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The Novelette, No. 11.

DANIEL BOONE;

—OR,—

THE PIONEERS OF KENTUCKY.

A Tale of Early Western Life.

BY DR. J. H. ROBINSON.

JOEL LOGSTON'S ADVENTURE.

BOSTON:

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A. W. STUDLEY, 23 HAWLEY STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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—OR,—

THE PIONEERS OF KENTUCKY.

A Tale of Early Western Life.

BY DR. J. H. ROBINSON.

ALLAN NORWOOD'S INTERFERENCE WITH LE BLAND.

CHAPTER I.

ROSALTHE ALSTON.—LE BLAND.

The vast forest of Kentucky had reverberated to the sound of the woodman's axe. The tide of population was flowing toward that wild and picturesque country which had been represented, by those who had explored its fertile levels, as another Eden.

A fort had been erected on the southern bank of Kentucky River by Daniel Boone, that daring and indomitable man whom no danger could appal and no difficulties discourage. At the distance of eight miles from Boone's fort, and one from salt river, Captain John Harrod had built a second fortification, while Colonel Logan had raised a third at St. Aspah's, in Lincoln County.

The few adventurous settlers that had penetrated into that country were continually harassed by savage foes, not unfrequently led on by Frenchmen and British Canadians.

Bold men worked in the new clearings with arms by their side, and became soldiers from necessity. The thrilling scenes that were of daily occurrence at that period, eclipse the pen of romance, and imagination is surpassed by startling reality. The shrill war-whoop grew strangely familiar to the ears of the pioneers, and the shafts of destruction, hurled from the rifles of ambushed enemies, were continually striking down friend and neighbor.

The red men beheld the daring approaches of the white settlers with alarm and furious indignation. Aided by the British posts at Detroit, Vencennes, and Kaskaskia, the Indians began a war of extermination against the determined trespassers on their hunting grounds. Against Boonesborough in particular was their hostility directed. At the period when the fury of the savages was at its height, and all the arts of Indian warfare were brought into active operation, our story commences.

A few rods below the Salt Lick, near which a fort and stockades had been erected by Daniel Boone and his associates, there was a highly romantic spot, half shut in by trees, and in the month of May(the period in which our romance exhibits its opening scene) was an exceedingly pleasant locality; for a great variety of flowers, mosses and lichens luxuriated there in agreeable profusion. A grassy glade sloped down to the water,and gentle eminences, and rocks overgrown with verdure, formed very acceptable seats for those who might feel disposed to linger there to enjoy the tranquil beauty of nature in her spring vestments.

We have directed the reader's footsteps to that then quiet and dreamy spot, in order to call his attention to another object fairer and more agreeable to the eye than the thousand flowery forms of vegetable life that were trembling and nodding in the early breezes of morning.

A young lady, in the summer of maiden loveliness, occupied just such a place as imagination most naturally suggests, and would desire her to occupy; she was reclining upon a mossy knoll, and the waters of the Kentucky (that voiceless witness of so many striking events) was flowing at her feet. She had gathered the violets and evergreens, and a wreath of the latter bound her brows with a careless grace, while the former she was leisurely forming into a boquet with lichens and earlier buds and blossoms of the season. Her face was uncommonly attractive, and her figure, so far as one might judge of it, in the attitude she assumed, very symmetrical in its outlines. The hand and foot, those useful appendages to the human form, so much admired (when of classical mold) by connoisseurs in female perfections, were faultless, so far as size and delicacy of proportions were concerned.

Of the several features of the face, and the expression of the whole conjoined, we cannot very well speak, for they were so perfect in all respects that we feel the want of appropriate terms to do justice to the subject. That common figure of the blending of the lily and the rose, was perhaps never more felicitously illustrated than upon the fair cheeks of Rosalthe Alston. The soft pensive expression of the eyes, and the sweet light of intelligence that streamed from beneath the penciled lids, were enough to fix the beholder's attention in a steadfast and admiring gaze.

It will not be wise for us to dwell long upon the mere externals of our heroine; therefore we will proceed to those matters, events, incidents calculated to develop and display those internal graces, without which physical beauty ceases to be attractive.

The sound of human footsteps upon the river's bank caused Rosalthe to assume a different attitude, and cast hurried and alarmed glances around her; for no doubt the consciousness that she had been imprudent in venturing so far from the fort was vividly impressed on her mind. It was not deemed safe, at that time, for females to venture out of sight of the stockades, and that consideration generally governed their movements —the boldest seldom overstepping the specified bounds. Rosalthe had, in this instance, as on several other occasions, violated, in some degree, the established custom; for, from the spot where she had been reclining, the stockades were not visible, although a few steps would render them so.

The cause of Rosalthe's alarm was directly apparent; a man appeared in the glade, and, without hesitation approached her. The young lady drew the folds of her light scarf hastily about her person, and was on the point of leaving the spot with considerable precipitation, when the intruder ad

dressed her, in a voice not wholly redeemed from the accent peculiar to Frenchmen.

"Stay, mademoiselle! Why should you fly at my approach, or exhibit so much perturbation of manner? Am I indeed a savage? is my skin red? or do I seek youthful maidens in sylvan bowers to do them harm?"

Rosalthe paused a moment before she replied, and was obviously somewhat annoyed and ill at ease.

"Excuse me, Monsieur Le Bland," she said, rather coldly, "if my fears appeared somewhat excited, and my manner hurried, for I did not expect—that is, I had no reason to suppose that my pleasant meditations in this agreeable retreat would be intruded upon."

"I am, then, it would seem, to be regarded as an intruder?" asked Le Bland, in a tone less courtly than at first.

"No matter, sir—let the subject pass, if it be not pleasing; I seek no cause of disagreement," returned the lady, with a smile.

"Neither do I, fair Rosalthe; your frown of displeasure would make me miserable," said Le Bland, earnestly.

A scornful smile played for an instant over the rosy lips of the lady; Le Bland observed it, and contracted his brows.

"Coldness may not quite crush me," he added, "contempt I never could bear."

"The old theme, Mr. Le Bland; the old theme," returned Rosalthe.

"It is a theme never old with me. Small streams may be turned aside into new channels, but large and swiftly-flowing rivers cannot be easily diverted from the deep channels which they have worn in the earth and in the solid rock. It is thus with the human affections; when they become fixed and strong, they cannot be changed or trained to flow in other directions."

"I have more than once begged you to spare me conversation of this nature; be good enough to change the subject, or I leave you," replied the maiden.

"I have sought you, Mademoiselle Alston, to lay bare my heart before you, and ask you to see the treasures of love that are garnered there— that are hoarded there for you—you only; but your impatient gestures, your curling lip, your rebuking glances, forbid me to proceed. I dare not adhere to my purpose; my tongue grows mute, my words find no utterance; they flow back in unspoken sorrow upon my despairing heart."

When Le Bland had given utterance to these sentiments, he bent his head as if in profound grief, and fixed his gaze steadfastly upon the ground.

Miss Alston gave him a searching look, and seemed to gain intuitively a deeper insight into the character and objects of the man before her, whose words distilled so sweetly and smoothly upon the external ear. She trembled and grew pale, as if her fears were struggling with her fortitude.

"I am glad you have done, and you could not better evince the good sense which I have always given you credit for possessing, than by so doing. I will now return, and hope you will enjoy the beauties of this pleasant morning and of this lovely spot, as truly as I have done."

"Not yet, mademoiselle—not yet. I have other matters to discuss which require your earnest attention. I refer to the dangers which environ and menace you on every side. The red men of the wilderness are gathering in great numbers to march against Boonesborough, and level it with the dust," returned Le Bland.

"Whence had you this information?" asked Rosalthe, quickly, fixing her dark eyes penetratingly upon the Frenchman.

"From one of my countrymen whom I accidently met while out hunting yesterday," answered the latter, calmly.

"Who incites our savage foes? Who supplies them with arms and ammunition, and who sometimes leads them to battle?" interrogated Rosalthe, with increasing earnestness.

"I know what you mean," said Le Bland coloring. "I am aware that it is reported that the British posts at Detroit, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes, aid and encourage the Indians in their movements against Boonesborough, Harrodsburgh and Logan."

"Do you not *know* that to be the case, Mr. Le Bland?" asked Miss Alston, with considerable energy of tone and manner.

"I do," answered the Frenchman, after a moment of reflection.

"Then why not speak openly, and call things by their right name. Let us have no concealments and subterfuges, but speak boldly and truthfully, and confront the danger, whatever it may be. If you have acquired by any means knowledge that concerns the safety of these young settlements, let it be plainly and manfully uttered," added Rosalthe.

"You possess much shrewdness and courage for a lady," observed Le Bland, with a

smile. "During my stay at Boonesborough, I have learned that among the rustic maidens that are destined to smooth the way for the flowing tide of population and civilization, there exists the true spirit of heroism. But still, mademoiselle, the country is too rude for you; you were destined for another sphere of life—to grace the highest circles of refinement."

The Frenchman ceased, and then added, as if speaking to himself:—

"No; yonder cabins are not for you. It were wrong to immure you for life in these forests, where the war-whoop of the red man forms a dread chorus for the howl of the wolf and the dismal hootings of the boding owl."

"Spare me your compliments; and let it suffice that I am content with my lot," returned Miss Alston.

"To the subject under consideration: I have heard, from undoubted authority, that Captain Du Quesne will soon appear before Boonesborough with a large body of savages, to demand its surrender."

"And what will be the consequence if Daniel Boone refuses to yield to such an unreasonable demand?"

"The consequences will be that Du Quesne will hurl his savages against Boonesborough, and take it by storm. The slaughter will, in such a case, I fear, be indiscriminate. And now comes the most important part of my business: it is to earnestly request you to go to Harrodsburgh, and stay until after this tragedy—for such I am certain it will be—is enacted."

CHAPTER II.

ALLAN NORWOOD.

Le Bland paused, and waited anxiously for an answer; but Rosalthe remained silent.

"Will you go to Harrodsburgh, Mademoiselle Alston, in order to escape the fate in reserve for yonder brave but infatuated families?" asked the Frenchman, seriously.

"And leave my dearest frends?" said Rosalthe, calmly.

"And leave your dearest friends," repeated the Frenchman, deliberately.

"Your motives may be excellent, sir; but I reject your counsel. I will not go; I will remain and share the fortunes of those I love, whatever they may be. If your plans of mercy cannot be extended to all, they are not schemes of benevolence to me. But I would not appear ungrateful. I thank you for your kind attentions.

"You have answered without reflection. Reconsider the subject, and be guided by the voice of cool reason," resumed Le Bland with increasing vehemence.

"Adieu? My decision is final," said Rosalthe, preparing to leave the spot.

"It is not—it must not be!" cried the Frenchman, emphatically. "I can—I will not consent to such a sacrifice!"

"I cannot understand whence comes your intimate knowledge of the contemplated movements of the Indians and their French and British allies," said Rosalthe. "Neither can I fully appreciate the motives which can induce you to offer safety to me and no others. You have been, for a period, the guest of the settlers; and Captain Boone, my father and others have treated you with kindness and true hospitality; why not go to them and make known the danger that is hourly drawing nearer and nearer?"

"There are many reasons that shape my actions, which I cannot explain. I am not at liberty to open my lips to one of those whom you esteem so highly, on the subject of our conversation; but a strong—an irresistible desire to save you, to pluck you from the general ruin, has induced me to give you a word of timely warning. It remains with you to determine whether you will perish with those destined to death, or live with those whose days are not numbered by painted warriors."

"My resolution to dare every peril with natural guardians and protectors, is as strong as human will can make it," said Rosalthe.

"Promise me, at least, that you will lock this secret in your own bosom, and reflect on what I have said for four-and-twenty hours," continued Le Bland, considerably agitated.

"I will make no promises, if you please," answered the young lady.

"How vexatious! how perverse!" exclaimed the Frenchman, petulantly. "Mademoiselle, you must listen to reason; you must be rational; you must promise to keep my secret, for at least twenty-four hours."

"Not for an hour," returned Miss Alston, and directed her steps toward the fort; but Le Bland placed himself before her, and barred her farther progress.

"Pardon me, lovely mademoiselle, but I am so unfortunately placed, that I am compelled to insist that you will pledge me your word to remain silent in regard to Captain Du Quesne and the advance of the savages, fo-

a short time; the period I have named will do."

Rosalthe quailed before the stern glances of Le Bland, and would have called for assistance had she dared; but her terror which the Frenchman's conduct inspired, sealed up her lips. When she timidly raised her eyes to his, they gleamed upon her like a basilisk's, and shrinking from him, she exclaimed:—

"I promise; let me pass."

"It is well; be careful that in some unguarded moment you do not betray the secret," rejoined Le Bland, in a milder tone, but without moving from her path.

"This is annoying, sir, and ill becomes you as a guest and a friend," said Miss Alston, whose perturbation momentarily increased, and was now mingled with some just indignation.

"I prevent you from going that I may ask your forgiveness a score of times, fair Rosalthe, I will do severe penance for this liberty, I assure you," replied Le Bland.

"Stand aside, sir, if you are a gentleman," said a voice that made Rosalthe's heart beat with gladness. Turning her eyes toward the spot whence the warning voice proceeded, she beheld a young hunter at the distance of a few yards, with a rifle in his hand, a powder-horn and ball-pouch slung at his side, together with the usual accompaniments of such a calling. The stranger's face was somewhat flushed with resentment, and his eyes (they were dark and penetrating) were fixed sternly upon the Frenchman.

Le Bland, who appeared chagrined and displeased, stepped from Rosalthe's path, bowed as she passed, and then turned towards the hunter with an expression that might be construed into anything rather than approbation.

With a smile of contempt he scanned him from head to foot, then remarked, as if his words were intended for no ears save his own.

"A knight in a hunting-shirt—a specimen of the infant chivalry of Kentucky." Then raising his voice:—

"Young fellow, what may be your business with me?"

"I have no furthur demand to make of your courtesy, sir," replied the hunter, looking after the retreating figure of Rosalthe.

"Extremely modest and ingenuous youth!" exclaimed the Frenchman, ironically.

The young man favored him with a furtive glance, which might admit of various constructions, and then followed the form of the maiden with his eyes.

"May I take the liberty to enquire by what particular combination of letters you are usually known?" added Le Bland.

"The condescending monsieur wishes to know my name; it is Allan Norwood," replied the hunter.

"Did it ever occur to you, excellent Allan, that meddling with other people's affairs is not always safe and profitable business—that it sometimes results in broken bones, and other highly disagreeable consequences?" said Le Bland, knitting his brows.

"I have some knowledge, proud Frenchman, of what belongs to a gentleman. I know how to defend my honor, and punish impertinence," rejoined Allan.

"You are there, are you? You carry it bravely. I'll humor your mood, my doughty rustic, and though you are not my equal, I will meet you on equal terms. Have you pistols, worthy Allan?"

"I have, and you may take your choice of the pair," answered the hunter, calmly.

"Let us walk yonder, then, out of hearing of the settlers, and adjust this little affair. I trust that your business matters are so well arranged that no one would be the looser if you should by any strange chance be called into another state of existence," said the Frenchman, blandly, with his peculiar smile.

"You give yourself unnecessary trouble, gentle monsieur. My earthly affairs are well looked after, and I have, happily, nothing to think of in that regard; so lead on," returned the hunter, in a quiet way.

"One thing more, if you please; have you visited the confessional recently?" resumed Le Bland.

"I confess daily, sir—confess to the Father," said Allan, impressively.

"All right, then, responded the Frenchman.

The two now diverged from the river's bank, Le Bland leading the way. Pushing aside the bushes at every step, and passing over some pretty rough ground, they soon reached a large growth of wood, free from underbrush and brakes, finally emerging from that, stood on the border of one of the beautiful levels characteristic of the country. The spot was verdant with a kind of a prairie grass, interspersed with laurel, and various indigenous plants. In one direction it stretched away and extended quite to the river, while in others it was spanned by forests of maple, oak and beech, or margined by the humbler furze, hazel and willow.

The sun had climbed so far into the heavens that its brightest rays lay along the plateau and kissed the most modest blossoms that had expanded its petals to the morning air.

Allan paused to admire the natural beauty of the spot, and the Frenchman, standing at a short distance, observed him askance. While the parti s stood thus, a small bird alighted on a small willow bush at about the distance of ten paces.

"I'll trouble you for one of those pistols, sir," said Le Bland, quietly.

Allan instantly complied with his request, and gave him his choice of a brace of well furnished pistols, with rifle barrels. The Frenchman took one of them, and remarked, with his usual courtliness of style, "that he was considered a very good shot, but want of practice had unfitted him for nice shooting."

With these words, and smiling again, he raised the weapon, fired without much apparent care, and the bird fell dead.

"Rather clumsily done for me. I should have shot his head off; but it is all owing to want of practice. Be good enough to load it young man, and we will soon finish this business," added Le Bland, carelessly, but at the same time glancing stealthily at Allan to observe the effect of the shot.

"It is one thing to shoot a bird, and another to shoot a human being," replied the hunter, coolly. "Such a feat does not surprise me; I have done as much myself. But there is one art in which I have never been emulous to excel; I allude to the art of dissimulation."

"Rash and foolish boy! you have provoked your fate. Your tone and manners are highly offensive, and add greatly to the sin of your first rudeness," retorted Le Bland, more angrily than he had yet spoken.

"I care nothing for the loftiness which you affect; I only remember the cause of this quarrel. You offered an insult to a young and beautiful maiden; who she is, what her name and station, I know not, neither does it concern our present purpose. I appear here as her champion, and will abide the result, whatever it may be; so proceed, and waste no more time in useless words," answered the hunter, firmly.

"I will pace off the ground. How many shall it be?" asked Le Bland.

"Suit yourself; I am not particular," was the ready rejoinder.

"Well, since you are so easily satisfied, I will pace off the distance between where I now stand and the spot where yonder bird lies."

Allan assented, and Le Bland measured the ground by paces; and then walking back to his former position, said with his accustomed smile, and a look that might have awed most men situated as Allan was:—

"You can stand, if you please, just where the bird was a few moments ago."

Allan felt the terrible significance of his antagonist's words, and understood the look which accompanied their utterance; but he was too bold and proud to object to the arrangement, and accordingly took his place where the poor bird lay dead, rent and shattered by the Frenchman's unerring aim.

"Who will give the signal to fire, since we have no seconds?" asked Allan.

"I will arrange that, although it may not be *a la mode*. I have an alarm watch which strikes any given time, by a regulated movement. I will set it so that it will strike in precisely two minutes."

Le Bland drew a repeater from his pocket, and proceeded to set it with much nonchalance. When he had done so, he hung it by the chain upon a bush, so that it was about six paces from each when both were at their respective places, as mutually agreed upon.

"Now," added Le Bland, in a voice more harsh, and with an expression more stern, "we have only to await the motions of the repeater; the instant of its striking will be the signal to fire; and during the interval you can reflect on the position in which your folly has placed you."

Norwood made no reply to this remark, which sounded to him very much like bravado, but thought of the fair lady for whose sake he had involved himself in a deadly quarrel. Both parties were now silent, and heard distinctly the monotonous tickings of the watch. Our hero, although he prided himself upon the use of fire-arms, was fully aware of the critical position in which he was placed. The bird which lay bloody and broken before him, was sufficient proof of his adversary's skill. But it was too late to evade with honor the quarrel into which he had been led; so commending himself to Heaven, he fixed his eyes upon Le Bland, and awaited with singular calmness the strokes of the repeater.

A minute of deathless silence had elapsed, when the Frenchman suddenly dropped his weapon, and exclaimed:—

"Le Diable! the game is up!"

Norwood instinctively turned his gaze towards the spot upon which Le Bland's eyes were fastened, and perceived a man of a figure bold and striking. He was dressed in deer-skin hunting-shirt and leggings, and his feet were encased in the Indian moccasins so much in vogue among whites at that period. His head was covered with a low-crowned hat, with the brim, which was not very wide, rolled up at the sides. His tunic, or hunting-shirt, was ornamented about the skirt and sleeves with a leathern fringe, as were also the lower portions of the leggings. The tunic was fastened together nearly to the chin, and over that part which covered the neck a collar somewhat deficient in starch, according to modern notions, was carelessly turned. A large, leathern wallet hung upon his right side by a broad strap passed over his left shoulder. The handle of a hunting-knife, the blade of which was thrust into a sheath under the wallet, was visible, while in his right hand he held a rifle.

"'Tis Daniel Boone!" cried Le Bland. "Put up your pistols, and we will defer this business until another time; for I do not wish to incur his displeasure."

Allan mechanically placed his weapon in its accustomed place, and then Daniel Boone approached toward them.

"Mr. Le Bland, what means this?" he said, sternly, letting the butt of his rifle fall heavily to the ground.

"Pantomime, sir; nothing but pantomime," replied Le Bland, somewhat disconcerted by the reproving glances of the far-famed forester.

"Let it end thus, sir, for we want no more blood shed than absolute necessity requires. I perceive that there is a quarrel between you and this young stranger; but drop it right here, and let it go no farther. If you are wise, you will take my advice, for I assure you that your friends at the settlement yonder are not numerous.

The Frenchman reddened, and for a moment was embarrassed by the sharp tones and keen glances of the pioneer.

"As you will, Captain Boone. I yield to your cooler judgment," he said, at length.

Boone stood for a few seconds as if lost in reflection, and then turning abruptly to Allan, added, with much frankness:—

"Come with me, young man, to Boonesborough. You appear to be of that class which we need at this crisis; you shall be welcome to hunter's fare."

This honest and open invitation made Norwood's heart beat with pleasure, for he trusted he should again see the fair maiden for whose sake he had dared the proud Frenchman's ire. He accepted the invitation as frankly as it was given.

"Will you go with us?" asked the pioneer, addressing Le Bland.

"Not now, I will follow presently," replied the latter. Daniel Boone and Allan Norwood then walked towards Boonesborough, while the Frenchman, giving our hero a threatening glance, moved slowly away.

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW CHARACTERS.

Allan Norwood, with a few hardy adventurers, had floated down the Ohio and Kentucky in boats, and reached, after encountering innumerable perils, the vicinity of the new settlements. Leaving his comrades to refresh themselves after nights and days of toil and danger, our hero took his rifle and sallied forth to explore the country a little, and learn how near they might be to Boonesborough and Harrodsburgh, of which he had heard so many strange things in his native State, when he accidentally became a party to the scene between Rosalthe Alston and Le Bland, the immediate results of which are already known.

Allan was the son of a wealthy farmer, and received, all things considered, a very liberal education. Naturally bold and adventurous in disposition, he felt a strong repugnance to any of the learned professions which his friends had talked of, and could not be induced, by logic or argument, to embrace either of them.

He longed for a life of activity, and declared he would rather enter the American army as a private soldier than to spend the best part of his life in study of a profession which might be, after all, of doubtful utility, and to the dry details of which he could never adapt himself. Accounts were daily reaching Ohio, through various channels, of the sufferings and romantic adventures of Daniel Boone, Benjamin Logan, John Harrod, and other pioneers; and those remarkable stories, not at all exaggerated, doubtless made Allan conceive the bold design of penetrating to that wild region, to share in the excitement and danger of a backwoodsman's life.

This resolution being formed, and a plan of operation matured, the requisite material, in the shape of enterprising young men, was speedily found to co-operate with him, and the perilous undertaking was achieved.

As Allan walked towards Boonesborough with its daring founder, he could not refrain from observing him with deep interest; and he truly appeared to him, if to no other person, the most remarkable man of the age; for he had explored alone the mighty forests of Kentucky, braving singly the fury of the exasperated savages, who followed his footsteps day and night to destroy him, and prevent him from carrying back to his countrymen the history of the most delightful country under heaven. But thus far he had escaped the deadly hostility of the wily savage, and the man of sleepless nights and weary days, ordained by God to carry life and civilization into the distant wilderness, now stood beside our hero with firm foot and lofty brow.

Norwood more than once thought to ask him about the maiden whom he had seen, but feared that his manner might betray how deep an impression she had made on him. To see a being of so much grace and refinement, in a country not yet redeemed from the grasp of its primal inheritors, was something which he had not been prepared for, and consequently took him by surprise; and his active mind had now food enough for meditation and speculation.

To him it appeared that his life as a forester had commenced most auspiciously; for had he not interfered to save the fairest female from insult that he had ever seen, and incurred for her the most imminent peril? He had unquestionably, and felt that he had been singularly fortunate. It now remained for him to learn who she was, what relation the Frenchman called Le Bland sustained to her, and whether her affections were already engaged.

When the parties reached Boonesborough, Norwood paused to examine the manner in which it was constructed. It consisted of a dozen cabins, built of heavy logs, ingeniously interlaced at the ends, and separated from each other by portions of the same material. These cabins formed one side of the fort, being highest upon the outside, the roofs inclining inward. Strong stockades were raised around these at suitable distance, and in the angles of the cabins, block-houses of the most substantial kind were erected. These projected about twenty inches beyond the outer walls of the cabins and stockades, and were amply provided with loop-holes, that the garrison might prevent their enemies from approaching too near, to assail the works. Allan, after making these observations, remarked "that the whole must have been a work of considerable labor."

"You are right, young man; and it was not only a work of much labor, but a work often interrupted by sudden attacks of the savages. It reminded me of Nehemiah repairing the walls of Jerusalem, when his workmen wrought with one hand, and held the spear in the other," replied the pioneer; and then led the way to a large gate of slabs, upon which he struck a few blows with the butt of his rifle. Directly footsteps were heard, and a voice asked:—

"Who dar?"

"It is one of our colored fellows," remarked Boone to Allan, and then replied to the negro's reasonable inquiry.

"It's me, Andrew."

"I doesn't know any sich white feller," was the immediate response.

"Come, don't keep us waiting—hurry," rejoined Boone.

"Dat you, Massa Boone?" asked Andrew, in a more respectful tone.

The forester replied that it was; the negro opened the door, and the parties entered the enclosure. Allan glanced at Andrew while he was closing the gate, and perceived that he was considerably advanced in life, his woolly hair being gray with age, though his figure was not bowed by the weight of years.

"A faithful, but rather eccentric fellow is Andrew," observed Captain Boone. He then lifted the rude latch and ushered the young hunter into his cabin. A respectable looking female met him on the threshold, whom he introduced to Allan as Mrs. Boone, A young woman of eighteen or twenty he presented as his daughter Elizabeth. Norwood had entertained a hope that the maiden whom he had seen in the morning might prove to be the daughter of the famous pioneer; but when his gaze rested upon Elizabeth Boone, although she was fair, he could not so far master his feelings as to realize no disappointment at the discovery. A lad of about fifteen years of age was cleaning the tube of a rifle, and was the forester's son.

Captain Boone informed his family that

his guest, who was from the State of Ohio, had come to examine the country, and hoped he would receive such hospitality as their poor dwelling could afford; to which Mrs. Boone responded in an appropriate and kindly manner, and set about making preparations for dinner.

While the meal was being prepared, Allan proceeded to relate the particulars of the morning's adventure, to which his host listened with earnest attention.

"Did you hear any portion of the conversation that passed between the young woman and the Frenchman?" he asked.

"I am quite certain that I heard the latter refer to some danger of an imminent and pressing kind that menaced this settlement, or the neighboring one; I am confident that it had relation to the former."

"And you say, moreover, that he wished to extort a promise of some kind from her?" continued Boone.

"It was that which caused me to interfere in her behalf; and the promise of secrecy I doubt not had reference to the danger which threatens you and yours," rejoined Allan.

"This matter may be of the greatest importance to us, Mr. Norwood. Were there any names mentioned, that you can remember?" resumed the forester.

"Let me recall the scene more vividly, if I can," said Allan, pressing his hand to his forehead. "Yes, a name was mentioned which I now recollect. Du Quesne, I think it was."

Daniel Boone sprang from his seat with a sudden and angry impulse, when Allan pronounced the name of Du Quesne.

"Du Quesne, did you say, sir?" he exclaimed. "Then there is indeed danger, for he is an instrument to do us harm. The Indians will rally around him to crush us, and sweep us from among the living. I have heard his name; he acts under the authority of the British posts, and has been active in distributing arms and ammunition among the savage tribes."

"Allow me to inquire who this Le Bland is who came so near sending a bullet through my body?" rejoined Allan.

"That question is not easily answered, young man; I confess myself unable to reply to it with certainty, for the simple reason that I need information on the subject myself. The person to whom your inquiry refers came among us about four weeks ago, and received the friendly treatment that we always make it a rule to extend to all who visit us. His ostensible object was to examine the lands in this part of the country, with a view to a final settlement, if he was pleased with the result of his explorations. He was not very popular among our people at first, on account of his being a Frenchman; but the suavity of his manners overcame that objection in a great measure, with the majority, though many still look upon him with distrust. Sometimes he has been the guest of Mr. Alston, and he has also spent some time with me. He is now the guest of Mr. Fleming, who occupies the third cabin from this, on the right as you enter. He has managed to make himself peculiarly agreeable to Esquire Alston, and that he loves his handsome daughter Rosalthe, is no secret among us. But his tender sentiments are not blessed with a return; and it is my firm conviction that the girl fears him. What the secret of his influence is, I have not been able to discover."

"Does Mr. Alston favor the pretensions of the Frenchman?" asked Allan, earnestly.

"Most decidedly; for Le Bland has the art of appearing very agreeable where he wishes to make a favorable impression; and you may be assured, sir, that for such a rare prize as Rosalthe, he will put forth all his powers. Esquire Alston was formerly a man of wealth, and could and did indulge in the luxuries of refined life. He also has indubitable claims to a noble ancestry. He married into a distinguished family, and his daughter received an education far superior to that which usually falls to the lot of young ladies. Having lost most of his wealth by an unfortunate investment, he no longer felt a desire to remain where he could not find means to support his accustomed manner of living; consequently he turned his attention to this new country, and had the courage to dare a pioneer's life."

"This explains why this excellent family is at Boonesborough, and the occupants of an humble cabin a few doors from this. If Squire Alston (we call him Squire) has any weak point, it is that his sweet daughter should marry a gentleman, and this Le Bland sustains the reputation (in his estimation) of being one."

"But I have no sympathy for him," added the pioneer after a pause; "I mistrust his motives, and, to be brief, dislike him."

"Well, didn't I tell ye so in de fust place?" exclaimed Andrew, who had

been gradually working himself towards the parties, during the conversation.

"Go away, darkey," said Boone, good naturedly.

"I never seed sich a feller sence I'se a nigger. He am sly as a fox, and I've seen him wink his eye at Missy Lizzy," said Andrew.

"We must get Andrew some spectacles, so he can see better," said Elizabeth, with a smile.

"What fur I want specs, when I can see now jest as well's I used to could ten years ago?" returned Andrew, somewhat offended at the allusion to his visual organs.

"Andrew is a regular genius," observed Captain Boone, looking pleasantly at the African's shining face. "He is a poet, an improvisator, a musician, and a singer; he knows a little of everything, and is, in fact, a clever sort of a blockhead, who will do very well while he is watched, and just as he has a mind to when he is not. You can trust him as far as you can see him, and sometimes farther."

"Dat am berry great praise, but one ting you fo'git; I'se berry familiar wid de state ob politicks ob Kentucky, an' de circ'lar motion ob de hebenly luminaries," said Andrew.

The conversation was interrupted at that moment by the entrance of Simon Kenton, a man whose name is honorably mentioned in the annals of Kentucky history.

Although considerably embrowned by exposure to the sun, his face had a frank and honest expression which served as a passport to the good opinion of Allan. The brief ceremony of introduction had scarcely been finished, before another individual, who will figure somewhat in our story, made his appearance in the cabin of the pioneer. The character referred to was no less a personage than Joel Logston, a man of extraordinary muscular power, and of whose wonderful exploits tradition is yet eloquent. He was followed by one of the largest and ugliest-looking dogs that ever aspired to the friendship of a human being.

On account of the explosive and fiery nature of his disposition, his master had bestowed upon him the name of Vesuvius. Vesuvius was, we are sorry to say, a snappish and fretful cur, given to sudden, violent, and dangerous eruptions of the lava of wrath, when it became imperatively necessary for all within a certain area to withdraw themselves speedily, to escape instant worriment with tooth and nail. This ungentle mastiff always walked about six inches behind Joel Logston, except when engaged in his favorite pursuit of hunting; for on these occasions he was invariably in advance of everything in the shape of quadruped or biped.

Vesuvius seldom if ever erected his large, shaggy ears, and obstinately persisted in carrying his caudal extremity in that drooping manner in which penitent dogs sometimes do, when convicted of some high offence.

