, was now discernible: it was like the waving of a field of standing corn, through which some animal rapidly winds its tortuous course, bending aside as the object advances, and closing again when it has passed. After the lapse of a minute, the terrible warrior was seen

to spring again to his feet, far in the rear of the band; and then, uttering a fierce shout of exultation, to make good his retreat towards the forest.

Meanwhile, Pontecac and the other chiefs of the council continued rooted to the piazza on which they had rushed at the unexpected display of the armed men behind the scarlet curtain. The loud "Waugh" that burst from the lips of all, on finding themselves thus foiled in their schemes of massacre, had been succeeded, the instant afterwards, by feelings of personal apprehension, which each, however, had collectedness enough to disguise. Once the Ottawa made a movement as if he would have cleared the space that kept him from his warriors; but the emphatical pointing of the finger of Colonel de Haldimar to the levelled muskets of the men in the block-houses prevented him, and the attempt was not repeated. It was remarked by the officers, who also stood on the piazza, close behind the chiefs, when the black warrior threw his tomahawk at the governor, a shade of displeasure passed over the features of the Ottawa; and that, when he found the daring attempt was not retaliated on his people, his countenance had been momentarily lighted up with a satisfied expression, apparently marking his sense of the forbearance so unexpectedly shown.

"What says the great chief of the Ottawas now?" asked the governor, calmly, and breaking a profound silence that had succeeded to the last fierce yell of the formidable being just departed. "Was the Saganaw not right, when he said the Ottawa came with guile in his heart, and with a lie upon his lips? But the Saganaw is not a fool, and he can read the thoughts of his enemies upon their faces, and long before their lips have spoken."

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chief, and his head is full of wisdom. Had he been feeble, like the other chiefs of the Saganaw, the strong hold of the Detroit must have fallen, and the red skins would have danced their war dance round the scalps of his young men, even in the council room where they came to talk of peace."

"Does the great chief of the Ottawas see the big thunder of the Saganaw?" pursued the governor: "if not, let him open his eyes and look. The Saganaw has but to move his lips, and swifter than the lightning would the pale faces sweep away the warriors of the Ottawa, even where they now stand: in less time than the Saganaw is now speaking, would they mow them down like the grass of the prairie."

"Ugh!" again exclaimed the chief, with mixed doggedness and fierceness: "if what my father says is true, why does he not pour out his anger upon the red skins?"

"Let the great chief of the Ottawas listen," replied the governor with dignity. "When the great chiefs of all the nations that are in league with the Ottawas came last to the council, the Saganaw knew that they carried deceit in their hearts, and that they never meant to smoke the pipe of peace, or to bury the hatchet in the ground. The Saganaw might have kept them prisoners, that their warriors might be without a head; but he had given his word to the great chief of the Ottawas, and the word of a Saganaw is never broken. Even now, while both the chiefs and the warriors are in his power, he will not slay them, for he wishes to show the Ottawa the desire of the Saganaw is to be friendly with the red skins, and not to destroy them. Wicked men from the Canadas have whispered lies in the ear of the Ottawa;

but a great chief should judge for himself, and take council only from the wisdom of his own heart. The Ottawa and his warriors may go," he resumed, after a short pause; "the path by which they came is again open to them. Let them depart in peace; the big thunder of the Saganaw shall not harm them."

The countenance of the Indian, who had clearly seen the danger of his position, wore an expression of surprise which could not be dissembled: low exclamations passed between him and his companions; and, then pointing to the tomahawk that lay half buried in the wood, he said, doubtfully,—

"It was the pale face, the friend of the great chief of the Ottawas, who struck the hatchet at my father. The Ottawa is not a fool to believe the Saganaw can sleep without revenge."

"The great chief of the Ottawas shall know us better," was the reply. "The young warriors of the Saganaw might destroy their enemies where they now stand, but they seek not their blood. When the Ottawa chief takes council from his own heart, and not from the lips of a cowardly dog of a pale face, who strikes his tomahawk and then flies, his wisdom will tell him to make peace with the Saganaw, whose warriors are without treachery, even as they are without fear."

Another of those deep interjectional "ughs" escaped the chest of the proud Indian.

"What my father says is good," he returned; "but the pale face is a great warrior, and the Ottawa chief is his friend. The Ottawa will go."

He then addressed a few sentences, in a tongue unknown to the officers, to the swarthy and anxious crowd in front. These were answered by a low, sullen, yet

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assentient grunt, from the united band, who now turned, though with justifiable caution and distrust, and recrossed the drawbridge without hinderance from the troops. Pontecac waited until the last Indian had departed, and then making a movement to the governor, which, with all its haughtiness, was meant to mark his sense of the forbearance and good faith that had been manifested, once more stalked proudly and calmly across the area, followed by the remainder of the chiefs. The officers who were with the governor ascended to the ramparts, to follow their movements; and it was not before their report had been made that the Indians were immerging once more into the heart of the forest, the troops were withdrawn from their formidable defences, and the gate of the fort again firmly secured.

CHAPTER XVII.

While the reader is left to pause over the rapid succession of incidents resulting from the mysterious entrance of the warrior of the Fleur de lis into the English fort, be it our task to explain the circumstances connected with the singular disappearance of Captain de Haldimar, and the melancholy murder of his unfortunate servant.

It will be recollected that the ill-fated Halloway, in the course of his defence before the court martial, distinctly stated the voice of the individual who had approached his post, calling on the name of Captain de Haldimar, on the night of the alarm, to have been that of a female, and that the language in which they subsequently conversed was that of the Ottawa Indians. This was strictly the fact; and the only error into which the unfortunate soldier had fallen, had reference merely to the character and motives of the party. He had naturally imagined, as he had stated, it was some young female of the village, whom attachment for his officer had driven to the desperate determination of seeking an interview; nor was this impression at all weakened by the subsequent discourse of the parties in the Indian tongue, with which it was well known, most of the Canadians, both male and female, were more or less conversant. The subject of that short, low, and hurried

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conference was, indeed, one that well warranted the singular intrusion ; and, in the declaration of Halloway, we have already seen the importance and anxiety attached by the young officer to the communication. Without waiting to repeat the motives assigned for his departure, and the prayers and expostulations to which he had recourse to overcome the determination and sense of duty of the unfortunate sentinel, let us pass at once to the moment when, after having cleared the ditch, conjointly with his faithful follower, in the manner already shown, Captain de Haldimar first stood side by side with his midnight visitant.