Joel Logston was quite as celebrated for his marvelous narrations and extravagant style as for his physical strength. No man at the three settlements could tell, with such incomparable self-possession and coolness, such stories as he did, which no person living could be expected to believe. With this strong proclivity to exaggeration was combined a rough drollery and good nature that made him at all times a very agreeable companion. If Joel had any malice in his heart it manifested itself, whenever occasions offered, in putting Andrew in mortal fear, by causing Vesuvius to show his teeth, and make several hostile demonstrations towards him. In this innocent pastime Logston took great delight. Nor was Andrew the only subject of these currish persecutions; Mr. Alston's colored man, Exquisite Ebony, was another martyr to Joel and his mastiff.

We shall only remark in this place concerning Exquisite Ebony, that he was the most pompous and self-conceited of any gentleman that ever inherited a dark skin; and had, moreover, such a strong propensity for fine clothes, that he had in many instances been known to don his master's best coat, by stealth, in order to appear to good advantage, for an evening, or an hour, in the eyes of Miss Aurora Lemons, a fair mulatto girl in the service of Mr. Fleming.

While Allan was partaking of the substantial hospitality of the pioneer, in the form of excellent venison and other wholesome and palatable viands, Logston amused all the parties by relating one of his recent adventures, in which he asserted with much modesty of manner, that he had no doubt slain fourteen Indians with his own hand, besides doing to death a litter of bears of six months, with their sire and dam. For the truth of this reasonable statement he appealed to Vesuvius, who answered with a short, sharp and expressive yelp, and then

fixed his fiery eyes upon Andrew in such a threatning manner that the latter, feeling sure that an immediate attack was meditated, retreated to the farthest corner of the room, rolling his eyes in great alarm.

Simon Kenton, though a braver man in the hour of danger never held a rifle, sat silent and reserved as a young maiden; but Allan observed that his eyes sought the neat figure of Lizzie Boone, as she moved lightly about the dwelling. Our hero flattered himself that he was shrewd enough to perceive how matters stood with Kenton with regard to the pioneer's fair daughter.

While these parties are discussing subjects of vital importance to the well-being of the new settlements, we will turn to other scenes.

CHAPTER IV.

STAR-LIGHT AND WHITE-CLOUD.

Rosalthe returned to the fort much perplexed and agitated by the singular conduct of Le Bland. Notwithstanding the high place which he occupied in the estimation of her father, she had never valued him as an acquaintance, or sought his friendship; on the contrary, she had never felt at ease in his society, and rejoiced when he was no longer an inmate of their humble dwelling. The cause of her aversion to the insinuating Frenchman she could not herself understand fully; but it was not the less genuine for that reason. Encouraged by her father's good opinion, he had made declarations at various times, of the nature and tendency of which she could not affect to be ignorant, or misapprehend. Rosalthe, on all such occasions, had given no word of hope, and with a careful regard to his feelings, endeavored to make known her sentiments without wounding his pride.

But it displeased and annoyed her excessively to perceive that he steadily persisted in affecting not to comprehend her meaning. In addressing her, especially in the hearing of Mr. and Mrs. Alston, he always assumed an easy and confidential manner, which implied that matters were all understood between them, and there need be no attempt to conceal what must be eventually known.

This deceit and assurance on the part of the Frenchman had succeeded in misleading the minds of the parties alluded to, and it was a piece of presumption that she could not overlook or pardon. Her silence and embarrassment were construed to mean exactly what they did not signify, and as sufficient evidence that her affections were engaged.

She had resolved more than once to speak with her parents on the vexatious subject, but somehow her courage always failed when the moment to test it arrived; so the unpleasant theme was postponed from day to day, in hopes that something in her favor would soon transpire, or that delay would strengthen her determination to do so.

Being thus situated, it will be well understood that her dislike rapidly increased, and ripened into positive repugnance. The conduct and character of Le Bland were, to our heroine, deeply mysterious, sinister, and dangerous, and she feared him as much as she disliked him; for her own nature was frank, open, and above dissimulation.

Rosalthe was of that susceptible and sensitive mold, that she seemed to acquire knowledge of a persons character by being brought in contact with him, or her—a species of intuition quite common with her sex, and which rarely, if ever, misleads. As a consequence of the annoyances and suspicions to which she was daily subjected, she became less cheerful, and far less happy than was usual with her.

The conversation which had transpired on the bank of the river, as already related, appeared abundantly confirmatory of her fears and untold suspicions. To the young stranger who had so opportunely appeared to assist her she felt truly grateful; but the reflection that she had possibly involved him in a quarrel with a dangerous man, added much to the anxiety of her mind.

She had noticed, as she glided by, the dark and malignant expression that the hunter's warning words had called instantly to his face, despite the smile of contempt that curled his lips, as if to mock at what all other men held sacred and dear.

The information which he had given in relation to the movements of the Indians against Boonesborough, did not surprise her so much as it would have surprised many others who had studied him less, and confided in him more unreservedly. It had revived all the strange misgivings she had long felt in regard to him. The secret was one of the deepest importance, yet she had promised not to betray it to those whom it most intimately concerned. She was on the point of making known the state of her feelings to her father, in respect to Le Bland, when he

commenced to speak highly in his praise, dwelling particularly upon his gentle manners, and the frankness which characterized him in every act in life.

"I esteem him," added Mr. Alston, "for his numerous good qualities—for the kindness of his heart, for the dignity and refinement of his manners, and for all those noble traits which constitute true manhood.

Rosalthe felt her blood mounting tumultuously to her cheeks, and tears of regret filling her eyes. She was much pained that a man of her father's discrimination should be so egregiously deceived in the Frenchman's character and pretensions. But she was misapprehended; for Alston, observing her confusion, attributed it wholly to another cause, and remarked, with a meaning smile, that "she need not be confused about the matter, for he fully appreciated her feelings, and should not reproach her for anything that might have passed between Le Bland and herself, of whose honorable intentions he was entirely persuaded."

And to make Rosalthe's position more mortifying, Mrs. Alston observed in relation to the subject of her husband's eulogy:—

"That he was a very pleasant gentleman, and she hoped her daughter would be so fortunate as never to form any acquaintances less respectable; and she should not object to her preferences when they were so judiciously made as in the present instance."

Mr. Alston then hinted that he was a man of wealth, and was about to make large purchases of land lying on the opposite bank of the Kentucky River. He stated that the idea was a good one, and would prove exceedingly profitable, inasmuch as it would doubtless quadruple in a few years the capital invested. The scheme was such a noble one, and the prospect of realizing an immense fortune so promising, he should himself embark in the enterprise, so far as his reduced circumstances would admit. Monsieur Le Bland had capital enough, so far as that was concerned, and he was not one to refuse a friend a favor, but always the first to offer it.

Much more Mr. Alston said to this effect, and was in excellent spirits, while his mind was obviously teeming with untold wealth. Rosalthe perceived at once that her father's mind was filled with a splendid bubble, which would burst sooner or later, and end in a cruel disappointment, or at least the subject presented itself to her in that light. Whether her fears magnified the danger and trial in reserve for her or himself, time only could prove; but it was plainly apparent to her that the wily Frenchman exercised almost unbounded influence over her father's movements.

It appeared to her that the time had come to speak boldly, and reveal all that her promise did not oblige her to lock within her own bosom. But the question instantly forced itself upon her mind, "what had she to reveal, save that which she had promised not to divulge for twenty-four hours?' She could assure her father that he had completely mistaken her sentiments in regard to Le Bland, and that she disliked him with more real intensity than she was supposed to love him; but so far as any absolute proof of his dissimulation was concerned, she saw that she had nothing to offer.

While thoughts of this nature were passing rapidly through her mind, the door was opened by Ebony, the colored servant, and the subject of her thoughts entered the cabin. He glanced quickly from one to the other, greeting them with his accustomed suavity. He took a seat near Mr. Alston, and conversed with him in that peculiar, agreeable, easy, and confidential manner which had so won upon his esteem.

Rosalthe could overhear but little of what was said, but she often caught such words as "land, loans, investment," etc., which induced her to believe that the land speculation was the one under discussion.

Le Bland finally arose and approached our heroine, and said to her in a low voice:—

"Pardon my earnestness this morning. My desire to save you from what appeared a pressing danger, made me, I fear, somewhat rude. I am happy to say now that I was not correctly informed in regard to Captain Du Quesne, and his intentions. You may sleep in safety, fair Rosalthe, and rest assured that there is one who will shield you from Indian cruelty. I grant that it was ill-timed, and almost reprehensible, to offer to snatch you alone from the general ruin which I then believed to be so near. I should have known that your fond heart would cling tenaciously to the dear friends that surround you; but my reason was rendered less clear by the overwhelming thought that you were in deadly peril. Believe me, Mademoiselle Alston, I speak the truth, without dissimulation."

"Then you free me from my promise?" returned Rosalthe.

"No, gentle Rosalthe," he answered, with a smile, and in his most engaging tones, which well nigh had the power of making one change his opinion who had already determined that he was a villain. "I cannot absolve you from your promise; for speaking of the subject might produce unnecessary alarm. Moreover, I design to make further investigation of the matter, and learn the real extent of the danger, if any exists, when your father shall be duly and properly informed of everything; for he and I are on such confidential footing that there can be no secrets between us. Take your accustomed walks as though nothing had transpired, being careful not to go too far away from the fort, and I promise not to interrupt you, or speak in relation to any subject not agreeable to you. Deal with me fairly and truly, and you shall not have an occasion to regret it, I assure you."

The Frenchman did not pause for a reply, but giving Rosalthe one of his warning glances, which never failed to terrify her, immediately left the cabin.

On the following morning Miss Alston left the fort as she had been in the habit of doing for some time, previously taking the precaution, however, to have Ebony accompany her. This procedure was not the result of thoughtlessness, on the contrary, of much reflection; for she wished to test the sincerity of Le Bland's promises, and give him another opportunity to make further disclosures, that she might, if possible, gain a deeper insight into his character and intentions, and afterwards be governed according to circumstances.

The step cost her considerable self-denial, and it was not without many misgivings that she walked towards her favorite retreat. She gave Ebony his instructions as she proceeded.

"You may go yonder," she said, pointing towards a hazel thicket, not far distant, "and remain there until I am ready to return."

"Yes, missus," said Ebony.

"And, do you hear, Ebony? do not on any account go farther; and be sure to come when I call," added Rosalthe.

"Dis child will be dar afore soon," returned Ebony.

"Very well; do not forget your instructions."

"I neber fo'git; I'll be sure to disremember eberyt'ing," said the negro, confidently.

"Do as I bid you, and I will reward you uitably," added Rosalthe.

Exquisite Ebony renewed his protestations of faithfulness, and with a greater sense of security than she had expected to feel, Miss Alston entered the glade, and seated herself upon the river's bank. That she felt somewhat nervous at first, and had vague apprehensions of hearing the footsteps of Le Bland, was quite natural; but soon the dreamy murmurings of the waters, the gentle sighing of the winds amid the trees, lulled her spirit into tranquility and forgetfulness of danger.

In that quiet seclusion from disturbing causes, she reflected with calmness and clearness of judgment upon the circumstances of her position, and endeavored to mark out a course of action dictated by prudence and duty.

While occupied in this manner, a soft touch upon the arm changed the current of her meditations, and caused her to rise to her feet quickly, and turn an alarmed look towards the intruder.

The object that met her gaze is worthy of some description. An Indian maiden in the summer of womanhood, with a figure queenly in proportions and bearing, stood before her. Her features were of marvelous regularity and beauty, but so proud and lofty in their expression, that Rosalthe, though startled at her abrupt appearance, could not repress an exclamation of admiration. Her eyes, which were dark and lustrous, were flashing with excitement. Her style of dress was by no means contemptible, but both picturesque and graceful, being ornamented in its different parts according to the arts of her people.

The two maidens stood *vis-a-vis*, the one defiant and haughty, the other wondering and alarmed. The steady gaze of the Cherokee girl was imperious, angry, yet curious, and she moved not a muscle, nor relaxed a tithe of her sternness, while she studied every line of Rosalthe's fair face.

When she had subjected our heroine to this ordeal, which made her tremble, she spoke with impassioned earnestness:—

"The daughter of the pale-face is fair, but she is weak; she has won that which she cannot keep, and that which belongs to another."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Rosalthe, recoiling before the threatening glances of the Indian maiden.

"What do I mean?" cried the latter energetically, "How dare the pale-face be so

bold, and look so innocent, when I know how black her heart is?"

"I am still dark—I understand you not," said Rosalthe.

"*Wabuma!* (attend thou), and let the just Monedo judge between us. A white man came to the lodges of my people; his eyes rested upon the face of Wassahauza (an Indian term signifying star-light), and it pleased him. The pale-skin was wise, and knew how to speak softly, and say pleasant things. Star-Light listened, and her foolish heart was taken captive by his smooth words; she spurned the love of Otter Lifter, the noble young chief, and all her eyelight shone upon the deceitful child of Machinito."

The Indian girl paused, and struggled with her emotions.

"*Wabuma!* daughter of the white man, listen while I speak of the wrongs of Wassahauza, of the red race of the bold Cherokee. The sun arose and set on her love, and the moon smiled upon the happy maiden. But the heavens grew black—a storm was in the skies, the heart of Shoiska (Smooth-Tongue) was bad and full of lies. He went in to the big wigwam of the pale-faces, and whispered the same fair words to Wahbahnokwot (the White-Cloud) that he had spoken to Star-light. The White-Cloud listened to the soft speeches of Smooth-Tongue, and her heart beat with the same wild hopes that had filled the Cherokee maiden with joy. They met here on this spot, where the sun shines warm and bright, and the waters murmur with a pleasant sound. Foolish trembler, what do you say to this strange tale?"

Star-Light ceased, and looked disdainfully at Rosalthe, whose cheeks were pale, and whose whole form was agitated.

"My red sister is speaking of Le Bland, the wily Frenchman!" she said, when she had recovered sufficient composure to speak intelligently.

The Cherokee girl laughed sardonically.

"You are deceived—you wrong me!" exclaimed Rosalthe, earnestly.

"*Minno Monedo!* Do I not know it? Have I not come to brush away the cloud that has obscured my sun?" cried Wassahauza, indignantly.

"Be silent and hear me," returned Rosalthe, with all the firmness she could summon to her aid. The White-Cloud does not love this Smooth-Tongue; she fears him, she shuns him. There is no sweetness in his tones for the daughter of the pale-face. She has no eye-light for the man whose heart is bad, and whose speech is full of guile."

"One pale-face has filled my ears with falsehoods, and I'll have no more; I believe they are all alike. No, no! your fair words, and fair skin, and fair looks cannot deceive me!" retorted Star-Light.

"I will make solemn oath to what I say. I will call upon the sacred name of the good Monedo!" cried Rosalthe, with touching earnestness, laying her hand upon the maiden's arm.

"Shoiska swore by the good Monedo, and yet he was false—false as the evil Machinito himself," replied Star-Light.

"What can I do, then, to convince you? I despair of doing so," said Rosalthe, much moved.

"The White-Cloud must go with me," replied the Cherokee, sternly.

"Go with you? O no, I cannot!" cried Rosalthe, more alarmed than ever.

"*Baimwawa!* 'tis but a passing sound—you can and must glide down the waters and walk the wide forest with Wassahauza."

The Indian girl took Rosalthe's arm, and pointed significantly down the river.

"You are one of my sex—you are a woman, though your skin differs from mine in color; then in heaven's name, show the pity of a woman!"

"Who talks of pity? It is idle talk! Come with me, where the Smooth-Tongue shall behold you no more; I have stayed too long already," was the unyielding response.

"Nay, if you insist, I will call for assistance, and some evil might befall you," said Rosalthe.

"Speak but a single word above your natural voice, and this blade will stop the heart's music forever," added Star-Light, drawing from beneath her Indian vestments a knife, and placing its polished point to Rosalthe's heaving breast.

"And can it be that one so fair, and one who can speak so wisely, has a nature so cruel? If I must fall a victim to your jealous fury, strike, and let me perish here near those who love me!" she cried, presenting her breast boldly to the gleaming steel.

The threatening features of Wassahauza relaxed something of their sternness.

"Cease to fear—I will not harm you. The White-Cloud shall float back again in safety; come away," she said, in a milder tone.

"Now you are fairer and gentler; relent

still more, and let me go in peace," entreated Rosalthe, with clasped hands and beseeching look.

"Hush, silly maiden; no more words; you have my promise. Do not resist me a moment longer, or I may change my mind," replied Star-Light; and passing her arm within Rosalthe's, led her away down to the bank of the river. A light birch canoe was drawn up among the reeds. "Get in," said Star-Light.

Rosalthe looked once more imploringly towards Wassahauza, and then obeyed; the latter quickly pushed off the frail vessel, and then took a seat in the stern, and using the paddle adroitly, urged it rapidly and silently down the stream.

When Rosalthe cast one long and lingering look backward, and realized that she was being borne from home and its dear associations, her heart was overwhelmed with inexpressible anguish. Of what agonizing fears would her friends become the victims when she should be missed and sought for in vain? Who would solace a father's grief, or check a mother's anxious tears? What conjectures would they form—what clue would guide the daring companions of Boone upon her track? What sign had she left to direct pursuit? What was in reserve for her, and what reliance could be placed upon the Indian girl's promise?

While thoughts of this nature whirled through her brain, she wondered whether the hunter who had interfered in her behalf on the previous day would feel any regret when he heard that she had suddenly disappeared, and could not be found among the living or dead. At that moment it was no more than natural that such an idea should occur, and mingle with other reflections that crowded upon her. No sympathy appeared upon the countenance of Star-Light, as she plied the polished paddle; she sat proudly taciturn, and gave no indications of the strong emotions which had so recently shaken her queenly figure.

The parties swept along so near the southern bank that the tall oak and chestnut stretched their green boughs over their heads, while their giant forms were reflected in the waters beneath the voyagers.

Rosalthe struggled to gain her firmness, and partially succeded. She changed her position in the canoe in a manner that would enable her to see her strange companion, and study her appearance more particularly than her fears had permitted her to do. She was endeavoring to imitate the stoicism of Star-Light, when the latter suddenly changed the direction of the canoe, putting it farther into the stream.

"Lie down in the canoe!" she exclaimed, waving her hand imperiously; "lie down, if you wish gentle usage and a safe return."

Rosalthe mechanically obeyed, and Star-Light instantly threw a blanket over her, that lay at her feet.

"Now keep quiet, for I see one yonder who must not look upon the face of White-Cloud. It is Otter-Lifter, the brave young chief of the Cherokees," added Star-Light, in low tones, dropping the paddle more softly.

Half suffocated with contending emotions, and yet striving to bear her fate with heroism, Rosalthe lay motionless in the birchen vessel, and felt it leaping to the dexterous strokes of Star-Light.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERY.

"You dar, Ebony?" said Andrew, in a loud voice, looking in every direction where the individual might be supposed to be.

"You dar, I say, you collud feller?"

Exquisite Ebony, who had been sleeping very soundly for the last hour and a half beneath a hazel bush, aroused by the cries of Andrew, rubbed his eyes lazily, and answered with a yawn:—

"Am I whar?"

"Am you anywhar?—dat's what I mean," replied Andrew.

"Ob course I is. Go 'way, common nigger," returned Ebony.

"Don't go fur to guv yerself airs, but ax me de question I'm gwine fur to tell ye. Whar's yer young missus?"

"Don't be too familiar wid de higher classes. Dat question am not reverential to dar case," responded Ebony, loftily.

"I hab de honor, you ign'ant darky, ob representin' at dis time Missy Alston, and she am berry worried about de young missus," added Andrew.

"Dat young lady am under my 'special 'tection," replied Ebony, with great dignity of manner.

"Dat am berry likely, when I doesn't see her nowhar, an' you hab been locked in the arms of Morfis like de seven sleepers," retorted Andrew.

"Speak, and tell me where Rosalthe is, without delay, if you know," said Elizabeth Boone, who had accompanied Andrew from the fort, where the protracted absence of Miss Alston had occasioned some alarm.

"She went down dar," said Ebony, pointing with his finger, "and quested dis child to stay here till she call me."

"How long ago was that?" said Miss Boone, anxiously.

"My watch am run up, and I habn't wind him down yet," rejoined Ebony.

Without waiting to interrogate Ebony farther, Elizabeth ran to the spot indicated, but the object of her search was not there. She then called her name in a loud voice, but the echo alone answered.

Matilda Fleming and several others now joined Miss Boone, and Rosalthe's name was repeated again and again; but her familiar voice gave back no response; the voices of the anxious maidens died away unanswered in the forest. Misgivings became certainties; and fears, confirmed realities; some misfortune had indeed befallen Rosalthe.

Ebony, finding his mistress was really missing, and smarting under the reproaches of Andrew, and of conscience, stood stupefied with terror and remorse; for it were unjust not to say that he was truly attached to his mistress. The enormity of his crime in going to sleep, and allowing her to be carried away by the savages, or to be lost in the woods, as the case might be, now appeared to overwhelm him with guilt, and it is possible that some well-defined fears of the consequences of his neglect of duty had something to do with his apprehensions. Miss Aurora, moreover, hinted that his conduct was shameful, that he was an unfaithful servant, and stood high as a candidate for various unenviable flagellations. Poor Ebony felt this to be the "unkindest cut of all;" the white portions of his optics grew fearfully large, and his whole expression unhappy.

While all the parties stood gazing at each other in sorrowful silence, Allan Norwood approached and inquired the cause of so much evident consternation, when he was immediately put in possession of all the facts known to them. The young hunter heard the news of Rosalthe's disappearance with a feeling of sadness not easily described. His footsteps had turned in that direction, encouraged by a vague hope that he might perhaps have the good fortune to see once more the fair object of his thoughts since the previous day. The pleasant fabric which his active fancy had reared, fell to the earth a mass of ruins. The sweet enchantress, whose wand had reared temples of bliss, had disappeared, and doubtless he should see her no more. Her face might never again diffuse happiness and sunshine among her friends, and her fate might remain forever a mystery.

Mr. and Mrs. Alston, Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton and Joel Logston now hastened to the spot, the first feeling all the anxiety of fond parents.

"It's of no use to stand here, looking at each other," said Boone. "The girl has gone, and it is an easy thing to tell what has happened to her."

"I reckon you're right about that, captain," returned Joel Logston. "The red-skins have spirited her away, and that's the long and short of it. It wont do no good to mince the matter; the truth might as well come out first as last."

"Fly to save my child! Why do you linger here?" exclaimed Mrs. Alston, in tones of grief.

"There isn't a man here but will do his best. Vesuvius, look around and see if you can tell which way the gal's gone," said Logston.

Vesuvius perpetrated a sound between a growl and a bark, made a furious pass at Andrew, which caused him to retreat so suddenly that he fell over a heap of brushwood, and then putting his nose to the ground, made, apparently, a thorough exploration of the spot, emitting, from time to time, dissatisfied yelps.

"The dog is at fault," said Allan.

"He was never at fault in his life," retorted Logston.

"He seems to be puzzled now," observed Simon Kenton.

"That cretur knows more nor all of ye about sich things. He'll find an Ingin trail where the rest on ye wouldn't mistrust that a sparrow had passed along. He goes by scent. It's instinct; and instinct does what the biggest edication can't, you see," replied Joel, and then added, by the way of encouragement to the animal, "Go it, Vesuvius!" which so incited his hostility to the human species that he instantly made another furious sally at Andrew, which caused that gifted person to aver that he (Vesuvius) was a disgrace to the whole canine race, and

the bane of his own (Andrew's) existence.

"You shall smart for this, my lad!" said Mr. Alston, looking angrily at Ebony.

"I think he was not much to blame," observed Miss Boone, touched with the mental distress of the black.

"Here comes Monsieur Le Bland," said Alston. "Let us hear what his opinion is."

Every eye was now turned upon the Frenchman as he approached, and not one of the parties, save the Alstons, seemed to hail his advent with pleasure. Allan watched his countenance and demeanor closely, to see how the news affected him. He observed, also, that Captain Boone, Simon Kenton and Joel Logston regarded him with keen and observant glances.

"My dear Alston, what means this sudden grief and consternation?" exclaimed Le Bland, grasping Mr. Alston's hand warmly.

"Rosalthe," said the father, with choking emotions, "Rosalthe—my darling—has disappeared—gone!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the Frenchman, "what do you mean?"

"The fact is," said Logston, "the young gal has been carried away by the Ingins."

Le Bland looked hurriedly from one to the other, and Allan perceived that his face grew deadly pale.

"If he's acting a premeditated and studied part, it's very good acting," thought our hero.

"How long since this happened," asked Le Bland.

"It is about two hours since she left the cabin," said Mrs. Alston.

"She must be pursued and overtaken," suggested the Frenchman, quickly.

"Yes, my dear Le Bland, let us pursue her!" exclaimed Mr. Alston.

"Believe me, Mr. Alston, I shall take immediate steps for the recovery of your daughter," said Daniel Boone, with a contemptuous glance at the Frenchman.

"Leave this matter wholly to me," resumed Le Bland, eagerly. "I understand the ways of the Indians, and perhaps I have some influence among them."

"I can't see how you know more about the ways of the Ingins than that man there," said Logston, pointing at Captain Boone. "He trod the sile of Kentucky afore a Frenchman heerd there was such a place; and as for your 'influence,' I don't see how it can be that you have any among the aboriginal reptiles of this country."

"Will you leave this matter wholly to me, I ask again?" continued Le Bland.

Mr. Alston looked hesitatingly from one to the other, and saw the scowling brows of his neighbors with alarm.

"No!" thundered Daniel Boone, striking the butt of his long rifle upon the ground. "No; this affair shall be trusted to those to whom it rightfully belongs; it concerns me and my faithful friends, and it shall pass into no other hands while I have any authority here. This is your answer, sir. You are at liberty, of course—and so is any other man—to look after the young woman, and do all in your power to recover her; but you have not the right to prevent others equally interested from doing the same."

The Frenchman bit his lips with vexation.

"You see how it is, my dear friend; I would gladly oblige you in this, as in all other things; but I can do nothing," said Alston, somewhat displeased at the evident coldness manifested towards Le Bland.

"Every man feels it his duty to assist youth and beauty in distress, and in this case, there is not a man at one of the three settlements who will not risk his life freely and willingly," added Boone, emphatically.

"We have no reason to distrust your zeal or your ability to direct it to a successful tirmination," said Mr. Alston, earnestly; "and I trust there will be no dissensions among us to prevent a speedy and unanimous action."

"Forgive me, if my anxiety for Rosalthe's safety has carried me too far," said Le Bland, taking Mr. Alston's hand.

"I hope there aint no deceit about that cretur, but sometimes they as hides can find," muttered Logston. "If I was certain on't I'd make Vesuvius worry him to death."

"Come, friends—all—let us return to the fort and make instant preparation to pursue the savage captors and wrest from them their fair captive," said Boone.

During the latter part of this conversation Allan Norwood had moved silently away from the parties, and walked along the bank of the river. As he was proceeding slowly, looking for some indications of an Indian trail, Vesuvius ran by him with his nose to the ground, and did not stop until he had gone quite down to the water's edge; he then seemed at fault, smelled among the reeds, swam into the water and barked.

Attracted by his conduct, Allan carefully approached the spot. Upon making a critical examination of the reeds and shrubbery, he perceived that they had been bent down and trodden upon, and immediately concluded that a light boat or canoe had been drawn up there and launched again. The young man, quick in his decisions, and deeply earnest in whatever enterprise he engaged, spoke kindly and encouragingly to the dog, and proceeded down the river at a more rapid pace. Vesuvius looked after him a moment, as if doubtful in which direction his duty lay, and then followed, keeping close to the water's edge.

The singular request of Le Bland, to have the whole affair of the pursuit of the Indians, and the recovery of Rosalthe, committed exclusively to his hands, had not been without its influence upon Allan. It had aroused all his energies, and caused him to feel justly indignant that the Frenchman's assurance should extend so far. In consequence of this feeling, and the impression which Miss Alston's beauty had made upon him, together with some other reasons which it is not necessary to mention, he resolved to make every effort in his power to unravel the mystery that now hung over the fate of the maiden.

Had he paused to reflect more deliberately upon the subject, it is very probable he would have been less hasty, and waited to act in concert with Daniel Boone and his friends; but youth is ever impatient of delay, and our hero pressed forward, full of sanguine hopes and daring projects. The image of Rosalthe seemed more deeply impressed upon his heart; her voice yet lingered like remembered music in his ears; her dark eyes and sweet expression were recalled, and came at his bidding to enchant him more completely.

He moved on like one in a dream. Rosalthe was in danger, it is true; but had not fortune so ordered it that he should be her deliverer? Had he not read of such things a hundred times in books? Did not every person living know that truth was stranger than fiction? The matter, in his mind, was settled. He was young, strong and daring; he would find the Indian trail—if the Indians were indeed concerned—follow it with the cunning of a veteran woodsman, discover her, at last, in a position of great danger, and save her, after achieving unheard of exploits.

Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, or Joel Logston, would have reasoned rather differently and seen things in another light, unquestionably; but they could not have drawn more vivid pictures than did Allan.

When the mind is occupied with great and hopeful subjects, time flies quickly; and an hour with Allan was such a mere fragment that it passed unnoticed; although during that period he had walked several miles through a tract of country so delightful that it called up the idea of another Eden, planted upon Kentucky River. Allan stopped, and leaning upon his rifle, contemplated the beauty of the scene. A low, warning growl from Vesuvius caused him to turn his eyes in another direction. An Indian was standing beneath the spreading branches of a patriarchal oak. Allan's first impulse was to cock his rifle; but the Indian calmly pointed to his own, which was reclining against the tree within his reach, and the young man felt assured that his intentions were not hostile.

The red man was the first to speak.

"Son of the pale-face, fear not. Had Otter-Lifter intended you harm, you would have ceased to live already; for his eye has been on you for a long time," said the Indian, in very good English.

"I feel that the words of the red man are true," replied Allan, adopting the style of speaking characteristic of the Indian races.

"*Wa-wa;* whence came you, and where do you go?" asked Otter-Lifter.

"I am from Boonesborough," said Allan, at a loss how to answer the other question.

"Very great man is Boone," returned the Indian.

Allan replied that he was.

"My white friend has not told me where he is going?" observed Otter-Lifter.

"One of our young maidens has disappeared from the fort," said Norwood.

"Ugh! The pale-face is hunting for her?"

"Yes."

"And you suppose that some of my people have stolen her away?"

"That was my thought," replied Allan.

Otter-Lifter looked searchingly at the young hunter, and said:—

"Men who have red skins can tell truth as well as those who have white. If one of your maidens has been carried away by any of our people, it is something unknown to me."

Allan could not help being struck with the noble bearing of the Cherokee. He had heard him spoken of by Captain Boone as one who contemned and despised the cruelties of his race, and he felt that he had good reason to congratulate himself that he had fallen in with a chief so celebrated for his love of justice and humanity.*

"You are in danger here," added Otter-Lifter. "Return to the big wigwam, or you will perish at the hands of my warriors. Go, pale-face, go in peace, and tell your people that there is one among the red nations that loves mercy."

"You speak like a great chief," said Allan; "but how can I go back without the maiden? Her friends are sad; all hearts are heavy at the great fort."

"*Wa-wa!* Otter-Lifter has spoken. He knows nothing of the pale-face maiden. Is it not enough?" replied the Cherokee, with dignity.

"We know that she has disappeared," answered Allan, "and Boone, the man with the big heart, is preparing to seek her. He is cunning as a fox when he follows the trail of his enemies, and strong as a lion when he raises his hand to smite them."

"What has that to do with me?" retorted Otter-Lifter, somewhat impatiently.

"It is possible that some of your warriors have carried her away without your knowledge," returned Allan.

"Ugh! then they shall carry her back," said the Cherokee, grimly. "I would fain live in peace with the pale-faces, although they are driving us from our lands and destroying our glorious hunting-grounds."

"There is," returned Allan, after a pause, "a Frenchman at the big wigwam, who talks, it is said, of making large purchases of land. Do you know him?"

The Cherokee frowned, and again looked searchingly at Norwood.

"My white brother is inquisitive; he speaks of that which does not concern him. What cares Otter-Lifter about the Frenchman's schemes? If he is treating for lands, is the chief of the Cherokees a woman, that he should tell all he knows to every one that asks him?"

"I meant no offence," said Allan. "It was only yesterday that the Frenchman had a talk with the missing maiden, and he used language that I liked not."

"He is called among my people Shoiska, which means Smooth-Tongue, in our language," replied the Indian, with a disdainful smile.

"Why do you not live at peace with the white settlers?" asked Allan, who perceived that nothing could be learned of the chief in relation to the subject nearest his heart.

"Cast your eyes over this beautiful country," replied the Cherokee; "it belongs to the red men, and they love it as they love the blood in their veins; but the white men come and say, 'This is our country; you must go away and let us possess it in peace.' And this is why the Indians fight. They struggle for their own, which the God of nature gave them. But what will their resistance avail? Nothing—nothing! The graves of their kindred will be trampled upon by the foot of the white stranger; their great forests will fall, and the homes of the red race will be found nowhere—nowhere on the face of the wide earth; the pale-faces and their fire-water will sweep the Indians from among the living nations."

Otter-Lifter sighed, and without another word walked swiftly away. Norwood gazed after him a moment, and then turned to retrace his steps to the fort. He had accomplished about two-thirds of the distance, when, feeling somewhat fatigued, he sat down to rest a moment, and the dog crouched on the ground beside him.

Suddenly Vesuvius started up and snuffed the air, and at the same time Allan caught a glimpse of a human figure moving hurriedly among the trees. He immediately concealed himself behind a log as well as he could, and putting his hand on the neck of his canine companion, by dint of threatening looks and gestures, kept him still.

The figure approached, and proved to be that of a white man. Allan was about to rise from his place of concealment, when another party appeared, and caused him to forego his purpose. The second comer was

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* Otter-Lifter was a remarkable man. He had raised himself to renown as a warrior without ever having killed women or children or prisoners. His friend, his word and his rifle were all he cared for. He said the Great Spirit, when he made all the rest of the animals, created man to kill and eat them, lest they should consume all the grass; that to keep men from being proud he suffered them to die also, or to kill one another and make food for worms; that life and death were two warriors always fighting, with which the Great Spirit amused himself.—*History of Kentucky.*

an Indian, who instantly joined the first, and the two advanced to within a few paces of our hero.

"Where is Smooth-Tongue?" asked the Indian, rather indifferently.

"Hasn't come. I've been waiting a long time," replied the white man.

The Indian made no reply, lighted his pipe and began to smoke; but his white companion seemed by no means so patient.

We cannot do better, in this place, than to give the names of the two men without further preface. The white man was Silas Girty, an individual well known to the settlers of Kentucky. He was a faithless, treacherous fellow, celebrated for nothing save being friendly to the Indians, and inciting them to acts of aggression and cruelty. He led many of the attacks that were made upon Boonesborough and Harrodsburgh. His companion was a chief of the Miamis, called the Little-Turtle, a character also mentioned in the annals of frontier warfare. The relation existing between Little-Turtle and Girty will become evident as we proceed.

"Are the Miamis ready to make an attack?" asked Girty.

"The bold Miamis are ready; they are always ready when the war-whoop sounds along the border," said Little-Turtle.

"I have seen the Wyandots—they are ready also. Why should there be any more delay about the matter? For my part, I don't see no use in it; every hour that goes by without being improved is an hour lost. People will say that we make war like women, and not like men."

"The chief of the Miamis is ready to lead his warriors to battle. Let the Wyandots come on, and we will level the big wigwam with the dust."

"You talk well; you are a wise chief; but the Frenchman comes not according to his appointment.

Girty and Little-Turtle waited a short time longer, and then walked from the spot. Allan arose hastily from his place of concealment, and returned to the fort without loss of time.

CHAPTER VI.

STARTLING DEVELOPMENTS AT THE FORT.

When Norwood reached the fort, he found Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton and Joel Logston ready to go in search of the missing maiden. Le Bland stood near, with brow overcast and sullen. He gave Allan one of his peculiar looks, as he joined them, and honored him also with his characteristic smile, which to Norwood was particularly offensive.

"Imprudent young man! why did you leave us?" exclaimed Boone.

"I would see you alone, sir," said Allan.

"This way, then," replied the pioneer. "Now I will hear you."

Allan without further delay proceeded to relate circumstantially all that he had heard.

"A white man and an Indian," repeated Boone, thoughtfully. "I have it," he added. "The first was Silas Girty—a man, to use a scriptural phrase, 'full of subtlety and mischief.'"

"The Indian was of small stature, and chief of the Miamis," said Allan.

"He is called Little-Turtle, and is a dangerous fellow. They spoke of an attack, did they?"

Norwood replied in the affirmative, stating as much of the conversation as he could possibly remember.

"The Frenchman referred to was no doubt our amiable friend yonder," continued the pioneer, looking towards Le Bland. "I have long suspected him of playing a double game like this. Leave him to me; say nothing of this matter, and we will see what can be done. He had an appointment with Girty and the Miami chief, no doubt, but did not think it prudent to go. I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Norwood; you have rendered an important service to me, and to all the settlers. You have commenced nobly the life of a pioneer."

"But what do you think of Otter-Lifter? Can his word be relied on?" asked Allan.

"It is my opinion that it can. If he has assured you that he knows nothing of Miss Alston, I am, for one, inclined to believe him," said Boone.

"What, then, can be accomplished? In what direction shall we look for the young lady?" continued Allan, earnestly.

"Those are difficult questions; they perplex me."

"And something must be done immediately," resumed Allan.

"I know it; but our position is critical. If a number of us leave the fort in search of Rosalthe, that very moment will probably be the signal for an attack by our enemies," replied Boone.

"Girty himself may have had something to do with this affair," added Allan.

"The Miami chief, also," said Boone.

"Nor would it be strange if yonder Frenchman knew something of this outrage," returned Norwood, in a suppressed voice.

"I have had such suspicions," returned the pioneer; "but I don't know—time will set us right."

Boone then made a gesture for Kenton and Logston to approach, Le Bland being at that moment busily engaged with Mr. Alston.

The information which Allan had brought was briefly stated, and for a short space not a word was spoken by either party, each striving to find out by some mental process what was best to be done.

"It's my opinion," said Joel Logston, at length, "that the Frenchman had better be done for."

"What do you mean?" asked Captain Boone.

"Make an end on 'im at once; that's what I mean," replied Logston.

"What do you think, Kenton?" asked the captain.

"Watch him, and shoot him down on the first appearance of treachery," replied Kenton.

"And what is your opinion?" continued Boone, turning to Allan.

"I concur with Mr. Kenton. Although the evidences of his treachery are strong, they would not seem to warrant the summary measures proposed by our friend Logston, to whose judgment I feel inclined to pay due deference."

"You are wrong, all of you!" exclaimed Logston. "Why not stop the mischief while there's an opportunity to do it? What satisfaction can you get when he's brought the Wyandots and the Miamis and a lot of his own kind down upon us in sufficient numbers to eat us all at two bites? How can you help yourselves then? What on airth will he care for your watching arter he's done jest what he wants to do? Why not put a stop to it now? Thrust him into one of the block-houses and keep him there."

"There is much reason and good sense in what you say, Joel," returned Captain Boone, thoughtfully. "You are about right, I believe, all things considered. What say you to shutting him up, Kenton?"

"That will suit me just as well, and a little better, captain; so shut him up, by all means."

Norwood felt convinced that the plan suggested would be the most judicious, and expressed himself accordingly.

"I am sorry that anything of this kind should have happened among us, but I can see no way to avoid it now," said Boone. "Mr. Alston will feel deeply aggrieved, and discredit the whole story of his treachery. But what's the use to falter when duty points the way, and the lives of all are depending upon promptness of action? Kenton, you and Logston may cage Le Bland as soon as you please. Put him into the block-house, and leave him to his pleasant reflections."

"It'll be the best job I've done for a twelvemonth," said Joel.

The Frenchman and Mr. Alston were conversing earnestly when the parties approached.

"There has been too much delay about this business!" exclaimed Le Bland, turning towards them.

"That's jest what I think," replied Joel, drily, laying his great hand on the Frenchman's shoulder. "Come with us, my lad."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Le Bland, the blood suddenly forsaking his face.

"This way," added Joel, tightening his grasp, "this way, my gentleman."

Mr. Alston looked at Captain Boone, then at Allan, and then at Kenton, every feature expressing supreme astonishment.

"I see that you are surprised, Mr. Alston, but it is necessary that this person's liberty should be curtailed, at least for the present," said Boone, calmly.

"And he may thank his stars that it's no worse than that," added Logston, dragging the Frenchman away.

"I am not only surprised, but indignant," replied Alston.

"I am sorry that you feel so about it; but I am only doing what my conscience approves," returned Boone.

"Tell me my crime. What base villain has slandered me?" cried Le Bland, struggling vainly in the hands of Logston.

"Treachery is your crime," returned Boone.

"'Tis false! You can prove nothing," retorted Le Bland. "That young fellow has a personal spite against me because I

chastised his impertinence to Miss Alston no longer ago than yesterday. I dare say you can find the truth of my assertion written upon his shoulders in good round characters."

Allan's cheeks grew red with rage, but he disdained to answer such a falsehood.

"You are too hasty, Captain Boone; you are doing foul injustice to Monsieur Le Bland. He is my personal friend; I know him well. This young man has wronged him, for he is doubtless smarting under my friend's severe discipline," said Alston, with much earnestness of manner.

"Mr. Norwood don't look like a man who would receive the kind of discipline you speak of very patiently," observed Boone, surveying with a smile Allan's stalwart proportions.

"It is not bone and muscle that makes men strong, sir; it is the right—the right, sir, makes the weakest arm strong," returned Alston. Then turning sharply upon our hero, he said, sternly, "Confess, young man, confess your error."

"What shall I confess, sir?" asked Allan, calmly.

"That, actuated by jealousy and malice, you have shamefully maligned this brave gentleman," replied Alston, in the same severe manner.

"Sir, I cannot understand you," said Allan, proudly.

"Who knows this young man? Who can vouch for his truthfulness?" resumed Alston.

"Those who came with me to Kentucky, and would willingly vouch for my veracity and honor, are now at Harrodsburgh," said Allan, who now perceived that all were looking to him for an answer to the questions proposed.

"He is a worthless adventurer!" exclaimed Le Bland, "and I trust I shall again have the pleasure of chastising his arrogance."

"Don't be too free," said Logston, giving his prisoner a hearty shake.

"I have already heard something in relation to this person," said Alston, pointing to Norwood. "My friend has spoken of him in a way that leaves little doubt on my mind in regard to his character and intentions."

"Take him away," said Boone, motioning to Logston and Kenton.

"I will confer with you privately on this matter, and give you such reasons for my conduct as will, I think, induce you to absolve me from blame, and change your opinion," added the captain, while the two foresters led Le Bland to one of the block-houses.

"This is unadvised—this is injudicious," continued Alston, still unreconciled.

"You do not know this man, my dear friend," replied Boone, soothingly.

"Who knows him better than I? Am I not deeply in his confidence? Is there not an amicable relationship existing between him and my—my family?" retorted Alston.

"I know all that you know, and much more. Le Bland is a false-hearted knave, as you will learn to your cost; and as for your daughter, she never liked him, but, sir, she feared him," said the pioneer, firmly.

"Strange infatuation!" exclaimed Alston.

"Andrew!" said Boone.

"Yes, massa," replied the negro, presenting himself.

"You are to keep watch of Monsieur Le Bland, and see that he does not escape from the block-house. Take your gun and keep guard at the door."

"Shall I shoot him, massa?" asked Andrew.

"Not unless he tries to escape," was the reply.

"I'll do dat ar," said Andrew.

"See that you do, if you value your skin; for look you, darkey, our lives are depending on it," added the captain.

"Lor, massa, how you does talk; I ken do it just like nuffin. You ken trust dis chile as fur as you ken see him."

"And not much further," said Boone to himself. Turning to Mr. Alston, he resumed, in a serious voice, "Trust my judgment for this time, and do not imagine that I am actuated by unworthy motives. If I am doing any person the least injustice in acting as I am, I will be the first to confess my error when it becomes fully apparent. I never took pleasure in wronging any human being, and I am getting too old to learn many new tricks now. This Le Bland I know is a personal friend of yours; but he is no true man; he is a spy—a wolf in sheep's clothing, and all the time he has been with us he has been in correspondence with our enemies. Hark; let me assure you that Rosalthe can tell you more of him than you would like to hear."

"I dare say you mean well, Captain Boone. I have no reason to distrust your

friendship; but it does appear to me that some enemy has done this."

As Mr. Alston spoke, he looked askance at Allan, who well understood what he meant.

"You wrong the young man, sir, my word for it you do; and the time will come when you will confess your error. This very day, Mr. Alston, this good friend of yours had an appointment with Silas Girty and the chief of the Miamis; and I should not be surprised if we were surrounded by Indians and Frenchmen before the sun has sunk in the west. I tell you we are in danger; but I do not fear it for myself—it is of our women and children I am thinking."

"Have I not a father's heart, also? Am I not at this moment suffering all the agony a parent's heart can feel? Is not my darling torn from me by savage hands? O, Captain Boone, let us reconcile these differences, and hasten after my daughter," replied Alston, in a voice husky with emotion.

"All that mortal man can do shall be done, and yet the fort must not be left without defenders," returned the forester.

At that moment there was an energetic knocking at the gate opening into the enclosure of the stockades where the scene just described had transpired. Ebony was ordered to undo the fastenings, and a strong, resolute-looking man, with a rifle upon his shoulder, entered.

The individual who appeared was Bland Ballard, whose services as a spy during the early history of Kentucky will never be forgotten. His bold step and firm bearing proclaimed him all that he had the reputation of being—a daring, trustworthy and efficient man, fitted for great emergencies and vicissitudes of frontier life.

"Ballard, I am glad to see you," cried the pioneer, grasping the hand of the scout. "What news have you? What of the Indians? Any new movements?"

"Well cap'n, you'd better stop and get your breath," said Ballard.

"The fact is, we are rather excited here, Ballard," replied Boone.

"Should think so; but you'll be likely to get more excited by-and-by, I reckon, if nothin' in the course of nater breaks."

We will here remark, *en passant*, that everything, either past, present, or future, was spoken of and referred to as something that had broken, was at that time breaking, or was to break at some future period.

"That's jest what we're afeared on," remarked Logston, who had executed his commission, and was now waiting further orders.

"There's Ingins!" said the scout mysteriously; "there's no doubt but there's Ingins!"

"Unquestionably," returned Boone, dryly.

"There 's Ingins, unless something breaks."

"In course," said Logston.

"And there's another kind o' varmints called Frenchmen," resumed Ballard.

"How many?" asked Boone.

"Well, I should naterally say the woods were full on 'em, to speak after a similitude of a figure 'cordin' to scripter."

"There'll be fighting, then," said the pioneer, musingly.

"That's about the English on't—that is, unless somethin'"——

"Breaks!" interrupted Logston, with a mischievous smile.

"Sartinly," said Ballard. "The fact o' the case is, we must shut ourselves up, here, and hold agin the nateral heathen of this sile to the very last, and longer, if possible."

"You may shut yourselves up as fast as you please, but I rather expect I shall take a turn around these here parts, to see what's goin' on; because, you see, I don't like to take nothin' second-hand like," said Joel Logston, biting off a very ungenteel plug of tobacco.

"No, no, Joel, it wont do," remarked Boone, gravely.

"I should naterally say so," added Ballard.

"Joel Logston wasn't never none o' your scared kind o' folks—he wasn't," rejoined Joel.

"We all know it, Logston, and therefore we can't spare you. We shall want you to do some of your nice shooting," remonstrated Boone.

But Joel, when once resolved upon anything, would always have his own way, and, notwithstanding all that could be said by way of remonstrance and entreaty, he mounted his horse and rode away.

CHAPTER VII.

JOEL LOGSTON'S ADVENTURES.

Logston crossed the new clearings, and took the narrow footpath leading to Harrods-

burgh. He had proceeded about two miles, when he was loudly hailed as follows:

"Stop there, you Joel Logston; I want a few words with you."

"Hullo! Who the deuce are you?" exclaimed Joel, reining up his horse.

A man with high cheek-bones and downcast eyes, dressed in Indian style, emerged from the bushes and stood before Logston.

"I'm glad I've met you," said the man; "it may be the means of saving much trouble, you know."

"No, I don't know it," retorted Joel, calmly.

"But you see you will, old feller, when I explain all about it," replied the other.

"Perhaps!" rejoined Joel, laconically.

"I'm Silas Girty," said the man.

"And a mean-lookin' scamp you are," observed Logston with perfect self-composure.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Girty, with a scowl.

"Get out with your infernal Ingin nonsense," responded Joel. "You aint an Ingin, nor aint fit to be one."

"Be careful, my fiery lad, because you'd better bear in mind that you're in a rather ticklish position about now.

"I aint afeared."

"Hear what I've got to say, and it'll be better for you in the long run."

"I never run," said Joel.

"I've come agin' Boonesborough with a great army, and mean to take it; nothin' this side t'other world can save it; but I'd rather they'd give in and knock under without fightin', for you know Ingins can't be restrained when they get a taste of human blood; they have a nateral hankerin' for blood," resumed Girty.

"What terms do you offer, providin' they'll give in without comin' to hard knocks?" asked Joel.

"Why, I'll let 'em all, big and little, young and old, march out of the country unmolested. Aint that ar' merciful, magnanious-like?"

"Uncommon! But what are you goin' to do with Harrodsburgh?"

"Sarve it the same; cruelty's no part of my natur'."

"I'm beginnin' to like you," observed Joel, with a curious expression.

"You're a game chicken, Logston. I've often heerd on ye, and if you'll join us, I'll give you a thousand acres of prime land as soon's as we've druv out Boone and his fellers, and all the rest on 'em."

"Now that's what I call ginerous!" exclaimed Joel.

"So it is, Logston; it is the ginerous policy that tells in all military leaders, and I've lately added it to my other vartues. But there's one thing I e'enamost forgot to mention. The fact is, I'm not a married man, and to come right to the p'int, and to speak out manful-like, there's a gal up there to the fort that has made a monstrous effect on me."

"What's her name, Captain Girty?"

"Eliza Ballard."

"Who?" asked Logston, with a start.

"Eliza Ballard," repeated Girty.

"Bright 'gal, captain, bright gal!" exclaimed Joel, with forced composure.

"I know she is. I've watched her when she went down to the spring for water. But I've got two strings to my bow, my boy; if I shouldn't succeed with Eliza, ther's Fleming's darter, as pretty a cre'ture as ever the sun shone on. So between the two, I expect my heart wont get entirely broke down."

"When the Ballard gal's married, I hope I shall be present at the weddin'," remarked Joel, sentimentally.

"I'll make sure on't by askin' ye now. And hark; jine me in this affair, and I'll say fifteen hundred acres of land instead of a thousand."

"Say two thousand, Captain Girty, and I'm your man."

"Well, I don't care; it wont make no great odds; so two thousand it is."

"Give me that bread hook o' yourn," said Joel, cordially extending his hand.

"Here 'tis," responded Girty; "I shall live to see you a rich land-owner yet."

"A lot about six feet by two, perhaps," muttered Joel.

"Nonsense, Logston."

"I'll carry your terms up to the fort and do the best I can; and I'll speak a good word to Miss Ballard, for she's a beauty, Captain, without varnish or whitewash."

"I shall depend on you, Logston. I knew you was my man, if I could only see you face to face; and really, it seems as though Providence brought us together."

"It does so," returned Joel. "I reckon I'll ride down to Harrodsburgh first, come to think it over," he added.

"I wouldn't advise you to do that. The woods aint quite safe in that direction, at this time," said Girty.

"I'm good for any number of 'em."

"There's a Frenchman up to the fort, I believe?" remarked Girty, carelessly.

"Yes there is, and I reckon he aint fur from the kingdom," replied Logston, with a knowing wink.

"Has he talked with you about "——

"Time and ag'in."

"Is he sick or anything?"

"Yes he's got a heavy tech of the fever and egger."

"All right," said Girty, a great weight evidently removed from his mind.

Joel cocked his rifle and pointed it at him, but dropped the muzzle, saying:—

"It wont do; the report would perhaps stir up a million of red-skins. Lay there, you infernal good-for-nothin', while I give you my blessin'!" he added, looking contemptuously at the motionless figure of Girty. "You aint nobody to speak on; you're a vile critter; you're a despisable turncoat; I don't know nothin' bad enough to call you. If I had a knife I'd scalp ye, hang me if I wouldn't, so your own mother wouldn't know you! Talk about Eliza Ballard, will ye? Give me two thousand acres of land! O, you snipe! you mud turtle! you unmerciful coward! you double-distilled villain! That's my blessin'. Come away, Vesuvius; don't touch the dirty critter; a dog is known by the company he keeps."

JOEL LOGSTON'S ADVENTURE.

"Hold here—jest another word about Eliza Ballard," said Joel, leaning towards Girty, and making a gesture for him to present his ear.

"There's the place I hear with," said Girty, thrusting his head towards Joel.

"Take that you sneakin' renegade!" cried Logston, planting a stunning blow exactly into Girty's "hearing place," that fairly lifted him from the ground, and landed him head foremost in a heap of brushwood beside the path, where he lay motionless, with his heels in the air.

Having concluded his "blessing," and his well-meant advice to Vesuvius, Logston put spurs to his horse and left the spot, while Girty remained in the unenviable position we have described.

The woodsman galloped briskly towards Harrodsburgh, his indignation mounting

higher at every step. Several times he was on the point of turning back to despatch the worthless object who had dared to aspire to the hand of Eliza Ballard, a young and comely maiden, upon whom his own affections had been placed for a long period. But second thought (which adage says is the best) displayed the imprudence of such a procedure.

"To think," muttered Joel, "that such a scamp should entrap such a lovely girl as Eliza! It makes me feel ugly all over. I was a fool that I didn't make a final end of the boasting blackguard."

The last period of Logston's soliloquy was scarcely uttered when the crack of a rifle saluted his ears. His horse staggered a few paces and fell, severely wounded. Before Joel could disengage himself from the saddle, a rifle-ball whistled through his hunting-shirt, grazing the skin, producing a plentiful effusion of blood. The hardy forester, inured to scenes of danger, was on his feet in an instant, firm and self-possessed, casting keen and rapid glances around him to discover his foes. The smoke from their rifles was curling gracefully upwards, but they were invisible, having hidden themselves behind trees. The quick and searching eye of Joel was not long at fault. In reloading his gun, one of his enemies exposed a portion of his body. Logston fired, and the savage cried out and fell. Another Indian immediately rushed from his hiding-place with a loud yell and uplifted tomahawk. The woodman clubbed his rifle; his assailant instantly stopped, and hurled the weapon in his hand with such precision that it would have been fatal to him, had he not with cat-like agility sprung aside, thus avoiding it.

Logston now rushed upon him, thinking to despatch him by a well-aimed blow with his clubbed rifle; but the wary savage anticipating his intentions, in every instance, managed to elude his furious blows. The conflict went on in this manner for a considerable time, with no advantage on the part of Joel. Finding that this kind of warfare was of no avail, and that he was wasting his strength in vain, he threw away his rifle and closed with his adversary in a hand-to-hand struggle, which was to cease only with the life of one or both.

Logston grasped the athletic savage in his sinewy arms and dashed him to the earth, but found it quite out of the question to hold him there; for he was nearly nude, and his skin was so unctuous that he could easily slip from beneath his opponent.

As neither was armed, the struggle was long and desperate, Joel continuing to throw his antagonist to the ground, and he contriving, as often, to slip from his grasp. Thus they exhausted their strength, without giving or receiving any fatal injuries.

The forester, perceiving that his muscular powers were rapidly failing, adopted a new plan of offensive operations. As often as the savage attempted to arise after he had hurled him to the ground, he dealt him a blow just under the ear that knocked him down again. This change of tactics operated admirably, and the Indian's swollen and battered face soon gave tokens of its efficiency; his energies were fast failing, and his efforts grew less vigorous. At length a blow, well directed and powerful, caused him to lie motionless, and Joel was about to grasp his throat and strangle him, when he perceived that he was silently and stealthily endeavoring to get his knife from its leathern sheath.

Logston seized the weapon and plunged it into the Indian's bosom. He expired with a hollow groan, and the woodman leaned against a tree, panting with exertion, to rest after the conflict.

Casting his eyes toward the spot where the other savage had fallen, he perceived that he was still living, and with heroic firmness had succeeded in reloading his gun, although it was evident from his movements that his spine was broken. The wounded and wretched, though determined, being had not sufficient command over his disabled body to sit upright long enough to fire; but as often as he attempted to present his gun, he fell forward upon his face; and again struggling with the unconquerable spirit, which neither pain nor danger could subdue, braced himself with his weapon for another trial.

Upon the writhing warrior there was depicted such an expression of mortal hatred and impotent fury that even Logston shuddered as he staggered away from the spot.

"Miserable cre'tur'!" he exclaimed. "Your back's broke, and you can't never git over it; so I'll leave you to fight it out with death the best way you can; but you'd better be dead a hundred times."

Joel's horse had gotten upon his feet again, and did not appear to be seriously injured.

"We aint worth much, neither on us, I reckon," added Joel, addressing the animal, and caressing his neck affectionately. "But you must try to get me to Boonesborough some way or other, for if you've noticed it, I've had a pooty hard time on it with the copper-skins."

At that stage of the woodsman's apostrophe to his horse, a cry from the wounded Indian attracted his attention, and looking in that direction the cause was at once apparent. Vesuvius, who previous to the fight had scented a deer and followed him some distance, had now returned to search for his master, and seeing the wounded savage sitting upon the ground, instantly attacked him; for, like his master, he had an unconquerable aversion to the red race.

Springing upon the ill-fated being, the dog sunk his sharp teeth into his throat, and with continual shakings, draggings and bitings, worried the life from his body.

"You should have been here afore, you lazy feller," said Joel, reproachfully, as Vesuvius, having shaken the last spark of vitality out of the Indian, stood over him growling hoarsely, and watching with vigilant eyes for some sign of life, that he might have a reasonable excuse for another attack.

"Don't sarve me another sich trick," added Logston, as he mounted his horse and turned his head towards Boonesborough.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEARCH.

The heart of Allan Norwood was not weak and irresolute, but strong in its resolves, and firm and persevering in the execution of its purposes. The placid countenance, and the quiet and unobtrusive air of Allan, when nothing had transpired to arouse him to action, might have misled many persons in regard to his real character, and they would not have felt disposed to give him credit for so much energy and daring as he truly possessed; but could such individuals have seen him in moments of danger, when his sterner nature was awakened, they would have changed their opinion, and regarded him as a young man gifted with high and noble qualities.

The events at Boonesborough, in which Providence had made him an actor, called out the latent powers of his mind, and stimulated him to prompt and decisive efforts in regard to Rosalthe. Immediately after the departure of Logston, Captain Boone summoned some of the most experienced of his little garrison around him, to learn their respective views in relation to the course most proper to pursue under existing circumstances. All agreed that, considering the great danger that menaced Boonesborough, every arm that could wield a weapon was needed in its defence; but notwithstanding, they deemed it their duty to make every effort in their power to rescue Mr. Alston's daughter.

Rosalthe, being fair and amiable, had won the friendship of old and young among the hardy pioneers; accordingly her case elicited much sympathy, and every one was anxious to serve her. Those capable of bearing arms, about twenty in number, would have gladly seized their rifles and rushed to the rescue, had they not feared an immediate attack by Girty and the Miami chief. It was finally decided that two or three persons of experience should steal quietly from the fort, to find the gentle maiden.

Kenton, Ballard and Allan immediately offered their services. Some of the older settlers hinted that the latter was not sufficiently experienced in Indian arts to venture upon so hazardous an enterprise; but Allan could not be induced to change his determination.

All realized how important the services of Captain Boone would be in such an undertaking, but none were willing that he should leave the fort, because his experience might be of more use than anywhere else, in case of a general assault.

Ballard affected to regard our hero with considerable contempt, for he prided himself not a little on his skill in woodcraft, and did not wish to be considered on a level with those less expert, who had perchance never followed a trail or slain an Indian.

"If this Ohio feller goes with us, we can't expect anything good will be likely to happen," he said to Kenton, in a voice sufficiently loud for Allan to hear.

"Why not?" asked Kenton.

"He's got no knowledge of these kind o' things. He wouldn't know an Indian trail from a rabbit-path. And as for rifle shootin', I don't suppose he could hit the bigness of a man at fifty yards, in firing as many times," said Ballard, ill-humoredly.

"Perhaps you underrate his abilities," answered Kenton.

"That aint by no means probable!" retorted Ballard. "I'm called the shrewdest reader of human character in Kentucky. I don't often make mistakes in them kind of matters. The chap is too quiet to be anything; he's got no courage, and if he has, he hasn't skill enough to follow a trail. As sure as he goes, somethin' will break!"

"Quiet your apprehensions, sir," said Allan, approaching the scout. "Do your own duty, and if I fail to discharge mine, the blame will not be attributed to you."

"That's all very well," replied Ballard unabashed. "I've heerd people talk just so afore, and then be off in the time of danger."

"Come, Ballard, don't be hard; you'll wound the young man's feelings," interposed Kenton.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Ballard, imitating the short, guttural sound peculiar to the Indian tribes. "I reckon his feelin's aint much finer nor mine nor yours. I aint disposed to put my reputation on a level with a green hand like him."

The cool contemptuous manner and insulting language of the spy thoroughly aroused the indignation of Allan. He felt that time enough had been lost already, and that it was highly incumbent upon them to act without furthur delay. Keeping down, with a strong effort, the feelings of wounded pride and impatience that were rankling within, he stepped forward and laid his hand upon Ballard's shoulder, and closing it until the fingers seemed sinking into the flesh, said in a hoarse whisper:—

"Cease this foolish bravado; or, if you must quarrel, wait until we are outside the fort, when we will settle it like men."

The features of the scout grew pale, and then flushed with anger; he threw a savage look at Norwood, and grasped the handle of his hunting-knife.

Simon Kenton instantly seized Ballard's arm, and wrenched the weapon from his hand.

"Are ye madmen!" cried Boone, who appeared at that moment, and saw what was taking place. "What means this? Why are ye wrangling? Is there not fighting enough to be done, without cutting each other's throats?"

Kenton hastened to explain the cause of the quarrel.

"Ballard, you are always too fast," added Boone. "Your ill-nature will cost your life, ultimately; but I will risk this young man with you. No more delay—off with you, and do the best you can."

Everything being in readiness, the gate was opened, the trio took leave of their friends, and left the fort, followed by the prayers and good wishes of all who remained.

They proceeded down the river, the scout leading the way in sullen and ominous silence. It was evident that he had not recovered his temper, and was brooding over the scenes that had just transpired, with feelings and intentions far from amicable. He fully resolved as he strode on, that Allan should not accompany them, but return to Boonesborough, or dispose of himself in any other manner he saw fit. With lowering countenance, and determined air, he stopped, and turning to Kenton, addressed him as follows:—

"You've heerd my opinion about that young chap from Ohio, and I mean to abide by it, and act up to it. He may go any way he pleases, and do what he pleases, but he can't go with me—that's settled."

"This is folly," exclaimed Kenton. "I will vouch for Mr. Norwood's courage and address."

"Well, if you like him, you can go with him, and we'll part company," returned the scout, doggedly.

"Recover your temper and be a man again," added Kenton.

Allan had gained sufficient knowledge of Ballard's character to enable him to understand that prompt and decided action was required.

"You have seen fit," said Allan, "to insult a stranger in a manner that is unpardonable, nevertheless I will bear no malice, if your conduct in future be such as one man expects, in decency, from another. If you wish to be on friendly terms, I am ready and willing; but if, on the contrary, you wish to fight, you will not find me unprepared."

"You look like it!" was the laconic rejoinder.

"You are unreasonable!" remonstrated Kenton, in a milder tone.

"We'll part company," added the scout.

"We shall thwart our own purpose, I fear, if we do that," continued Kenton.

"Enjoy thinking so; but here we separate," resumed Ballard.

The scout being naturally of a very obstinate disposition, it was impossible to

change his determination; accordingly he shouldered his rifle and walked away, thinking, doubtless, that Kenton would follow him; but in this he was mistaken; Kenton remained with Allan.

"Let him go," he added; "he's in one of his contrary moods, and wont listen to reason. What shall we do?"

"Keep along down the river," said Allan.

"What do you say to taking a boat?"

"That would be the best thing we could do if we had one," answered Norwood.

"There is one concealed in the bushes yonder; so we'll soon float it," said Kenton.

The little vessel was dragged from its concealment, and the two young men were soon gliding down the river. Norwood had not forgotten to inform his comrade about the circumstances of finding the spot where a canoe had evidently been drawn up, and of the strange conduct of Vesuvius. For several hours they silently plied the paddles, always keeping close to the shore.

They had reached a place where the river made a sudden sweep to the left, and was much wider, when a man appeared on the opposite bank and besought them in an impassioned manner to come to his assistance.

Simon Kenton paid no attention to his entreaties, which astonished Allan very much, whose ears were ever open to the cries of those in distress.

"What do you want?" asked our hero, touched with pity by the frantic entreaties of the unknown, and, apparently, greatly terrified individual.