The night, it has elsewhere been observed, was clear and starry, so that objects upon the common, such as the rude stump that here and there raised its dark low head above the surface, might be dimly seen in the distance. To obviate the danger of discovery by the sentinels, appeared to be the first study of the female ; for, when Captain de Haldimar, followed by his servant, had reached the spot on which she stood, she put the forefinger of one hand to her lips, and with the other pointed to his booted foot. A corresponding signal showed that the lightness of the material offered little risk of betrayal. Donellan, however, was made to doff his heavy ammunition shoes ; and, with this precaution, they all stole hastily along, under the shadows of the projecting ramparts, until they had gained the extreme rear. Here the female suddenly raised her tall figure from the stooping position in which she, as well as her companions, had performed the dangerous circuit ; and, placing her finger once more significantly on her lips, led in the direction of the bomb-proof, unperceived by the sentinels, most of whom, it is probable, had, up to the moment of the alarm subse-

quently given, been too much overcome by previous watching and excitement to have kept the most vigilant look out.

Arrived at the skirt of the forest, the little party drew up within the shadow of the ruin, and a short and earnest dialogue ensued, in Indian, between the female and the officer. This was succeeded by a command from the latter to his servant, who, after a momentary but respectful expostulation, which, however, was utterly lost on him to whom it was addressed, proceeded to divest himself of his humble apparel, assuming in exchange the more elegant uniform of his superior. Donellan, who was also of the grenadiers, was remarkable for the resemblance he bore, in figure, to Captain de Haldimar; wanting, it is true, the grace and freedom of movement of the latter, but still presenting an outline which, in an attitude of profound repose, might, as it subsequently did, have set even those who were most intimate with the officer at fault.

"This is well," observed the female, as the young man proceeded to induct himself in the grey coat of his servant, having previously drawn the glazed hat close over his waving and redundant hair; "if the Saganaw is ready, Oucanasta will go."

"Sure, and your honour does not mane to lave me behind!" exclaimed the anxious soldier, as his captain now recommended him to stand closely concealed near the ruin until his return. "Who knows what ambuscade the she-devil may lade your honour into; and thin who will you have to bring you out of it?"

"No, Donellan, it must not be: I first intended it, as you may perceive by my bringing you out; but the expedition on which I am going is of the utmost im-

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portance to us all, and too much precaution cannot be taken. I fear no ambuscade, for I can depend on the fidelity of my guide; but the presence of a third person would only embarrass, without assisting me in the least. You must remain behind; the woman insists upon it, and there is no more to be said."

"To ould Nick with the ugly winch, for her pains!" half muttered the disappointed soldier to himself. "I wish it may be as your honour says; but my mind misgives me sadly that evil will come of this. Has your honour secured the pistols?"

"They are here," returned his captain, placing a hand on either chest. "And now, Donellan, mark me: I know nothing that can detain me longer than an hour; at least the woman assures me, and I believe her, that I may be back then; but it is well to guard against accidents. You must continue here for the hour, and for the hour only. If I come not then, return to the fort without delay, for the rope must be removed, and the gate secured, before Halloway is relieved. The keys you will find in the pocket of my uniform: when you have done with them, let them be hung up in their proper place in the guard-room. My father must not know either that Halloway suffered me to pass the gate, or that you accompanied me."

"Lord love us! your honour talks as if you niver would return, giving such a heap of orders!" exclaimed the startled man; "but if I go back alone, as I trust in heaven I shall not, how am I to account for being dressed in your honour's rigimintals?"

"I tell you, Donellan," impatiently returned the officer, "that I shall be back; but I only wish to guard against accidents. The instant you get into the

fort, you will take off my clothes and resume your own. Who the devil is to see you in the uniform, unless it be Halloway?"

"If the Saganaw would not see the earth red with the blood of his race, he will go," interrupted the female. "Oucanasta can feel the breath of the morning fresh upon her cheek, and the council of the chiefs must be begun."

"The Saganaw is ready, and Oucanasta shall lead the way," hastily returned the officer. "One word more, Donellan," and he pressed the hand of his domestic kindly: "should I not return, you must, without committing Halloway or yourself, cause my father to be apprised that the Indians meditate a deep and treacherous plan to get possession of the fort. What that plan is, I know not yet myself, neither does this woman know; but she says that I shall hear it discussed unseen, even in the heart of their own encampment. All you have to do is to acquaint my father with the existence of danger. And now be cautious: above all things, keep close under the shadow of the bomb-proof; for there are scouts constantly prowling about the common, and the glittering of the uniform in the starlight may betray you."

"But why may I not follow your honour?" again urged the faithful soldier; "and where is the use of my remaining here to count the stars, and hear the 'all's well!' from the fort, when I could be so much better employed in guarding your honour from harm? What sort of protection can that Ingian woman afford, who is of the race of our bitterest enemies, them cursed Ottawas, and your honour venturing, too, like a spy into the very heart of the blood-hounds? Ah, Captain de Haldimar,

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for the love of God, do not trust yourself alone with her, or I am sure I shall never see your honour again!"

The last words (unhappily too prophetic) fell only on the ear of him who uttered them. The female and the officer had already disappeared round an abrupt angle of the bomb-proof; and the soldier, as directed by his master, now drew up his tall figure against the ruin, where he continued for a period immovable, as if he had been planted there in his ordinary character of sentinel, listening, until they eventually died away in distance, to the receding footsteps of his master; and then ruminating on the several apprehensions that crowded on his mind, in regard to the probable issue of his adventurous project.