"I've escaped from the Wyandots; they are after me, and I cannot cross the river; come and take me off, if you are Christians," returned the man, who continued to run along the shore, wringing his hands as the boat passed on.

"Let us take him into the boat," said Allan.

Kenton smiled, and shook his head, and the man redoubled his cries, protesting that the Indians would soon re-capture him if he did not succeed in getting across the river.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Norwood.

His companion smiled again.

"I'm absolutely starving—I'm torn and bleeding all over!" added the man on shore, in piteous accents.

"Come, my friend, this is unlike you!" continued Allan, to the impassive Kenton. "Are you not touched by the terrible fears and miserable condition of the wretched man?"

"Not I," said Kenton. "This distress is not real; it is an infamous plot to allure us to the other side. The white scoundrel is backed by a score of red-skins, no doubt."*

"Are you really in earnest?" asked Norwood.

"Perfectly so," replied Kenton.

"Then send a bullet through the treacherous rascal, in Heaven's name!" exclaimed Allan.

"That's the way I intend to assist him—out of the world," added the other.

"You are laying a trap to deceive us," said Kenton, ceasing to use his paddle.

The fellow on shore solemnly protested that he was not, but was acting in perfect good faith.

"How many Indians are there up in the woods behind you?" resumed Kenton, laying down his paddle.

The man swore that there was not one there to his knowledge; but he expected every moment the woods would be full of them, when he, unfortunate fellow, would perhaps be burned at the stake, the subject of tortures impossible to describe.

Perceiving that the boat had stopped, and partially changed its direction, the impostor increased his outcries.

"Now back water a little, and keep the boat steady," whispered Kenton; then addressing the fellow in distress:—

"If we go ashore, you promise to play us no Indian tricks?"

"Not a trick," was the reply; and the white impostor called heaven and earth, and the Maker of both, to witness his truthfulness.

"Turn the boat quite round, head to the opposite shore, so as to bring you between myself and him," said Kenton, in a low voice.

"What if he should prove to be no impostor after all?" remarked Allan.

"Nonsense! Look! I can see a painted face peeping from behind a bush. Steady—as you are. When I have fired, drop your paddle and let fly at the Indian, if you get a chance."

The little boat now lay quietly upon the water; and before the man on shore perceived what was intended, Kenton raised his piece and discharged it.

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* Plots of this kind were of frequent occurrence on the Ohio and other large rivers, and were often successful.

The white man fell—scrambled to his feet—and fell a second time. Allan had kept watch of the red-face behind the bush, and the instant Kenton fired, seized his own rifle and followed his example with all the celerity and precision of a practiced hunter. The painted visage disappeared, and a loud war-whoop resounded through the forest.

"You see I was right," said Kenton. "You have finished your fellow outright, and the white renegade has got what he wont get over in a hurry."

"His distress seems to be more real now," observed Allan, as the wounded man attempted to recover his feet for the third time with no better success than before.

While Norwood was speaking, several Indians appeared on the bank of the river, and our two friends were saluted with a shower of balls.

"Load your rifle," said Kenton, coolly, "and I will pull up close to the shore, and get as far out of range as possible. Several of their balls, you see, have touched the boat."

Simon bent smartly to the paddle, and the tiny vessel shot rapidly through the yielding waters. The young hunter reloaded his rifle, while the bullets of the enemy occasionally whistled past his ears, splintered the boat, or, their force being spent, fell harmless a few feet from them, into the water.

Allan now proposed that they should go ashore, leave the boat, and strike into the forest.

"Not yet," replied his brave comrade; "let us see what they will do."

"Several of them are at work in the water; I wonder what they are doing?" said Allan.

"They have doubtless sunk a canoe there, and are now raising it; they intend to follow us."

"You are right; they are dragging a birchen vessel from the water."

"If there is more than one of them, we are lost," resumed Kenton.

"Fortunately for us there is but one, and it will contain but four or five at the most. I think we can manage that number."

"We must sink the canoe; for if we allow them to cross, our chance of escape will be a small one indeed. So keep cool, and let us see whether they intend to pursue us, or go directly across."

"I hope they don't intend to cross, for then we shall have enemies on both sides of the river, in which case they can riddle us with their balls."

"There they come; pull away," added Kenton, who had just finished loading his rifle.

The canoe had left the opposite bank, and was now rapidly approaching, propelled by four savages.

"They are Miamis," observed Kenton; "we must sink them."

"But how? Rifle-balls make but small holes; we might perforate the bark in a dozen places below the water-line, and not affect our purpose."

"We have been trying some experiments at Boonesborough, lately, with balls linked together in this manner," replied Kenton, holding up two bullets fastened together by a small chain about eight inches long. "These balls, when projected from the rifle, separate the length of the chain, and at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards, will pass through a board an inch in thickness. So you perceive that it will not take many such shots to sink one of those canoes, for they are not much thicker than brown paper."

"An excellent device, my friend," returned our hero.

"I hope you have driven home one of those kind of missiles, and have one or two to spare."

"I am ready," said Allan, a moment afterwards.

The Miamis swept towards our friends with loud cries, thinking to terrify them, and render resistance less effectual.

"I don't care so much about destroying the poor wretches, as I do about sinking the canoe," added Kenton, in a suppressed voice. "Let us get the first fire, if we can. Do you fear them?"

"I never was afraid in my life," said Allan, coolly.

The words had scarcely left Norwood's lips, when a shot from the savages cut a button from his hunting-frock.

"That was very well done," remarked Kenton.

"Perhaps they will improve on it," replied Allan, with a smile.

"I hope not! Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Kenton, earnestly. "This wont do!" he added, as another shot passed through Norwood's cap, and a third lodged in the paddle he was holding.

"They are near enough; let us have a

shot—its our turn now. Fire at the canoe, and you can't help doing damage."

Both took steady aim, and the Indians, anticipating their intentions, endeavored to screen themselves by dodging their heads down into the canoe.

"That will only make it worse for them," said Kenton; and then both fired.

The result fully equalled their expectations; the fragile vessel was so badly cut that it immediately filled, and the Indians leaped into the water, some of them severely if not mortally wounded.

In a few seconds the canoe sank. Then the terrified Miamis made a great splashing in the water, while those on the bank yelled with rage. The two young men grasped the paddles, and used them with such effect that in half an hour not an enemy was seen or heard.

"What shall we do now?" asked Norwood.

"I think we had better land and sink the boat."

"That is my own opinion; for on shore we may find a trail; but the water keeps its secrets, and effaces at once the track of the voyagers it has borne on its bosom," said Allan.

Having landed, they filled the boat with large stones, and sunk it. The sun had gone down, and darkness pervaded the mighty forests.

"Come," said Allan, "let us go."

"Go where?" asked his companion.

"Anywhere," replied Norwood, hesitatingly, "to find Rosalthe Alston."

Kenton, who had seated himself on the bank, arose and attempted to follow Allan, but staggered a few steps and fell.

"My dear Kenton, you are wounded!" exclaimed his companion, running to the heroic woodsman, and raising his head from the ground. But the gallant fellow made no reply; he had fainted from the loss of blood.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIAN VILLAGE.

"Arise!" said Star-Light.

Rosalthe lifted her head languidly. She had lain in the canoe she knew not how long. The voice of the Indian girl recalled her from a state bordering on unconsciousness. She looked around her like one dreaming, and wondered where she was; but in a moment she caught up the broken thread of memory, and the occurrences of the last few hours passed rapidly through her mind. She turned her gaze towards the skies, and perceived that the sun was far past the meridian, which fact assured her that considerable time had elapsed since she had sunk down in the canoe.

While she was making these observations, the birchen vessel touched the shore.

"Step out!" said Star-Light, and Rosalthe obeyed in silence. The Indian maiden drew the canoe out of the water, and secreted it among the reeds and bushes.

That operation being completed, she motioned to Rosalthe to follow her, and walked with noiseless and gliding footsteps into the forest. Star-Light proceeded in this manner until our heroine was nearly exhausted, and could with difficulty keep pace with her more practiced conductress; which the latter perceiving, went forward more slowly, stopping often to assist her over rough places. The way was so dark and lonely that Rosalthe queried whether a human foot ever had pressed that soil before, or whether a human voice ever broke the stillness of the solemn woods.

They reached an Indian hut or lodge, and it was a spot so hemmed in by stupendous forests, that it seemed to Rosalthe completely hidden from the observation of the living.

The maidens entered the lodge; it was without an occupant. Star-Light pointed to a couch of skins, and our heroine was glad to avail herself of the privilege of resting upon it; while the former kindled a fire and made preparations for cooking a meal. It was quite dark when her simple arrangements were completed.

Rosalthe was aroused from an uneasy slumber (produced by exhaustion, no doubt), and food set before her, which many persons more fastidious in those matters than the dwellers of the backwoods would not have complained of. Of these viands she partook without hesitation, resolved to appear as unconcerned and heroic as possible before her strange companion.

While she was thus employed, although, as may be supposed, she had but very little inclination to eat, Star-Light was busily engaged in compounding various paints, for what purpose Rosalthe was at a loss to conceive. When the latter had ceased eating,

and pushed the food from her, the Indian maiden approached with the pigments she had prepared, and the object became apparent. Rosalthe drew back in alarm.

"Foolish maiden!" exclaimed Star-Light. "What do you fear? water will make these colors disappear. What I am about to do is necessary to your safety. I must make you look like one of my people."

"Swear that you will keep faith with me, and that I shall return in safety to Boonesborough," said Rosalthe.

"I swear," returned Star-Light.

"By the Great Spirit?" continued Rosalthe.

"By the Great Spirit," added Star-Light.

"Then I submit; do with me as you will."

"White-Cloud is proud," said the Indian girl, after a pause. "She is vain of her beauty; she fears that these colors will destroy it, so that Smooth-Tongue will no longer love her."

"I am ready—put it on," replied Rosalthe, submitting herself patiently to Star-Lihgt.

The Cherokee girl gazed an instant at the handsome features of Rosalthe, and sighed.

"Star-Light is sad and unhappy," said our heroine, kindly. "Smooth-Tongue has made her heart heavy by his deceit. Let her forget him; he is bad."

"Forget him, that White-Cloud may remember him!" retorted the Indian girl, angrily.

"Star-Light is wrong; jealousy and grief have blinded her eyes. But the time will come when she will see clearly," rejoined Rosalthe.

The heart of Star-Light seemed to relent; she commenced laying the colors upon Rosalthe's face with no ungentle hand, while the latter sat uncomplainingly before the blazing fire, that she might see to complete the novel operation. When this part of the singular toilet was finished, the Indian girl proceeded to unfasten her hair, which was confined by a band, and let it fall unrestrained over her neck and shoulders. In a short time Rosalthe's dark tresses were arranged to suit the fancy of Wassahauza. From a willow basket, in one corner of the lodge, she produced an Indian dress, in all respects like her own.

Our heroine made no objections, but suffered herself to be attired in the costume of savage life. When the whole was completed, Star-Light herself looked at her with wonder and admiration; for Rosalthe appeared quite as charming in her new apparel (in the estimate of the former) as in her own legitimate style of dress.

"Good!" exclaimed Star-Light, holding a small mirror before her unresisting captive. Rosalthe glanced at the image reflected, and could not repress an involuntary exclamation of astonishment.

"You'll be jealous of me, now, I'm sure," she said, with a faint smile.

"If I thought you could speak the truth, I should not hate you," rejoined Star-Light, a portion of her former sternness returning.

"Let Star-Light and White-Cloud be friends," said Rosalthe, in a kindly tone.

The maiden made no reply, but taking Rosalthe's hand, led her from the lodge.

"There is a village not far from here," said the former, when they had walked a short distance. "You will be safe there, for you shall dwell in my lodge, and I am the daughter of a powerful chief. You must not try to escape for that might bring evil upon you. I will tell our young men that you come from our cousins, the Wyandots, on account of a young chief who loved you, but whom you despised. This tale will account for your appearance among us if you follow my directions. Speak to no one, and leave the rest to me."

A walk of half an hour brought the maidens to the Cherokee village, which consisted of about twenty lodges; being only a minor branch of that once powerful nation.

Star-Light was passing rapidly among the huts, followed by Rosalthe, when a tall and majestic figure appeared in the narrow and well-beaten path that wound in a serpentine manner from lodge to lodge.

"Star-Light has been abroad?" he said, inquiringly.

"There is starlight all above you," replied the Indian girl, carelessly.

"But not the Star-Light that is more pleasant to Otter-Lifter than the brightness of day," returned the Indian.

"The bold chief of the Cherokees will make me sad," said Star-Light.

"He would not willingly darken the rays of joy that should continually stream up from your heart, and beam from your eyes," rejoined Otter-Lifter.

"You have not noticed our sister; she comes from our cousins, the Wyandots. She is called White-Cloud."

"The daughters of the Wyandots are comely," returned Otter-Lifter, giving Ro-

salthe a searching glance. "White-Cloud is welcome; she looks like the sister of Star-Light."

"Otter-Lifter has sharp eyes!" retorted Star-Light, coldly.

"May no cloud darker than that ever come between Otter-Lifter and Star-Light," replied the chief, pointing to Rosalthe.

"The Cherokee chief is making love to my cousin!" exclaimed the Indian girl, with warmth.

Otter-Lifter turned away with a smile, and the maidens passed on to the lodge near the centre of the village. The lodge was a large one, divided into two compartments by buffalo-skins suspended from the top, and secured at the bottom by sticks driven into the earth. In one place a skin was left to serve the purpose of a door, and through which Star-Light conducted her captive.

"This is my father's lodge," said the Indian girl. "He is one of the chiefs, and is called Gitshewa, or Strong-Voice, because his shout is so terrible in battle. Being a noted man, his lodge is double, as you see, and this part belongs to me and Monon. Monon is my sister."

The person last mentioned was seated on a mat near the fire; and when Star-Light mentioned her name, she arose and regarded Rosalthe with as much curiosity as was in keeping with Indian stoicism, and, possibly, a little more.

"'Tis White-Cloud," said Star-Light.

Rosalthe seated herself on a mat, and examined Manon more particularly. She was younger than her sister, and bore a striking resemblance to her. She was fair, but her beauty was of a gentler cast than Star-Light's; and our heroine took courage from the fact, and hoped she would be able to win her friendship.

The three maidens being seated before the fire, did little else, for a time, than to throw furtive glances at each other.

The beauty of Rosalthe seemed to fix the attention of Manon in a particular manner, and the former judged by her looks that she had great difficulty in believing that she was really one of a different race.

Presently Star-Light and her sister began to converse in the Indian tongue, and being somewhat familiar with the language, Rosalthe soon perceived that they were talking about a white captive that one of their war-parties of young men had taken at Harrodsburgh. This riveted her attention, and she listened with breathless interest to all that was said, understanding, occasionally a few words. Her sympathies were more completely enlisted in the subject when she heard the prisoner was a young girl, and already condemned to death.

Rosalthe could control her feelings no longer. She asked why Otter-Lifter, being a humane chief, permitted such cruelties; to which Star-Light replied that he had nothing to do with the matter; the captive having been taken by a party of young braves, and to retaliate on the settlers at Harrodsburgh for the loss of one of their number.

"But has not Otter-Lifter, or your father, power to save the poor girl?" inquired Rosalthe.

Star-Light made no answer, but looked steadily at the fire.

"Did not the Great Spirit intend that the pale and red-faces should be perpetually enemies?" asked Monon.

"No; it is his will that all men should be brethren, and dwell together in friendship," replied Rosalthe.

"That would be best, it seems to me; but if it had been the will of the Great Spirit it would have been so; for his power is greater than man's," answered Monon.

"I know it; but it is wiser to lead men by the gentle influences of love, than to bend them to our purposes by force," returned Rosalthe.

"Who can tell his purposes?" said Monon, thoughtfully.

"I wish it had pleased the merciful Monedo to have gifted me with eyesight so strong that I could look into the strange country where people say we shall go after death," observed Star-Light.

"For what object?" asked Rosalthe.

"That I might see how the Great Spirit governs the souls of men there, so that we could imitate him on the earth," she replied.

"We know he is impartial, and works in wisdom for the good of all," added Rosalthe.

"Yes, he is good," said Monon, "because he gives us the strawberry moon, and the corn moon, and the buffalo moon, all in their season, and never alters his mind and changes them."

"If he is so good, why does he let the people do wickedly—make war, and kill each other? Why does he suffer the poor white girl to be burned with fire, and allow others to lie and deceive?" said Star-Light, with much bitterness of manner.

"Perhaps he will not permit this girl to suffer. He may avert her fate," replied Rosalthe, quite earnestly. "Promise me that you will make an effort to save her," she added, with fervor.

"Lie down and sleep, White-Cloud," returned Star-Light, coldly.

"The fate of that unhappy young woman makes me miserable!" exclaimed our heroine, and lying down upon the couch of buffalo-skins that had been spread for her, she vainly endeavored to rest. The imperfect slumbers that visited her at periods were disturbed by dreamy vagaries. It was about midnight when she felt a touch upon her arm. She opened her eyes with a start, and beheld Star-Light beside her.

"If you would see the white captive, arise and follow me," said the Indian girl.

Rosalthe lost no time in obeying; she arose and followed her from the lodge, while Monon remained sitting by the fire. Without a word being uttered by either party, they approached the spot where the unfortunate captive was waiting the execution of the sentence which had been pronounced upon her by her judges.

Two warriors lay extended upon the ground, near the door of the lodge, who appeared to be sleeping soundly. Star-Light paused, evidently somewhat surprised at what she beheld.

"The Great Spirit favors us," she said, in a low voice. "The warriors are full of fire-water—they are drunken."

Star-Light passed on, stepping lightly within a few inches of the unconscious watchers. Making a gesture for Rosalthe to imitate her example, she glided into the lodge. The prisoner was sitting near a smouldering fire, her hands and feet tightly bound with thongs of deer-skin. She looked up with an exclamation of astonishment as Star-Light entered; but the latter placed the index finger of her left hand upon her lips, and with the other pointed significantly towards the place where the warriors were sleeping.

The instant that Rosalthe caught a glimpse of the sorrowful face that was turned towards her, she sprang forward and embraced the doomed maiden, exclaiming, "Fanny Harrod!"

The captive uttered no words of recognition, but gazed at Rosalthe in mute surprise.

'*Minno Monedo!*" said Star-Light, in a suppressed but energetic manner. "What are you doing? Is this a time to embrace and weep? Come away, White-Cloud; the Drooping-Lily does not know you."

Star-Light grasped Rosalthe by the arm and drew her away from the captive; with a knife she had severed the thongs that bound her limbs, and bade her stand up. This done, raising her hand warningly, she stepped to the door and looked a moment at the warriors before it. Satisfied, evidently, with the result of her examination, she returned, and took Fanny Harrod by the hand, and led her from the lodge.

The parties stood in the open air, and beneath the light of an unclouded moon. The face of Miss Harrod was deadly pale; her limbs trembled with agitation, and her heart beat fast with expectation and fear. She turned her marble visage towards Star-Light, or threw wild and wondering glances at Rosalthe.

The Cherokee girl paused but a moment, and then moved away from the spot, supporting the trembling form of Fanny Harrod. They had proceeded perhaps a dozen yards, when a majestic figure darkened their path, and the face of Otter-Lifter was looking calmly upon them. Miss Harrod uttered a faint cry, and fell fainting into the arms of Star-Light.

CHAPTER X.

LE BLAND'S ESCAPE FROM THE FORT.

Joel Logston reached Boonesborough much exhausted from the loss of blood; but he was not so weak as to be unable to give a very extraordinary account of what had transpired. His vocal organs were in suitable order to relate the manner in which six of his enemies attacked him on the right, while nine more were advancing upon the left, three in front, and heaven knows how many in the rear, because he had no eyes in the hinder portion of his head; therefore he could not be expected to know.

One thing was certain; Joel gave living evidence that he had triumphed over his assailants; for his own return was proof positive. The woodsman did not forget to render proper praise to that intrepid animal called Vesuvius; but believed that he could with safety affirm that he had supped on warm Indian, of his own slaying.

Leaving the redoubted veteran of the forest to have his wounds dressed, and to re-

fresh his energies by sleep, we turn to Le Bland, whom we shall find safely shut up in one of the block-houses.

The restraint which had been imposed upon the Frenchman's actions proved by no means agreeable. He felt that he was in danger, and that many of his plans were likely to fail.

His solicitude for his personal safety was blended with the utmost indignation. He attributed all his present difficulties to young Norwood, and resolved to be fully revenged upon him. He paced the rough floor of the block-house until near midnight, devising plans of escape and retaliation.

The pioneers were in their cabins, and the Frenchman was the sole occupant of the structure. The door which opened into the enclosure was guarded by Andrew, who was soon to be relieved by Exquisite Ebony. That it would be possible to corrupt the simple black, and escape, was an idea that naturally crept into the mind of Le Bland. The result of this conception was the following conversation between the parties:—

"Andrew?" said the Frenchman, in a low voice, putting his mouth to a loop-hole.

The honest African was somewhat comatose at that time; but the sound instantly aroused him, and caused him to look around in alarm.

Le Bland repeated the name.

"Am dat you spokin?" said Andrew.

The prisoner answered in the affirmative without delay.

"Don't 'dress yerself to me," returned Andrew, with some loftiness of manner.

"And why not, Monsieur Andrew?" asked Le Bland, suppressing his rage.

"Kase circumstance am berry changed since morning; I occupies a different station in s'ciety."

The Frenchman gnashed his teeth with anger, and wished, for the moment, above all other things for the privilege of wringing the negro's neck.

"But, my good Andrew, this misfortune of mine should not interrupt our friendship," added the prisoner in a deprecating tone.

"Dis chile am berry much fat-i-gued, and doesn't want to hear no low remarks," said Andrew, yawning.

Le Bland was on the point of giving utterance to some very bad language, but managed to restrain himself by a great effort.

"Come, Monsieur Andrew, don't be hard on a person who has been unfortunate," he added.

"Stop dat talkin' dar; I'm gwine to decompose some poetry," returned Andrew.

"Le Diable!" exclaimed the prisoner, whose patience was nearly exhausted.

"What will rhyme wid 'skies,' you French feller, in dar?" asked Andrew, after a short silence.

"Eyes," replied Le Bland, thinking that perhaps it would be better to humor his mood.

"Dar fust line am dis," resumed the negro, "Dar moon an sailin' in de skies."

"But can't compare wid Dinah's eyes," added Le Bland.

"Dat am berry good," quoth Andrew, much pleased with the lines.

"Mon Dieu!" cried Le Bland. "You are a poet; you have drunk of the waters of Castalia."

"I never takes nuffin stronger nor egger fortis and whiskey," replied the African.

"Listen," continued the Frenchman; "I'll assist you to compose some lines on Dinah's eyes, if you'll just let me out of this ridiculous place. Poetry is the sure road to the female heart."

"You'd better decompose suffin for Missy Alston! heah! heah!" retorted Andrew, with a loud guffaw.

"The foul fiend fly away with this stupid nigger!" said the prisoner to himself, "I can do nothing with him."

"Andrew, you are a poet and a man of feeling," resumed Le Bland.

"Y-e-s, I know dat," said the negro, highly gratified by the compliment to his head and heart.

"The fact of the case is, that I am vilely slandered and villanously traduced. It is necessary in order to vindicate my character, that I should escape this block-house. Now it seems to me, that a man of your sensibility must pity me, more especially when I assure you that I will give you a handsome sum of money for your services."

"Money!" exclaimed Andrew, eagerly.

"Yes, Andrew; good, hard, silver pieces."

"Dat alters de cirkumstance. Poke out des money frew der hole," responded Andrew readily.

"But how shall I get out?" inquired the Frenchman, who could not see how he was to be greatly benefited by the operation which the black had suggested.

"The best way you ken; you can't

come frew de door," was the rejoinder.

"Get me an axe, then, and let me cut my way out."

"How much money?" asked Andrew.

"Three silver dollars—more than you ever had in the course of your whole life, probably."

"Hand out de currency," said the negro.

"Well, the axe?"

"I'll tell you whar to find one," said Andrew.

"There's one here, then?"

"Yes, massa; but you can't find it, 'less I tell ye."

After a few moments of reflection, Le Bland was about to pass out the money, when he heard the voice of Ebony without; but this did not discourage him, for he believed that the African would be disposed to sympathize with his master, and so be inclined to favor his escape.

Accordingly the prisoner did not hesitate to state the proposition which he had made to Andrew. The matter was discussed in low voices by the two worthies; and they finally concluded that for an additional dollar, they would be completely justified in disclosing the place where the axe was secreted in the block-house.

Should the Frenchman be fortunate enough to free himself by the aid of that implement, Andrew and his friend supposed that they could not be very deeply implicated in the affair, for the discovery of the axe would appear more the result of accident than any conveyance on their part.

So the stipulated sum was duly transferred (through one of the port-holes pierced in the walls) to the hands of the negroes, and the promised information given.

But here a new difficulty presented itself; would not the sound of his blows alarm all the sleepers in Boonesborough? If they heard the noise, would they be likely to suspect the true cause of the disturbance? The experiment was at least worth trying, and he resolved to risk it.

After considerable searching, aided by the faint light shining in at the loopholes, and by the sense of touch, he discovered a place where his operations promised to be most successful. But the first blow resounded so loudly through the empty structure, and among the adjacent cabins, that he threw down the implement in despair.

"Stop dat noise dar!" cried Andrew, authoritatively. "Massa Boone's down by de gate."

"I must abandon the attempt," said Le Bland, thoughtfully, for a new and more feasible plan had suggested itself to his mind.

"You may keep the money, Andrew, and say nothing about what has taken place."

"The best thing you can do! I knew you could not do nuffin in dat line," replied Andrew; and wishing the prisoner good night, he walked away with the silver safely deposited in his pocket, singing in the happiest possible frame of mind; for he had made some brilliant additional improvements to his poetical tribute to Dinah's optics.

"De nightingale war singing loud,
De moon was walking frew de cloud," etc.

The moment Andrews voice had ceased to be heard, Le Bland hastened to sound Ebony's feelings in regard to his imprisonment, and to ascertain so far as he was able, whether he could reasonably expect any immediate assistance from Mr. Alston.

The result was satisfactory. He soon discovered that Exquisite Ebony had received instructions, and was ready to favor his escape, providing that it could be so adroitly managed that he could not well be suspected of having any direct agency in the same.

While a low conversation was going on between the Frenchman and the negro, Mr. Alston himself cautiously approached the block-house.

"Here's Massa Alston," said Ebony.

"Yes, I am here, my friend," said the person referred to. "How do you find yourself?"

"I find myself a prisoner and very poorly treated," replied Le Bland, rather haughtily.

"You speak truly; but you are aware that no efforts of mine were wanting to protect you from this indignity?" asked Alston.

"I freely admit you spoke in my favor; but is speaking all that friendship demands in such a case as this? Is not action also required?" asked Le Bland.

"I am ready to work with you heart and hand; but what can I do? When and where shall my services begin?"

"Free me from this disgraceful thraldom. Let me not be pent up here, while every moment seems an age to me, and, while I appear to hear each instant the despairing cries of Rosalthe; and for my apparently unpardonable tardiness, to meet her reproving glances. I am ready to pluck out my

beard with vexation. My impatience to serve and save the best of women drives me to the confines of madness. And yet you come and say, 'I am your friend; I spoke in your behalf.' Thrice accursed are these unyielding walls! they hold me from action when it is most needed. Perhaps it is already too late; the pile may be lighted—the fagots even now blazing in flames mounting to the skies."

"Hold! for the love of God!" exclaimed Mr. Alston. "Your words torture me beyond endurance. The shrieks of my idolized girl are in my ears—her agonies penetrate my soul."

"Is it not so with me, also? Am I not a lover? Is not Rosalthe the being of my idolatry? Who talks of grief? Who complains of sorrow?" returned Le Bland, with impassioned earnestness.

Mr. Alston was deeply affected, and although he had done all in his power to prevent his friend's imprisonment, he really began to feel that he had done little or nothing. Here was an excellent gentleman who was deeply enamored of his daughter. His daughter had been stolen by the savages, and the anxious lover was prevented from flying to the rescue by an unjust imprisonment. Was it strange that he resented the injustice which had rendered him inactive, while the object of his adoration was in deadly peril? No; all this was natural. Any man similarly situated would have exhibited the same impatience—the same burning solicitude—the feverish longing to be at large.

Mr. Alston was subdued. All resistance to the plans and purposes of the wily Frenchman were gone. He stood outside the block-house, looking more like a condemned and guilty person than did the individual within. He was ready to pronounce judgment against himself. He reflected upon the gigantic schemes which had danced through his brain, teeming with visions of unbounded wealth. Should all these grand speculations be allowed to fail? Should he shamefully desert the man who had raised up the golden fabric? The answer came to him in a powerful *no*—not for a moment. He would stand by him through slander and detraction, through imprisonment and danger.

"My excellent Le Bland, what shall I do?" he asked, at length.

"You ask me what you shall do? Do what your better nature is bidding you at this moment. Do what love for your child, and love for common justice demands. Demolish these walls! open the door! give me liberty! give me the free air! This restraint will make me frantic. To breathe this air another moment will suffocate me. I am, while here, like the poor fish transferred from his loved element to dry land. I gasp—I struggle with my fate like it. Make haste, then, to relieve me. Consult not cold and selfish prudence; think not of false fears of professed friends, and the falsehoods of concealed enemies. Act, and act quickly. Your friend demands it; your daughter invokes it."

"Before Heaven!" cried Alston, "I will comply with your request, let the consequences be what they may. My doubts (if I ever entertained a single doubt) vanish; I give them to the winds. When I hear your tones, I hear only the voice of sincerity and truth; I feel that there is no hypocrisy within you, let others cry out as they will. Now I am ready to serve you."

"Is Captain Boone still walking about within the works?" asked Le Bland.

"No; he concluded his observations, and returned to his cabin a few moments since," replied Mr. Alston.

"That is well; now I must contrive to escape without implicating you."

"Generous friend!" said Alston, pleased to behold so much ingenuousness.

"Let Ebony mount to the roof," continued the Frenchman, and remove, with my co-operation, a sufficient portion of the same to allow me a comfortable egress. Once upon the top of the block-house, I will drop down upon the outside, and the object will be accomplished."

"The plan is judicious and practical," remarked Mr. Alston. "Ebony, get suitable implements, and climb up and open an aperture of the proper dimensions; but work softly, and throw yourself down flat on the roof if any one appears."

Ebony made haste to obey these commands, and in a short time he was industriously at work on the top of the block-house, while the Frenchman gave directions and assisted him from the interior. The work progressed successfully; the timbers were displaced by means of a lever. The Frenchman emerged from the opening, and the implements which had been employed were so placed as to convey the idea that

all had been effected from the inside.

"There's one subject which you have not mentioned," observed Alston, thoughtfully.

"And what may that be?" asked Le Bland.

"You have not reflected that it is exceedingly hazardous for you to leave Boonesborough. Our red enemies have been, as you know, unusually active of late. To venture forth at this time, seems like rushing to certain death. In my anxiety for my daughter, and sympathy for you, I had entirely lost sight of that most important fact."

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the Frenchman. "Do you imagine that I would shrink from any danger where duty calls me to act? You do not yet know me. Nothing is so dreadful to me as the thought that Rosalthe is exposed to insult and death. All other considerations fade from my mind. For her I would dare all things that can menace or affect the safety of mortal man."

"But stay yet a moment," added Alston. "You are unarmed; let me run to my cabin and get my rifle."

"Never mind it, my good Alston. I have many friends who"—— Le Bland checked his speech, and left the remainder of his thoughts unexpressed.

Alston, in his eagerness and agitation, did not notice the circumstance, but continued to insist that he should wait until he returned with the rifle; and he reluctantly complied.

Alston hastened to procure the weapon; but when people are most in a hurry, they facilitate matters the least. The powder-horn was misplaced, and the ball-pouch could not readily be found. The few minutes which Le Bland had to wait, appeared to him an age. Alston came back at the very instant when his friend's patience was failing; and the rifle and ammunition were passed up to him. He seized them hastily, dropped down upon the front side of the block-house, and hurried away.

CHAPTER XI.

BOONESBOROUGH INVADED.

The hour of midnight had passed on, and other hours had followed in its noiseless track. It was near the break of day; but the hush of night lay more deeply, and far more darkly, upon the face of the earth than since the sun went down. The moon had finished her course, and passing away to other regions left darkness and gloom on the places where her beams had flickered so pleasantly. The stars were obscured by clouds, and only a few, at distant points, twinkled faintly in the firmament.

Daniel Boone and Mr. Fleming stood near the gate that opened from the stockades for ingress and egress. Each of the sturdy pioneers held in his hand his trusty rifle—weapons which had been proved upon many a bloody day.

"This," said Captain Boone, "is the hour which has ever been so fatal to our countrymen. The savages always select it for a surprise; and how many hundreds have been slain betwen sleeping and waking; leaping from their beds in terror at the sound of the terrific war-whoop, they have met death unarmed, and without resistance."

"You speak truly; I know it by many bitter experiences. I have seen houses on fire, and heard the shrieks of women and children when the flames were leaping from their dwellings, and when the murderous hatchet was suspended over their heads. I have been in battles here and elsewhere; and I have been in infant settlements that have been surprised by the ruthless savage. I know well that this is the hour of Indian maraud and treachery."

"Yes, my brave lads, this is the time when we may naturally expect the oncivilized critters," said Joel Logston, who appeared at that moment, followed by Vesuvius.

"You ought not to go abroad in the open air until you have recovered from your recent wounds," observed Captain Boone.

"The air 'll do 'em good; I never was afraid of the air; I ain't one o' them kind. I can't sleep where there's any danger, or any reasonable prospect of a fight. Isn't it so, Vesuvius?"

The ill-natured looking cur responded to this friendly question by a spasmodic growl.

"You made terrible work with the Indians, didn't you, dog?" added Logston, in the same confidential manner; and Vesuvius condescended to yelp again.

"He's a knowin' varmint," resumed Joel. "He can tell when there's a red-skin within half a mile. I really believe that he'd bark in his sleep if one of the painted critters should even look at Boonesborough."

At this instant the singular quadruped

referred to began to give vent to low and energetic growls, snuffing the air, erecting the hair upon his back, and walking defiantly about the enclosure near the stockades.

"What does that mean?" asked Fleming.

"It means that he scents somethin' as he don't like," replied Logston.

"I suspect that there are Indians near," remarked Daniel Boone.

"If you're allers as near the truth as that, you won't have to answer for much sin of that natur'," said Joel.

"Perhaps we had better call out the men," added Captain Boone.

"I think you had, by all means; for there'll be an oncommon uproar here soon, 'cordin' to my notion of things," replied Joel.

"Mr. Fleming, go and order the men to come out silently, and without confusion," said the captain.

"It will be best," said Fleming, and hastened to obey orders.

"I s'pose you've got that Frenchman safe enough?" continued Logston.

"Certainly; he's in the block-house, just where you put him. I had a long and serious conversation with Mr. Alston in regard to him, but failed to awaken him to a sense of the danger to be apprehended through his agency. He is determined to see nothing wrong in him; and nothing but positive proof will ever convince him of Le Bland's duplicity."

"Silas Girty and the Miami chief could tell him enough about it, I rather reckon," answered Joel, drily.

"I have not the least doubt of it," returned the pioneer. "But observe the dog; he is growling more in earnest. There is certainly some danger."

"If I was goin' to die the next minute as is a comin', I should say and stick to it, there's Ingins not fur off."

The settlers now began to leave their cabins and gather about their leader in silence, as they had been instructed. Mr. Alston appeared among them with a melancholy and dejected air, for he was doubtless thinking of his daughter.

"I cannot bear this torturing suspense and inaction much longer," he remarked, approaching Captain Boone. "Although not very skilful in Indian tactics, and unused to the trail, I shall, nevertheless, make some effort to recover my beloved Rosalthe."

"I can appreciate your feelings, Mr. Alston. You feel as all fathers would under such circumstances," said Boone. "But rest assured that there are those now in pursuit of your daughter who are far more experienced than yourself, and who will never return without some tidings of the lost one. Calm your anxieties as much as possible, that you may better administer comfort to your companions in affliction."

"Yes, I must try to bear up like a man," replied Alston, sighing, "Is there any immediate danger of an attack?"

"I am strongly inclined to think so," was the reply.

"I am differently persuaded. I think the danger has been greatly magnified. As you are aware, I have but little faith in this story of a fearful conspiracy," rejoined Alston.

"We differ on that point, unfortunately; but we shall see. The French have assisted and encouraged the savages more than once, and I see not why the report that Du Quesne is marching against us at the head of a large body of savages may not be true," said Boone.

"Time will solve all these questions. A great explainer is Time; he gives us the keys to all mysteries," resumed Alston.

"Look yonder, in the name of Heaven, and tell me what new mystery is that which I now behold!" exclaimed the forester, with startling emphasis.

Instantly all eyes were turned towards the block-house where Le Bland was supposed to be yet in durance. Dusky figures were seen on top of the structure, disappearing one after another through the roof. The hardy pioneers gazed at this astonishing sight in mute wonder. For a moment they seemed like men utterly deprived of the powers of volition. The danger had appeared in an unexpected quarter, and in a more dreaded form than they had anticipated.

But no eyes were more fully dilated with surprise than Mr. Alston's; he was almost paralyzed with what he beheld; he felt that he had been guilty also of a breach of trust, and in some respects acted unworthily; but he did not even dream that his friend Le Bland had anything to do with what was transpiring before him.

Captain Boone was the first to speak and to act. "We must stop this!" he exclaimed, "or we are little better than dead

men:" and instantly discharged his rifle at one of the dark forms. Three or four of the settlers followed his example. The fire was immediately returned from the block-house with effect, for one of the men fell.

"We are to be shot down from our own block-houses, and through the loop-holes pierced by our own hands" cried the captain. "Mr. Logston," he added, "take a half a dozen men and take possession of the other block-house, and prevent any more from entering the works, while I try to drive the enemy from this."

Brandishing a hatchet, the bold pioneer rushed towards the stronghold occupied by the Indians. The little party was met by a severe fire; Mr. Alston, who was among the foremost, received a wound which prevented him from taking any further part in the struggle.

The savages had the advantage; the guns levelled from the several loop-holes completely covering Boone and his men. A few of them reached the door of the block-house; but it could not be forced open, and even had they suceeded in doing so, it would have been rushing to destruction. The consequence was, the storming party was obliged to retreat.

Perceiving that nothing could be affected without more deliberation, order, and concert of action, they proceeded to superintend and protect the passage of the women and the children from the cabins to the block-house in the other angle of the works. This important measure was affected without loss, although they were frequently fired upon.

While these movements were taking place within the station, there was much shouting and tumult without. Several attempts were made to mount the top of the block-house, which met with a prompt repulse from the settlers, whose position commanded the entire front of the fort. As has been observed, the block-houses projecting twenty inches beyond the cabins, prevented effectually the possibility of the enemy's making a lodgement before them,

"This," said Logston, addressing Mr. Alston, who was having his wounds dressed, "this is the work of your Frenchman."

"I am still incredulous," replied Alston.

"Where is Andrew?" inquired Boone.

"Here, massa," said Andrew.

"Was Le Bland in the block-house when you went away from it?"

"Yes, massa."

"Are you sure?"

"Berry sure, massa Boone; 'kase he spoke to dis chile."

"What did he say?"

"He axed me if the moon am riz," replied the colored man, a little confused.

"Did he make any attempt to escape?" continued Boone, sternly.

"He spoke about dat ar subject."

"What did you say to him?"

"Dat I's berry tired and couldn't t'ink to listen to no low remarks."

"Are you sure you said that?"

"Dat's de natur' ob de obserwation."

"Did he offer you money, or hold out any inducement for you to assist him to escape?" added the forester, still more sternly.

"Yes, massa," said Andrew, quailing before the penetrating glances of Boone. Unfortunately for him, in his perturbation he thrust his hands into his pockets so desperately, that the jingle of silver coin was distinctly heard.

"What have you got in your pockets?" asked Boone.

"Nuffin but nails, massa—not a single t'ing," returned the negro, his manner plainly giving the lie to his words.

"Search his pockets," said the captain, turning to Logston, who stood near.

Joel, ever ready to do the bidding of his superior, laid his hands upon the trembling Andrew, which Vesuvius observing, concluded that it was the signal for some extraordinary demonstration on his part, and instantly displayed all his sharp teeth, and approached him with intentions most sinister and alarming.

Andrew, overcome by the sense of so many dangers, fell upon his knees, and declared he would confess all about the matter, which he did, with but a few trifling prevarications; protesting most strenuously that he had no intention whatever of assisting the Frenchman to escape.

Of the fact of Le Bland's escape, and the means employed, Andrew, as the reader is aware, knew nothing, and could give his master no information at all upon that subject.

Ebony was next questioned; but emboldened by the presence of Mr. Alston, fearlessly asserted that he was wholly ignorant of the transaction, and that the first intimation which he had received that anything was going wrong, was the report of Captain

Boone's rifle when he shot at the Indians.

Although perfectly assured in his own mind that Ebony knew more than he chose to divulge, the forester ceased to press his questions farther, for the imminence of the danger required prompt action.

A hurried consultation was now held among the veteran woodsmen, to determine what should be done. Some suggested that a party of picked men should advance with axes, burst in the door, and meet the savages face to face. But a young man by the name of Reynolds proposed a plan which appeared the most practicable, and was most favorably received. It was this: one party was to remain in the building where they were, another advance to make an assault upon the door of the structure held in possession by the Indians, while a third would attempt to gain an entrance by running along the roofs of the intervening cabins and effect their object through the same aperture by which the enemy had found access.

This scheme appeared very feasible, for the party remaining could protect the party upon the roof from the fire of the enemy outside the works; and the third party making a simultaneous attack upon the door, would divert the enemy, giving them two points to defend instead of one.

This measure was so well planned and conducted, that it was crowned by complete success, and every Indian within the block-house was slain, or put *hors du combat*.

The struggle after the parties entered the building was brief, but sanguinary, and the shouts of victory in one block-house was answered by shouts of joy from the other. The pioneers now had possession of their works; but the victory was by no means complete, for the frightful yells of hundreds of savages filled the wide forests with dreadful echoes, and blanched the cheeks of women and children. Wives and mothers thought of the husbands they had lost by the hatchet, by the well-sped ball, by the knife, or the more lingering death of torture. Fair young maidens thought of their lovers, and little children clasped their mothers' knees in terror, their tiny hands trembling with indescribable fear.

The red sun came and shone upon many pale faces at Boonesborough. The firing ceased on both sides.

"You observe, men," said Boone, "that the Indians fire indiscriminately at our fort and waste much powder and lead; but we must not follow their example, for ammunition is worth much more to us than gold or silver; it is more precious than diamond dust. Fire only when you see a mark, and the noisy, bragging rascals will soon keep at a distance. I know well the worth of ammunition, for I passed weary months alone in this wilderness, while my brother performed a long and dangerous journey to North Carolina for a fresh supply. The time, during his absence, often hung heavily on my hands. I was surrounded by those who continually sought my life, and for purposes of safety changed my camping ground every night. You may depend upon it, I wasted no powder during that period. That experience taught me a lesson of prudence I shall never forget."

"I want to speak a word to you privately," said Logston, making signs to the captain to follow him.

"I think I've seen that French feller," added Joel, when the two had gone a little apart, out of hearing of their companions.

"What makes you think so?" asked the other.

"Because I saw a face that looked like his, notwithstanding the paint that had been laid on it. I was loading my rifle at the time, and afore I got ready to fire he had disappeared. So you can rely on it, he's among the critters, helpin' them on in their mischief."

"It does not seem possible, at first thought, that a man who has received so much kindness at our hands, can be so villanously ungrateful and treacherous; and yet I am disposed to believe you are not mistaken," replied the forester.

"And to think that he should pretend to set his heart on such a girl as Rosalthe Alston," added Joel.

"Watch for him, Logston, and if you can see him or any one that looks like him, be sure to cover him with your rifle," said Boone.

"I'll do it! may I be trodden to death by wild buffaloes if I don't!" exclaimed Joel, with energy.

The latter and the captain were soon joined by others, and a very important subject was discussed. As it was evident that the station would be besieged, it was necessary that they should be supplied with water. The spring from which they obtained this indispensible fluid was situated in the rear of

the fortifications, at the foot of the eminence upon which they were built. There was a well-beaten path leading to the spring, and the same for a long distance was surrounded by rank grass and weeds, in which they had good reason to suppose a large body of Indians had secreted themselves. To do without water was out of the question, and all agreed that it must, in some manner, be procured before the enemy made another attack.

"I have studied the habits of the savages for many years," observed Mr. Fleming, "and I believe that I know something of their cunning. If our men go for water they will surely be fired upon, and many of of them must inevitably be slain."

"And it appears to me that is not all that is intended," returned the captain. "They would, if possible, cut off their return to the fort."

"There is something more than that to be considered," remarked young Reynolds. "If any considerable number of us go out, they will make a desperate effort to enter before the gates are closed."

"While Reynolds was speaking, a brisk firing was commenced on that side of the station further from the spring.

"You speak wisely, young man," said Boone, quickly. "The firing that has now commenced is only to attract our attention from the true point of attack. The gates must not be opened, for it is evident that they are expecting that we naturally enough feel desirous of obtaining a supply of water from the spring, and have taken measures accordingly."

"I think that female wit can free you from this dilemma," said Matilda Fleming, with blushing cheeks. "We women cannot do so much in battle as you, because nature has given us an organization less strong; therefore our lives, at this time, are not worth so much as yours; it shall be our duty, then, to go to the spring and procure water. If we go calmly, they will naturally conclude that their ambuscade is not discovered, and will not fire, but wait, thinking that the next time some of the men will take our places, seeing that we were not molested."

"Yes, we will go!" exclaimed Elizabeth Boone and Eliza Ballard.

"You are brave gals," said Joel Logston.

"The plan is a good and judicious one," observed Mrs. Boone, and Mrs. Fleming, and all the females said the same.

After many objections were made by the men successfully overruled by the women, the plan was put into operation. In a short time the latter appeared with pails, resolved to sacrifice themselves, if the occasion demanded, for those they loved. The gates were opened by unwilling hands, the devoted and brave women passed out, and the gallant defenders of Boonesborough gazed after them with intense anxiety, as they descended the slope and advanced with unfaltering footsteps towards the spring, near which they were sure scores of their deadly foes lay concealed.

It was a moment fraught with deep and painful interest. It was observed that Joel Logston kept his eyes fixed upon the comely figure of Eliza Ballard, and watched her retreating form with pale cheeks and ill-concealed anxiety.

"I can guess your thoughts, Joel," said Daniel Boone, in a low voice. "You are wishing that you could interpose your own person between her and the deadly shafts of the lurking enemy."

"Right, sir, right!" exclaimed Logston, grasping the captain's hand. "Heaven knows I would risk my life for her without a single fear."

When Joel had ceased speaking, the parties had reached the spot where the cool waters gushed up from the earth, and sparkled pleasantly in the morning sun.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCOUT AND INNIS MCKEE—"SOMETHING BREAKS."

Ballard, after parting with Kenton and Norwood, struck out into the forest in a south-eastern direction, leaving the Kentucky River a little to the left. The scout was in ill-humor, for he was fully persuaded in his own mind that Allan was a person to disarrange and foil the most skillfully devised plans that experienced woodcraft could contrive for the rescue of the maiden.

"He's a green hand," he muttered to himself. "He's a stumblin' block in my way. I don't want to be in such company; I want men who have walked up and down this great country as I have, when there was a painted cre'tur' behind every bush, and no man could safely say his life was his own for the next three seconds. He wont never git back to Boonesborough with a whole skin.

Sumthin' in the course of natur' will naterally break."

Having arrived at this sage, and to him self-evident conclusion, the scout paused to deliberate on the object of his present mission, and the ways and means most likely to ensure success. In a short time he moved on again with a more assured step, having, no doubt, decided upon some particular course of action. He traversed beautiful woodlands, lying in uniform and graceful swells, where the wild grape-vines mounted gigantic trees, where innumerable flowers breathed their perfume to the balmy air.

He heard the hum of busy bees luxuriating among countless petals redolent with sweetness, and the cheerful songs of a great multitude of birds. The agreeable aspect of all he saw, and the harmony of all he heard, chased away the moroseness of the scout. Born as he had been in a new country, and passing the larger portion of his life beneath the open heavens, he had become in his simple way a devoted lover of nature. Ill-humor gave place to tranquil enjoyment, and he moved along in a happier and better frame of mind.

He now left the rolling lands, and entered a rougher region which stretched away to the base of some high hills. It was near the hour of sunset when Ballard reached the hills; and the great and beneficent dispenser of light and heat was darting his departing rays upon their wood-crowned summits. The forester was thirsty, and looked about for water. Hearing the murmur of a rivulet, he advanced in that direction and discovered a small stream gushing from the hills.

Thinking to find cooler and more refreshing waters nearer the source of the spring, he followed the streamlet. He soon perceived that it flowed from one of the highest of the range of hills, the sides of which were nearly perpendicular. As the scout threw himself down to drink, he observed that the ground about the spot seemed considerably trodden. He instantly examined this appearance more particularly, and was convinced that human feet had recently pressed the soil; and not merely on one or two occasions, but so often that a tolerably well-defined path was discernible. Having satisfied his thirst, Ballard discovered that the water gushed from an open space in the hill-side, a few steps beyond, and the spot was overgrown with grape-vines and hazel, while the slight footpath tended in that direction and was lost.

The scout approached the place, and pulling away the vines perceived, much to his surprise, the mouth of a small cave. Having gazed into the dark and forbidding aperture until his eyes had become in some measure accustomed to the darkness, he entered the subterranean abode—for it was quite certain that it was now inhabited, or had recently been. He groped his way along until he reached a place where he could stand erect. He was straining his powers of vision to the utmost, in order to see what was still beyond him, when he was prostrated by a heavy blow upon his head.

Before the scout had fairly recovered his senses, his hands and feet were securely bound.

"Come in," said a gruff voice. "I've got him where he can't do no mischief. Come in and kindle a fire, and let us see who we've caught."

Ballard turned his eyes towards the mouth of the cave, and saw two females glide in. They passed the spot where he was lying, and one of them lighted a pile of faggots that had been previously prepared, and heaped against a large rock (which formed the entire side and roof of the cave) with a cleft at the top which allowed the smoke to pass out.

The flames leaped up cheerfully, and flung a ruddy glare of light upon the features of the scout. The individual who had knocked him down and bound him, stood by like a surly mastiff, who, having conquered his adversary, stands by to give him an additional shake, if necessary.

"It's Ballard!" he exclaimed, when the scout's features were revealed by the firelight.

"You shouldn't knock a man down without an introduction," said the spy, coolly.

"So you've tracked me at last," said the man.

"I reckon I have," returned the scout, "and would like to track my way back again."

"You've made the last tracks you'll ever make!" cried the other, fiercely.

"I knew something would break," answered Ballard.

"You've got a broken head already, and it's my opinion you'll get a broken neck before you get through with this business," retorted the man.

"I have a notion your name is McKee, the bosom friend of that villanous piece

of human natur' called Silas Girty," said the scout.

"Draw it mild, or I may make an end of you on the spot," answered McKee savagely. "You have always been a spy on our movements, and your death has been resolved on for a long time. Girty and I have been after you for many weeks."

"Thank ye," said Ballard.

"Girty will be here in the morning," resumed McKee.

"I should rather have seen him yesterday morning," observed the scout, honestly.

"No doubt—no doubt!" returned McKee, with a sinister grin.

Ballard felt little inclination to continue a conversation so uninteresting, and accordingly turned his attention towards the two females. One of the females, and the elder of the two, was obviously of the Indian race, while the younger was evidently her daughter. Both were clad in the costume of savage life. The younger was about eighteen years of age, and though a half-breed, remarkably handsome. The scout watched her movements with increasing interest, for he fancied he read indications of pity and sympathy in her countenance; while her dark eyes and rosy cheeks made a deep impression on his bachelor heart.

During the preparation of the evening meal, he did not cease to follow her every motion with his eyes. McKee's wife appeared less lovely in the estimation of the scout; for she manifested less compassion for his unfortunate condition, and had numbered twice as many years as the former.

When McKee had finished his supper (which he ate in sullen silence), Ballard was removed to another portion of the cavern, and additional means of security made use of. Having accomplished this business satisfactorily, the renegade whispered a few words to his wife, and left the place.

"Now," thought Ballard, "is my time to devise some method of escape. If McKee brings Silas Girty here, I shall certainly be killed; so I must see what can be done."

The scout had in his pocket a bottle of pretty good whiskey—a beverage of which the Indians were exceedingly fond—and he resolved to try its virtues upon Mrs. McKee. He instantly informed her of the fact that a bottle of strong-water was deposited in the pocket of his hunting shirt.

This information seemed to have a very cheerful effect upon the tawny spouse, and she proceeded with considerable alacrity to take the coveted treasure from the woodsman's pocket.

The daughter said nothing, nor indicated by word or look any interest in the matter. She sat by the fire absorbed in thought, and Ballard began to fear that she had entirely forgotten that such a person as himself was in the vicinity, or had an existence anywhere. But, despite all the indifference of the fair half-breed, he could not help feeling attracted towards her.

"Too pretty—too pretty!" he said to himself, "to be in such a place as this, and surrounded by such influences."

Meantime Mrs. McKee tasted the whiskey, and liked it so well that she tasted again, repeating the operation with marvelous alacrity and every sign of enjoyment. This was just what Ballard had anticipated, and he regarded her persevering efforts to drain the bottle with much interest; for if she became helplessly intoxicated, he doubted not but he could prevail on the daughter to assist him.

Mrs. McKee soon grew talkative, and offered the young woman some of the beverage; but she refused it with strong manifestations of repugnance, which raised her greatly in the scout's estimation. Ballard's greatest fear was, that McKee would return before the whiskey had wrought its effects; and he turned his eyes with anxiety towards the entrance of the subterranean abode.

Mrs. McKee's utterances grew thick, and her conversation incoherent. She finally sunk upon the earthen floor, completely overpowered, and soon her heavy respiration gave evidence that she was unconscious.

"Innis," said the scout, for he had heard her called by that name, "don't you think it would look better for me to be up and walking about, than to be here?"

The maiden glanced towards her mother, but made no reply.

"It's hard to die at my time of life," added Ballard.

Innis, sighing, fixed her gaze upon the fire.

"I've got a mother and sister at Boonesborough," continued the scout.

"Perhaps they'll weep for you," replied Innis.

"But I'd rather save them the trouble," he rejoined.

"What have you done to offend my father?" asked Innis.

"I reckon I haven't done anything to offend an honest man," said the scout.

"Why did you come here?" asked the girl.

"I blundered in by mere accident. One of our young women has been stole away by the Ingins. I was tryin' to find her when I stumbled into this curious place. You know what happened to me arter that. I can't be called no great friend to your father, because he and Silas Girty stir up the Shawnees, Cherokees and Wyandots against the new settlements; and they kill our young men and carry off our maidens."

"They do wrong—they do wrong!" exclaimed Innis, clasping her hands.

and persuade your father to be an honest man," answered the scout, kindly.

"I must set you at liberty before my father comes," she added.

"God bless you?" said the scout.

Innis McKee approached Ballard, and with her father's hunting-knife severed his bonds, and he sprang lightly to his feet.

"There is your rifle," said his benefactress.

"I see it; but I don't feel as though I could go without sayin' a few words that seem to be pressin' up from my heart. You

INNIS MC KEE RELEASING THE CAPTIVE SCOUT.

"Yes, pretty Innis, they do wrong," said Ballard.

"I have often told them so," returned the girl.

"And you did right," added the scout.

"Girty is a bad man," continued Innis.

"He's a renegade!" returned the scout.

"I am very unhappy," added the maiden. "I know that the young women at Boonesborough and the other stations know more than I do. They have friends to care for and instruct them, while I lead this ignorant and half savage life."

"You must go to Boonesborough and live, have saved my life, and I thank you for it," returned the forester, with much feeling.

"You had better hurry away," said Innis

"I've been lookin' at you for a good while, as you sat by the fire, so pensive and melancholy-like, and somehow or other I took a fancy to you," added the scout, with some hesitancy of manner.

"I'm such a half savage that I don't see how anybody living could be pleased with me," replied Innis, weeping violently.

"If anybody else should dare to call you a half savage, I reckon they'd never do it again in my hearing." returned Ballard, em-

phatically. "The fact is, you suit me exactly, and I hope you'll excuse me for sayin' so. You see I'm a plain-speakin' man, and I say what I mean and mean honest. I don't want to make you blush, nor be forrad on short acquaintance; but if you shouldn't take a likin' to me, I'm sure that in the course of natur' somethin' will break."

The bold scout laid his hand on his heart, as if to intimate that the "somethin'" which might be expected to "break," was in that particular locality.

"Do go, Mr. Ballard, for I don't feel as though I ought to stand talking with you here. It's not likely we shall meet again," said Innis.

"I should feel very sorry if I thought so, because I shan't never forget your handsome face. I shall think about you when I'm in the wilderness all alone; in the daytime, when the sun is shinin' on the flowers, and in the night-time, when the moon and stars are lookin' down on my lonely campin' ground. You may think this sounds kind o' strange and wild-like, seein' as we never met afore, but such things has happened often, as I have read in books."

"I should like to hear you speak in such a pleasant way if you wasn't in so much danger; but I had rather you would go, as my father may return at any moment, and Girty may perhaps come with him," resumed Innis.

"I will go, but I shall come to see you again," said Ballard, moving towards the open air. The scout paused, and turned once more towards his benefactress.

"I hope this affair won't get you into any trouble," he added, thoughtfully.

"Don't think of me; I shall do very well," returned Innis, hastily.

"If you should ever want a protector, or feel the need of a friend, let me know it, and I'll go through fire and water to serve you," he added. And invoking a hearty blessing upon Innis McKee, he glided quietly out of the cavern, and the cool free air of heaven kissed his brow.

As he hurried from the hills, he forgot the dull ache occasioned by the blow upon his head, and thought only of the renegade's daughter, whose beauty had quite conquered him. He resolved to seek her again at the earliest opportunity, and do all in his power to make a favorable impression upon her young heart.

However incongruous it may appear to the reader, it is true that the scout muttered to himself as he moved along, "that he knew when he set out something would certainly break." And this reflection seemed a source of great comfort to the woodsman, for it deepened his faith in the strength and acuteness of his intuitions.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRAIL.

Allan Norwood raised Simon Kenton from the ground, and discovered that blood was flowing from the sleeve of his hunting shirt. He instantly bared the left arm, and found that a ball had lodged in it just below the left shoulder. He then proceeded to bind his handkerchief tightly about the limb, in order to stop the profuse hemorrhage. Kenton soon revived, and sturdily protested that the wound was a mere scratch, and that he should have no difficulty in going forward according to their original intentions. Allan suggested to him the propriety of returning to the station; but to that proposition he would by no means listen. He said that he had undertaken the enterprise with a full determination to carry it to a successful issue, and would persist in it as long as he felt able to follow a trail.

A fire was then kindled, and a choice piece of venison which they had brought with them, cooked for their evening meal. Kenton's wounded arm had ceased bleeding, and he professed to feel much refreshed, and in good spirits. He proposed that they should proceed towards a Cherokee village which was situated in a south-eastern direction. If Rosalthe had been carried there by any of the war parties, the greater portion of the distance was probably accomplished by water, which would effectually baffle pursuit in the ordinary way; consequently, to learn anything of Rosalthe, providing that she had been thus abducted, the chances of success would be greatest to take the nearest way to the village, and trust to circumstances and their own resources for the rest.

Allan and Kenton accordingly acted in agreement with this idea, and again resumed their way; and the moon coming up anon, lighted up their forest wanderings. Sometimes our hero felt hopeful, and at others depressed; sometimes his heart warmed with earnest zeal that could scarcely brook re-

straint, and caused him to quicken his steps to such a degree that his companion could with difficulty keep pace with him; and then again, the enterprise he had undertaken looked so unfavorable in all its aspects, that he was ready to throw himself upon the earth in despair.

Rosalthe! how musically the name sounded in his ears. He loved to hear it everywhere pronounced in the rough tones of the forester. Who is so bold as to affirm that there is not music in a name? Whose heart has not been stirred by the combination of certain letters, forming a single word? Who will not confess to the soft impeachment? Those who do not are unlike the bold Allan, for he acknowledged it all in his thoughts.

Before morning Norwood perceived that his companion began to falter; his foot pressed the soil less firmly; he gave evident signs of exhaustion, and his breathing grew hurried. His haggard features and toilsome tread checked the impatience, and excited the pity of Allan.

"This is not right!" he exclaimed, stopping suddenly, "You are exerting yourself beyond your strength."

"I believe," said Kenton, faintly, "that the blood has started again."

Norwood hastened to examine the wound, and found that the handkerchief had been displaced by his exertions in walking, and the bleeding had commenced anew, and was very profuse. The handkerchief was again adjusted, and they were on the point of moving on, when the bark of a dog attracted their attention. Kenton leaped to his feet, and laying his right hand heavily upon Allan's shoulder, said, in a tone that sent the blood upon its way with a quicker impulse:—

"That is an Indian dog; we are pursued."

For a moment the two young men looked at each other in silence.

"What shall we do?" asked Allan, at length.

"Nothing remains for us but to run for our lives, and break the trail," replied Kenton.

"Let us lose no time, then. I fear more for you than for myself; your strength may fail on account of that unfortunate wound."

"When my strength fails, then you must leave me to my fate," said Kenton, calmly.

"Never, while I have life!" said his companion. "It were shame indeed for me to abandon a brave man in the hour of his most pressing need. May Heaven save me from that heinous sin!"

"It often happens thus; the disabled are often left to their fate in cases of disastrous retreats," answered Kenton.

"Yes; such things have transpired in numberless instances; but I hope never to be a witness of such a misfortune," replied Allan.

"The soil is hardest away in that direction; so let us on, and leave the red fiends behind, if possible," added the other.

The young men now exerted their utmost strength to evade their savage pursuers, but occasionally the bark of a dog admonished them that they were still unsuccessful.

"We never can elude them while that dog is after us," said Kenton, at length.

"That's my own impression," answered Allan.

"We must wait till he comes up, and shoot him."

"That will be a dangerous experiment, for the Indians are probably not far behind him."

"It's our only chance; so you may go on. I will stop and despatch him."

"Rather reverse that proposition, for I am in better condition than you."

But Kenton would not change his resolution, and Norwood protested that he would not leave his side. Both the parties stood perfectly still, and the dog came on at full speed.

"I will stop his barking," observed Allan, cocking his rifle.

"Take good aim," said Kenton, anxiously.

"Be calm; I am always self-possessed in the hour of danger. I am called a good shot, also."

Our hero took deliberate aim and fired at the dog; he fell, and they heard a rustling among the leaves, produced by his death struggles.

"'Twas coolly done," remarked Kenton. "And now let us change our course once more. When you find strong grape-vines that have climbed tall trees, lay hold of them and swing yourself forward as far as possible, in order to break the trail. I will set the example."

They had gone but a short distance from the spot, before an opportunity offered to try this experiment. Kenton grasped the vine with both hands, as well as his wounded arm would permit, and swung himself forward a distance of several yards, and strik-

ing upon very rocky soil, his feet left no perceptible imprint. Allan followed his example, with similar results, and then both ran for life, for they heard the savages approaching.

All the various artifices to baffle pursuit were resorted to; but when the parties paused, ready to fall down with exhaustion, the sound of the savage horde came faintly to their ears through the intervening distance.

"I cannot continue this much longer," said Kenton. "My strength is failing fast."

Norwood entreated him to do his best, and they continued their efforts; but with no better success.

Kenton then sat down upon the ground, and declared that he was unable to go any further.

"Go on," he said, with extraordinary composure; "you may yet escape; but if you try to save me, both will perish. I will await here the coming of the Indians. My rifle and pistols are loaded, and I shall kill the first that appears. Yes, I shall have the pleasure of three good shots before I die."

Without making any reply, Allan placed his ear to the earth, and listened with breathless interest. He heard approaching steps, and knew the elastic, bounding tread of the red men. He grasped his rifle firmly, stood a moment in thought, and looked earnestly at his friend.

"I beg of you, Mr. Norwood, to leave me; there is yet time for you to elude these ferocious, savage hounds. I shall perish, but I have always expected to die in some such way; I made up my mind to it long ago. If you should live to see Lizzie Boone, tell her that—that I thought of her even when death was staring me in the face."

"My dear Kenton!" exclaimed Allan, "I would not desert so bold and heroic a comrade for a thousand worlds; no, not to save my life. Trust to me, and we will both escape, or fall side by side. My plan is formed; proceed as fast as you are able, and I will soon overtake you."

"But this generosity is madness; by giving your life to yonder yelling demons, you will not prolong mine five minutes—scarcely as many seconds!" cried Kenton.

"I do not value existence so lightly that I am willing to throw it away without a chance of success. So go forward, in Heaven's name!" said Allan.

"I will," replied Kenton, sorrowfully. "We may never meet again; farewell!"