Meanwhile, Captain de Haldimar and his guide trod the mazes of the forest, with an expedition that proved the latter to be well acquainted with its bearings. On quitting the bomb-proof, she had struck into a narrow winding path, less seen than felt in the deep gloom pervading the wood, and with light steps bounded over obstacles that lay strewed in their course, emitting scarcely more sound than would have been produced by the slimy crawl of its native rattlesnake. Not so, however, with the less experienced tread of her companion. Wanting the pliancy of movement given to it by the light mocassin, the booted foot of the young officer, despite of all his precaution, fell heavily to the ground, producing such a rustling among the dried leaves, that, had an Indian ear been lurking any where around, his approach must inevitably have been betrayed. More than once, too, neglecting to follow the injunction of his companion, who moved in a stooping posture, with her head bent over her chest, his hat was caught in the closely matted

branches, and fell sullenly and heavily to the earth, evidently much to the discomfiture of his guide.

At length they stood on the verge of a dark and precipitous ravine, the abrupt sides of which were studded with underwood, so completely interwoven that all passage appeared impracticable. What, however, seemed an insurmountable obstacle, proved, in reality, an inestimable advantage; for it was by clinging to this, in imitation of the example set him by his companion, the young officer was prevented from rolling into an abyss, the depth of which was lost in the profound obscurity that pervaded the scene. Through the bed of this dark dell rolled a narrow stream, so imperceptible to the eye in the "living darkness," and so noiseless in its course, that it was not until warned by his companion he stood on the very brink of it, Captain de Haldimar was made sensible of its existence. Both cleared it at a single bound, in which the activity of the female was not the least conspicuous, and, clambering up the opposite steep, secured their footing, by the aid of the same underwood that had assisted them in their descent.

On gaining the other summit, which was not done without detaching several loose stones from their sandy bed, they again fell into the path, which had been lost sight of in traversing the ravine. They had proceeded along this about half a mile, when the female suddenly stopped, and pointing to a dim and lurid atmosphere that now began to show itself between the thin foliage, whispered that in the opening beyond stood the encampment of the Indians. She then seated herself on the trunk of a fallen tree, that lay at the side of the almost invisible path they had hitherto pursued, and motioning to her

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companion to unboot himself, proceeded to unlace the fastenings of her mocassins.

"The foot of the Saganaw must fall like the night dew on the prairie," she observed; "the ear of the red skin is quicker than the lightning, and he will know that a pale face is near, if he hear but his tread upon a blade of grass."

The young officer had, at the first suggestion of his guide, divested himself of his boots, prepared to perform the remainder of the journey merely in his stockings, but his companion now threw herself on her knees before him, and, without further ceremony, proceeded to draw over his foot one of the mocassins she had just relinquished.

"The feet of the Saganaw are soft as those of a young child," she remarked, in a voice of commiseration; "but the mocassins of Oueanasta shall protect them from the thorns of the forest."

This was too un-European,—too much reversing the established order of things, to be borne patiently. As if he had felt the dignity of his manhood offended by the proposal, the officer drew his foot hastily back, declaring, as he sprang from the log, he did not care for the thorns, and could not think of depriving a female, who must be much more sensible of pain than himself.

Oueanasta, however, was not to be outdone in politeness. She calmly reseated herself on the log, drew her right foot over her left knee, caught one of the hands of her companion, and placing it upon the naked sole, desired him to feel how impervious to attack of every description was that indurated portion of the lower limb.

This practical argument was not without its weight, and had more effect in deciding the officer than a volume

of remonstrance. When Captain de Haldimar had passed his unwilling hand over the foot of Oucanasta, which, whatever her face might have been, was certainly any thing but delicate, and encountered numerous ragged excrescences and raspy callosities that set all symmetry at defiance, a wonderful revolution came over his feelings; and secretly determining the mocassins would be equally well placed on his own feet, he no longer offered any opposition.

This important point arranged, the officer once more followed his guide in silence. Gradually the forest, as they advanced, became lighter with the lurid atmosphere before alluded to; and at length, through the trees, could be indistinctly seen the Indian fires from which it proceeded. The young man was now desired by his conductress to use the utmost circumspection in making the circuit of the wood, in order to gain a position immediately opposite to the point where the path they had hitherto pursued terminated in the opening. This, indeed, was the most dangerous and critical part of the undertaking. A false step, or the crackling of a decayed branch beneath the foot, would have been sufficient to betray proximity, in which case his doom was sealed.

Fortunate did he now deem himself in having yielded to the counsel of his guide. Had he retained his unbending boot, it must have crushed whatever it pressed; whereas, the pliant mocassin, yielding to the obstacles it encountered, enabled him to pass noiselessly over them. Still, while exempt from danger on this score, another, scarcely less perplexing, became at every instant more obvious; for, as they drew nearer to the point which the female sought to gain, the dim light of the half-slumbering fires fell so immediately upon their path, that had a

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single human eye been turned in that direction, their discovery was inevitable. It was with a beating heart, to which mere personal fear, however, was a stranger, that Captain de Haldimar performed this concluding stage of his adventurous course; but, at a moment when he considered detection unavoidable, and was arming himself with resolution to meet the event, the female suddenly halted, placing, in the act, the trunk of an enormous beech between her companion and the dusky forms within, whose very breathing could be heard by the anxious officer. Without uttering a word, she took his hand, and, drawing him gently forward, disappeared altogether from his view. The young man followed, and in the next moment found himself in the bowelless body of the tree itself; into which, on the side of the encampment, both light and sound were admitted by a small aperture formed by the natural decay of the wood.

The Indian pressed her lips to the ear of her companion, and rather breathed than said,—“The Saganaw will see and hear every thing from this in safety; and what he hears let him treasure in his heart. Oucanasta must go. When the council is over she will return, and lead him back to his warriors.”

With this brief intimation she departed, and so noiselessly, that the young officer was not aware of her absence until some minutes of silence had satisfied him she must be gone. His first care then was to survey, through the aperture that lay in a level with his eye, the character of the scene before him. The small plain, in which lay the encampment of the Indians, was a sort of oasis of the forest, girt round with a rude belt of underwood, and somewhat elevated, so as to present the appearance of a mound, constructed on the first principles of art. This was thickly,

although irregularly studded with tents, some of which were formed of large coarse mats thrown over poles disposed in a conical shape, while others were more rudely composed of the leafy branches of the forest.