With tearful eyes, and heart melted and subdued, the forester arose to his feet, and making a desperate effort, staggered on with a speed that surprised Norwood. The latter watched his lessening figure until he could no longer be seen, and then threw himself upon the ground among the rank shrubbery. He laid his rifle beside him, and drew his hunting-knife from his belt. The light, bounding footsteps which he had heard, came more distinctly to his anxious ears. He summoned all his constitutional coolness and courage to his aid. He had risked his life upon the correctness or incorrectness of a single idea.

By the sounds which he had heard, he judged that one of the pursuers was far in advance of all the rest. If that conclusion was just, he could wait for the foremost savage to come up, and then slay him on the spot. In the event that there should prove to be more than one, it would only remain for him to do the best he could, and leave all to the Great Disposer of events.

To the acute senses of the hunter, still more palpably came the vibrations of the agile steps. Allan's eyes were turned with intense interest towards the spot where a painted face, or faces, were expected to papear. One moment more of breathless expectation, and a gigantic Indian sprang into view. He was darting onward like a bloodhound, panting with exertion. In his right hand he held his gun, and his eyes were fixed with fearful eagerness upon the trail, casting occasionally keen and sweeping glances into the forest beyond.

He came on; he was flying past the spot where the bold hunter lay. The latter bounded up, leaping upon the savage like a young lion—the hunting-knife flashed in the first faint beams of the morning, and then sank deep in the red-man's breast. A hollow groan was given to the gentle winds, and the pursuer had run his race. The athletic limbs quivered an instant, and all was still again—not a footstep was heard in the wide woodlands.

Allan thrust the crimson blade into its sheath, cast one look at the quiet outlines of the body, and then left the spot with confident and assured, yet hasty tread. He overtook Kenton, who was dragging his exhausted frame along with indomitable energy and perseverance. When he heard steps behind him, he turned about and cocked his rifle,

thinking the savages were upon him; but saw instead the resolute face of our hero.

"My dear Norwood!" he cried, while large tears rolled down his sunburnt cheeks, "I never expected to see you again on earth. What have you done?"

"I have slain the leader of the pursuit; I have sent him on the eternal trail that no warrior ever retraced."

"You have done well; the next half-hour will decide this question of life or death," returned Kenton.

"I know it; now lean on me, and we will baffle them yet. Here is a brook; we will walk in it—it may break the trail."

By Norwood's help Kenton was able to proceed. Every ruse was resorted to; they doubled on their own tracks; they changed their direction many times; and when the sun was an hour high, no sound of pursuit could be heard, and they began to hope that the savages were at fault, or had abandoned the enterprise altogether.

It was now imperatively necessary that Kenton should rest. While looking for a place suitable to that object, they discovered an Indian lodge, which proved to be uninhabited. Of this they immediately took possession. To the surprise of both parties, they perceived that a fire had recently been kindled there, and several articles of comfort were left, among which were several pieces of venison, some mats, a few undressed deer-skins, etc.

Allan hailed this discovery as a singular piece of good fortune, and instantly set himself at work to minister properly to the wants of his friend. He dressed his wound as well as he could, searched for a spring, brought him cool and refreshing water, and then arranged the mats and deer-skins, and prevailed upon him to lie down and endeavor to recruit his exhausted energies.

Kenton complied, making efforts during the time to induce Norwood to leave him there, and put a safer distance between himself and the Indians, who might possibly be on their trail.

Our hero was, of course, deaf to these suggestions; and in a short time had the pleasure of seeing his comrade sink into a deep and tranquil sleep. He then kindled a fire, and moving about softly, like a careful nurse, commenced cooking as well as the case would admit, some of the venison so providentially provided.

While Allan was engaged in this manner, a human figure darkened the lodge door. The unexpected visitor was an Indian maiden. When she beheld our hero, she drew back with an exclamation of surprise.

"Come in," said Allan, perceiving she was in doubt.

The tones of the young hunter's voice seemed to re-assure her, and she advanced a few steps, into the lodge.

"What does the pale-face seek here?" she asked, with a dignified air.

"I don't know that it would be proper to make you my confidante," replied Allan, with a smile.

"Confidence sometimes makes friends," added the Indian girl, in excellent English, though somewhat lofily.

"I know it, daughter of the red-man," answered Norwood.

The maiden made no rejoinder, but stood with her large, dreamy eyes fixed upon the ground.

"Are any of your people with you?" asked Allan.

"I am alone; are you afraid?" replied the maiden.

"Not of you, certainly," said Norwood with a smile.

"Why are you so near our village?" inquired Star-Light, for it was she.

"A young maiden has disappeared from the station on the Kentucky River," rejoined our hero, resolving to trust her with the object of his mission.

"Is that all?" asked Star-Light.

"Is not that enough?" returned Allan.

"Such things often happen; but why do you seek her in this direction? Do you lay this new sin at the door of the Cherokee? Is the red-face always at fault? Did the Great Spirit make them a nation of thieves?"

"I said not so; but we seek that which is lost in all places where there is a possibility of its being found. Is it not so?"

"*Wabuma!*" exclaimed Star-Light, energetically. "Know that the White-Cloud is safe; she will return again to Boonesborough before the next moon. Go back and tell her friends so."

"What strange thing is this you say?" cried Allan.

"Am I speaking to the winds, that you do not understand? Are my words so idle that they do not interest you? I said that the white maiden was safe," rejoined Star-Light.

"Where is she? Let me see her—let me speak to her!" cried Allan.

"What is White-Cloud to you?" asked Star-Light, coldly, looking steadily at Allan.

"Oh, she is much! I think of her and dream of her!" exclaimed Norwood.

"And does she dream of you?" resumed Star-Light, in the same tone.

"Alas, no! She does not even know me.

"*Hooh!*" (an exclamation of contempt.) The pale-face has been drinking fire-water," said Star-Light.

"I am impatient to know more. If you really speak truly, lead me to Rosalthe," added Norwood.

"*Wa Wa!* I should lead you to your death. You would never return to the great fort to say that the pale maiden lives," returned Star-Light, emphatically.

"Rosalthe is a captive among your people—how then can she be safe?" asked the young man.

"That is known to me and not to you. I will tell no more," said Star-Light.

"You shall, by heavens!" cried Norwood, starting to his feet.

"The daughter of the proud Cherokee fears nothing. She is willing to make the friends of the White-Cloud glad by sending them word that she is safe; but should you torture her with fire she would tell no more," replied Star-Light, drawing up her person majestically.

The dignified and assured air of the Cherokee maiden, conjoined to her beauty of feature and form, arrested Allan in his purpose. He stood before her irresolute and embarrassed. Before he had recovered his self-possession, Star-Light had glided from the lodge, and disappeared in the forest.

CHAPTER XIV.

SCENE AT THE INDIAN VILLAGE.

We return to Rosalthe. She clasped her hands and looked imploringly at Otter-Lifter, who stood motionless in the path.

"What would Star-Light and her cousin of the Wyandots do?" asked the chief, coldly.

"White-Cloud and the maiden they call Star-Light do not like cruelty; they seek to save this pale-face captive from death," replied Wassahauza.

"And was not Otter-Lifter worthy of the confidence of Star-Light and White-Cloud?" replied the chief in a tone of mild reproach.

"Otter-Lifter of the red race of the Cherokees is humane; but this captive was not taken by a war party of his, and he might have feared to offend the young warriors who brought her away from Harrodsburgh," answered Star-Light.

"Wassahauza speaks of fear. When was Otter-Lifter afraid? When did he fail to raise his voice against cruelty? Who can say that he ever tortured a prisoner, or made war on women and children? Not a person living!" said the chief, with dignity.

"Then why does such a gentle-hearted leader stand still when his help is needed? Does he not see this trembling girl suffering the terrors of death! Has he not a hand to use, as well as a tongue to talk!" exclaimed Star-Light.

"The speech of Star-Light is bitter; she wounds the heart of the chieftain who is ready to die in her service," returned Otter-Lifter, mournfully.

"My fair young cousin means not to wrong her friend, the bold Otter-Lifter. She speaks thus because the danger is pressing," said Rosalthe.

The Cherokee chief gave Rosalthe a searching glance while she was speaking.

Fanny Harrod recovered her consciousness, and stood clinging to Star-Light and our heroine, awaiting with feelings which cannot be described the decision of her fate. Hope and fear struggled by turns in her bosom, and held her in the chains of suspense too dreadful to imagine. When Rosalthe had first seen her in the lodge, she had resigned herself with the calmness of despair to the doom which appeared inevitable; but since a ray of hope had reached her, the love of life had returned with all its legitimate power.

Miss Harrod was by no means a weak, irresolute character; but her position, it will be perceived, was one to try the strongest nerves; for there were but two sides to the momentous question. The dark side was unrelieved by a single gleam of sunshine—it was to return and meet death by a process from which the most firmly organized mind might shrink with a shiver of inexpressible horror; the other side of the subject was life and all its sweet enjoyments.

She fixed her burning eyes on the placid face of Otter-Lifter in silent agony of spirit; for she felt, and truly, that it was he who was to decide her fate. There was a short period in which no words were spoken. The captive read no emotions of pity in the features of the chief. He gave back her appealing

look with one apparently as impassive as hers had been earnest. A faint smile at length played over his lips; he spoke, and Fanny Harrod and Rosalthe bent forward to catch his words with breathless attention.

"This white maiden is," he said slowly, "this white maiden is"——

"Is what?" exclaimed Rosalthe, no longer able to control her intense anxiety.

"Is condemned to death," added the chief in the same tone.

"Heaven preserve my senses!" murmured Rosalthe to herself.

"Yes, the Pale-Lily has been condemned to death by the ordeal of fire."

"What!" cried Rosalthe, with quivering lip and trembling voice.

"*But she shall live!*" added Otter-Lifter.

"It is well," answered Star-Light, loftily.

"She shall live," repeated the chief, "even if the sum of her freedom be the life of Otter-Lifter. Yes, he will perish, before a single hair of her head shall be scathed by the devouring fire."

The chieftain paused, and turning more fully toward Star-Light, asked:—

"Is it enough?"

"It is enough," replied the Indian girl.

"This way," continued Otter-Lifter. The latter moved on, and the three maidens followed him without a question. Leaving the little village, he led the way to the deep and dark forest, through the umbrage of which the pale moonlight with difficulty crept. He stopped at length a few hundred yards from the encampment.

"Stay here," he said, "till I return," and immediately left them.

Rosalthe was now about to reveal herself to Miss Harrod, but Star-Light sternly bade her be silent.

"If you would save her, be silent," she said.

Though this was a restraint which she could not bear without much effort, she felt the necessity of obedience. Fanny Harrod was an intimate and valued friend, and she longed to throw herself into her arms and tell her all; but that could not be thought of under the circumstances in which she was placed.

Miss Harrod, who now began to feel somewhat assured of escape, felt a strong desire to know who the delicate Indian girl was who had embraced her and called her by name.

The time of Otter-Lifter's absence seemed long indeed to the expectant captive. A thousand fears and wild conjectures had birth in her mind. Perhaps the chief had been detected in his purpose, and the plan had failed. It was possible that he had not sufficient influence among the other chiefs and warriors to save her, and innumerable other fancies of this kind passed in quick succession through her mind to revive her terrors.

Star-Light appeared to fathom her thought, and said:—

"He will not fail; he never breaks his word."

These brief sentences cheered the heart of Miss Harrod.

After the lapse of half an hour steps were heard approaching. Fanny and Rosalthe simultaneously uttered a cry of surprise and alarm; for, instead of seeing Otter-Lifter, they beheld half a dozen warriors mounted upon horses. Star-Light remained calm and undisturbed.

"Peace! peace, foolish maidens! Otter-Lifter is with them!" she exclaimed.

Rosalthe looked again at the advancing Indians and beheld the chief in the midst of them, leading a horse. She kissed Miss Harrod's pale cheeks, and wept for joy. Without speaking, Otter-Lifter placed Miss Harrod upon the animal which had been provided for that purpose. The chief then turned to the young men.

"Conduct this maiden to Harrodsburgh," he said, in a voice of command. "Otter-Lifter has pledged his word that she shall live and return to her friends. Go; and remember that your lives shall answer for hers if harm befall her."

"Come here, Star-Light," said Fanny, in a subdued voice. The proud Indian girl stepped to her side, and Miss Harrod, bending forward, imprinted a kiss upon her lofty forehead. "It is all I can give you," she added.

Star-Light smiled faintly, and seemed to look lovingly at the young girl. For a moment her haughty beauty was softened into a mildness almost angelic. Standing as she did, with the dim rays of the moon shining on her upturned face, she caused Rosalthe's thoughts to wander to that unkown period far back in forgotten years of the past, when "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair."

"It is well that you have been called Star-Light, for I behold reflected from your star-

ry eyes serenest rays of mercy and truth!" said Miss Harrod, enthusiastically.

Wassahauza gazed more fixedly at Fanny, and her expression became more benignly soft.

Otter-Lifter gazed at her with a kind of mute idolatry discernible in his eloquent eyes, and then turned abruptly from the scene, as if afraid to trust himself longer.

Star-Light moved slowly away, and Rosalthe took Miss Harrod's hand. When the latter stooped to kiss her forehead, she half-formed the resolution to whisper her name; but a single glance at the changed and gentle expression of Star-Light made her reject the idea; and in an instant Fanny and her escort were moving toward Harrodsburgh.

Rosalthe threw her arms about Star-Light and embraced her tenderly; all her unfavorable impressions were completely removed by the recent scene.

This spontaneous act of friendship the Cherokee maiden neither repelled nor encouraged, but suffered it as a statue of marble might receive the same indications of gratitude. The parties returned to the village, Otter-Lifter leading the way in silence.

It was on the ensuing morning that Star-Light visited the lodge where the interview already mentioned took place between her and Allan Norwood.

There was a great commotion at the village when it was known that Fanny Harrod had escaped. A council was immediately called to see what should be done. While they were gravely smoking the pipe, as an indispensable preliminary, Otter-Lifter appeared among them. One warrior arose and advised that the warriors be punished who had been appointed to watch over the captive, which duty they had not faithfully performed. Another recommended that a small war-party be instantly despatched in pursuit of the captive.

A young chief next arose, and said that so far as he could learn, the young woman had been liberated by some man of influence among them; for, upon examining the adjacent forest, he had discovered a fresh trail, produced by some half dozen mounted men. Moreover, some of their young braves were missing, and it would therefore seem as if they had been sent to conduct the young woman back to Harrodsburgh. He hoped the wise chiefs would examine the matter, and see who was the guilty party.

During this speech murmurs of applause were heard from every portion of the council-lodge. When the fiery chief had ceased speaking, and resumed his seat, Otter-Lifter arose calmly to his feet, and looked deliberately around upon the faces of the assembled chiefs and warriors.

The eyes of every chief in the council were fastened upon him. At length, gathering up his majestic form to its full height, in a calm, impressive voice, he deliberately gave utterance to his thoughts:—

"Our nation," he said, slowly, "in the past was a great and powerful one; its warriors were as numerous as the trees in the forest, and its young maidens were as plentiful and as fair as the flowers. The glory of the Cherokee is passing away; their numbers have diminished—their power is being broken. They could once make war alone, and feel assured of victory; but now they are obliged to seek for allies among other nations! Why is this? Why are the Cherokees and other red races of men fading away from the earth? Why do they not increase in numbers until they are like the rocks and mountains that cannot be moved? I will answer, and my words shall be uttered in wisdom. The Great Spirit is angry with his red children because of their cruelties! He hides his face from them because they have slain helpless children, and tortured men and women with fire. The whole human race is but one great family, of which the Great Spirit is the father. He looks down upon his red children, and perceives that they are cruel—that they kill the innocent, and torture the young and fair; and in his displeasure he will smite them until the arm of their strength is fully broken, and they shall not be able to make war any more.

"This is the curse that hangs over the red sons of the forest; this is the rod that will humble the Cherokee to the dust. Let us then learn wisdom from the past, and study to be merciful as well as brave. When we have learned to conquer by our generosity as well as by our arms, then we shall be indeed irresistible. I have never loved cruelty; I have never slain women and children; I have never put my prisoners to the torture. My soul scorns to do so; it is unworthy of men, and it is a custom destined to pass away.

"It was my hand that liberated the young white woman. I rejoice that I did so, because it is a deed that will give me pleasure whenever I think of it. I sent the Pale-Lily

under an escort of my warriors; and by this time she is far beyond pursuit. If these wise chiefs and these brave warriors are angry, let them turn their displeasure on me. I am strong, and can die like a man; but she was a weak young girl, whom it was our duty, as brave men, to protect, and not to inhumanly torture. I have spoken."

Otter-Lifter sat down, and there was a deep silence among the chiefs and warriors. At length a chief who had more than reached the period allotted to human life—threescore years and ten—arose and said, in a voice of deep solemnity:—

"The young chief has uttered words that have reached my heart. The spirit of *Moncdo* rests upon the young man; he is worthy to be a chieftain among the red children of the Cherokees. I shall pass away, and the grave will hide me; but he will live to be great, and his name will be known among the nations. Young warriors and chiefs, imitate the bright example of Otter-Lifter; it is the advice of an old man whose way is towards the receptacle of death, and to whose eyes the scenes of the happy hunting-grounds already open."

The old man took his seat, and the assembled warriors were deeply affected. The current of opinion was changed. The council broke up; the warriors and chiefs pressed around Otter-Lifter to shake hands with him and speak some words of applause; for their noble nature had been touched, and the man "who cared only for his word, his rifle, and his honor," was never so popular among his people as then. It is thus that a noble act frequently raises the actor in the estimation of those, whom, in all human judgment, it would have deeply offended.

About the same time that the above scene was transpiring, Star-Light and White-Cloud were walking in the forest, upon the margin of the Indian village.

"I have seen one of your people," said Star-Light.

"Where?" asked Rosalthe, eagerly.

"Near," returned the Cherokee girl.

"Who was it?" returned our heroine, looking anxiously at her companion.

"A young man, and he was seeking you."

"Describe him," said Rosalthe.

"He was tall and handsome, with black hair and eyes," returned Star-Light.

"Did you speak to him?"

"I did," returned the other.

"Did you ask him his name?" rejoined Rosalthe, with an earnestness that she made no attempt to render less apparent.

"I cared nothing for his name; but I told him to go back to Boonesborough and tell your friends you were safe, and would be with them before another moon."

"I thank you for that," exclaimed Rosalthe.

Before the Indian girl had time to reply, a rapid footstep was heard, and Allan Norwood stood before the maidens. The suddenness of his appearance caused Rosalthe to recoil a few paces, but Star-Light remained unmoved.

"What brings you here? Have you worn your scalp so long that you have got tired of it, and wish to lose it?" asked Star-Light.

"I have come to seek the maiden I spoke of; and I will never go back till I know what her situation is, and I have some proof that you have told me the truth," replied Allan.

"I never speak falsely; it is the pale-faces that lie!" she replied, with dignity.

"I demand proof!" returned Norwood.

"Again I ask, what is the young woman to you?" said the Indian girl.

"She is much—everything, and yet *nothing*," answered the young man, with much feeling.

"That is strange! 'much, everything, *nothing*,'—the young man has taken much strong-water," replied Star-Light, with a contemptuous curl of her lip.

While this conversation was going on, our heroine stood partly behind Star-Light, partially concealed by her person; and the effect of the young man's words may be imagined by the reader. She had no difficulty in recognizing him as the man who had interposed to save her from the impertinence of Le Bland. She stood like one spell-bound, and listened to his words with intense interest.

"She is *much* to me, because I love her; and *nothing* to me, because she does not know me, and reciprocate the sentiment which a single chance meeting called up," he added.

"You have met her then? Why did you not tell her this pleasant story?" resumed the Indian maiden.

"I did not even address her," said Norwood. "I gazed upon her beauty only a moment, and she passed away from my sight like a fair but delusive vision of the night."

"And you were so foolish that you could not forget her! When our young men love the maidens, they go and tell them."

"I have already told you that she disappeared suddenly," said Norwood.

"You will tell her this pretty tale if you find her?" added Star-Light, looking at him with a scornful smile.

"Not until she is safely restored to her friends," replied Allan, firmly.

"*Wabuma!* listen—let your ears be open—the White-Cloud already loves!"

The young hunter grew deadly pale, and pressed his hand to his forehead, as if it were stricken with a sudden pain.

"Rosalthe's fortitude gave way, and the intensity of her emotions overpowered her. With a faint cry she sank into the arms of Star-Light; and her perceptions grew so confused, that the past, present and future were mingled in chaotic confusion.

CHAPTER XV.

INNIS MCKEE—BOONESBOROUGH FORMALLY SUMMONED TO SURRENDER.

Innis McKee cast a lingering and anxious look at the scout, and then languidly resumed her seat by the dim and fitfully blazing fire. She reflected upon her own isolated and friendless condition. She wondered if the woodsman really felt an interest in such an untaught being as she felt herself to be. He had given utterance to sentiments that sounded most pleasantly to her ears; she had never had such words addressed to her before.

While she recalled his earnest manner and subdued tones, she felt herself less wretched, and encouraged a trembling hope of a brighter future, to come at some very distant day. The kindly words of the scout were like so many notes of music elicited from, what appeared to her the disordered harp of human society.

Innis mused on; but her truant thoughts finally reverted to a less agreeable theme. That her participation in the scout's escape would bring down upon her head her father's displeasure, was an object upon which she could feel no doubts. The name of Ballard was well known to the Indian tribes; his services as a spy had been such as to make him a dreaded enemy. McKee and Girty had good reasons to fear him; his extraordinary skill in learning their plans, and in evading pursuit, was a subject often talked of both by white and red-men. Associated with Ballard were several others (who had been selected by the settlers at Boonesborough for their courage and address), who acknowledged him as their head, and the director of their movements. Many plans had been laid by Girty, McKee and the Indians to entrap Ballard, but they had all failed; and accident or chance had at length accomplished what art and stratagem had failed to do.

However much Innis might dread the consequences, she did not for a moment regret what she had done. Restless and uneasy, she sat until the clouds were crimson with the dawning. Her mother awoke from her heavy slumber, and looked about the dim and gloomy cavern with a dull and vacant stare. She saw Innis sitting abstractedly and silently in the same place and in the same position where she had seen her on the previous evening, before her senses had been overpowered by the intoxicating beverage.

Her eyes wandered mechanically to the spot where Ballard had been left by her husband; her apathy was gone—she was fully awake.

"He is gone," said Innis, in answer to her startled and inquiring look.

"Gone where?" asked Mrs. McKee.

"Where he lists—he's free," replied Innis.

"And you"——

Mrs. McKee paused, as if afraid to finish the interrogatory.

"Assisted him," added the girl.

"*Minno Monedo!*" exclaimed Mrs. McKee.

No more was said by either party. Mrs. McKee produced a pipe, and exhaled column after column of smoke with Indian stoicism; and Innis endeavored to imitate her indifference.

"This mode of life does not please me, and I care but little what happens," said the latter, after a long interval of the deepest silence.

Mrs. McKee made no rejoinder, but buried herself in the fumes of the tobacco.

"The young women at Boonesborough lead a better life; they have been taught many things which I know nothing about. I shall go there and see them, perhaps."

Innis ceased speaking, for she heard her father's footsteps. The color forsook her face, and she instinctively pressed closer to

her mother's side. But the latter remained unmoved, and continued to emit dark wreaths of smoke.

As McKee drew nearer, however, and his steps resounded through the subterraneous dwelling, she threw down the pipe, and, folding her arms, calmly awaited the storm.

The renegade's eyes wandered quickly to the spot where he had left his victim.

"Where is he?" he asked, with a brow already clouded with wrath.

"Gone!" said Mrs. McKee, briefly.

"Gone!" he repeated, as if not fully comprehending such unwelcome intelligence. "When, and how?" he added, frowning.

"He's a brave man, and I gave him his liberty," replied the Indian spouse, in the same tones.

McKee's nostrils dilated with fury; he retreated a few steps and drew a pistol from his belt.

"Hold! stay your brutality!" exclaimed Innis, advancing until the leveled weapon covered her own person. "I alone am guilty of this deed. These hands released the scout while she slept."

Innis stood erect and firm before her father. She seemed like an accusing spirit sent to rebuke his wickedness. Her form did not tremble nor her voice falter.

"You!" said McKee; and returning the pistol to his belt, he raised his hand to strike.

"Beware!" cried his wife, in a threatening voice. "Be guarded in what you do. Remember that my father is a powerful chief among the Shawnees. I have only to lift my finger thus, and you will be swept from the face of the earth. Strike, if you dare!"

The man's arm sunk suddenly to his side. Fear for his own safety restrained him from acts of unmanly violence; but the demon was still raging within him.

"I am not master of my own wife and child," he muttered. "The one threatens me, and the other refuses to obey. All my plans are continually thwarted; I am always to be opposed by both mother and daughter. And so it is with the Girty affair. He is good enough for Innis; and in that matter I will have my way, in spite of resistance, threats, tears, or entreaties.

"You will never live to see Innis wedded to such a false knave," replied Mrs. McKee. "The moss will gather upon your bones first."

"It is for my interest, I tell you!" added McKee, violently.

"Hooh!" exclaimed his wife, contemptuously.

"He will soon own a great deal of land on the south side of the Kentucky River," he added.

"Just enough to bury his vile body in!" said Mrs. McKee.

"The Indians have promised it to him when Boonesborough, Harrodsburgh and Logan are leveled with the ground, and not a white settler has a foothold in this country," rejoined McKee.

"That time will never be," responded the Indian spouse. "The white stations will remain long after the red-men have lost their power. The descendants of Daniel Boone will build their houses in peace upon the graves of the Wyandots, the Shawnees, and the Cherokees.

"Accursed prophetess of evil! What will stop your dismal croakings? Your boding voice sounds in my ear when any great project is started that promises well to all eyes but yours. Even at this very moment Boonesborough may be in flames; for Girty and Du Quesne have already attacked it with hundreds of Indians."

"They'll fail, and go away like whipped dogs," responded Mrs. McKee.

"Croak on!" he said, angrily. "Croak on like an owl, and make yourself hoarse with your evil sayings, and see what it will amount to. Innis may make up her mind as soon as she pleases, to take Girty for better or for worse; for we've talked it all over atween us, and decided on it. So mark what I say, both of you."

With these words and a threatening glance at each, McKee arose and left the cavern.

"Can Boonesborough hold out against so many enemies?" asked Innis, after a pause.

"Yes; it always has been able to defend itself; why shouldn't it now?" replied her mother.

"The odds are so great against it, that it don't seem to me possible," resumed Innis.

"Long-Knife (Daniel Boone) is there, and he is a very great warrior. The station can't be taken while he's alive."

"But it may be taken by stratagem."

"Possibly," rejoined Mrs. McKee.

"In that event, what would be the fate of the women and children?" asked Innis, earnestly.

"Some would be slain on the spot; some

would be taken prisoners, and die on the long march; and others would perish by torture."

"It is dreadful to think of," continued Innis.

"We'll go up there and see what they're doing," said Mrs. McKee.

"To Boonesborough?" asked Innis.

The Indian mother replied in the affirmative. In a short time they both issued from the subterranean dwelling, and walked in the direction of the station referred to; and to which it is necessary that we should now return.

We left the bold pioneers awaiting with painful anxiety the return of the heroic women who had descended the slope to procure water from the spring. Eliza Ballard and Matilda Fleming were the two last of the party to fill their vessels with the sparkling fluid. While they were in the act of doing so, a half-dozen Wyandots, headed by Girty, rushed from the covert of the surrounding shrubbery, seized the two maidens, and in spite of their resistance and shrieks, bore them away before the men at the fort were scarcely aware that anything had happened.

Joel Logston was the first to realize fully the new misfortune that had befallen them.

"Come on, men! To the rescue!" he shouted, running to the open gate; while several young men followed him with equal impetuosity.

"Stop, I command you!" cried Daniel Boone, in tones distinctly heard above the confused tumult of sounds.

"Away, away!" exclaimed Joel, with terrible earnestness.

"Pause, Joel! reflect! listen to reason!

"I hear only the shrieks of those females," rejoined Logston. "I listen only to their calls for help. Let me go—I am desperate."

"And if you go with those ready to follow you, who will defend the fort? Who will protect those who yet remain to us, and have equal claims upon our exertions?" replied Captain Boone.

This view of the case seemed to have some weight with Logston, and he stood irresolute.

"And what would it avail if we should attempt a rescue?" said Reynolds, who had been among the first to follow Logston. "We can effect nothing against hundreds of savages; we should be cut down in a moment, and thus would our lives be thrown away, without accomplishing anything. Let us remain and trust the two maidens to the care of God."

By this time the rest of the women were at the gate, which was instantly opened for their admission. Strange to relate, they had, with one or two exceptions, maintained their self-possession to such an extent as to bring with them the several vessels of water which they had procured. While they were entering, a strong body of Indians, among which were several Frenchmen, tried to rush in after them; but a well directed fire from the fort forced them to retreat, with severe loss.

Joel Logston appeared unlike himself; he threw down his rifle and leaned against the stockades, gloomy, silent and dispirited. Daniel Boone attempted to comfort him.

"Look," he said, pointing towards the parents of the girls who had been captured, "they are striving to bear their grief with Christian fortitude. They are struggling with Roman firmness to master their paternal instincts; to listen to the admonitions of duty, and bow to the stern admonitions of providence. Be a man, Joel.

"They don't know what I know," replied Logston; "they haven't any idea what the gals were stolen away for. I heard Girty talk about it myself, and I know the fiery trial that's in reserve for the poor young creatures."

"Some way of escape will be provided for them," resumed Boone.

"Perhaps so; I feel pooty sure that neither of the gals will ever consent to throw themselves away upon such a vagabond; they've got too much sense for that," returned Joel.

"Rest assured of it," added the pioneer.

"All this trouble has come of that Frenchman," said Logston, bitterly. I've never felt right since he's been among us. It is very clear to me that he's been nothin' more nor less than a spy on us ever since he's been here, and you'll find it so."

"Such remarks, Mr. Logston, are extremely offensive to me," said Mr. Alston, who had heard Joel's last observation.

"I can't help it," retorted Joel. "I know I'm right, and have good reasons to say what I do. I never like to hurt nobody's feelings, nor nothin' of that sort; but I do like to tell the truth, and to see justice done to all. Why did Silas Girty speak about this Le Bland, if he didn't know this man, and what was he doin'. Your Frenchman talks a

great deal about makin' his fortin' on Kentucky land; and I know very well how he expects to make it. The land he has so much to say about is right here where we stand; and if he ever gets it Boonesborough'll be a pile of ruins and he'll walk over our graves. That's what will happen, Mr. Alston, think of it as you may. Twenty-four hours haven't passed since Girty offered me two thousand acres of land to join the Ingins against the white stations."

"Le Bland has my friendship and esteem; nearer relationship, it is well known, has been talked of. I still find it impossible to believe all the dark reports which I hear of him. I hope you will pardon me if I act the friendly part, until I have ocular evidence of his guilt," rejoined Mr. Alston.

Daniel Boone replied that he trusted they were all willing to make a proper allowance in the case, considering how great had been his friendship for the man; but so far as his own feelings were concerned he had no doubt of Le Bland's guilt.

During the morning and the greater portion of the forenoon, the defenders of Boonesborough were constantly employed in repelling attacks made at different points, and in many instances conducted with much spirit and resolution; but about noon the assaults ceased altogether, which surprised the settlers not a little, for their foes were very numerous.

While each stood at his post, trying to assign some plausible reason for this sudden suspension of hostilities, a white man was seen approaching cautiously, bearing a flag of truce.

"It's Girty!" said Joel, raising his rifle.

"Don't fire!" exclaimedBoone. "Let us hear what he has to say."

Finding that he was not fired upon, Girty mounted a stump and addressed the pioneers as follows:—

"I have come to summon you to surrender. It's of no use for you to resist; if you surrender promptly, no blood will be shed; but if you will not listen to reason, and give us instant possession, we will batter down your works about your ears with cannon that we momentarily expect; for, know that we are expecting, not only cannon, but reinforcements, also. What can you do against such numbers? Nothing; every man of you will be slain."

"Shoot him down," cried several of the foresters; but Boone bade them to forbear.

"Perhaps you don't know me?" added Girty, with much pomposity of manner.

"I should like to speak a word to yonder boasting rascal," said Reynolds to Boone.

"Speak on," replied the latter with a smile.

"You have asked if we know you," said Reynolds, showing himself boldly. "Hear our answer; we know you well. We know you as the vilest of men living; we know you as a cowardly renegade, recreant to all that is noble in the human character; we know you as the enemy of women and children—as a monster of wickedness, and as a blood-stained villain. The name of Girty will be spoken with contempt by all those who shall hear of his treachery in all time to come. I have a worthless dog that kills lambs; instead of shooting him, I have named him Silas Girty, and he has never held up his head since; for he knows that everybody despises him. You talk largely about reinforcements. What could you do with cannon? such cowardly wretches would be afraid to fire them if you had ever so many. We also expect reinforcements; and it will be well for you to be off before they get here. Should you batter down our stockades, as you pompously threaten, we are fully prepared for that contingency; for we have roasted a score or two of hickory sticks with which we intend to sally out and whip you out of the country as we would thieving curs."

Reynold's sarcastic speech put the renegade in a towering passion. He poured forth a volley of oaths that proved him proficient in the art of profanity.

"I have two of your young women in my power," he added, "and it would be better for you to be a little more humble; but I shall enter your works and pay you off for your insolence."

"It's a thousand pities I hadn't made an end of you out in the woods there!" cried Logston.

"Are you there, my fine lad?" asked Girty.

"How does your head feel?" rejoined Joel.

"It will never be well till yours is out of sight. I shan't soon forget that mean trick you served me; it will go hard with you for that, Joel Logston!" retorted Girty.

"Don't tempt me; you make a fine mark for my rifle at this particular time," said Joel Logston, menacingly.

"I'm under a flag of truce," returned Girty.

"I wish you was under the ground," added Joel, impatiently.

"No doubt; you are thinking about the two girls, perhaps," replied the renegade.

"I am," thundered Joel.

"Oh! the wind sets in that quarter does it?" said Girty, with a laugh.

"Mind what you say. I warn you; for no human power shall prevent me from shooting you, if you provoke me farther. What care I for a flag of truce, when it floats over the head of such a villain?"

It was easy enough to be seen that Girty began to feel uneasy and fearful of consequences, if he was not more careful in his speech: he therefore prudently addressed himself to Daniel Boone, and asked for an answer to carry back to his army.

"Tell your red crew and your ruffianly French allies that Boonesborough will never be given up while two sticks of it remain together," replied the pioneer, promptly. "This is our final answer; begone."

Girty leaped down from the stump in rather undignified haste, considering that he was under a flag of truce. Shouts of defiance and derision from the fort followed him until he was again with his friends.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SIEGE OF BOONESBOROUGH.

Reynolds and Mr. Fleming were in the block-house nearest to the river. Andrew and Exquisite Ebony were standing within a few feet of them looking cautiously through the loopholes. At different parts of the structure stern faces were seen, begrimed with powder and dust. Each heart felt that danger was pressing, and every pulse throbbed with anxiety; a few brief hours would decide the fate of Boonesborough.

The attention of the pioneers was suddenly attracted by an exclamation of surprise from Exquisite Ebony.

"What now?" asked Daniel Boone.

"Will yer look dar?" said Ebony.

"Where?" inquired the forester.

"Why dar, right afore yer eyes."

"I don't see anything but the river," rejoined the captain, after looking a moment from one of the loop-holes.

"Don't yer see, Massa Boone, it am changed its color; it am just like mud as one darkey is like anudder," returned Exquisite.

The pioneer looked again from the block-house, and the truth of the negro's remarks was at once apparent. The waters of the Kentucky were no longer of their natural color, but deeply colored as when, swollen with heavy rains, the loose red soil is washed away. For an instant the pioneer was at fault.

"This is strange!" he exclaimed; "what can you make of it, men?"

By this time many anxious eyes were gazing upon the river.

"By heavens! I understand it all!" cried Boone. "They are digging a trench; they intend to let the water in upon us!"

"You are right," said Fleming, mournfully. "Boonesborough is no better than lost."

"And we are no better than lost men," observed Alston, with a sigh.

The pioneers looked gloomily at each other; they thought of their wives and children; brave men wiped away tears, that, perhaps, were never guilty of the like weakness before; but they were not selfish tears; they flowed for those unable to defend themselves from savage barbarity.

"Girty must have put this infernal idea into their heads," said Reynolds.

"Possibly not; for I heard Le Bland remark once, that Boonesborough might be easily undermined, and the whole of us drowned out like so many rats," replied Mr. Fleming.

"Gorra mighty! dey's gwine to let loose old Kentuck!" exclaimed Andrew, with dilated eyes.

"De women folks wont have to go arter no more water," observed Ebony, philosophically.

"No; de water will come arter dem," rejoined Andrew.

"Dar's more of de mischief!" exclaimed Ebony.

"So there is; they're shootin' flamin'arrers at us to set the works on fire," said Joel Logston.

"We can have our choice, then, between fire and water," added Fleming.

"Or we can have both," retorted Joel.

The women and children had learned by this time what was going forward, and every part of the fort resounded with cries and lamentations. Husbands and wives, parents and children embraced each other tenderly

thinking that they would soon be parted forever in this world.

"Death must come to us all, in some form or other," said Boone, addressing the mournful and panic-stricken group, in a calm, subdued and solemn voice. "It is an irrevocable law of God that all created beings should die. Seeing that death is something that cannot be evaded, it becomes us to meet it with firmness and Christian philosophy. So far as I am able to judge, the term of our earthly lives is drawing to a close. I must certainly regard it in this sad light, unless some means can speedily be devised to thwart this hellish ingenuity of our enemies. I enjoin upon you all to be calm in this terrible emergency. The women have once proved themselves heroines since this siege commenced, and I doubt not they will again. This is no time for grief and tears; such demonstrations discourage men, and our fair companions should rather strive to produce a contrary effect, and stimulate them to deeds of greater daring. Let the women and children all take shelter in the block-houses, and be careful not to encumber and embarrass their brave defenders. I desire implicit obedience, and if it is accorded, all may yet be well."

The forester paused, and the effect of his words was instantly obvious; the females checked their tears, and the men grasped their arms with fresh resolution.

"Mr. Reynolds," added Boone, "take about half of our able-bodied men, gather up all the picks, shovels, etc., that can be found, and hasten to the enclosure on that side toward the river; if our foes mine, we must countermine."

This order was received with loud cheers, and the plan was so promising that every man felt a new hope springing up in his bosom.

"Cut a trench eight feet wide and as long as you can, within the stockades, and we will baffle them yet. While you are digging, the rest of us will keep a sharp lookout that they don't set us on fire."

In a short time ten or a dozen sturdy men were at work with picks and spades, and the dirt went merrily over the stockades.

"They are still digging; the water grows muddier," said Fleming, who with Boone and the rest remained in the block-houses.

"If they were not sheltered by the bank, we would soon make them scamper away," returned the pioneer.

"There's a burning arrow upon the roof of one of the cabins," said Fleming.

"I will go and put it out," added Daniel Boone's son, who was yet but a mere lad.

"You had better not; I will go," replied Fleming.

"I am younger than you," answered young Boone. "I am not afraid."

"Stay, my son; I prefer to go myself!" cried his father, nervously, more willing to expose himself than his son.

"Your life is worth more than mine," said James.

"For my sake—for your mother's sake!" cried the captain, earnestly. But before he had finished the sentence, James was running along the roofs of the cabins, exposed to the enemy's fire.

The old veteran of the wilderness stood watching his boy with a terrible anxiety for the result, which no heart but a parent's can understand. He heard a discharge of fire-arms, and the balls that whistled about his son seemed to wound his own person. James stooped down, and with his foot extinguished the flaming arrow, while a literal shower of lead cut the air, and perforated his clothes in many places.

The fire being out, the bold boy turned to retrace his footsteps, when a ball too true to its aim struck him upon the breast, and he fell amid the shouts of a hundred foemen.

The pioneer staggered and groaned as if his heart would burst, and would have rushed forth to cover his son's body with his own, had not Fleming held him, while Joel Logston, regardless of danger, leaped out upon the roof, raised the fallen youth in his athletic arms, and bore him to the block-house.

The shaft had been well sped—the wound was mortal. Joel laid the lad gently down upon the floor. The bereaved father bent over the dying boy in tearful agony, and taking up King David's lament, cried out in the bitterness of his wounded spirit:—

"My son, my son! would to God I had died for thee!"

For a space all stood silent, too much affected to speak.

"Be a man, cap'en; be a man," said Logston.

"Ah, Joel, things have changed since I bade you master your griefs," said Boone, in a choked voice. "This makes two darling sons and a brother that I have lost by savage hands."

"Others have felt the same heavy losses," said Mr. Alston, covering his eyes to shut out the affecting spectacle.

"James, James! my dear boy! look at me; it is your father that calls!" cried the captain, frantically.

Contrary to all expectations, the boy opened his eyes languidly, and smiled faintly.

"He lives! he lives!" exclaimed Boone.

"Don't hope," said Joel. "The brave boy has got his death; them drops come from the heart."

"Unhappy father! unhappy father!" added Boone, kissing the pale lips of his son.

"He's goin' to speak," added Joel, and all bent eagerly forward to hear what he would say.

"I'm going, father!" said James.

"I cannot give you up," replied the father, with a groan.

"Where's mother and Lizzie? I must see them before I go," continued the dying lad.

"It will break their hearts—it will kill them!" cried Boone. "I would I had never lived till this fatal hour."

"Be brave, dear father—we shall meet again," resumed James.

And now ensued a scene so tender and affecting that the stoutest heart turned away unmanned. The boy's mother and sister had come to gaze their last upon him, and to share his agonies quite down to the rolling river of death.

"It's all over now—the pain of dying is past—the darkness has disappeared, and the light flows in. Farewell, loved ones—I go, I go. I go to the land where there are no warfares and fightings, and where God himself shall wipe all tears from all faces."

The boy smiled and died; and an expression of serene joy inexpressible lingered sweetly upon his young face.

"I have done struggling with destiny," said Boone, in heart-broken accents. "I yield now to my fate; I relinquish all earthly hopes. I shall command no longer among you. This last blow has destroyed my manhood. Choose a new leader, and leave me to my private griefs," he added, sadly.

"No new leader will we have," answered Joel.

"My voice will be heard no more in battle," replied Boone.

"Daniel, Daniel!" exclaimed Mrs. Boone, in a tone of solemn earnestness, wiping away all traces of recent tears, "is this like you? Have you ceased to be the iron-nerved man chosen by God to people this wilderness? Are you not to these heroic men what Moses was to the Hebrews? Will you falter now, when the hopes of all are centered upon you?"

The hardy pioneer still stood irresolute, his eyes fixed sadly upon the body of his son.

Mrs. Boone approached, and laid her hand softly upon his arm. "Daniel, it is Rebecca that speaks. Arouse yourself! shake off this unmanly despair! Women and children appeal to you for help."

"You are right, Rebecca; I must master myself," answered the forester, like one just awakened from sleep.

"Here is your rifle, Daniel," added Mrs. Boone, placing the trusty weapon he loved so well in his hands. The touch of the faithful steel, and the beloved voice of Rebecca, seemed to bring him to himself. He passed his hands over his forehead, and his spirit was once more alive to the sound of battle.

"To your posts, men!" he shouted; and with a firm step he walked round the works and reconnoitered the enemy.

The settlers continued the defence with great obstinacy, shooting down all those who had the hardihood to show themselves within gunshot of the fort. When the night set in, the digging was still progressing, judging by the muddy hue of the water; and the inhabitants of Boonesborough remained in suspense until morning, expecting hourly to hear the spades of the enemy in their underground approaches.

With the first light of the dawn eager eyes were turned towards the river. The sun came slowly up, and they discovered to their joy that the project had been abandoned, for the water rolled on clear and tranquil. Whilst the oldest of the pioneers were speculating in regard to what new mischief might be expected, another flag of truce appeared; but it was not borne by Girty.

"Who is he?" asked Mr. Alston.

"It is McKee, the friend and counsellor of Girty," said Joel Logston, handling his rifle nervously, and looking wishfully at Boone.

"No, Joel; it won't do," replied the latter, in reply to the woodsman's earnest look. "He deserves death; but let us respect the flag, and not set a bad example for our foes."

"It's very hard," answered Joel, "that we can't give such wretches their deserts when they are within our reach. Just think of the mischief them two rogues have done us first and last, off and on."

"Too true, friend Logston. But it is the best policy to forbear, and look after the general good. To slay him under such circumstances would provoke our enemies without any particular gain on our part."

"Hullo, there, you fellers in the fort!" cried McKee, stopping and waving his flag.

"What's your business?" asked Captain Boone.

"Captain Du Quesne has sent me to invite you to make a treaty," answered McKee.

"What kind of a treaty?" asked Boone.

"One that will be greatly for your advantage," replied McKee.

"In what respect?" continued Boone.

"In several; to prevent bloodshed, and save the lives of your women and children."

"A great deal you care for women and children!" muttered Logston, biting his lips with impatience.

"You know Du Quesne and Girty have got a great army, and will soon succeed in destroying this little station. They can sit down before it and starve you out, if they can't do any other way," added McKee.

"That remains to be proved," returned Boone, quietly.

"Du Quesne says he has killed enough of you, and is very willing to save the rest from the fury of the Indians. He wants you and three or four of your principal men to meet him and some of the chiefs outside the fort, where the terms of surrender will be arranged in a very satisfactory manner."

"We are afraid to trust such fellows," said the captain.

"You don't do Du Quesne justice; he really wants to do you a good turn; for he knows it will be impossible to restrain the savages when they get the upper hand."

"What do you think of what this fellow says?" asked Boone, addressing himself to Alston, Reynolds, Fleming, Logston, and others.

"It is my opinion it would be well to consider the subject; it may possibly be for our advantage, the enemy exceeding us so greatly in numbers," replied Alston.

"They are treacherous rascals; you can't trust them," said Fleming.

"It is indeed a dangerous experiment," added Reynolds.

"It's a trap laid to catch us; let us stay where we are," said Logston.

"Go back and tell Du Quesne and Girty that we will consider the matter and give them an answer in one hour," continued Daniel Boone, addressing McKee.

"I hope you'll come to your senses by that time!" retorted McKee; he then returned to his friends again.

Considerable debate now followed; some of the settlers opposed the measure proposed by McKee; and others were strongly in favor of it.

The subject was discussed with much warmth. While the matter was under consideration, Elizabeth Boone had been standing at one of the loop-holes of the block-house in which the pioneers had assembled. The aperture was on that side opposite the river, and commanded a view of a large forest on the right of the recent clearings.

The firing had ceased long before in that direction, but knowing that their foes were full of artful devices, Miss Boone resolved to keep a good watch upon that point, while the men deliberated in regard to the proposed treaty. She was thus laudably employed, when she beheld a female figure emerging from the woods.

"What do you see, Miss Boone?" inquired Joel Logston, who perceived by her eagerness that some object attracted her attention.

"A female who appears desirous of approaching the fort," replied Lizzie.

"It's a young gal!" exclaimed Joel; "and she seems timid like about comin'."

"Perhaps it's an Indian in disguise," said Reynolds.

"Look and see," returned Joel.

Reynolds did as requested, and blushed at his own awkward suggestion, for it was easy enough to see that the person cautiously approaching was a young and pretty maiden.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN INTERVIEW IN THE FOREST.

"Go!" said Star-Light; "I hear footsteps."

But Allan still lingered, looking inquiringly at the unconscious form of Rosalthe.

"My cousin is ill; she will soon recover; begone, I say!" added Star-Light, impatiently.

The sound of footsteps aroused Norwood to a sense of danger, and turning from the singular scene, he plunged into the forest.

The next moment Monon stood beside Star-Light.

"The young pale-face I spoke of has been here," said the latter; "he has talked of White-Cloud until her soft heart was moved; but her strength is coming again."

"What did he say of White-Cloud?" asked Monon.

"*Minwawa!* 'twas a pleasant sound; he talked of love," returned her sister.

"She sighs—she breathes—she comes back again to earth," resumed Monon.

"It would be better for her to stay in the land of dreams," replied Star-Light, thoughtfully. "The world of shadows must be better than this."

Rosalthe opened her eyes and smiled faintly on the two maidens.

"I have been weak and foolish," she said.

Monon pressed her hand slightly, and no other answer was made.

"Is he gone?" asked Rosalthe, timidly.

"Never to come back," returned Star-Light.

"Is he a prisoner?" exclaimed Rosalthe, grasping Star-Light's arm nervously, while the paint upon her cheeks failed to hide the pallidness that overspread them.

"Peace, silly maiden!" said the Indian girl, with a smile. "The white hunter is safe."

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Rosalthe, and blushed at her own earnestness.

"Leave me alone a few moments, and I shall soon collect my confused thoughts, and recover my calmness," she added.

"Do not try to escape," said Star-Light.

"I will not," replied our heroine.

The Cherokee maidens moved slowly away, and Rosalthe's wish was gratified; she was alone. Like one in a dream she stood gazing at the beautiful scenery around her; but her thoughts were not occupied with what she beheld; she was thinking of Allan Norwood, and the words which she had heard him utter. To her the declarations which he had made were far from offensive; she could not but confess to herself that she had experienced a secret pleasure in listening to his earnest avowals. Her situation had been indeed a singular and in many respects a trying one. She had been obliged to hear a sincere declaration of the most tender of all sentiments; and also to remain unknown to the person who had risked his life for her. The late excitements through which she had passed, the thought of home, and the new love dream that was opening so romantically before her youthful vision, rendered her feelings so intense that her physical system had for a moment yielded to the overpowering current. The balmy breezes blowing on her brows reanimated her being; her fortitude and courage revived, and with a more tranquil step she walked among the wild flowers and green plants that margined the narrow footpath that wound its verdant way through the forest of lofty oaks.

Rosalthe's dreamy meditations were disturbed by the hurried tramp of horse's feet She stepped quickly from the path; but not before the horseman was in sight, and had caught a glimpse of her person. Our heroine became faint with terror, for in the advancing horseman she recognized Le Bland; and she most cordially hoped that she should not be known, but pass for just what she seemed in externals—an Indian maiden.

"Is it you, Star-Light?" said Le Bland.

Rosalthe partially turned her face towards the Frenchman without making a reply. He immediately discovered his mistake.

"Ah! no; it is not Star-Light; but upon my word, one quite as pretty," he added.

Rosalthe dared not trust herself to make a rejoinder, fearing her voice might betray her; she therefore imitated the coyness and taciturnity highly characteristic of the race to which she apparently belonged.

"Although I mistook you for Star-Light, in good faith I am but little disappointed. What matters it! Come, girl, where is your tongue? Be not coy, but social—if you know what that means—I am in a mood to chat a while with some one of your complexion."

Rosalthe raised her hand and pointed significantly toward the village.

"You mean to say that I shall go my way; but I am not disposed to obey you."

Rosalthe assumed an air of offended dignity, and looked in another direction.

"What are you called, my wild beauty?" asked Le Bland, urging his horse close to her side.

The easy impudence of the Frenchman began to have effect on Rosalthe; but she wisely controlled her feelings. She pointed once more to the path he had been pursuing, and then with a frown passed her fingers round her temples, describing very accur-

ately the circumference of the scalp-lock.

"They dare not do it!" exclaimed Le Bland. "Not one of your race would presume to harm a hair of my head. Why should they wish to? Am I not one of them? Do I not espouse their cause, and lead them on to battle against the white stations, that the red tribes may possess their lands in peace? No; my pretty flower of the wilderness, I have nothing to fear. I will be gallant if thou wilt be loving."

With an expression of deepest scorn upon her countenance, Rosalthe turned from Le Bland and walked hastily away. He dismounted and followed her, when Star-Light, who had been an unseen witness of the meeting, stepped from her hiding-place and confronted him.

The Frenchman stopped, and for a moment lost his assured and easy self-possession, and appeared confused. Star-Light stood erect and calm, perfect mistress of herself. Not a muscle betrayed disappointment, jealousy, or anger. With folded arms she waited for Le Bland to speak.

"Well, you really startled me at first," he said, with a careless laugh.

Star-Light smiled scornfully, but made no answer.

"All the red maidens are in the same ungentle mood today, I believe," he added.

The face of the Cherokee girl grew more unfriendly in its expression.

"Come, come, Star-Light, give me a better greeting; you know I have been dying to see you," resumed the Frenchman, in tones more insinuating.

"I believe not the tale," said Star-Light, coldly, in reply.

"I will tell it to you so sweetly that you cannot help believing it," continued Le Bland, in his most agreeable manner.

"Say on, we shall see, Smooth-Tongue," answered the maiden.

Her cold calm manner disconcerted even Le Bland; but he quickly recovered his accustomed assurance.

"I have ridden from the great fort on purpose to sun myself in the soft light of your eyes," he resumed. "See; my horse is panting with exertion."

"Where have you been so long? Why did you not come for eye-light before?" inquired the Indian girl.

"Because, light of my life, I have been suspected and shut up like a captive, which delayed the fulfilment of my designs somewhat; but I escaped from Boonesborough, and have attacked it with a great army."

"Why have you attacked the white station?"

"To drive them out of the country, so the red men can possess the whole."

"I believe the Smooth-Tongue lies!" said Star-Light.

"What says my eye-light?"

"My people call you Smooth-Tongue; they do well; for your speech is smooth, and your ways are deceitful. Begone! I love you no longer!" continued Star-Light with energy.

"This is strange! what evil thing have I done to offend the light of my eyes," exclaimed the Frenchman, much astonished.

"Go, Smooth-Tongue, go! The Great Spirit has opened my eyes to your deceitfulness. Your voice is no longer music, your smiles no longer sweet. My heart will warm toward you no more; it will be colder when you are near. I have no more eye-light for Shoiska; the past has melted away from my soul like the dews which the sun dries up. Away, and hiss your falsehoods in the ears of the pale-face maiden."

Le Bland stood silent and confounded.

"Star-Light will smile no longer upon Smooth-Tongue," added the Cherokee girl.

"Some one has amused himself by telling you lies," said the Frenchman.

"If a spark of love ever animated the heart of Star-Light, she has crushed it as she now crushes this fair flower."

While the maiden was speaking, she placed her foot upon a beautiful wild flower and remorselessly crushed it.

"Thus has it been, and thus ends it all!" she continued bitterly. "But your own hour of darkness draws near; the Great Spirit seems to whisper to my soul of a sudden death, and an unwilling journey to the land of shadows that lieth towards the west. I see the figure of justice mirrored in the sunny sky; it holds a bow in one hand, and a quiver in the other. Let Shoiska tremble! Let his heart become weak and his cheeks grow pale!"

Star-Light ceased speaking, raised her finger warningly, and instantly glided away, followed by Rosalthe, who had been a party to this strange interview.

Le Bland stood rooted to the spot, and made no attempt to detain the maiden.

* * * Allan Norwood retraced his footsteps to the lodge where he had left Kenton.

He found the latter sitting at the door, patiently awaiting his return.

"What tidings do you bring?" asked Kenton, immediately.

Allan related what he had heard and seen during his recent interview with Star-Light.

"This seems to be rather a mysterious affair, but I trust it will end well," said Kenton.

"How does your wound feel today?" inquired Allan.

"Much better; I have been into the forest since you left me. As I returned (which was but a few moments ago) I struck a trail which I feel a strong desire to follow."

"Is it far from here?"

"Less than a mile," returned the woodsman.

"If you think the exercise will not irritate your wound, lead the way; I am ready," answered Norwood.

The two friends carefully examined their weapons, and set off in the direction where the trail had been discovered.

"This is the spot," said the forester, after a short and silent walk through the woods.

"The tracks are quite easily seen, although they follow a beaten buffalo path," he added.

"It appears to be the trail of a party on horse-back," observed Allan.

"Yes, and not less than six in number. Let us go on a little way."

The hunters moved forward some distance, examining the trail minutely. An exclamation from Norwood induced Kenton to ask what he had discovered.

"The imprint of a white man's foot."

The forester was quickly at Norwood's side.

"You are right, for the feet toe out instead of in, now the next question that naturally arises, did he belong to the party, or was he a prisoner?" resumed Kenton.

"By the signs," returned Allan, "I should say that he was a prisoner; for you observe that tracks commence here, and by walking a few steps in this direction, I imagine I discover some indications that a struggle or scuffle had taken place. In this spot the grass and wood-plants are trampled considerably."

"Correct again," said Kenten. "The unfortunate white man was doubtless tied to one of the Indian's horses and compelled to keep pace with them; for as I proceed, I perceive that his steps are very long, like one obliged to run."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Allan, with a sigh.

"It's a pity we couldn't do something for him," added Kenton, looking wistfully at Allan.

"I only wish your arm was well," resumed Allan.

"Never mind that; I feel like a new man today," replied Kenton.

"There are two of us, and probably as many as half a dozen of the enemy," continued Norwood, musingly.

"You have the same ideas about this matter that I have. I'm glad you have, for I always like to assist a fellow-creature in distress. I think with boldness and cunning combined, we can do all we feel so strongly inclined to."

"Let us follow the dictates of humanity," responded our hero warmly. "So well armed as we are, if we can surprise the party, the work will be easily accomplished, and a fellow-being saved, perhaps, from death."

"Such feelings are honorable, and accord well with my inclinations. The trail is fresh, and you may be assured that we shall not go far before the affair will be decided in one way or another. This business requires caution, and in its execution, we must be, in the Bible phrase, 'as wise as serpents.'"

The sentiments of the young man being the same upon the subject, the pursuit was immediately commenced. It is well known that to follow an Indian trail requires practice and skill of the most experienced woodsman. At the period of which we are writing, a thousand arts were employed to evade pursuit, when some successful foray upon the white settlements had been made; but luckily in this particular instance, no uncommon precautions had been taken; the trail was distinct and bold, as if no pursuit was expected or feared.

The greatest danger, as Kenton justly remarked, was not that of losing the trail, but of coming so suddenly upon the party, that they themselves would fall into their hands. Accordingly, bearing this important item in mind, they proceeded very slowly, never speaking above their breath, and never treading incautiously upon the dry twigs.

The prediction of Kenton that the party was not far off, proved true. They had followed the trail about an hour when the neighing of a horse was heard. The young men crept forward on their hands and knees, resolved at all hazards to learn who the pris-

oner was and how far their conjectures had been just.

"There they are," whispered Allan, as sheltered by a thick network of grape-vines, he obtained a full view of the party.

"They are the Shawanese; one, two, three, four, five, six in number. Yonder are their horses; but where is the white man?" returned Kenton.

"Look to the left of that fellow who is in the act of lighting his pipe, and you will see him," replied Allan.

"Right, right! I see him, and if I can trust the evidence of my sight, it is Ballard the scout!" said Kenton.

"It is no other," answered Norwood, scarcely able to repress an exclamation of surprise.

"He is a lost man if we don't save him," added Kenton.

"I believe they are making preparation to kill him now," resumed our hero.

While Allan was making this remark, two of the savages approached the spot where the unfortunate scout was lying bound, and compelled him to arise. He was then led to a small tree and firmly lashed to it with a wild grape-vine. One who appeared to be chief of the party now approached Ballard with a tomahawk in hand.

"They mean to make quick work of it," exclaimed Kenton.

"Yes; there is not an instant to lose. Let us fire and then rush upon them with our pistols and other weapons; take the one on the right of Ballard, and I will pick off the one on the left. Are you ready?"

"All ready!" said Kenton.

The savage with the tomahawk raised the weapon to deal a deadly blow; but a bullet whistled through his heart, and he fell at the feet of his victim. At the same instant the one nearest him shared his fate.

"Come on, my men!" cried Allan, at the top of his voice, and followed by Kenton, flung himself among the astonished survivors, discharging his pistols with effect. Two more fell, and the others received severe wounds, but succeeded in making their escape. Before a minute had elapsed, the two young hunters were masters of the field.

With his knife Norwood quickly liberated the scout. He looked at his deliverers a moment, and then taking a long breath, said solemnly:—

"I knew somethin' would break!"

"Your top story would have been by this time, I reckon," returned Kenton, pointing significantly at the savage nearest him, whose hand still held the handle of the tomahawk in the rigid grip of relentless death.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEW PHASES IN THE LIFE OF ROSALTHE.

The deportment of Star-Light was more friendly after her return to the village. The reasons for this change were attributed to the occurrences of the day; we mean those relating to Allan Norwood and Le Bland.

Our heroine's emotions while in the presence of the former, and her evident repugnance to the latter, had produced a favorable impression on the jealous Indian maiden.

Rosalthe took advantage of Star-Light's mood, to refer to the promise which she had made to conduct her back to Boonesborough. The subject gave no apparent displeasure, and the assurance was given that the matter should not be long delayed.

Rosalthe was much surprised at the calmness exhibited by the Cherokee girl, when she obviously felt so deeply on the subject. That the Frenchman had made the strongest professions of love to her, there could be no ground of doubt; and that Star-Light still distrusted his sincerity was equally sure.

"What does White-Cloud think of Smooth-Tongue?" she asked, abruptly, on the morning following.

Rosalthe felt that it was her duty to deal truly and frankly with Star-Light; she therefore replied that she considered Le Bland a dangerous man, to whose protestations of love or friendship it was not safe to trust: that if he had professed to love her (Star-Light), the truth compelled her to say that he had not acted in good faith, for during the last few weeks he had not ceased to persecute and render her miserable with his avowals, to which she could not listen without the very deepest repugnance.

While Rosalthe was making this statement, Star-Light kept her eyes fixed searchingly on her. When she had ceased speaking, her companion shook her head and smiled faintly.

"And White-Cloud is sure that she has no happiness in the words of Shoiska?" replied Star-Light.

"Very sure," said Rosalthe; "his society was not agreeable to me from the first; and when I began to be suspicious that he was

leagued with our enemies, I not only disliked, but feared him. I have told you this before, but you would not listen."

"The spirit of the lying Machinito is in him. *Gezha Monedo!* the clouds of the sky grow dark; they are heavy with storm and tempest; I hear his *biamwawa* (passing thunder) in the air."

Star-Light's eyes flashed, and her chest heaved with emotion as she spoke.

"Let my red sister be strong," replied Rosalthe. "Let her soul rise above sorrow. Smooth-Tongue is unworthy of her thoughts; therefore let her forget him. Otter-Lifter is brave and humane, and his heart sighs for Star-Light."

The maiden made no answer, and soon after Rosalthe and Monon left the lodge and walked into the forest together. They had gone but a short distance from the village when they were again met by Le Bland. He assumed the same easy, assured and arrogant tone which had characterized his conversation on the previous day.

"Yesterday you were coy; I trust you will be kind today," he said.

"Our cousin of the Wyandots talks but little," replied Monon.

"So I should think," added the Frenchman. "She seems to be a perfect mute. Is the gift of speech denied her?"

"She speaks to those who please her," replied Monon.

"Indeed!" said Le Bland, drily.

Monon did not think it proper to make any reply to this not very gallant rejoinder.

"I would speak a few words to you," continued the Frenchman, again addressing Rosalthe, but in a more respectful tone.

"Speak on," she replied, disguising her voice as much as possible.

"What I would say is for your ears alone."

"I am willing that this person may hear whatever you wish to communicate," replied Rosalthe.

For a moment the Frenchman was silent; a significant, sarcastic smile played over his features.

"Think; reflect one single moment. Is there not some secret connected with your present situation which you might not wish to be known in certain quarters?" replied Le Bland.

"None in which I wish you to feel interested," returned Rosalthe.

"You are injuring your own cause," resumed Le Bland.

"I do not wish to have any further conversation with you," added our heroine.

"There is a place called Boonesborough," said the Frenchman.

"Who does not know it?" replied Monon.

"There is a family there by the name of Alston," he continued.

Our heroine made no rejoinder, but felt herself trembling in every limb.

"Mr. Alston had a fair daughter whose name was Rosalthe."

"I know what you would say," replied Rosalthe. "I know the words that hang upon your lips for utterance. What my present situation may be, it cannot be bettered by you. I would not trust myself with one who has proved himself so recreant to all that is honorable."

"You speak proudly and bitterly, Rosalthe Alston. Captivity has not turned your haughtiness and intractibility of spirit. I find you just the same—but more cold, if possible. It was your father's wish that you should cultivate a far different deportment towards one who is too willing to be your slave."

"Monsieur Le Bland, the time has passed when such language could be received with even a semblance of courtesy. Since your true character has been revealed to me in the light of day, and there can no longer be doubt in relation to that subject, I shrink from you with unspeakable repugnance."

"It has come to this, then!" exclaimed Le Bland. "You speak out at last; you throw aside the flimsy mask imposed by respect to your parents, and stand before me as you are; and I cast off mine. The period of dissimulation has gone forever. Gentle speech and the soft fooleries of love cannot effect you; I must woo you as the gallant knights of olden times sometimes wooed fair ladies—by sterner arts."

"I cannot for a moment doubt your inclination to commit any species of villany, since you have betrayed those who have loaded you with kindness. Alas! those most dear to me may already be bleeding in savage hands! Boonesborough may even now be wrapped in flames."