Within these, groups of human forms lay wrapped in their blankets, stretched at their lazy length. Others, with their feet placed close to the dying embers of their fires, diverged like so many radii from their centre, and lay motionless in sleep, as if life and consciousness were wholly extinct. Here and there was to be seen a solitary warrior securing, with admirable neatness, and with delicate ligatures formed of the sinew of the deer, the guiding feather, or fashioning the bony barb of his long arrow; while others, with the same warlike spirit in view, employed themselves in cutting and greasing small patches of smoked deerskin, which were to secure and give a more certain direction to the murderous bullet. Among the warriors were interspersed many women, some of whom might be seen supporting in their laps the heavy heads of their unconscious helpmates, while they occupied themselves, by the firelight, in parting the long black matted hair, and maintaining a destructive warfare against the pigmy inhabitants of that dark region. These signs of life and activity in the body of the camp generally were, however, but few and occasional; but, at the spot where Captain de Haldimar stood concealed, the scene was different. At a few yards from the tree stood a sort of shed, composed of tall poles placed upright in the earth, and supporting a roof formed simply of rude boughs, the foliage of which had been withered by time. This simple edifice might be about fifty feet in circumference. In the centre blazed a large fire that had been newly fed, and around this were assembled a band of

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swarthy warriors, some twenty or thirty in number, who, by their proud, calm, and thoughtful bearing, might at once be known to be chiefs.

The faces of most of these were familiar to the young officer, who speedily recognised them for the principals of the various tribes Pontecac had leagued in arms against his enemies. That chief himself, ever remarkable for his haughty eye and commanding gesture, was of the number of those present; and, a little aloof from his inferiors, sat, with his feet stretched towards the fire, and half reclining on his side in an attitude of indolence; yet with his mind evidently engrossed by deep and absorbing thought. From some observations that distinctly met his ear, Captain de Haldimar gathered, the party were only awaiting the arrival of an important character, without whose presence the leading chief was unwilling the conference should begin. The period of the officer's concealment had just been long enough to enable him to fix all these particulars in his mind, when suddenly the faint report of a distant rifle was heard echoing throughout the wood. This was instantly succeeded by a second, that sounded more sharply on the ear; and then followed a long and piercing cry that brought every warrior, even of those who slept, quickly to his feet.

An anxious interval of some minutes passed away in the fixed and listening attitudes, which the chiefs especially had assumed, when a noise resembling that of some animal forcing its way rapidly through the rustling branches, was faintly heard in the direction in which the shots had been fired. This gradually increased as it evidently approached the encampment, and then, distinctly, could be heard the light yet unguarded boundings

of a human foot. At every moment the rustling of the underwood, rapidly divided by the approaching form, became more audible; and so closely did the intruder press upon the point in which Captain de Haldimar was concealed, that that officer, fancying he had been betrayed, turned hastily round, and, grasping one of the pistols he had secreted in his chest, prepared himself for a last and deadly encounter. An instant or two was sufficient to re-assure him. The form glided hastily past, brushing the tree with its garments in its course, and clearing, at a single bound, the belt of underwood that divided the encampment from the tall forest, stood suddenly among the group of anxious and expectant chiefs.

This individual, a man of tall stature, was powerfully made. He wore a jerkin, or hunting-coat of leather; and his arms were, a rifle which had every appearance of having just been discharged, a tomahawk reeking with blood, and a scalping knife, which, in the hurry of some recent service it had been made to perform, had missed its sheath, and was thrust naked into the belt that encircled his loins. His countenance wore an expression of malignant triumph; and as his eye fell on the assembled throng, its self-satisfied and exulting glance seemed to give them to understand he came not without credentials to recommend him to their notice. Captain de Haldimar was particularly struck by the air of bold daring and almost insolent recklessness pervading every movement of this man: and it was difficult to say whether the haughtiness of bearing peculiar to Pontec was himself, was not exceeded by that of this herculean warrior.

By the body of chiefs his appearance had been greeted with a mere general grunt of approbation; but the countenance of the leader expressed a more personal interest.

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All seemed to expect he had something of moment to communicate; but as it was not consistent with the dignity of Indian etiquette to enquire, they waited calmly until it should please their new associate to enter on the history of his exploits. In pursuance of an invitation from Pontecac, he now took his seat on the right hand of that chief, and immediately facing the tree, from which Captain de Haldimar, strongly excited both by the reports of the shots that had been fired, and the sight of the bloody tomahawk of the recently arrived Indian, gazed earnestly and anxiously on the swarthy throng.

Glancing once more triumphantly round the circle, who sat smoking their pipes in calm and deliberative silence, the latter now observed the eye of a young chief, who sat opposite to him, intently riveted on his left shoulder. He raised his hand to the part, withdrew it, looked at it, and found it wet with blood. A slight start of surprise betrayed his own unconsciousness of the accident; yet, secretly vexed at the discovery which had been made, and urged probably by one of his wayward fits, he demanded haughtily and insultingly of the young chief, if that was the first time he had ever looked on the blood of a warrior.

"Does my brother feel pain?" was the taunting reply.

"If he is come to us with a trophy, it is not without being dearly bought. The Saganaw has spilt his blood."

"The weapons of the Saganaw, like those of the smooth face of the Ottawa, are without sting," angrily retorted the other. "They only prick the skin like a thorn; but when Wacousta drinks the blood of his enemy," and he glanced his eye fiercely at the young man, "it is the blood next his heart."

"My brother has always big words upon his lips,"

returned the young chief, with a scornful sneer at the implied threat against himself. "But where are his proofs?"

For a moment the eye of the party thus challenged kindled into flame, while his lips were firmly compressed together; and as he half bent himself forward, to scan with greater earnestness the features of his questioner, his right hand sank to his left side, tightly grasping the handle of his scalping-knife. The action was but momentary. Again he drew himself up, puffed the smoke deliberately from his bloody tomahawk, and, thrusting his right hand into his bosom, drew leisurely forth a reeking scalp, which he tossed insolently across the fire into the lap of the young chief. A loud and general "ugh!" testified the approbation of the assembled group, at the unequivocal answer thus given to the demand of the youth. The eye of the huge warrior sparkled with a deep and ferocious exultation.