"Yes; Boonesborough is invested by a great army. Du Quesne has sat down before it; it is threatened by fire and water. Many of its defenders have fallen. All faces there are as white as those of the sheeted dead; all hearts feel the icy touch of despair. Women and children are quaking with horror;

tears flow like rain; cries and prayers go up to heaven like a burden of terrible agony," said Le Bland.

"And you, the author of this great wrong, can speak of it calmly!" cried Rosalthe.

"I can."

"I would that I could see this Captain Du Quesne," added our heroine. "I would throw myself at his feet and entreat him to have mercy on the helpless and the innocent."

"But little would you move him," replied Le Bland, with a sarcastic smile.

"He could not resist the appeals of mercy; his soul is not so hardened."

"I know him better than you."

"If he can bring such misery on Boonesborough, he is not a man; he is a fiend!"

"He was ready to fire the station when I came from there."

"Merciful Heaven! how cruel is the heart of man!" exclaimed Rosalthe.

"There is yet a solitary hope of saving Boonesborough, although invested by four hundred savages, led on by Du Quesne, and stimulated by the arts of Girty and McKee."

"What is that hope?" asked Rosalthe.

"It is a hope as slender as the finest thread ever spun into the woof of spider's web."

"Name it—be quick!"

"It is a hope fainter than the breath of the dying zephyr."

"This suspense is dreadful; it fills me with horror."

"It is a hope as distant as the far-of planets; as cold as the frozen ocean."

Rosalthe clung convulsively to Monon for support, looking wildly at Le Bland.

"It is this: if you will listen to the wishes of your father (and duty to parents is strictly enjoined in the Book of books), the army shall be withdrawn from Boonesborough," said the Frenchman, calmly, bending upon Rosalthe a keen and penetrating glance.

"Merciful Father! can this man be trusted?" she exclaimed.

"No, no! The bad Monito is with him," Monon said, earnestly.

"It is terrible to think of being this man's wife!" added Rosalthe, wringing her hands.

"And is there not something equally appalling in the fate of Boonesborough?" asked the Frenchman, whose hopes in this new device momentarily grew stronger.

"I doubt your power to do this. Bring me face to face with Captain Du Quesne," returned Rosalthe.

"You have your wish; I am Captain Du Quesne," answered Le Bland, drawing himself up proudly, and smiling coldly at the amazed expression that passed over the face of Miss Alston.

"*You* Du Quesne!" cried the latter.

"Ay, Miss Alston, I am that monster," was the ironical rejoinder.

"It has only required this declaration to make my repugnance complete. If you have no other conditions to offer, Boonesborough must indeed perish!" returned Rosalthe, in despairing accents.

"Think of those you love; have respect to the gray hairs of your father—to cherished wishes of the kindest of mothers."

"Dare you hold such language, in the face of heaven and in the sight of God? Do you feel no fear? Do you not tremble at your own enormity?" replied our heroine.

"You talk like a woman; I have gone too far to recede. I feel no remorse; none of the lashings of conscience you speak of. I have but one desire—one absorbing wish that swallows up all other thoughts—the ambition to call you mine—to know that you are indissolubly connected with my destiny—that fate itself cannot take you from me!"

"I am not so silly as to be deceived by your protestations; I know the baseness of the heart from whence they spring. If my life would redeem Boonesborough from the danger that now threatens it with annihilation, I would willingly yield it; but this other condition you talk of is too horrible."

"To know the danger to which your friends are exposed, you must go with me; you must look upon the painted faces; you must witness on their red visages the impatience which they feel to dip their hands in gore. If the spectacle does not move you, you are composed of sterner material than I imagine."

"Go with you? God forbid! I would not look on the doomed station."

"But I shall not consult your wishes; you shall see Boonesborough assailed with fire and sword, and behold the destruction of all the inhabitants by hands that know no mercy!"

Du Quesne gave a shrill whistle, and three savages appeared, who instantly seized the two maidens. Both called for assistance; but their cries were immediately stopped, and they were placed on horseback. In a few minutes they were moving of through the forest at a rapid rate in the direction of

Boonesborough. Monon bore her fate with stoical firmness; but Rosalthe, less resigned, sighed for the gentler captivity of Star-Light, from which she was being conveyed, to a condition which might prove a thousand times more wretched.

On the way Du Quesne informed her that a small party which had accompanied him to the Cherokee village, had been attacked on the previous day by Simon Kenton and Norwood; the fellows, he said, who had officiously interfered with his affairs on several occasions. Some of his faithful allies, he could let loose upon him. The wilds of Kentucky were not large enough to admit of his hiding himself away from his wrath. He would send so many savages after him that they would be as numerous as the trees in the forest, provided the party he had already despatched did not succeed.

These menaces Rosalthe was obliged to hear in silence, and it added not a little to her unhappiness to think that Allan might soon be in the power of her persecutor.

"How mutable are the things human!" thought Rosalthe, as she pursued the way

SEIZURE OF ROSALTHE AND MONON BY THE ORDER OF DU QUESNE.

he added, had been slain, and a prisoner of much importance set at liberty. To punish such audacious outrage, he had despatched a messenger to Boonesborough for a larger party, which would pursue the offenders until they overtook them, when strict justice would be meted out.

He then referred to his imprisonment at the station, attributing the same to the agency of Allan, who had artfully contrived to poison the minds of his friends against him. In the most unequivocal terms he vowed the destruction of Norwood. His escape, he averred, was a thing impossible, when it was considered how many warriors toward the fated station. "How uncertain is the future!—how weary the journey of life, when circumstances conspire against us. Yesterday elated with hope, today cast down with despair!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TREATY.

The maiden approached the station, and Reynolds and Joel Logston hastened to open the postern for her admittance. It was Innis McKee; she entered, pale and agitated, and asked to be conducted to Captain

Boone. Elizabeth, who had hastened to meet her, took her kindly by the hand and led her into the block-house.

"This is Captain Boone," said Lizzie.

"Let me breathe a moment; I am excited; my heart beats very fast," replied Innis.

"No wonder," said Joel. "It's a mystery to me how you managed to get here alive."

"I have come to speak about the treaty proposed by Captain Du Quesne, Girty and others," said Innis, when she had grown somewhat calmer.

"Then you were sent here?" asked Boone.

"No, no! I came of my own accord," answered Innis, earnestly.

"And for what purpose, young woman?" inquired the captain.

"To save you all from destruction; the treaty talked of is but a trap to destroy you. If you go out of the fort, you will never come back; you will be seized, and perhaps slain on the spot!" added Innis, with increasing fervor.

"Who are you?" asked the Captain, in a more kindly tone.

The young girl hesitated, and then covering her face with her hands, replied:—

"My name is Innis McKee."

"That's unfortunit!" muttered Joel to himself.

"And you have risked your life to tell us this!" exclaimed Elizabeth, embracing Innis warmly.

"Ah! what is life to me!" she replied. "What pleasant hopes does it hold out?"

"Sure enough," added Joel, in the same tone, "with such a father!"

"Be silent, Joel," said the Captain. "Now, Miss McKee, be good enough to tell us the particulars of this plot; and in so doing you need not implicate your father unless you choose."

"Alas! sir, why should I attempt to conceal what is so well known? The perfidy of my father fills me with shame. The plot is simply this: when you go out to make your terms with Du Quesne, you will be seized and not allowed to return to the fort. A large party of warriors will surround you, and effectually cut off retreat. The principal men being captured, the station will be greatly weakened and forced to surrender, when a horrible scene of butchery will follow. Knowing this, I have hastened hither, in order to prevent a catastrophe so dreadful."

"You have acted nobly, and all these helpless women and children will thank you; and not they only, but these gallant men, who are their natural defenders," said Boone, feelingly.

"Do you know anything of the two young women who were carried away by Girty?" asked Joel.

"I have seen them," returned Innis.

"What is their condition?" inquired Mr. Fleming, anxiously.

"Why do you ask their condition, when you know into whose hands they have fallen?" asked Innis.

"Too true—too true!" exclaimed Mr. Fleming, turning aside to hide a tear that glistened in his eye.

"Alas, my child! my child!" cried Mrs. Fleming.

Captain Boone sighed, and pressed his hand to his brow.

"Do not give way to despondency," said Boone. "This is no time to weep for the dead, or grieve for the living. Let us think only of the general good. Have I not cause of sorrow, also? Could I not weep with you all? Hath not the hand of death touched me?"

"Cheer up, wife—cheer up! Trust in Him who doth not willingly afflict us," said Fleming, in a calmer voice.

"Perhaps somthin' can be done to liberate the gals," added Joel, thoughtfully.

"I think so," replied Innis.

"The affair of the treaty must first be attended to," resumed Boone, recovering his wonted serenity of expression.

"Let us hear your opinion," said Mr. Alston.

"Knowing as we do their intentions, I think we may safely meet them, under certain conditions."

"Name them," said Fleming.

"Send them word that we will meet them sixty yards from the block-house."

"Go on," said Alston.

"In the block-house we will station our sharpest shooters. If they attempt to seize us, let them shoot down the first who lifts a hand."

"Very good," said Logston.

"They'll object to meet you within sixty yards of the fort," said Reynolds.

"Then we will not attempt to treat with them," returned the pioneer.

"If they accede to this, who will go?" asked Mr. Fleming.

"I will for one," replied the captain.

"And I, for another," said Fleming.

"I'll go, for a third," added Logston.

"No more will be necessary," said Boone. "Now the next question to be decided is, when shall we meet them?"

"Tomorrow morning," said Reynolds, "for by putting it off to that time, we may have a more quiet night, and obtain some rest."

"The idea is a happy one," rejoined Mr. Alston.

"Mr. Reynolds, take a white flag, mount to the top of one of the cabins, and tell them we will meet them tomorrow morning early, in order to fix the terms of a treaty," added Boone.

"What shall I do for a flag?" queried Reynolds.

"Take my handkerchief," said Elizabeth.

"Thank you," replied Reynolds, with a smile.

"Tie it to your ramrod, and you'll have as good a flag of truce as ever a man stood under," suggested Joel.

After the lapse of a few minutes, the clear voice of Reynolds was heard hailing the enemy. He delivered his message, but it failed to give satisfaction; they would not consent that the meeting should take place within so short a distance of the fort.

The night which followed was by no means a quiet one, as the pioneers had hoped; for there was much firing and bravado on the part of the savages. In the morning the overtures of Girty were renewed, and considerable parleying ensued. He said Du Quesne was at the present time absent, hurrying up the reinforcements and cannon, but would be with them by noon. Girty affirmed, moreover, that Du Quesne left highly indignant that his merciful offers were so obstinately and foolishly rejected; and the moment of his return would be a signal to batter down the works, and let four hundred furious savages upon them. The scene that would inevitably follow, he would leave to the imaginations of the good people of Boonesborough; he (Girty) could not reasonably be blamed, for he had done all that mortal could to avert the dreadful calamity; he had even shed tears of compassion, when he thought of the poor women and children, not one of whom would ever see the sun rise again. He had always been a merciful man, notwithstanding the many slanderous reports that had been circulated in regard to him. He differed from the people of Boonesborough in "political" sentiments; but great and good men had differed on these subjects ever since the creation of the world.

"If you have any regard for me, cap'en, I hope you will let me fire," said Logston, in a persuasive tone.

"Be patient, Joel," returned the captain.

"The measure of his sins is full and runnin' over," added Logston.

Girty ceased speaking, and nothing of importance took place on either side until a little past noon, when he again appeared, with the announcement that Du Quesne had returned, and the cannon and reinforcements had reached them. The noble captain had commissioned him to say that the following persons would be permitted to leave Boonesborough before they would commence the assault, which would be final and decisive, and result in the total destruction of the station, viz: Mr. Alston and family, Mr. Fleming and son, and any relatives of Eliza Ballard who might be there, save Bland Ballard, the scout. These generous and humane terms he advised the above-named to accept, as they held out the only chance of life that now remained.

He pledged his word solemnly, that not a single shot should be fired while they were leaving the station, and the very best treatment should be extended to them.

"Gentlemen, do you hear this offer; you are at perfect liberty to accept or reject it," said Daniel Boone.

"Do me not the gross injustice to imagine that I shall listen to such a proposal for a moment," replied Mr. Alston, quickly.

"I'd rather stay and perish where I am," said Fleming, with an honest glow of indignation. "When I leave Boonesborough, I'll leave it just as the rest do; I never left my friends in the hour of trouble, and by the help of God I never will!" he added.

"But your families!" resumed Boone.

"We will share the fate of our dear neighbors and defenders!" exclaimed Mrs. Alston and Mrs. Fleming, simultaneously.

"Noble souls! noble souls!" cried Captain Boone, passing his stalwart hand across his eyes.

"Where such a spirit prevails, no enemy can conquer," said Reynolds, enthusiastically.

"Who's comin' out?" cried Girty.

"Not a single soul, you contemptible cre tur'!" said Joel.

"To prayers, then, every one of ye, for the sun of your lives is settin', and wont never rise on ye ag'in. Let your dyin' speeches be short, or many on ye wont get off from your knees afore your scalps'll be called for in a hurry. I reckon most on ye'll be loth to loose 'em!" retorted Girty.

Joel again entreated the captain to let him fire, but with no better success than before.

Girty had disappeared, and in about an hour McKee came out and affirmed that Du Quesne, still considerate and merciful, had finally concluded to accede to their most unreasonable terms, and would meet them within sixty yards of the fort, when he and the principal chiefs and leaders of the expedition would hear what they were willing to do; and it was arranged that the meeting should take place immediately.

Captain Boone, therefore, as previously determined upon, stationed his men on that side of the block-house to command a view of the parties, and where they could cover them with their rifles.

"If they lay hands on us and attempt to detain us, fire, and we'll willingly incur the risk of being hit. And, mark me, *remember Girty and Du Quesne!*" said the pioneer, when with his two companions, Fleming and Logston, he was ready to leave the fort.

"If we effect nothing more, we can at least learn whether they have really got cannon and reinforcements," he added.

"I think it would be well," said Joel, "for each of us to conceal some kind of a weapon under our hunting-frocks. I've an idea that we shall feel the need on 'em afore we get back."

"It is well thought of," replied Boone. "Our hunting-knives will answer the purpose."

Enjoining it upon the men to observe well their instructions, the gates were opened and the three men passed out; and their friends who remained watched their footsteps with intense interest. They were met within the specified distance by a numerous party, among whom were three Frenchmen, Girty, McKee, and several chiefs.

"That does not agree with my notions of a friendly and honorable treaty," said Reynolds, who, with his rifle at a loop-hole, was observing all that was transpiring. "There are too many there; they mean no good; keep a sharp lookout."

A discussion of considerable length now ensued; and so far as those at the station could judge by appearances, everything was going on in the most amicable manner. But Reynolds did not relax his vigilance; he declared that on this occasion he would not be deceived by Indian cunning and French duplicity; and the settlers being left under his command, he ordered every man to cover with their rifles the bodies of those nearest the captain and his associates, and not to take their eyes for a single moment from the sights.

The wisdom of this advice was soon apparent. The good humor of the Frenchmen and the principal warriors seemed to increase. Innis McKee drew near to Reynolds and looked eagerly forth.

"They will shake hands soon," she said, "and that will be the signal for seizing them."

Innis stood pale and anxious at a loop-hole; for she had at that instant caught a view of the form of her father, and he was very near Captain Boone. Reynolds quickly perceived her agitation and guessed the cause.

"Don't fire at McKee," he said, in a low voice to his comrades.

"I thank you very much!" exclaimed Innis; "for I know he does not deserve mercy at your hands."

"The service you have rendered us, fair Innis, justly entitles you to consideration," replied Reynolds.

"Alas! he is so different from what I wish him to be, that his death could scarcely shock me more than his life; and yet I cannot see him within range of your rifles without a feeling of horror," she added.

"Such feelings do you no discredit. Mercy, kindness and affection seem to be natural to the female heart," resumed Reynolds.

"Look! look! they stretch forth their hands!" cried the maiden.

Instantly the women screamed with alarm, for they beheld the captain and his men seized by the savages; for the moment they had extended their hands they were grasped by the powerful warriors, who attempted to drag them away.

A desperate struggle had already commenced, when the sharp crack of more than a dozen well-aimed rifles scattered their enemies like autumn leaves. The atheletic pioneers dashed down those nearest them, and ran towards the fort under a heavy shower of balls.

Andrew and Ebony, who had been sta-

tioned at the gate for that purpose, opened it in haste, and the brave men threw themselves in, bleeding from a few slight wounds, and panting with exertion.

"Well done, my gallant boys!" cried the captain, as he precipitately entered the block-house. "That fire was a leveller."

"They fell down strangely," said Mr. Fleming.

"Little-Turtle has gone under, I rather reckon," added Joel, casting from him a knife stained with deep crimson spots.

"You've made a fine treaty, I suppose?" said Alston, with a smile.

"We will leave you to draw your own inferences from what has just happened," replied Fleming.

"Did you see Captain Du Quesne?" asked Mr. Alston.

Captain Boone colored, and seemed pained and embarrassed.

"Yes, we've seen him! we've seen him!" exclaimed Logston, emphatically. And then, as if to divert his thoughts from the subject, he trod on Vesuvius's tail, putting him into a towering passion, and making him more than ever anxious to worry Andrew and Ebony.

"The fact of the case is," said Boone, seriously, "that our friend Logston believes he has made a discovery."

"He's famous for discoveries," returned Mr. Alston, somewhat ironically.

"Yes, I am," said Joel, drily.

"Friend Joel has discovered on this occasion," added the pioneer, calmly, "that Captain Du Quesne and Monsieur Le Bland are the same."

"The same!" cried Alston, turning pale.

"Identically the same," returned Joel, with a scowl.

"It cannot be! it cannot be!" he exclaimed. "What do you think, Captain Boone?"

"I am of Joel's opinion," replied the latter.

"And you, Mr. Fleming?" resumed Alston.

"I'll venture to make the assertion that if Du Quesne were to die this very moment, there wouldn't be such a man as Le Bland on the face of the earth."

A dark frown passed over the usually placid face of Mr. Alston. "If this is indeed true," he said, at length, "this very hand shall punish the perfidy of the villain!"

"Pervidin' I don't get my eyes on him fust!" muttered Joel, while Vesuvius growled in concert, and Andrew and Ebony withdrew to the farther part of the fort, influenced by the most prudential motives.

Boone remarked that it was certain Du Quesne, notwithstanding all the vaporings of Girty, had no cannon, and therefore he should not think of surrendering, as he was of the opinion that they could not take the place without ordnance.

CHAPTER XX.

END OF THE SIEGE.—HAPPY CONCLUSION.

The ensuing night set in dark and stormy. A fine, misty rain distilled from the gloomy clouds, and fell continuously on the earth. The enemy, fatigued with their past efforts, had ceased to make hostile demonstrations, and were evidently resolved on resting until morning.

Captain Boone, having placed a guard, had prevailed on the weary defenders of Boonesborough to lie down to sleep, to strengthen them for the contingencies of the morrow. The pioneer had lain himself down for a couple of hours, but at eleven o'clock arose and walked around the works to see that all was safe, and to take care that the guard was duly relieved and vigilant.

As he was passing the gate, he heard a gentle knocking on the outside.

"It is some Indian trick," thought Daniel; "but I am too old a bird to be caught with chaff."

The captain paused and listened, and the knocking continued.

"Who knocks?" he asked, at length.

"Bland Ballard," was the reply.

"Doubtful," said Boone.

"There are three of us," added the voice.

"Let the other two speak," returned the pioneer.

"Simon Kenton," said another voice.

"Allan Norwood," added a third.

"It's all right," resumed the scout. "There's no Indian trick about this."

"So I begin to think," said Boone, undoing the fastenings of the gate.

"No three men were ever more welcome to any place!" he continued, as the parties entered.

"You've had a fine time of it here, I reckon," said Ballard.

"The hand of sorrow has pressed heavily upon us," replied Boone, sadly.

"I knew in the course of natur' that some confounded thing or other would break!" added the scout, sentimentally.

"How has it fared with you, my lads? What news of Miss Alston?"

"It has fared but indifferently with us," rejoined Allan.

"Been continual breakages!" said Ballard.

"Our enterprise has'nt by any means proved an entire failure," remarked Kenton.

"Miss Alston, we have reasons to suppose, is safe, although in the power of Le Bland," observed Allan.

Mr. Alston, who had also been walking about the works, heard the name of his daughter mentioned, and hastened to join the parties.

"It appears," continued Allan, "that your daughter was carried away by a jealous Indian maiden, who intended her no serious harm."

"But where is she? Where have you left her? Why have you not restored her to my arms?" exclaimed Alston, deeply moved.

"Softly, softly!" said the scout; "we have done all that men could do. We have'nt been afeared to risk our lives in her service."

"The Cherokee girl," resumed our hero, "had witnessed an interview between her lover and your daughter, which excited all her jealousy and hatred, and was the cause of her sudden and mysterious disappearance."

"But who was the Indian maiden's lover?" asked Alston, a new light streaming in upon his brain.

"He was called while here Le Bland."

"Good heavens! The weight of my folly and stupidity will crush me to the earth!" cried the unhappy father.

"Before I made this important discovery, Miss Alston had been found by Le Bland, and carried away. We pursued him with haste; but he reached his friends, who are keeping you besieged here, before we could effect a rescue," said Norwood.

"This young man has acted nobly," added the scout, with great warmth. "He has saved my life, and Kenton's also. I abused him at the outset, and am sorry for it; he's as brave a young feller as ever walked, and I'll make my word good agin a dozen, armed with any kind o' weapons whatever. If there should be any sort o' blame attached to his name, now or hereafter, this year or next, or the year arter, I don't care when, I warn everybody in particular that in course of natur' somethin' will break."

"It is no more than what justice demands to say, that all the success that has attended this enterprise, is due to Mr. Norwood," said Simon Kenton, with manly frankness. "He has been coolest in the hour of danger, and his active mind, and fertile imagination, and physical daring have been the first to open a way of escape. I say, with Ballard, that he has conducted himself with a wisdom and prudence beyond his years, and deserves the warmest thanks of Miss Alston and her friends."

"We've got good news for you all," resumed the scout. "Otter-Lifter is coming to your aid at the head of his warriors, and is now close at hand."

"And we called at Harrodsburgh," added Allan, "on our return, and Colonel Harrod is coming with two pieces of cannon. I think we shall not only be able to make good the defence but defeat the enemy and rescue Miss Alston."

"We have only bad news to tell you in return for these glorious tidings," returned Boone, "Matilda Fleming and your sister Eliza, Mr. Ballard, have been carried off by Silas Girty, and are now in his hands."

"If we can git them two cannon into this place afore sunrise, and Otter-Lifter reaches us with his warriors, it's my opinion there'll be a confounded breakage!" exclaimed Ballard, knitting his brows, and grasping his rifle nervously.

"As much as that," said Joel Logston, who had joined them in time to hear the last part of the conversation. "I feel pooty sartin that I shall make my breakfast on about a dozen on 'em, more or less, take 'em as they run, off and on, by and large, so on to the end of the subjeck."

The news which Allan and his companions had brought soon circulated through the station, awakening new hope in every heart. The most experienced of the pioneers doubted not but the cannon could be brought to the fort under cover of the darkness.

"We shall have to go out and reconnoitre a little, and see which will be the safest way to bring in the big dogs," said the scout, referring to the cannon.

"It's rather a delicate piece of work," added Kenton, "but the darkness of the night is greatly in our favor. Be on the watch,

captain; to let us in." With these words the three men left the station once more, and glided away, while their friends awaited their return with a suspense which can only be imagined by those who have been placed in an analogous position.

In a little time Ballard came back to say that the enemy had relaxed their vigilance, being, doubtless, tired out with the length of the siege; that twenty men from Harrodsburgh were at a short distance from the fort with ordnance, which they would now endeavor to drag into the station.

The rain descended in torrents, and the night, though more inclement, was more favorable than ever to their purpose. After incredible toil and exertion, the efforts of Colonel Harrod were crowned with success, and the much coveted cannon were at last safely lodged in the block-house, which commanded in the most perfect manner the enemy's position and favorite point of attack. Every heart was gladdened by the sight of the formidable engines of destruction, and the brave company who came with them, They were immediately loaded with grape-shot, the terrible effects of which when fired into a body of men, are well-known to those at all acquainted with the arts of war.

This being done, they were properly placed, and pieces of canvas thrown over them to hide their frowning muzzles from observation of the enemy, when they should recommence offensive operations on the morrow.

The scout was both surprised and pleased when he discovered among the females, the pretty figure of Innis McKee; and the particulars of her appearance at the station, as related by Joel Logston, gave him genuine feelings of admiration and satisfaction. He affirmed, in the hearing of Allan and others, that she was without question, the finest girl in the whole world, and he stood ready, then and there, to make good the assertion.

Soon after Ballard freed his mind by making this important statement, he was observed in earnest conversation with Miss McKee; that is, as earnest as his embarrassment would allow of; for the scout on this occasion did appear to have lost his usual boldness, and in the estimation of Kenton and Elizabeth Boone, he was really awkward at times, bashful and hesitating. Before the dawn of day, Allan and his two friends had related their several adventures since they left the fort; while those who remained, in their turn, rehearsed what had transpired during the siege.

It may be a fact worthy of note, in this connection, that Simon Kenton had much to say to Elizabeth Boone; but as nobody took the trouble to listen, we regret that we shall not be able to explain it all to the reader. It was remarked however, by Joel (the fellow ought to have been minding his own affairs) that Miss Boone's pale cheeks thereupon assumed a ruddier glow.

The subject of Miss Harrod's capture and singular return to Harrodsburgh was then spoken of, as the news of that event had not reached the station. As soon as the name of Fanny Harrod was mentioned, the attention of young Reynolds was instantly fixed upon the speaker. With changing color and varying emotions he listened to the tale, and exclaimed:—

"Thank heaven!" in such an emphatic tone, when he heard the happy termination of the affair, that all eyes were instantly turned towards him.

"She's safe now, my lad!" said Colonel Harrod, in a low voice to the young man.

In answer to this assurance, Reynolds pressed the colonel's hand warmly.

"It would have been impossible to have kept him hived up here, if he had known that Fanny was in danger," remarked a man from Harrodsburgh, to Allan.

"He's somewhat sentimental towards the young woman, I suppose," observed the latter.

"Sentimental don't seem to be exactly the word; but he's very fond of her company, and people say that something will come of it by-and-by," returned the settler.

* * * The morning so anxiously expected by the inmates of Boonesborough dawned brightly and clearly at length; anon a few random shots from the enemy told that they were also astir. Presently the firing ceased, and Girty once more, and, as he said, for the last time, hailed the fort. Captain Du Quesne, he went on to state, whose forbearance he considered really surprising, had a few more words to address to the infatuated people of Boonesborough. Some of the young women belonging to the station, had, unfortunately, fallen into the hands of his friends, the Miamis; the names of these captives as follows: Rosalthe Alston, Matilda Fleming, and Eliza Ballard; all of whom would be put to death, providing the station did not immediately surrender un-

conditionally. Captain Du Quesne had seen an intimate friend of Mr. Alston, whose name was Le Bland, who entreated him (Alston) in most earnest manner, to advise Captain Boone to yield without delay.

These, Girty added, were the last offers that Du Quesne would make, and he would allow them half an hour to think of them.

Captain Boone replied that they did not wish to think of such a proposition for a moment; and Captain Du Quesne was at liberty to do his worst without delay. Moreover, if he (Girty) appeared before them again, he would instantly be shot down, if he stood under as many flags as he could hold up.

This reply sent the notorious white man off in a great rage, and the pioneers perceived by the unusual bustle, that preparations were being made for a grand assault.

"I wish to speak a few words to Du Quesne before the attack is made," said Alston.

"You are at liberty to do so," replied the captain.

Mr. Alston immediately availed himself of the permission, and with the flag which Reynolds had used, presented himself to the enemy in a conspicuous place, and signified his desire to communicate personally with Du Quesne, the leader of the expedition. After some demurring and a multitude of excuses, Du Quesne reluctantly appeared and demanded to know what was wanted, since all his merciful overtures had been rejected.

"I wish to say that I know you; and knowing you, hold you in the deepest abhorrence," replied Alston. "You came under my roof like a villain as you are, under an assumed name, and in an assumed character. You won my confidence, and thereby had it in your power to do me the greatest possible injury. Henceforth the name of Le Bland will ever be associated with all that is infamous. As the only reparation which you can make to a deeply injured father, I ask the restoration of my daughter, and those young women whose names have already been mentioned."

"Give your resentment to the winds, and attend to the safety of yourself and family. Come over to me with your wife, and instead of a dreadful scene of slaughter, there shall ensue a wedding; your daughter shall become Madam Du Quesne, and you shall own half the lands on the southern bank of the Kentucky River—all that portion included in the purchase of Major Henderson," returned Du Quesne.

"I would rather see my daughter slain in the manner already threatened, than to witness such a consummation as you have the hardihood to speak of!"

"Come in, come in!" exclaimed Boone. "Let us waste no more time!"

Du Quesne now attended to the arrangement of his forces without further delay, for he was both angry and disappointed at his ill success. The present disposition of his army was most favorable to the use of the two pieces of ordnance.

"He is dividing his red rascals into two large parties, in order to attack us at two points at the same time," said Colonel Harrod.

"I think it would be well to open fire upon them while they are so compact," said Boone.

"Otter-Lifter, who is doubtless concealed in the forest yonder, will attack them the moment he hears our fire," observed Allan.

"Let me point one of those guns, if you please; I belonged to an artillery company once," said Alston.

"He stands right at the head of the column there," whispered Joel Logston, in his ear. "Bring down the sight fair and square upon him, as you would level a rifle."

Mr. Alston looked deliberately along the gun, and Joel, obeying the motions of his hand, adjusted it to his satisfaction. Reynolds stood near, holding a blazing brand; Alston stepped back, and gave him a significant look. The next instant the block-house shook and trembled to the thunder of the cannon, and the head of the column sank down, while yells of consternation arose from many savage throats.

The pieces had been well aimed, and did terrible execution. Before the enemy had time to recover from their first panic, both the cannon had been discharged the second time, while the sound of musketry on the left, told that Otter-Lifter had commenced the attack.

"To the rescue of the maidens!" shouted Allan Norwood; and followed by thirty gallant Kentuckians, he rushed from the fort.

Du Quesne had fallen at the first fire, and Girty was trying to rally the Indians. The quick eyes of Joel Logston singled him out.

"Here's for you!" cried Joel, and the crack of his rifle reverberated up and down

the green banks of Old Kentucky. The infamous renegade staggered and fell, to rise no more till the trump of doom summons all men to judgment.

The tall figure of Otter-Lifter with his warriors was seen struggling for a brief period in the midst of the flying savages; and then joined by the Kentuckians, the enemy were routed in all directions.

The siege of Boonesborough was ended; and Otter-Lifter announced in a loud voice that the maidens were rescued. The body of Du Quesne was found among the slain. The victory was complete, and the joy consequent upon the successful termination, though subdued by the remembrance of their losses, was deep and heartfelt. Rosalthe and the other maidens, unexpectedly restored to the arms of their anxious friends, expressed their thanks to their deliverers with grateful, eloquent looks, and tearful, expressive eyes.

Allan Norwood grew rapidly in the good opinion of Mr. Alston, and an intimacy of the most tender and interesting nature soon became apparent between him and the fair Rosalthe.

Early in the following spring, just as the flowers were expanding, she consented to make him the happiest of men. And thus blest to the summit of their hopes, we leave them to glide calmly and blissfully down the ever-rolling stream of life.

Star-Light gave her heart, finally, to Otter-Lifter, and kept, thereafter, his lodge-fire bright. Among Norwood's visitors none were more truly welcome than the humane chieftain and his Star-Light.

As for young Reynolds, is it not written in the chronicles of Old Kentucky, that he was so fortunate as to persuade Fanny Harrod to become Mrs. Reynolds? And upon the next page is it not also written that Bland Ballard, the scout, offered his hand and varying fortunes to Innis McKee, and was accepted? It is very certain that something of this kind should have been made a matter of authentic record, if it was not; and possibly it was lost with other important missing archives of the "dark and bloody ground."

Joel Logston did not long defer his happiness, but was wedded to Eliza Ballard some time during the year, although we do not now remember the precise date.

It would be well to remark, perhaps, that McKee was never heard of after the siege, and was probably among the slain.

Of Daniel Boone we feel that it is unnecessary to add more. His name is so intimately associated with the history of that flourishing State, where he passed a great part of his remarkable life, that it needs no eulogy from our pen to add to its renown. He was the first and most distinguished among the Pioneers of Kentucky.