"What says the smooth face of the Ottawas now?" he demanded, in the same insolent strain. "Does it make his heart sick to look upon the scalp of a great chief?"

The young man quietly turned the horrid trophy over several times in his hand, examining it attentively in every part. Then tossing it back with contemptuous coolness to its owner, he replied,—

"The eyes of my brother are weak with age. He is not cunning, like a red skin. The Ottawa has often seen the Saganaw in their fort, and he knows their chiefs have fine hair like women; but this is like the bristles of the fox. My brother has not slain a great chief, but a common warrior."

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A flush of irrepressible and threatening anger passed over the features of the vast savage.

"Is it for a boy," he fiercely asked, "whose eyes know not yet the colour of blood, to judge of the enemies that fall by the tomahawk of Wacousta; but a great warrior never boasts of actions that he does not achieve. It is the son of the great chief of the Saganaw whom he has slain. If the smooth face doubts it, and has courage to venture, even at night, within a hundred yards of the fort, he will see a Saganaw without a scalp; and he will know that Saganaw by his dress—the dress," he pursued, with a low emphatic laugh, "that Oucanasta, the sister of the smooth face, loved so much to look upon."

Quicker than thought was the upspringing of the young Indian to his feet. With a cheek glowing, an eye flashing, and his gleaming tomahawk whirling rapidly round his head, he cleared at a single bound the fire that separated him from his insulter. The formidable man who had thus wantonly provoked the attack, was equally prompt in meeting it. At the first movement of the youth, he too had leapt to his feet, and brandished the terrible weapon that served in the double capacity of pipe and hatchet. A fierce yell escaped the lips of each, as they thus met in close and hostile collision, and the scene for the moment promised to be one of the most tragic character; but before either could find an assailable point on which to rest his formidable weapon, Pontecac himself had thrown his person between them, and in a voice of thunder commanded the instant abandonment of their purpose. Exasperated even as they now mutually were, the influence of that authority, for which the great chief of the Ot-

tawas was well known, was not without due effect on the combatants. His anger was principally directed against the assailant, on whom the tones of his reproofing voice produced a change the intimidation of his powerful opponent could never have effected. The young chief dropped the point of his tomahawk; bowed his head in submission, and then resuming his seat, sat during the remainder of the night with his arms folded, and his head bent in silence over his chest.

“Our brother has done well,” said Pontecac, glancing approvingly at him who had exhibited the reeking trophy, and whom he evidently favoured. “He is a great chief, and his words are truth. We heard the report of his rifle, and we also heard the cry that told he had borne away the scalp of an enemy. But we will think of this to-morrow. Let us now commence our talk.”

Our readers will readily imagine the feelings of Captain de Haldimar during this short but exciting scene. From the account given by the warrior, there could be no doubt the murdered man was the unhappy Donclan; who, probably, neglecting the caution given him, had exposed himself to the murderous aim of this fierce being, who was apparently a scout sent for the purpose of watching the movements of the garrison. The direction of the firing, the allusion made to the regimentals, nay, the scalp itself, which he knew from the short crop to be that of a soldier, and fancied he recognised from its colour to be that of his servant, formed but too conclusive evidence of the fact; and, bitterly and deeply, as he gazed on this melancholy proof of the man's sacrifice of life to his interest, did he repent that he had made him the companion of his adventure, or that, having done so, he had not either brought him away

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altogether, or sent him instantly back to the fort. Commiseration for the fate of the unfortunate Donellan naturally induced a spirit of personal hostility towards his destroyer ; and it was with feelings strongly excited in favour of him whom he now discovered to be the brother of his guide, that he saw him spring fiercely to the attack of his gigantic opponent. There was an activity about the young chief amply commensurate with the great physical power of his adversary ; while the manner in which he wielded his tomahawk, proved him to be any thing but the novice in the use of the formidable weapon the other had represented him. It was with a feeling of disappointment, therefore, which the peculiarity of his own position could not overcome, he saw Pontecac interpose himself between the parties.

Presently, however, a subject of deeper and more absorbing interest than even the fate of his unhappy follower engrossed every faculty of his mind, and riveted both eye and ear in painful tension to the aperture in his hiding-place. The chiefs had resumed their places, and the silence of a few minutes had succeeded to the fierce affray of the warriors, when Pontecac, in a calm and deliberate voice, proceeded to state he had summoned all the heads of the nations together, to hear a plan he had to offer for the reduction of the last remaining forts of their enemies, Michilimackinac and Detroit. He pointed out the tediousness of the warfare in which they were engaged ; the desertion of the hunting-grounds by their warriors ; and their consequent deficiency in all those articles of European traffic which they were formerly in the habit of receiving in exchange for their furs. He dwelt on the beneficial results that would accrue to them all in the event

of the reduction of those two important fortresses; since, in that case, they would be enabled to make such terms with the English as would secure to them considerable advantages; while, instead of being treated with the indignity of a conquered people, they would be enabled to command respect from the imposing attitude this final crowning of their successes would enable them to assume. He stated that the prudence and vigilance of the commanders of these two unreduced fortresses were likely long to baffle, as had hitherto been the case, every open attempt at their capture; and admitted he had little expectation of terrifying them into a surrender by the same artifice that had succeeded with the forts on the Ohio and the lower lakes. The plan, however, which he had to propose, was one he felt assured would be attended with success. He would disclose that plan, and the great chiefs should give it the advantage of their deliberation.

Captain de Haldimar was on the rack. The chief had gradually dropped his voice as he explained his plan, until at length it became so low, that undistinguishable sounds alone reached the ear of the excited officer. For a moment he despaired of making himself fully master of the important secret; but in the course of the deliberation that ensued, the blanks left unsupplied in the discourse of the leader were abundantly filled up. It was what the reader has already seen. The necessities of the Indians were to be urged as a motive for their being tired of hostilities. A peace was to be solicited; a council held; a ball-playing among the warriors proposed, as a mark of their own sincerity and confidence during that council; and when the garrison, lulled into security, should be thrown entirely off their guard, the warriors were to

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seize their guns and tomahawks, with which (the former cut short, for the better concealment of their purpose) their women would be provided, rush in, under pretext of regaining their lost ball, when a universal massacre of men, women, and children was to ensue, until nothing wearing the garb of a Saganaw should be left.

It would be tedious to follow the chief through all the minor ramifications of his subtle plan. Suffice it they were of a nature to throw the most wary off his guard; and so admirably arranged was every part, so certain did it appear their enemies must give into the snare, that the oldest chiefs testified their approbation with a vivacity of manner and expression little wont to characterise the deliberative meetings of these reserved people. But deepest of all was the approval of the tall warrior who had so recently arrived. To him had the discourse of the leader been principally directed, as one whose counsel and experience were especially wanting to confirm him in his purpose. He was the last who spoke; but, when he did, it was with a force—an energy—that must have sunk every objection, even if the plan had not been so perfect and unexceptionable in its concoction as to have precluded a possibility of all negative argument. During the delivery of his animated speech, his swarthy countenance kindled into fierce and rapidly varying expression. A thousand dark and complicated passions evidently struggled at his heart; and as he dwelt leisurely and emphatically on the sacrifice of human life that must inevitably attend the adoption of the proposed measure, his eye grew larger, his chest expanded, nay, his very nostril appeared to dilate with unfathomably guileful exultation. Captain de Haldimar thought he had never

gazed on any thing, wearing the human shape, half so atrociously savage.

Long before the council was terminated, the inferior warriors, who had been so suddenly aroused from their slumbering attitudes, had again retired to their tents, and stretched their lazy length before the embers of their fires. The weary chiefs now prepared to follow their example. They emptied the ashes from the bowls of their pipe-tomahawks, replaced them carefully at their side, rose, and retired to their respective tents. Pontecac and the tall warrior alone remained. For a time they conversed earnestly together. The former listened attentively to some observations made to him by his companion, in the course of which, the words "chief of the Saganaw—fort—spy—enemy," and two or three others equally unconnected, were alone audible to the ear of him who so attentively sought to catch the slightest sound. He then thrust his hand under his hunting-coat, and, as if in confirmation of what he had been stating, exhibited a coil of rope and the glossy boot of an English officer. Pontecac uttered one of his sharp ejaculating "ughs!" and then rising quickly from his seat, followed by his companion, soon disappeared in the heart of the encampment.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

How shall we attempt to paint all that passed through the mind of Captain de Haldimar during this important conference of the fierce chiefs?—where find language to convey the cold and thrilling horror with which he listened to the calm discussion of a plan, the object of which was the massacre, not only of a host of beings endeared to him by long communionship of service, but of those who were wedded to his heart by the dearer ties of affection and kindred? As Pontecac had justly observed, the English garrisons, strong in their own defences, were little likely to be speedily reduced, while their enemies confined themselves to overt acts of hostility; but, against their insidious professions of amity who could oppose a sufficient caution? His father, the young officer was aware, had all along manifested a spirit of conciliation towards the Indians, which, if followed up by the government generally, must have had the effect of preventing the cruel and sanguinary war that had so recently desolated this remote part of the British possessions. How likely, therefore, was it, having this object always in view, he should give in to the present wily stratagem, where such plausible motives for the abandonment of their hostile purpose were urged by the perfidious chiefs! From the few hasty hints already given him by his guide,—that kind being, who

evidently sought to be the saviour of the devoted garrisons,—he had gathered that a deep and artful plan was to be submitted to the chiefs by their leader; but little did he imagine it was of the finished nature it now proved to be. Any other than the present attempt, the vigilance and prudence of his experienced father, he felt, would have rendered abortive; but there was so much speciousness in the pleas that were to be advanced in furtherance of their assumed object, he could not but admit the almost certainty of their influence, even on him.

Sick and discouraged as he was at the horrible perspective thus forced on his mental view, the young officer had not, for some moments, presence of mind to reflect that the danger of the garrison existed only so long as he should be absent from it. At length, however, the cheering recollection came, and with it the mantling rush of blood, to his faint heart. But, short was the consoling hope: again he felt dismay in every fibre of his frame; for he now reflected, that although his opportune discovery of the meditated scheme would save one fort, there was no guardian angel to extend, as in this instance, its protecting influence to the other; and within that other there breathed those who were dearer far to him than his own existence;—beings, whose lives were far more precious to him than any even in the garrison of which he was a member. His sister Clara, whom he loved with a love little inferior to that of his younger brother; and one, even more dearly loved than Clara,—Madeline de Haldimar, his cousin and affianced bride,—were both inmates of Michillimaekinae, which was commanded by the father of the latter, a major in the ——— regiment. With Madeline de Haldimar he had long since exchanged his vows of affection; and their nuptials, which were to have

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taken place about the period when the present war broke out, had only been suspended because all communication between the two posts had been entirely cut off by the enemy.

Captain de Haldimar had none of the natural weakness and timidity of character which belonged to the gentler and more sensitive Charles. Sanguine and full of enterprise, he seldom met evils half way; but when they did come, he sought to master them by the firmness and collectedness with which he opposed his mind to their infliction. If his heart was now racked with the most acute suffering—his reason incapacitated from exercising its calm deliberative power, the seeming contradiction arose not from any deficiency in his character, but was attributable wholly to the extraordinary circumstances of the moment.

It was a part of the profound plan of the Ottawa chief, that it should be essayed on the two forts on the same day; and it was a suggestion of the murderer of poor Donellan, that a parley should be obtained, through the medium of a white flag, the nature of which he explained to them, as it was understood among their enemies. If invited to the council, then they were to enter, or not, as circumstances might induce; but, in any case, they were to go unprovided with the pipe of peace, since this could not be smoked without violating every thing held most sacred among themselves. The red, or war pipe, was to be substituted as if by accident; and, for the success of the deception, they were to presume on the ignorance of their enemies. This, however, was not important, since the period of their first parley was to be the moment chosen for the arrangement of a future council, and the proposal of a ball-playing upon the common. Three days

were to be named as the interval between the first conference of Pontecac with the governor and the definitive council which was to ensue ; during which, however, it was so arranged, that, before the lip of a red skin should touch the pipe of peace, the ball-players should rush in and massacre the unprepared soldiery, while the chiefs despatched the officers in council.

It was the proximity of the period allotted for the execution of their cruel scheme that mainly contributed to the dismay of Captain de Haldimar. The very next day was appointed for carrying into effect the first part of the Indian plan : and how was it possible that a messenger, even admitting he should elude the vigilance of the enemy, could reach the distant post of Michillimackinac within the short period on which hung the destiny of that devoted fortress. In the midst of the confused and distracting images that now crowded on his brain, came at length one thought, redolent with the brightest colourings of hope. On his return to the garrison, the treachery of the Indians being made known, the governor might so far, and with a view of gaining time, give in to the plan of his enemies, as to obtain such delay as would afford the chance of communication between the forts. The attempt, on the part of those who should be selected for this purpose, would, it is true, be a desperate one : still it must be made ; and, with such incentives to exertion as he had, how willingly would he propose his own services !

The more he dwelt on this mode of defeating the subtle designs of the enemy, the more practicable did it appear. Of his own safe return to the fort he entertained not a doubt ; for he knew and relied on the Indian woman, who was bound to him by a tie of gratitude, which her con-

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duct that night evidently denoted to be superior even to the interests of her race. Moreover, as he had approached the encampment unnoticed while the chiefs were yet awake to every thing around them, how little probability was there of his return being detected while all lay wrapped in the most profound repose. It is true that, for a moment, his confidence deserted him as he recurred to the earnest dialogue of the two Indians, and the sudden display of the rope and boot, the latter of which articles he had at once recognised to be one of those he had so recently worn; but his apprehensions on that score were again speedily set to rest, when he reflected, had any suspicion existed in the minds of these men that an enemy was lurking near them, a general alarm would have been spread, and hundreds of warriors despatched to scour the forest.

The night was now rapidly waning away, and already the cold damp air of an autumnal morning was beginning to make itself felt. More than half an hour had elapsed since the departure of Pontecac and his companion, and yet Ouearasta came not. With a sense of the approach of day came new and discouraging thoughts, and, for some minutes, the mind of the young officer became petrified with horror, as he reflected on the bare possibility of his escape being intercepted. The more he lingered on this apprehension, the more bewildered were his ideas; and already in horrible perspective, he beheld the destruction of his nearest and dearest friends, and the host of those who were humbler followers, and partakers in the same destiny. Absolutely terrified with the misgivings of his own heart, he, in the wildness and unconnectedness of his purpose, now resolved to make the attempt to return alone, although he knew not even the

situation of the path he had so recently quitted. He had actually moved a pace forward on his desperate enterprise, when he felt a hand touching the extended arm with which he groped to find the entrance to his hiding place. The unexpected collision sent a cold shudder through his frame; and such was the excitement to which he had worked himself up, it was not without difficulty he suppressed an exclamation, that must inevitably have sealed his doom. The soft tone of Oucanasta's voice re-assured him.

"The day will soon dawn," she whispered; "the Saganaw must go."

With the return of hope came the sense of all he owed to the devotedness of this kind woman. He grasped the hand that still lingered on his arm, pressed it affectionately in his own, and then placed it in silence on his throbbing heart. The breathing of Oucanasta became deeper, and the young officer fancied he could feel her trembling with agitation. Again, however, and in a tone of more subdued expression, she whispered that he must go.

There was little urging necessary to induce a prompt compliance with the hint. Cautiously emerging from his concealment, Captain de Haldimar now followed close in the rear of his guide, who took the same circuit of the forest to reach the path that led towards the fort. This they speedily gained, and then pursued their course in silence, until they at length arrived at the log where the exchange of mocassins had been made.

"Here the Saganaw may take breath," she observed, as she seated herself on the fallen tree; "the sleep of the red skin is sound, and there is no one upon the path but Oucanasta."

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Anxious as he felt to secure his return to the fort, there was an implied solicitation in the tones of her to whom he owed so much, that prevented Captain de Haldimar from offering an objection, which he feared might be construed into slight.

For a moment or two the Indian remained with her arms folded, and her head bent over her chest; and then, in a low, deep, but tremulous voice, observed,—

“When the Saganaw saved Oucanasta from perishing in the angry waters, there was a girl of the pale faces with him, whose skin was like the snows of the Canadian winter, and whose hair was black like the fur of the squirrel. Oucanasta saw,” she pursued, dropping her voice yet lower, “that the Saganaw was loved by the pale girl, and her own heart was very sick, for the Saganaw had saved her life, and she loved him too. But she knew she was very foolish, and that an Indian girl could never be the wife of a handsome chief of the Saganaw; and she prayed to the Great Spirit of the red skins to give her strength to overcome her feelings; but the Great Spirit was angry with her, and would not hear her.” She paused a moment, and then abruptly demanded, “Where is that pale girl now?”

Captain de Haldimar had often been rallied, not only by his brother officers, but even by his sister and Madeline de Haldimar herself, on the conquest he had evidently made of the heart of this Indian girl. The event to which she had alluded had taken place several months previous to the breaking out of hostilities. Oucanasta was directing her frail bark, one evening, along the shores of the Detroit, when a gust of wind upset the canoe, and left its pilot struggling amid the waves. Captain de Haldimar, who happened to be on the bank at the moment with his

sister and cousin, was an eye-witness of her danger, and instantly flew down the steep to her assistance. Being an excellent swimmer, he was not long in gaining the spot, where, exhausted with the exertion she had made, and encumbered with her awkward machecoti, the poor girl was already on the point of perishing. But for his timely assistance, indeed, she must have sunk to the bottom; and, since that period, the grateful being had been remarked for the strong but unexpressed attachment she felt for her deliverer. This, however, was the first moment Captain de Haldimar became acquainted with the extent of feelings, the avowal of which not a little startled and surprised, and even annoyed him. The last question, however, suggested a thought that kindled every fibre of his being into expectancy,—Oucanasta might be the saviour of those he loved; and he felt that, if time were but afforded her, she would. He rose from the log, dropped on one knee before the Indian, seized both her hands with eagerness, and then in tones of earnest supplication whispered,—

“Oucanasta is right: the pale girl with the skin like snow, and hair like the fur of the squirrel, is the bride of the Saganaw. Long before he saved the life of Oucanasta, he knew and loved that pale girl. She is dearer to the Saganaw than his own blood; but she is in the fort beyond the great lake, and the tomahawks of the red skins will destroy her; for the warriors of that fort have no one to tell them of their danger. What says the red girl? will she go and save the lives of the sister and the wife of the Saganaw.”

The breathing of the Indian became deeper; and Captain de Haldimar fancied she sighed heavily, as she replied,—

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"Oucanasta is but a weak woman, and her feet are not swift like those of a runner among the red skins; but what the Saganaw asks, for his sake she will try. When she has seen him safe to his own fort, she will go and prepare herself for the journey. The pale girl shall lay her head on the bosom of the Saganaw, and Oucanasta will try to rejoice in her happiness."

In the fervour of his gratitude, the young officer caught the drooping form of the generous Indian wildly to his heart; his lips pressed hers, and during the kiss that followed, the heart of the latter bounded and throbbed, as if it would have passed from her own into the bosom of her companion.

Never was a kiss less premeditated, less unchaste. Gratitude, not passion, had called it forth; and had Madeline de Haldimar been near at the moment, the feeling that had impelled the seeming infidelity to herself would have been regarded as an additional claim on her affection. On the whole, however, it was a most unfortunate and ill-timed kiss, and, as is often the case under such circumstances, led to the downfall of the woman. In the vivacity of his embrace, Captain de Haldimar had drawn his guide so far forward upon the log, that she lost her balance, and fell with a heavy and reverberating crash among the leaves and dried sticks that were strewed thickly around.

Scarcely a second elapsed when the forest was alive with human yells, that fell achingly on the ears of both; and bounding warriors were heard on every hand, rapidly dividing the dense underwood they encountered in their pursuit. Quick as thought the Indian had regained her feet. She grasped the hand of her companion; and hurrying, though not without caution, along the

path, again stood on the brow of the ravine through which they had previously passed.

"The Saganaw must go alone," she whispered. "The red skins are close upon our trail, but they will find only an Indian woman, when they expect a pale face. Oucanasta will save her friend."

Captain de Haldimar did as he was desired. Clinging to the bushes that lined the face of the precipitous descent, he managed once more to gain the bed of the ravine. For a moment he paused to listen to the sounds of his pursuers, whose footsteps were now audible on the eminence he had just quitted; and then, gathering himself up for the leap that was to enable him to clear the rivulet, he threw himself heavily forward. His feet alighted upon an elevated and yielding substance, that gave way with a crashing sound that echoed far and near throughout the forest, and he felt himself secured as if in a trap. Although despairing of escape, he groped with his hands to discover what it was that thus detained him, and found he had fallen through a bark canoe, the bottom of which had been turned upwards. The heart of the fugitive now sank within him: there could be no doubt that his retreat was intercepted. The canoe had been placed there since he last passed through the ravine: and it was evident, from the close and triumphant yell that followed the rending of the frail bark, such a result had been anticipated.

Stunned as he was by the terrific cries of the savages, and confused as were his ideas, Captain de Haldimar had still presence of mind to perceive the path itself offered him no further security. He therefore quitted it altogether, and struck, in an oblique direction, up the opposite face of the ravine. Scarcely had he gone twenty

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yards, when he heard the voices of several Indians conversing earnestly near the canoe he had just quitted; and presently afterwards he could distinctly hear them ascending the opposite brow of the ravine by the path he had recently congratulated himself on having abandoned. To advance or to recede was now equally impracticable; for, on every side, he was begirt by enemies, into whose hands a single false step must inevitably betray him. What would he not have given for the presence of Oucanasta, who was so capable of advising him in this difficulty! but, from the moment of his descending into the ravine, he had utterly lost sight of her.

The spot on which he now rested was covered with thick brushwood, closely interwoven at their tops, but affording sufficient space beneath for a temporary close concealment; so that, unless some Indian should touch him with his foot, there was little seeming probability of his being discovered by the eye. Under this he crept, and lay, breathless and motionless, with his head raised from the ground, and his ear on the stretch for the slightest noise. For several minutes he remained in this position, vainly seeking to catch the sound of a voice, or the fall of a footstep; but the most deathlike silence had succeeded to the fierce yellings that had so recently rent the forest. At times he fancied he could distinguish faint noises in the direction of the encampment; and so certain was he of this, he at length came to the conclusion that the Indians, either baffled in their search, had relinquished the pursuit, or, having encountered Oucanasta, had been thrown on a different scent. His first intention had been to lie concealed until the following night, when the warriors, no longer on the alert, should leave the path once more open to him; but now that the

conviction of their return was strong on his mind, he changed his determination, resolving to make the best of his way to the fort with the aid of the approaching dawn. With this view he partly withdrew his body from beneath its canopy of underwood; but, scarcely had he done so, when a hundred tongues, like the baying of so many blood-hounds, again rent the air with their wild cries, which seemed to rise up from the very bowels of the earth, and close to the appalled ear of the young officer.

Scarcely conscious of what he did, Captain de Haldimar grasped one of his pistols, for he fancied he felt the hot breathing of human life upon his cheek. With a sickly sensation of fear, he turned to satisfy himself whether it was not an illusion of his heated imagination. What, however, was his dismay, when he beheld bending over him a dark and heavy form, the outline of which alone was distinguishable in the deep gloom in which the ravine remained enveloped! Desperation was in the heart of the excited officer: he cocked his pistol; but scarcely had the sharp ticking sound floated on the air, when he felt a powerful hand upon his chest; and, with as much facility as if he had been a child, was he raised by that invisible hand to his feet. A dozen warriors now sprang to the assistance of their comrade, when the whole, having disarmed and bound their prisoner, led him back in triumph to their encampment.

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